

ARTslant



[*Fahrenheit 311: Seven Legends of Machismo*](#)

Nadia Kaabi-Linke

Lawrie Shabibi

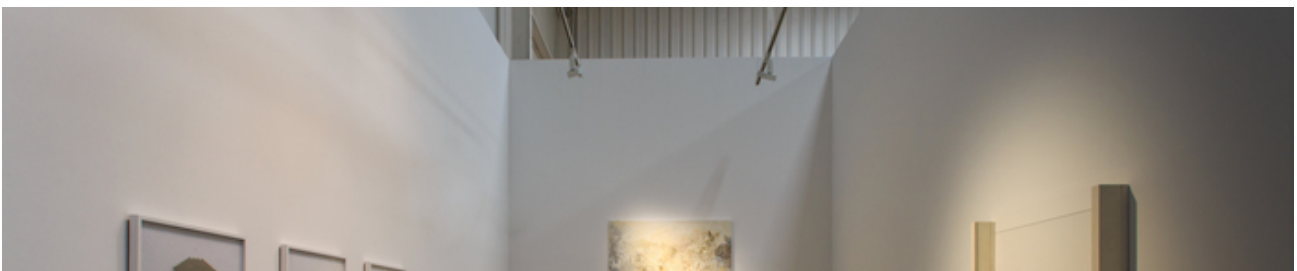
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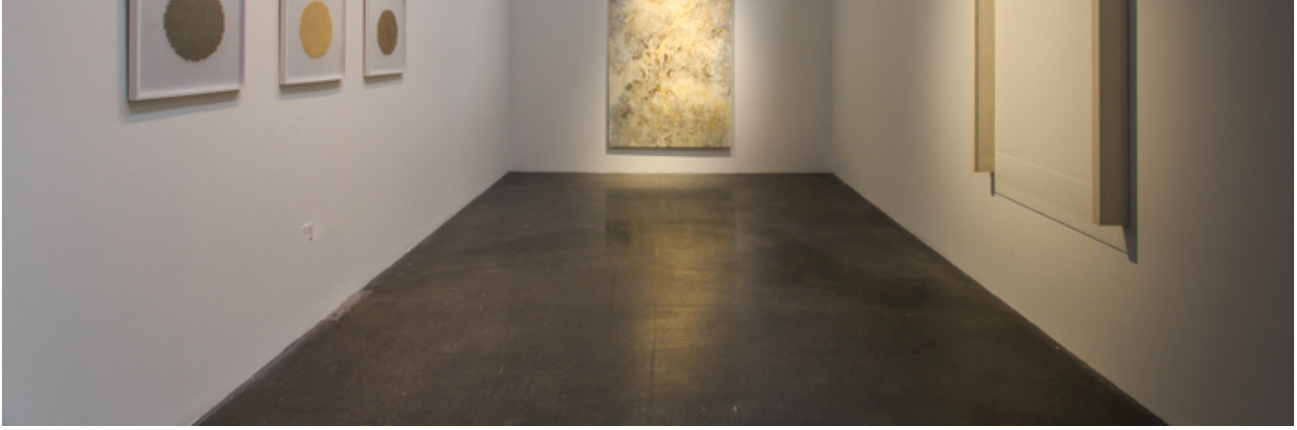
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Melting Machismo: Nadia Kaabi-Linke's *Fahrenheit 311*

by Danna Lorch

Medically speaking, at precisely 311 degrees Fahrenheit, testosterone, the male sex hormone, begins to melt. With her second solo show at [Lawrie Shabibi](#) in Dubai, *Fahrenheit 311: Seven Legends of Machismo*, [Nadia Kaabi-Linke](#) presents eight place-centred works that each conduct an autopsy on masculine qualities and myths—from war and glory to violence and heroism. The seven deadly sins run in parallel. In case you need a re-cap of *Dante's Inferno*, these are lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride.



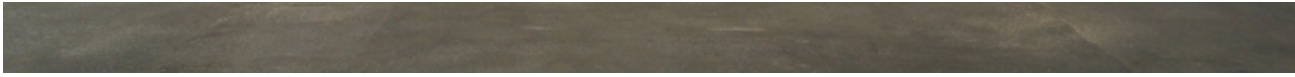


Nadia Kaabi-Linke, *FAHRENHEIT 311* Installation view. From left - right. *Hardballs*, *Bangballs*, *Grindballs*, *A Short Story of Salt and Sun* & *Perspective Bank Junction*. Courtesy

Lawrie Shabibi

Kaabi-Linke has a practiced knack for making the ugly shamefully beautiful, and this has never been more evident than with *Impunities London Originals*—a series of pretty smudges and creases on paper quietly installed along the gallery's rear wall. As there is no accompanying wall text, it's possible to casually view these without understanding that they are actually prints documenting the male-inflicted injuries that sent women to a domestic abuse shelter. With knowledge comes the guilty shock at what one is actually admiring.





Nadia Kaabi-Linke. *Impunities London Originals*, 2012, Black powder on transparent film on paper. 19 x 25 cm. Courtesy Lawrie Shabibi and the artist

In *Tunisian Americans*, 400 tiny glass bottles intended to contain *kohl* (the ground mineral stibnite traditionally used to outline women's eyes in the Middle East), have been clinically numbered and filled with soil from the graves of fallen American soldiers buried in a U.S. military graveyard in Kaabi-Linke's native Tunisia. The soldiers' dog tag numbers correspond to the identifications on their actual graves, which have each been compartmentalized here in an antique typesetting tray. Beyond the number, each life, battle, and loss are ultimately equal and indistinguishable.





Nadia Kaabi-Linke. *Tunisian Americans* (detail), 2012, Wood, cork and soil in four panels, 137 x 157 cm. Courtesy Lawrie Shabibi and the artist

It's impossible to visit the show without being drawn like a believer on a pilgrimage towards *Altarpiece*, a gold leaf triptych that references a church's iconography. The surface of the work is in the form of three imprints that have been taken from a Berlin bunker that still bears the battle scars of World War II, has survived various incarnations, and presently houses the [Boros Collection](#). The doors to the icon can be closed with a creak and seem to question whether history and man's errors can ever be fully concealed.



Nadia Kaabi-Linke, *Altarpiece*, 2015, Transfer print and acrylic on paper on canvas, wood and 24 k gold leaf. Courtesy Lawrie Shabibi and the artist

It is not entirely clear exactly who Kaabi-Linke considers to be in power. In a show that focuses so wholly on male behavior and vice, it is thinkable to charge her with presenting a counter-myth of females as passive, sexual objects manipulated by male aggressors and structures. On the other hand, as *Grindballs*, *Hardballs*, and *Bangballs* bluntly suggests, it is also possible to view the show as the artist's commentary on the ways society's boxes and expectations crush and dominate male potency.

—[Danna Lorch](#)

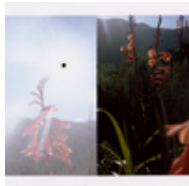
(Image at the top: Nadia Kaabi-Linke, *Altarpiece*, 2015. Transfer prints on paper on canvas, wood and gold. 250 x 450 cm. Courtesy Lawrie Shabibi and the artist)

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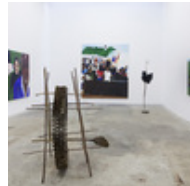
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