

NOURHAN MAAYOUF
PORTFOLIO
2022

A DISH BREAKING THE EMPTINESS

**2020 - in progress
cooking workshops, photography and video**

Mahshi محشي in Arabic. It means filling or stuffing in English. Mahshi is a stuffed vegetable dish, a universal dish, known as Mahshi in Egypt and some other Arabic speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa region.

In the past the dish was used to be cooked by a group of women, owing to being effortful and requiring a long time in its preparation. One can do the evacuation, the other can do the stuffing, thus a shared female responsibility and an extension of the communal activity. In the present time, working women started to lead a busy life that is difficult to advocate time to prepare Mahshi, relying on the help of other, or buying it ready for cooking from the market.

The project aims at bringing back the slow cooking activity of Mahshi in a collective manner as a form of caring especially in the time of a pandemic. This is through carrying out cooking workshops with women of different backgrounds. Thus far, the cooking workshops were carried out with women from the artist's personal network, as well as collaborating with art centers, women associations and community centers, such as Philomena+ and Frauentreff in Vienna, Espace Interculturel in Sierre, Hospice Général in Geneve and ExpoTranskultur

and GZ Hirzenbach in Zurich. This collaboration resulted in cooking with more than 40 women from Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Brazil, Bolivia, Cameroon, Congo, Chechnya, Eritrea, France, Iraq, Iran, India, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, Somalia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey, and Tunisia. The cooking workshops allowed an opportunity for a conversation and interconnection between the participants .

The project also includes a video and photography series titled "I am Stuffed" that shows the dish and the act of stuffing, shedding the light on the meal and its preparation.

A publication titled "Stuffed vegetables, the women and I" was produced. Through it, I share my personal story with Mahshi, cooking with and for others, the practical experience of the cooking workshops that happened, in addition to reflections and questions that contributed to the development of the socially engaged art process.



Mahshi cooking workshop in Vienna, Austria, 2021.
Part of Banal Complexities project, curated by Philomena+
art and architecture platform, in collaboration with Frauentreff
association.



Mahshi cooking workshop in Geneva, Switzerland, 2021.
In collaboration with Hospice General.



Mahshi cooking workshop in Zurich, Switzerland, 2021.
In collaboration with ExpoTranskultur and GZ Hirzenbach.



Eating together after cooking Mahshi, in GZ Hirzenbach, Zurich, Switzerland, 2021.



I am Stuffed, photography series, 2020.



Volkertmarkt platz in Vienna, Austria, 2021.
Part of Banal Complexities project, curated by Philomena+ art and architecture platform.
Photo by Abdulrab Habibyar.



I am Stuffed video, 06' 46", 2020.
Visit: <https://vimeo.com/376326116>

DIARIES FROM A LOCKED FLAT

2021
performance

Drinking coffee with colleagues, eating a Big Mac in her car and preparing Mahshi together with her mother at home. I take the audience on a journey, reflecting on the daily life of a millennial middle class Egyptian female living with her family, from pre-COVID-19 times to lockdown realities in 2020. In a narration filled with excerpts from a diary and pop cultural elements, I present memories, struggles and dreams amid uncertain times.

To watch the performance, visit:
<https://vimeo.com/679920955>



Performance at Philomena+ art and architecture platform.
Part of Independent Space Index festival.
Vienna, Austria, 2021.
Photos by Kosta Tonev.



Performance at Philomena+ art and architecture platform.
Part of Independent Space Index festival.
Vienna, Austria, 2021.
Photo by Kosta Tonev.

WANNA SQUEEZE?

