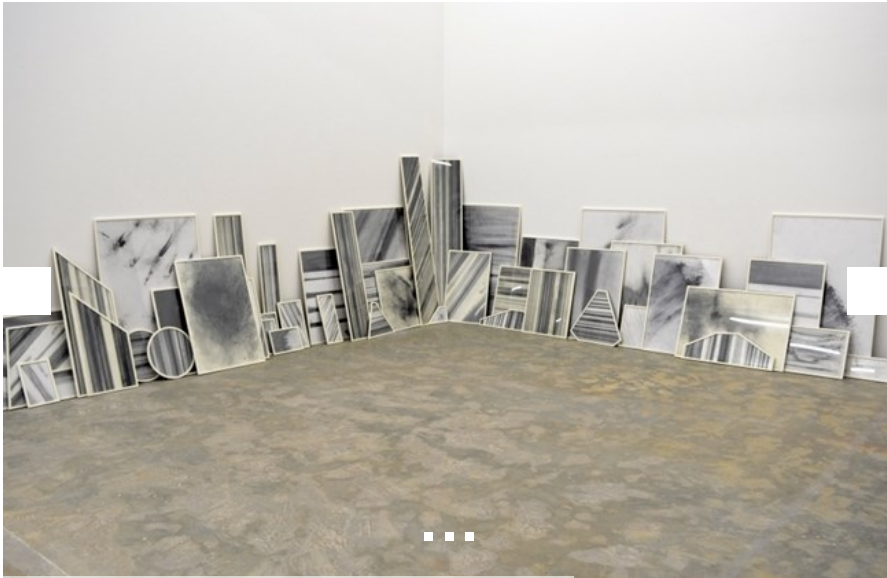


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## Aivazian opens first Middle East exhibition



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👤 Hadia Sinno | The Daily Star

Editor's Note: Fashionista Hadia Sinno took the style world by storm with a unique combination of expertise and avant-garde style, rising to become one of the most preeminent voices on all things fashion. Every Friday, Sinno will join The Daily Star to cover the hottest trends and latest styles, sharing professional fashion tips as well as her favorite salons, restaurants, and places to be seen.

BEIRUT: Artist Haig Aivazian opened his first solo exhibition in the Middle East Thursday at the Sfeir-Semler gallery in Beirut. The exhibition, entitled "I Am Sick but I Am Alive," includes a series of sculptures, drawings, and live performances as well as a film called "Not Every Day Is Spring."

Haig Aivazian is an artist and writer and has had his work shown in different places around the world. The artist has participated in the 2009 Sharjah Biennale and was associate curator of the 2010 edition. He was part of the Armenian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale. He also featured at the sixth Marrakech, and 14th Istanbul Biennales. He will be participating in the upcoming Montreal Biennale.

A conceptual artist working across a wide range of media, Aivazian's works delve into the various ways in which ideologies embed, affect and move people, objects and architecture. Departing from often known events, and weaving lesser known narratives into them, he has explored apparatuses of control and sovereignty as they are at work in sports, finance, museums and most recently music.

For each project, he utilizes the precise medium, whether it is drawing, sculpture, installation, performance or video, necessitated by the concept.

The works reflect on the history and contemporary state of modal "Oriental" music after the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationalism amid the regional drive toward modernity. It was in this period that ethnomusicologists collected and arranged pieces of rural folklores, to construct out of them musical repertoires that reflected pure national identities.

Aivazian uses as starting point Turkish-Armenian oud master Udi Hrant Kenkulian (1901-78), a significant contributor to Turk Sanat Muzigi (Turkish Art Music): a salon style music derived from Ottoman classics but incorporating influences from Western classical music – a hybrid style central to the new and so-called progressive republican identity.

Among the programs broadcast by the radio, was a segment dedicated to Art Music, where Kenkulian and his ensemble would eventually feature. The exhibition loosely follows in Kenkulian's footsteps as well as those of the stones from the Pangalti cemetery, dispersed around the city and integrated into its architecture.

By studying the historical intertwinement of the region's musical traditions "I Am Sick But I Am Alive" reflects on the sheer violence exerted by borders on the one hand, and their perpetual incapacity to curb waves of sound and human migration.

Haig Aivazian's work will be displayed at the Sfeir-Semler Gallery in Karantina until December 2016.