LETITIA
Art Gallery

**Basir Mahmood: *Eyes Recently Seen***
**Curated by Lauren Wetmore**

**6 September – 3 November 2018**
**Letitia Gallery, Beirut**

Basir Mahmood, *All divided equally*, 2018. Inkjet print on photo rag, 150 x 100 cm each (diptych). Courtesy of the artist.

Letitia Gallery is pleased to announce *Eyes Recently Seen,* a solo exhibition by Basir Mahmood. Curated by Lauren Wetmore, the show presents new and existing photographic and video works which reveal the distinctive processes by which the artist recreates his own visual experiences. Fascinated by the structures of daily life – labour, hierarchy, distribution and identity – Mahmood's photographs and videos occupy a space between staged scenes and spontaneous documentation.

In *Eyes Recently Seen,* works from the past five years of Mahmood's practice – including meditations on fishermen *(Message to the Sea*, 2012) and blessed water (*Holy water from Mecca*, 2015) – are shown together with new pieces that investigate communal human consumption. Taken together, the works demonstrate the artist's position in relation to the various social structures which they reflect.

For the new works in the exhibition, including *Milk* (2018) and *All Good Things* (2018), Mahmood composed the activity of individuals from various occupations, including day-laborers and milk

sellers, in a Lahore film studio. The participants were invited to enact their vocations, to explore the nuances of human interaction.

The new diptych, *All Divided Equally* (2018), continues Mahmood's fascination with the societal division of resources by depicting an abundance of food, each item cut exactly in half to create a multitude of diptychs. The resulting tableaux considers the outcome of equality in distribution.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue.

Basir Mahmood, artist;
"I am interested in exploring my position as an artist by adopting multiple roles including: as an author who writes narratives; an initiator who sets in motion collisions of people and improvised scenarios to create original stories; as an observer who teleports in or out of the everyday situations he is observing to see intimately from within and from without; and as a withdrawn subject, for example as a disengaged onlooker on a main street."

Lauren Wetmore, curator;
"Many themes from Basir Mahmood's work will be relevant to the Beirut context, from picturing an interdependent relationship between humans and the sea to exploring the societal position of so-called 'unskilled' laborers. Basir's work brings an array of contexts and themes in sharp focus through his process – the way he allows us to transcend the distinction between how an artist sees the world versus how the world is seen."

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**About Letitia Gallery**

Letitia Gallery is a contemporary art gallery in Beirut focused on encouraging global engagement with contemporary art in Lebanon through the contextualisation of both local and international artists and their work in the global art environment. Under the direction of Annie Vartivarian, the gallery has a strong ethos of collaboration and has worked closely with leading international curators from around the world to work on a project-focused model that looks to nurture the growth of regional artists from the MENA region as well as showcasing international artists in Lebanon within a programme of four to five exhibitions a year. Letitia Gallery offers both local audiences and international visitors the opportunity to discover international artists and to gain a deeper understanding of the breadth of their practice through public programming that includes: talks, off-site projects, site-specific commissioning and supporting cultural initiatives in Lebanon and the region.

**About the artist, Basir Mahmood**

Basir Mahmood (b. 1985 Lahore, Pakistan) reflects on the social and historical terrain of the ordinary, using photography and video to create poetic sequences characterized by closely observed individuals, objects and rituals. Most recently, Mahmood participated in the 10th Berlin Biennale: *We Don't Need Another Hero* (Berlin, 2018) and completed the Rijksakademie residency program (Amsterdam, 2016-2017). His work has shown in exhibitions internationally, including Contour Biennale 8 (Mechelen, 2017); The Abraaj Group Art Prize: *Syntax and Society* (Dubai, 2016); *Time of*

*Others* at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Tokyo, 2015); Sharjah Biennial 11 (Sharjah, 2013); and *The Garden of Eden* at Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2012). Mahmood studied at the Beaconhouse National University (Lahore) and completed a 2011 fellowship at Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart). Basir Mahmood is currently based between Amsterdam and Lahore.

**About the curator, Lauren Wetmore**

Lauren Wetmore is a curator and writer based in Brussels. She has contributed to exhibitions, biennials and commissions internationally, including Frieze Projects (London, 2014 and 2015); the *2013 Carnegie International* (Pittsburgh); and *Meeting Points 8* at the Beirut Art Center (2017), La Loge (Brussels, 2016) and the Windsor Hotel (Cairo, 2016). She has also held positions at The Banff Centre, Barbican Art Gallery and her project *The Conversation* won the Encura curatorial residency at Fundació AAVC Hangar (Barcelona, 2015). Wetmore is currently co-host and producer of *Momus: The Podcast.* She was short-listed for the 2016 International Awards for Art Criticism and has contributed to publications including *Xavier Cha: abduct* (MOCA Cleveland, 2015) and *These Are the Tools of the Present: Beirut – Cairo* (Sternberg Press, 2017). She holds a MFA in Criticism & Curatorial Practice from OCAD University and a BA in Art History and Gender Studies from the University of British Columbia.

