

# Marwa Arsanios

## *Who takes care of the caretaker?*

April 22 - May 27, 2023



*Amateurs, Stars and Extras*, 2019. Single channel video installation. Color, sound, 24'26".

What is identified as work? How can we resist its inherent forms of exploitation? *Who takes care of the caretaker?*, a solo exhibition by Marwa Arsanios, considers questions on the invisible work of care. The exhibition brings together the artist's filmmaking practice, in dialogue with textiles and drawings that connect ideas of collaborative production, while discussing issues of class, and the racialized and gendered roles of labor within domestic work and its unseen intimacies. The artworks presented here flow between the idea of work as representation and the representation of work and its exploitations. In this way, Arsanios creates a space for thinking about politicized leisure as well as resistance. Interested in collectivity and collective political projects, the artist layers these methods of making and collaboration as she works with performers and workers, using the exhibition space as an extension of the on-stage / backstage binary.

In *Amateurs, Stars and Extras or the Labor of Love*, a 2019 short film by Arsanos, the characters explore the world of performing work, with the opening scene showing one of the protagonists telling us we are, “about to witness a discussion about love. Or, more specifically, the labor of love.” She continues, “As an actress, I often had to represent different characters that do this labor... ..How can I relate to that History?” she asks. The film moves back and forth between short segments that include discussions on the conditions of domestic labor, to interviews with the domestic workers’ syndicate in Mexico city, and scenes from the production set of a Lebanese TV series. At times, Arsanos pulls the camera back to include the film’s production workers, who usually stand just outside of the image frame, revealing added layers of work in the film’s own production.

Arsanos works across disciplines, often looking at histories of resistance and their contemporary resonance. The textile and tapestry works introduce such approaches to the artist’s collaborative research methods. Arsanos first developed the tapestry project while working with autonomous eco-feminist communities in northern Syria, and produced the pieces in collaboration with a collective of women embroidery workers from the Sama Association. While the sequential drawings in the exhibition depict filmic scenes for animation, they also show hand drawn frame-by-frame studies of various movements.

Arsanos’ practice tackles structural and infrastructural questions, using different devices and forms. From architectural spaces, their transformation and adaptability throughout conflict, to artist-run spaces, and temporary conventions between feminist communes and cooperatives, her practice tends to make space within, and parallel to, existing art structures, allowing experimentation with different kinds of politics. The main protagonists become these lands and the people who work them.

Solo shows include, Heidelberger Kunstverein (2023), Mosaic Rooms, London (2022), Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2021); Skuc Gallery, Ljubljana (2018); Beirut Art Center (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2016); Witte de With, Rotterdam (2016); Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon (2015); and Art in General, New York (2015). Group exhibition include, Documenta 15 (2022), Mardin biennial (2022), Sydney Biennial film program (2022), 3rd Autostrada Biennale, Pristina (2021); 11th Berlin Biennale (2020); The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2020); Gwangju Biennial (2018); Lülea Biennial (2018); Kunsthalle Wien (2019); 1st Sharjah Architecture Triennial (2019); SF Moma, San Francisco (2019); Warsaw Biennial (2019); 14th Sharjah Biennale (2019). Her films have been screened at Cinéma du Réel, Paris (2021); Rotterdam Film Festival (2021); Film Fest, Hamburg (2020); FID Marseille (2015, 2019, 2022); tiff, Toronto (2019). She is currently a PhD candidate at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna.

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*Who takes care of the caretaker?* is on view at Brief Histories from April 22, 2023 to May 27, 2023.

The exhibition opens with a conversation between the artist and writer, Dina A. Ramadan on Saturday, April 22 at 4pm followed by the opening reception. Space is limited, please arrive on time.

Brief Histories hours: Thursday-Saturday 12pm-6pm.

For more information visit [www.briefhistories.art](http://www.briefhistories.art)

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