

Floor projections have been seen before, but it remains stunning to have our expectations of a vertical screen upended. Walking on the image — instead of passively upholding it — gives the spectator a liberty of action that doubles with a conundrum as to where to go, how to stand, and how to behave. Walking on the image is disorienting, not only because the image is moving, but also because it feels sacrilegious. We're not floating, but are very much aware of our stomping over something that's the concrete gallery floor, although that floor's existence is now in question.

There is no single focus in Roy Dib's *Revisiting Hesitation*, so an additional decision as to where to watch needs to be made. One could stand right in the middle of it, hovering over elusive characters, or scan the sides, awaiting a surge. This disorientation drives an immersion in one man's thoughts, from his body to the great beyond, without interruption but for an alien land/seascape. The video deals with the tense moments where a man is made to take a crucial decision in his life, being prepped for an undefined battle in the context of a city forced to go through the motions of combatants' funerals, as they're unable to bury them. If the story is not further fleshed out, its feeling is: one of questioning, loss, and uncertainty.

It was first amusing being met with a disclaimer concerning individuals under 18 being accompanied by an adult: wouldn't most underage people come accompanied as such? Until another fact dawned on us: despite Lebanon being the most liberal of its neighbours, its artists largely shy away from nudity (among other controversial subjects.) Dib, though, stages a full frontal confrontation with the male nude, the very foundation of much of Western art history since, at least, the Renaissance, and through which artists relentlessly honed their skills in female-less academies. Other characters — notably women — appear, acting, at once, as the chorus and stimuli to the man's thoughts. The man himself plays both hesitant agent and blank screen. He's floating at times, as if dead or asleep, and at others seemingly smoothly moving from one pose to another in deliberate gestures, tentatively engaging with spectators, looking vulnerable to circumstances and to himself. Whether he is a martyr or a hero is secondary, for all is elusive, from matter, to man, to mind.

The exhibition is on view at Galerie Tanit, Mar Mikhael, Beirut, until November 10, 2018.

## Looping through Roy Dib's Revisiting Hesitation



OCTOBER 1, 2018 ~ WAWREVIEWS