**Exhibition Details**

Title: Basir Mahmood: *Eyes Recently Seen*
Address: Letitia Gallery, Tour de Saroula, Hamra, Beirut, Lebanon
Website: www.letitiagallerybeirut.com
Dates: 6 September – 3 November 2018
Opening Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm
Thursdays: 10:00 am to 9:00 pm
Saturdays: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Admission: Free
Facebook: LetitiaBeirut
Instagram: LetitiaBeirut

For press information and images please contact:
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For more information on **Basir Mahmood: *Eyes Recently Seen* ,** please contact Mary Doherty or Saskia Deliss
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Basir Mahmood, *All divided equally,* 2018, diptych, Inkjet on photo rag, 150 x 100 cm each. Courtesy of the artist.

Basir Mahmood, *All Good Things*, 2018. Inkjet on photo rag, 120cm x 180cm each. Courtesy of the artist.

Basir Mahmood, *Milk*, 2018. Inkjet on photo rag, 80 x 120 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

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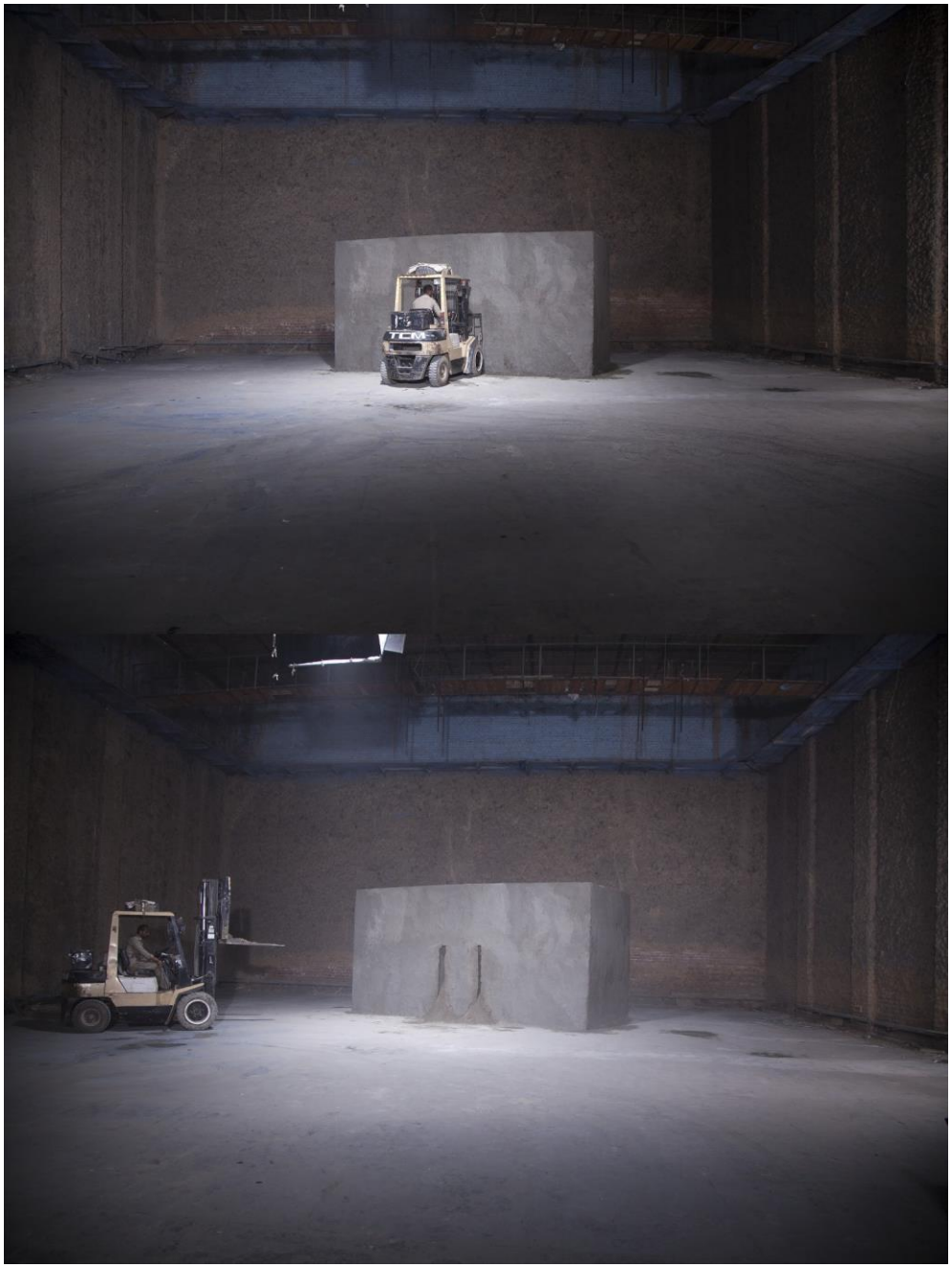

Basir Mahmood, *Other Living Things*, 2018. Inkjet on photo rag, 100 x 133.33cm. Courtesy of the artist.

