



(a(versions))

The idea for this project began from recurring conversations with friends in Beirut around sampling, the art of sampling, what it means to us and why its become so prevalent in sound practices amongst many of the artists I find interesting at the moment. Its a device that has become embedded so deeply in the technological tools that many sound artists are using to create their work, but there's not a lot of discussion on the significance of this prevalence.

On a basic level we can define sampling as simply taking a pre-existing recording and appropriating it for your own use, but there's a million nuanced decisions that come into play when deciding to use a sample and for what purpose. And how does one navigate this in a world completely saturated by sound materials? The media theorist Jonathan Sterne¹ has noted that there are more mp3's in circulation today than any other recording format combined. Operating in this sonic landscape forces an artist to be extremely deliberate and calculating in choosing a sound, its an intuitive process that begins in the gut, a conflation of time where a moment of sound jumps out and shakes your core, a moment where the universe aligns itself forming a cryptic revelation which the artist must capture and decode. There's a wonderful quote from Kodwo Eshun² where he talks about his concept of Sampladelia in which he describes the "powerful sensation of deletion as samples trigger successive waves of synthetic defamiliarization." Its this defamiliarization or deconstruction that these artist are dealing with, but not just on a formal level, because this approach is related to the artist's entire philosophy encompassing their work - how it becomes disseminated, consumed, reproduced, etc.

So the idea was simply to commission a collection of works from artists whose practice inherently deals with sampling in order to create a dialogue between their practices and around the culture of sampling. Here, in this compilation, you'll find 11 works that span a wide spectrum of approaches, dealing with intimate autobiographical references to over-arching archival systems exposing the politics of listening. These are all artists that are in some way connected to the Middle East, whose work is steeped and inspired by their locale and history, politics and pressures, but are dealing with sounds that move beyond this, creating threads that are spatially ambiguous and future in their scope.

- Joe Namy, August 2012

TRACK LISTING:

- Feriano - Rough Americana [5:17]
- Asking to be possessed - Rayya Badran [3:49]
- Bag of Cassettes Vol. 1 - Basel Abbas [1:22]
- Beirut Cornice Encounters - SC MoCha [4:19]
- Effects Pedals in the Trial of Saddam Hussein - Lawrence Abu Hamdan [1:17]
- Pourqoui - Mohamed Abdelkarim [6:18]
- FRE SPEECH 6.0 - Lawrence Abu Hamdan [2:30]
- Tanaffus Istina'i - Boikutt [4:45]
- Halim El Dabh's 3arooba re-edit - Joe Namy [6:28]
- Lullaby for Traffic - Cynthia Zaven [3:58]
- Animal Rights aka MGM's Lion: The first sonic theft - Lawrence Abu Hamdan [0:09]

Produced by Electric Kahraba
Mastered by Jana Saleh, Beirut / August 2012

All works are made available with permission from the artists.



This project was made possible with support from:



Feriano – Rough Americana

[All sounds and track performed, produced, written, arranged, mixed and engineered by Rough Americana (Morgan Craft and Mutamassik) at Rocca AlMileda Studio, Italy]

for Feriano aka Frediano (R.I.P.)

www.roughamericana.com

Asking to be possessed – Rayya Badran

[All sounds produced, arranged and mixed by Rayya Badran]

I distinctly remember the first time I heard Soapkills's rendition of Fairuz's Ya Man Hawa at a small bar in Monnot around ten years ago now. A recording of the track only existed on CD-Rs, shared between friends through out the years but it was never included in a full studio album.

Filmmaker John Akomfrah from the Black Audio Film Collective wrote, in a text entitled "On Writing Who Needs A Heart," that in order to work on a biographical film one has to "ask to be possessed; it's like asking to be haunted by the traces and deposits of another life."

A Bag Of Cassettes Vol.1 – Basel Abbas

[All sounds produced, arranged and mixed by Basel Abbas]

It was my intense encounter with cassette tapes as a child that allowed me to organically discover the potentials of sampling, in fact my first memory of music composition was the 'tracks' I would create using several tape players and my parents eclectic collections of tapes. These tapes, once a huge source of material and inspiration for my musical aspirations, are now long forgotten and dumped in plastic bags where they only gather dust. This work is the first in a series of pieces where I will 'rediscover' these bags of tape and begin to retrace my childhood encounters with sampling and its relation to my contemporary sampling practices.

While the material has archival importance that I also wish to investigate, this first instalment is only a window into some of the material in the first bag of tapes that I have come across, an initial exploration. My interest in this instance is rather the technique and the 'organic imperfections' that are nearly impossible to code using the 0's and 1's of the computer. However, this is not a suggestion to abandon our current contemporary methods in sound production and simply go back to an old method, but a process through which one could begin to deconstruct current sound practices.

vimeo.com/ruanneandbasel // soundcloud.com/baselabbas

Beirut Corniche Encounters – SC MoCha

[All sounds produced, arranged and mixed by SC MoCha]

www.checkpoint303.com

Selections from Aural Contract – Lawrence Abu Hamdan

The Chipmunk in the Court of Saddam

Pitch shifting and harmonising and other effects of vocal manipulation are employed during the trial of Saddam Hussein to disguise and infantilise voices testifying in his defense.

FRE SPEECH 6.0

Audio ripped from Israeli company PerSay Ltd's demonstration of voice identification security technology.

Animal Rights AKA: MGM's Lion: The first sonic theft.

Metro Goldwyn Mayer's roaring lion was the first 'non musical' sound to be copyright protected.

Aural Contract is a research project that is constituted by a series of events, publications, exhibitions and workshops that examine the contemporary politics of listening through a focus on the role of the voice in law. Throughout the project Abu Hamdan has built up a sound archive, containing audio extracts of his works together with specific moments of juridical listening and speaking gathered from a wide range of sources such as the trials of Saddam Hussein and Judas Priest, UK police evidence tapes, films such as Decoder and readings from texts including Italo Calvino's A King Listens. For this compilation Joe Namy has selected 3 tracks from the Aural Contract audio archive as a way to add to the discussion on how artists sample, manipulate and process their aural environment and the politics invested within it.

Pourqoui – Mohamed Abdelkarim

[All sounds produced and arranged by Mohamed Abdelkarim. Mixed by Jana Saleh]

Contains samples from the film "Alexandria... Why?"

soundcloud.com/abdelkarim

Tanaffus Istina'i – Boikutt

[All sounds produced, arranged and mixed by Boikutt]

soundcloud.com/boikutt

3arooba – Halim El Dabh (Joe Namy re-edit)

[Original skype recording performed by Halim El Dabh. Re-edit arranged and mixed by Joe Namy. Engineered by Jana Saleh]

Contains samples from live renditions of Halim's 3arooba recorded during the performance "Triboluminescence" at Ashkal Alwan (May 2012), an impromptu party at ONNO (May 2012), and a sound art class at the Beirut School for the Blind (April 2012).

Lullaby for Traffic – Cynthia Zaven

[All sounds produced, arranged and mixed by Cynthia Zaven]

soundcloud.com/c_zaven