2020
performance and video

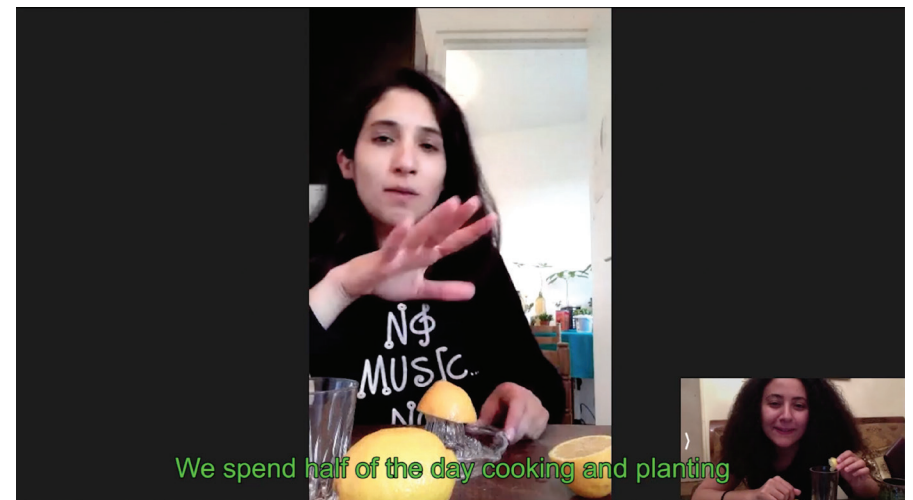
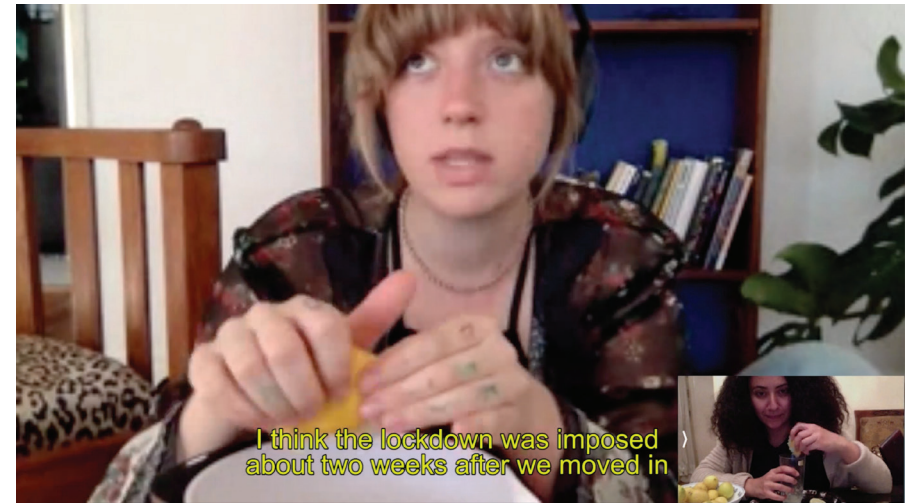
An online interactive performance, calling young emerging female visual artists in quarantine from around the world to join for a one hour video call to squeeze lemons and chat. Discussions have been opened about how artists spend their time during quarantine, how they see the future of art during covid-19 outbreak and for how long they think the situation shall last. Participating artists are from Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, South Africa, and the UK.

The online performance calls for solidarity and connection despite isolation, this is due to the shape of relationships has changed since the spread of covid19 virus. Governments have called people to stay home to limit the spread of the virus, as well as maintaining social distance even with close ones. Thus our relationship with our family and friends have become digitized in the form of video calls.

The performance is also questioning the effectiveness and the limit of online relationships. For example, to what extent can online video calls replace real life meetings? And how effective is bonding with people that we meet online for the first time?

To watch the video, visit:

<https://vimeo.com/417123654>



Wanna squeeze? video, 45' 34" , 2020

THE SEA IS CLOSED: SHALLOW WATER

**2016 - 2017
photography**

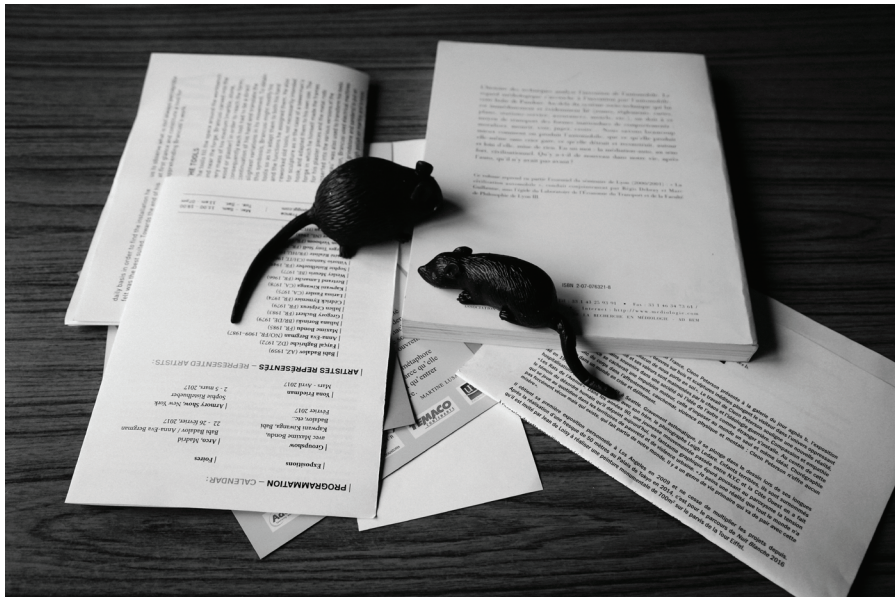
An autobiographical photography project that took place between 2016 and 2017. The project analyzes the contemporary relationship between one's home and that individual's personal feeling of independence. The origin of the project and its title came from an earlier inspiration, the story of a child who wanted to swim in the sea after sunset, his mother told him "the sea is closed, no one is swimming at the moment". The story is a metaphor of one's deep desire to seek independence, however faced with continuous struggles: the Sea is Closed. The project is supported by Absa bank in South Africa, as part of winning l'Atelier contemporary art competition grand award in 2016.



