
PRESS

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TAKING STOCK

The exhibition *Taking Stock* shows the results of an artistic research project that took place in Cairo, Egypt, from January to March 2020. The project is a response to the closure of the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art. The closing is an incentive to investigate a series of events in the centre of Cairo and the cultural scene in Egypt.



Installation Photo: *Taking Stock* (2021), © Maarten Nauw / Framer Framed.

Dates

19 June - 26 Aug 2021

Initiators

Mariam Elnozahy, Wouter Osterholt, Elke Uitentuis

ADDRESS

Oranje- Vrijstaatkade 71
1093 KS Amsterdam
The Netherlands

OPENING HOURS

Tue - Sun
12:00 - 18:00

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Taking Stock or **سرد و جرد** is an artistic work which took place from January to March 2020 and commemorated the closure and consequent transformation of the Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art in Cairo, Egypt.

Initiated by Elke Uitentuis, Wouter Osterholt, and Mariam Elnozahy, the project was a meditation on a multilayered situation, using Townhouse as a lens to examine a nexus of happenings in downtown Cairo and the cultural scene in Egypt at large. It began with a colossal installation which featured towering wooden shelves, built to display all the residual materials from the gallery. To activate the installation, artists, cultural workers, craftsmen, neighborhood residents, and day laborers were invited into the structure to sit and draw an object selected from the remnants on display.

Through this process, the work became a series of interactive still-life drawing sessions. The drawing sessions were open, intimate, and slow, allowing room for informal discussions and reflections. In this space, individuals came together to think, process, and take stock alongside us, members of the Townhouse community, who wanted to seize an opportunity for reflection, and create a kinetic force out of a transitional period. Together, we gathered amidst the derelict remains of the gallery, and drew the old objects that had been excavated from the various storage sections in the gallery. While drawing, we discussed the events of the past ten years: the period of political tumult, the neighborhood transformation, the closure of the gallery, and more, in a series of conversations that ranged from the hyper-personal to the supra-political. Each session was recorded and transcribed anonymously and uploaded onto an interactive web-platform, made navigable by key search terms that were prevalent in the conversations.

Townhouse Gallery was a non-profit art space located in the heart of Downtown Cairo. It occupied an iconic position in contemporary art in the Middle East; a key player in what has become a culturally rich, regional art scene.

Mariam Elnozahy is a curator and writer from Cairo. She currently works for music platform Ma3azef.com. Previously, she curated exhibitions at the Townhouse Gallery, as well as at various venues in Jeddah and London.

Wouter Osterholt is a Berlin-based artist who graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. He develops projects in specific places with which he wants to unravel hidden relationships and conflicting interests that determine the functioning of that place.

Elke Uitentuis is a visual artist, human rights activist and mother. From 2005 to 2013, she was part of the artist duo Osterholt/Uitentuis. During that time, Osterholt/Uitentuis realised community projects with the aim of democratising the relationship between people and their environment.

Supported by

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