

firstdraft

Gallery 2

4 May – 13 Jun 2022

Shoe Bathers Shireen Taweel

Shoe Bathers conjures up the sensory relationship between body, spirit, and kinship. The warmth of a conversation is ambient and eloquent, a rite to the intimate relationships developed and formed by community and family within the many varied spaces of the bath house both public and private.

The state of transition evoked through the ritual of bathing is recorded in the shaping and forming of piles of handmade olive oil soap by bodies constantly moving back and forward between physical and spiritual centres. Two pairs of engraved and pierced bathing shoes central to the work signal the bath house's long lineage as a ritualised space of cleansing.

Shireen Taweel is a Sydney based artist working on Gadigal Land. Shireen's practice draws on her Australian Lebanese heritage, and employs a progressive application of copper artisan techniques to inform cross-cultural discourse around the construction of cultural heritage, knowledge, identity and language.

The project development of Shireen's works are often site-specific, weaving local narratives and research with a focus on experimentation in material and sound through site. The use of copper as an artistic medium has helped to preserve and extend her personal connection with the rich cultural heritage, further developing her understanding of the importance of community legacy.

The artist would like to thank Spencer Anthony Reid, Nicola Bylmakers, Emily Parsons-Lord, Shan Turner-Carroll and Marietta Zafirakos.

Shoe Bathers is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW. Shireen Taweel's exhibition *Shoe Bathers* is powered by Lūpa Media Player. More information at lupaplayer.com

lūpa
www.lupaplayer.com



Gallery 1
Temples of Doom
Ryan Andrew Lee

Gallery 3
sister +++++
familial formations
Marian Abboud

Gallery 4
Born to Draw
Matthew Clarke

firstdraft
gadigal land
13–17 riley street
woolloomooloo
nsw 2011
+61 2 8970 2999
firstdraft.org.au

we acknowledge and pay respect to the gadigal people of the eora nation, the traditional owners of the land on which firstdraft is built and operates.

firstdraft is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW; and assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



firstdraft

Gallery 2

4 May – 13 Jun 2022

Shoe Bathers Shireen Taweel

Artwork

Shoe Bathers, 2022

installation, engraved and pierced copper,
soap, and sound (25 minutes)

Sound composition: Spencer Anthony Reid

The bathroom

Shireen Taweel

Originally commissioned and published by *ADSR Zine*, Issue 013

The bathroom was always steamy, in the corner of the room, a single candle would infuse the hot mist with a warm golden hue, that illuminated a group of girls skipping back into the 1950's, their dresses and faces, fading from sight. Teddy bears, and illustrations of cartoon animals also faded in the golden haze, all receding into a past of six or seven decades of dense moist bath times. The pasted drawings and magazine cutouts were the passions of childhood defying both condensation and the loss of something magical, a testament to the innocence of children. It was all set upon an eclectic array of coloured and arabesque tiles, floor to ceiling, in the bathroom of my grandmother's house, although as with memory, it was all gradually losing its lustre over time.

On entering the bathroom I would perch myself upon a small stool situated in the centre of the space. It was what we would call in Sydney, 'a vintage mid century milking stool', in Tripoli at my grandmother's house it was 'the bath stool', and it certainly was the only stool to have ever been, in the bathroom. The timber had changed colour over the years, and the chair resembled a piece of driftwood, a stool that had washed up on a beach somewhere in the Mediterranean. The timber had greyed and the seat become smooth, I would guess from the shifting back and forth of soft buttock skin coated in the lather, of the finest of Tripoli's olive oil soap.

Gallery 1

Temples of Doom

Ryan Andrew Lee

Gallery 3

sister +++++

familial formations

Marian Abboud

Gallery 4

Born to Draw

Matthew Clarke

firstdraft
gadigal land
13–17 riley street
woolloomooloo
nsw 2011
+61 2 8970 2999
firstdraft.org.au

**we acknowledge and pay respect to the gadigal people of the eora nation,
the traditional owners of the land on which firstdraft is built and operates.**

**firstdraft is supported by the NSW
Government through Create NSW; and
assisted by the Australian Government
through the Australia Council, its arts
funding and advisory body.**



firstdraft

Gallery 2

4 May – 13 Jun 2022

Shoe Bathers

Shireen Taweel

Facing the stool was seated an immense hand hammered copper basin, engraved with arabesque motifs. It was rustic yet wonderfully ornate, replete with stunning hammer marks and a natural green patina. The basin reminded me of the copper domes on the mosques, that had been hand formed by artisans in the souks, and weathering in the hot summers and wet winters of Tripoli. My aunty would have the copper pot full of boiling water before I entered the room for each bath time. I would sit dripping with the wetness of the room like the skipping girls covered in condensation, and draw water from the pot with a large wooden ladle, and gently pour it over my body while lathering myself with soap from the local soap makers. The fragrant olive oil and orange blossom soap would permeate the bathroom air, an ever swelling golden mist of orange blossom enveloping me upon my driftwood stool floating on the Mediterranean.

I loved to bathe at my grandmothers after spending a day in the medina. And most of all during the winter months. I have been thinking about what could fill the void left by the disappearance of a space and specifically a functional space full of emotions and intimate experiences. What would fill a space which did remain, although family and friends have long since moved on or perhaps passed away, and the original function of the space no longer exists. Do we need a physical space to occasionally return to, in order for a richer and deeper experience of the past or would a digital version of my grandmother's bathroom be enough.

Gallery 1

Temples of Doom

Ryan Andrew Lee

Gallery 3

sister +++++

familial formations

Marian Abboud

Gallery 4

Born to Draw

Matthew Clarke

firstdraft
gadigal land
13–17 riley street
woolloomooloo
nsw 2011
+61 2 8970 2999
firstdraft.org.au

we acknowledge and pay respect to the gadigal people of the eora nation, the traditional owners of the land on which firstdraft is built and operates.

firstdraft is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW; and assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