Between Cairo and Paris, self portrait, 2016-2017.



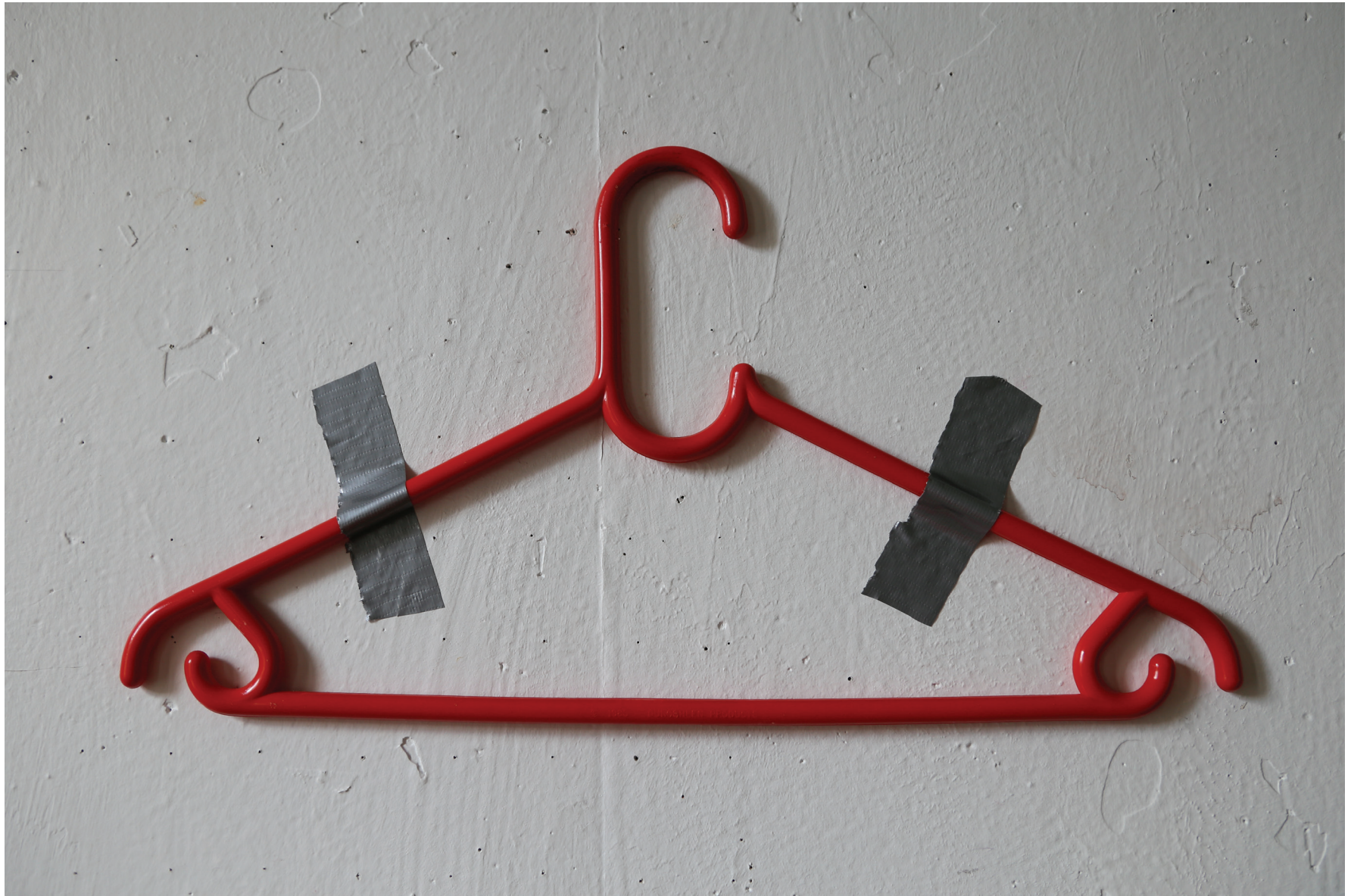
The Nest, photography series, 2016.



I heard a squeak, photography series, 2017.



For how long are you staying? photography series, 2017.



For how long are you staying? photography series, 2017.

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