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Basir Mahmood, *Holy Water from Mecca*, 2015. Inkjet on photo rag, 100 x 66.67cm. Courtesy of the artist.

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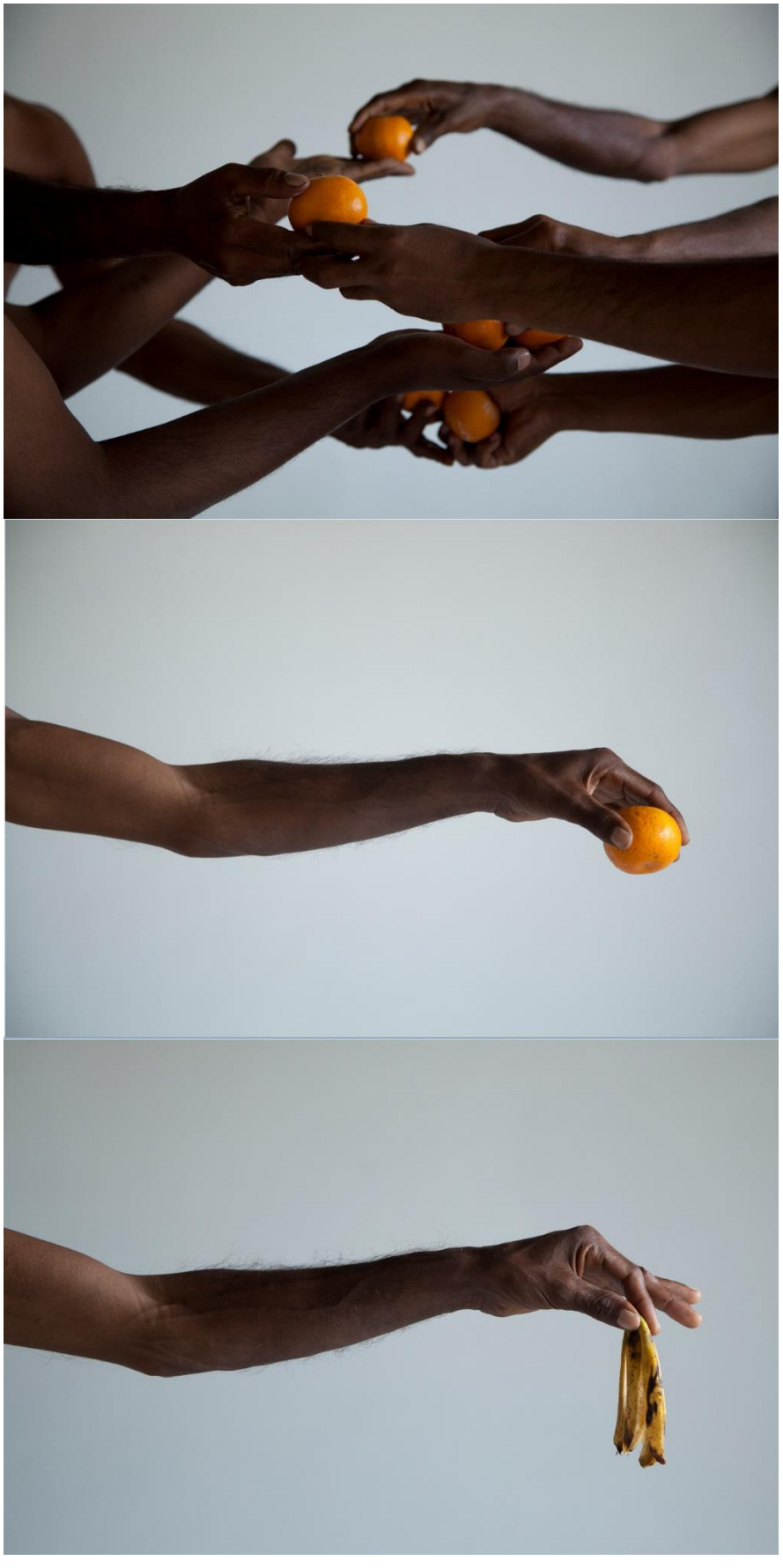

Basir Mahmood, *One for Each, Two For All*, 2013. triptych, Inkjet on photo rag, 45 x 30cm each. Courtesy of the artist.

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Basir Mahmood, *A Message to the Sea,* 2012. Single-channel video, color, sound, 06:04. Courtesy of the artist.

Basir Mahmood, *No Land for a Fisherman*, 2012. Inkjet on photo rag, 40 x 26.6 cm each (series of 6). Courtesy of the artist.

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Basir Mahmood, *No Land for a Fisherman*, 2012. Inkjet on photo rag, 40 x 26.6 cm each (series of 6). Courtesy of the artist.

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