For Immediate Release

May 2, 2017

“Eden” and “Riad” open at the Lewis Center for the Arts
Two Senior Thesis Shows by Adam Locher and Walid Marfouk

Photo caption 1: “Genesis (Three)” one of the works by Adam Locher to be included in his senior thesis exhibition, “Eden”
Photo credit: Adam Locher

Photo caption 2: “In Memorium,” one of the photographs by Walid Marfouk to be included in his senior thesis exhibition, "Riad"
Photo credit: Walid Marfouk


When: May 2 through 5, with artist presence and performance each day 5:30-9:30 p.m.
Where: Room 301 at 185 Nassau Street, Princeton
Free and open to the public
What/Who: “Riad”, an exhibition of large format analog photography by Princeton senior Walid Marfouk, explores novel visual representations of Muslim identities through notions of gender, power, family, and history.
When: May 1 through 5, with an opening reception on May 4 at 7:30-9:00 p.m.
Where: Lucas Gallery at 185 Nassau Street, Princeton
Free and open to the public

(Princeton, NJ) The Visual Arts Program at the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University will present “Eden,” a multimedia exhibition that presents a retelling of the Garden of Eden creation story by Princeton senior Adam Locher, and “Riad,” an exhibition of large format analog photography by Princeton senior Walid Marfouk, explores novel visual representations of Muslim identities through notions of power, gender, family, and history. Locher’s work will be on view May 2 through 5 in Room 301 at 185 Nassau Street with an artist performance and presence daily 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Marfouk’s work will be exhibited in the Lucas Gallery at 185 Nassau Street also May 1 through 5 with an opening reception on May 4 at 7:30 p.m. The exhibitions and receptions are free and open to the public.

In “Eden,” Locher presents a “modern-day parable” based on his own life story. Viewers journey consecutively through three sections of the exhibition: “Middle America,” “Eden,” and “Dissociation.” Using a range of media including sculpture, spray paint, graphic design and photography, Locher examines his own creation and identity with works featuring themes of isolation, aspiration, dissociation, and love. “Genesis,” an eight-part poster series using graphic design and photography, features Locher positioned in the eight cardinal and ordinal directions, offering differing visual points of view into the many ways he is formed: genetically, chemically, historically, and emotionally. A seven part photo series features Locher and his boyfriend as rainbow creation figures reminiscent of Adam and Eve. In his sculptures, he presents unconventional self-portraits using mundane objects that have been decorated or altered. The sculptural works are made from items associated with childhood crafts, such as pipe cleaners, string, and Play-Doh.

Locher is majoring in visual arts through a collaborative program between the Department of Art and Archaeology and the Lewis Center’s Program in Visual Arts. He came to Princeton considering a major in the social sciences. After taking a year off to help care for his grandfather who was dying, he returned to Princeton with the feeling that the social sciences might not be the
career path for him. He wanted to attain skills in making things and “to learn more practical things than what I was finding was possible for me in the social sciences.” His initial focus in the arts was in film, but he began to explore graphic design and other media in his junior year. His junior independent work, which featured diagrams of emotions, has parallels in this year’s “Eden,” as nearly all pieces function as diagrams, puzzles, or sequential series. This year, as a senior, Locher began to focus more on sculptural diagrams and now considers three-dimensional work his primary medium.

In his photographic series “Riad” Marfouk provides an original perspective on Muslim identities that, while historical, points to an unseen side of the Islamic world. His process indicates nostalgia for a past era; his tools – a large format viewfinder film camera and halogen cinema lights – were commonly used in the 1950’s, a period of great freedom and prosperity in the Middle East. Marfouk’s subjects are exclusively his relatives, and are all pictured in the Riad, the ancestral home of his great-grandfather, the Caïd Layadi, in Marrakech. Through the construction of a deeply personal photographic syntax, Marfouk notes that he dissociates historically mischaracterized Muslim identities from preconceptions embedded in traditional Western representation. In so doing, as he explains, he creates a self-contained world in which the viewer can perceive Islamic culture the way he did growing up in Morocco.

“I focused on photographing my relatives” explains Marfouk, “because I can’t honestly make claims about a ‘general Muslim experience.’ There is no single Muslim reality to portray. By expressing my own vision, I am trying to bring diversity to a Western-centric conversation that largely revolves around images of pain and submission.”

In Morocco, Marfouk was joined by Rachel Heath Ferguson, a faculty member from Princeton’s Department of Sociology. Ferguson observed Marfouk’s photographic practice in situ, and in particular, interpreted its sociological implications. “The goal is not only to ground the portraits in the broader context of an incredibly complex society,” Ferguson explains, “but also to shine a unique academic perspective on the subjects, in parallel with Walid’s artistic perspective.”

Marfouk is majoring in Operations Research and Financial Engineering and pursuing a certificate in the Program in Visual Arts. His senior thesis advisors are artist-photographers and
faculty members Deana Lawson, whose work is currently exhibited in the Whitney Biennial, and James Welling, whose works are held in major museum collections including the Centre Pompidou in Paris, MoMa in New York, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography in Tokyo.

The Lucas Gallery and Room 301 at 185 Nassau Street are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For information on these exhibitions, the Program in Visual Arts, or the more than 100 performances, exhibitions, readings, screenings, concerts and lectures presented each year by the Lewis Center for the Arts, most of them free, visit arts.princeton.edu.

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