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Tabet, Rayyane

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Dropped Ceiling

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

Rayyane Tabet

Committee in charge:

Professor Teddy Cruz, Chair
Professor Jean-Pierre Gorin
Professor Anya Gallaccio
Professor Andrei Both

2012

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The Thesis of Rayyane Tabet is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2012

DEDICATION

To my mother
To my father
To my sister

EPIGRAPH

Don Quixote asked Sancho to tell him an entertaining story as he had promised, and Sancho said he would do so if he could rid himself of the fear caused by those sounds he kept hearing.

“But in spite of that, I’ll try to tell a story that, if I’m able to finish telling it without getting mixed up or being interrupted, is a terrific one. Now, I hope your grace is paying attention, because I’m ready to begin. Once upon a time...”

Miguel De Cervantes

And Scheherazade perceived the dawn of day, and ceased saying her permitted say.

The Book of One Thousand and One Nights

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Dropped Ceiling

by

Rayyane Tabet

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

University of California, San Diego, 2012

Professor Teddy Cruz, Chair

On December 2nd 1950 the first drop of Saudi oil arrived to Lebanon via the newly constructed Trans-Arabian Pipeline, the world's longest pipeline and the largest American private investment in a foreign land. The 30inch wide structure which spanned 1213 kilometers passing through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria to end in Lebanon had required 3 years of planning and surveying, 2 years of installation, the fabrication of 256,000 tons of steel tubes, the employment of 30,000 workers, the

ratification of a few national and international laws, the invention of new transportation and communication devices, and a CIA backed political coup. 33 years later, on December 28th 1983, the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Oil Company announced that it was terminating its operations and, by January 1984, the pipeline was abandoned. Today it sits hidden six feet underground; the only physical object that crosses the border of five political entities in a region that is very conscious of its demarcated lines. Over the past five years I have undergone an in depth research of the pipeline and the company that ran it. This project proposes to take the material gathered over these years and develop a series of objects, installation, performances and books that uses the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company as both their conceptual and physical framework, a specter through which to address the economic, political, geographic and social transformations of the region from the end of World War II onwards.