

# Archiving a Revolution in the Digital Age, Archiving as an Act of Resistance

Lara Baladi

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Click the image above to enter *Vox Populi: Tahrir Archives*, a project by Lara Baladi

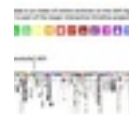
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## Archiving a Revolution in the Digital Age, Archiving as an Act of Resistance

From the very first day of the 2011 uprisings in Egypt that toppled president Mubarak, archiving played a central role. During the 18 days of the revolution in Tahrir square, photographing was an act of seeing and recording. Almost simultaneously, because a photograph is intrinsically an archival document, this act of resistance turned into act of archiving history as it unfolded.

In the square, revolting was archiving. From the media tent, at the centre of the square, protesters continuously uploaded footage and testimonies, thus reaching out to the rest of the world for solidarity. Artist and activist Tarek Hefny[1] created the website Thawra Media,[2] one of the first to host and disseminate as it happened documentation of the uprising. A *media* revolution also took place in Tahrir when the physical and the virtual space collapsed into one. Tahrir revealed the reality of the streets but also the reality of the virtual world.

It was another normal day in September 1996 – a symphony of honking cars, people everywhere, dusty and hot. In the mid-1990s, at the height of the 'Made in China' invasion, I was searching for props in the *Mouski*, a vast open-air market in the heart of medieval Cairo. Vendors were standing up on top of carts in the midst of piles of lingerie, brandishing cheap-yet-exuberant bras and screaming at the top of their lungs to women in the souk: '*ta3alee wa boss, teleta wa noss*' ('come and see, three and a half only'). Zigzagging my way down the long narrow street filled with people, noise, the smell of spices, cats, dogs and donkeys, I eventually made it past the crowd and reached the centre of *Al-Ataba* Square. Cars – bundled up in the middle of the main street, amplifying the congestion – were the centre of attention and focus of anger for other drivers. Honking became louder as people yelled at each other. For many of them, it was a release of daily frustration. A man stepped out of his car, his chest inflated with pride. From the corner of his eye, he checked whether everyone could see him



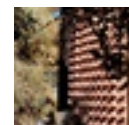
**VOX POPULI**  
Tahrir Archives  
Lara Baladi



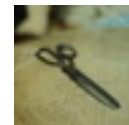
**A DICTIONARY OF THE REVOLUTION**  
Amira Hanafi



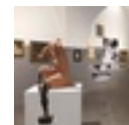
**NOTES FROM THE RESISTANCE**  
Özgür Uçkan and Vasif Kortun in conversation with Basak Senova



**CONDEMNED TO DEPTH**  
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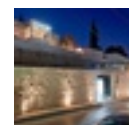
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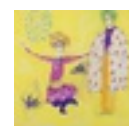
**THE ARAB NUDE**  
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**ARCHIVING A REVOLUTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE, ARCHIVING AS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE**  
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Friday of Victory, Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, February 2011.  
*Photo Lara Baladi.*

holding a mobile phone as big as a shoe to his ear. With the acceleration of globalization, along with McDonalds and mobile phones, wireless networks and the World Wide Web had just been introduced in Egypt. Internet cafés popped up around Cairo and other big Egyptian cities like mushrooms after the rain. The *shebab* (youth) slowly adopted an MTV type of attitude and body language. While the gap between generations grew bigger, Egyptians became more aware of the disparities between their country and the world. People finally had a window through which to look outside of Egypt.

Ten years later, with virtual access to the rest of the world, Egyptian online activists surfaced, preparing the terrain for what would later transform the Middle East and the world at large. By 2006, the Egyptian blogosphere had become the largest in the region, and the World Wide Web an alternative space for political opposition and resistance. On 6 April 2008, textile mill workers organized alongside Egyptian activists using Facebook, blogs, text messaging, independent media and word-of-mouth, strikes and protests known as the Mahalla Factory Protests throughout the country. The 6th April movement - which was created following these events, later played a major role during the 2011 uprisings. Egyptian activist Hossam el-Hamalawy, blogged: 'the revolution will be flickrised,' pointing to the need to document and disseminate the regime's repressive procedures, concealed persistently for 30 years. This was never truer than during those 18 days. The 2011 Arab uprisings, and in particular Tahrir Square – whether seen as a failed set of political revolutions or revolutions still in progress – undoubtedly marked a turning point in history.

From 2011 onwards, what those involved in politics (activists and journalists, mostly) had long been aware of became a reality for the majority of Egyptians. While in the square, people worked together and formed groups: No To Military Trials, Tahrir Cinema, Operation Anti Sexual Harassment, to list a few. The number of online platforms, their direct influence on the ground, and the role of online communities became more significant.

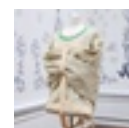
Today, Tahrir Square stands as one of the most documented and mediatized events in the digital age. The challenges of remembering this unprecedented moment in Egyptian history and archiving such an extensive document – that is, an extraordinary and unedited portrait of Egyptians in Tahrir Square one can find online, and/or similar historical events in the digital age – are not only linked to oppressive political contexts. The very nature of the documentation of this movement is intrinsically problematic. In spite of the age of big data and mass connectivity we live in, relying on the Internet is precarious. Even though in theory data related to the 18 days exists online, in reality most of it has already vanished into the Internet's bottomless pit of information.



## TOWARDS A SPATIAL IMAGINARY >

### Walking Cabbages and Watermelons

Heba Y. Amin



## STILL (THE) BARBARIANS >

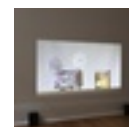
### Koyo Kouoh in conversation with Stephanie Bailey



## THE TURN المنعرج >

### Socially Engaged Art Practices in Tunisia

Christine Bruckbauer, Patricia K. Triki



## IBRAAZ 5TH ANNIVERSARY >

Ibraaz



## VOX POPULI >

### Tahrir Archives

Lara Baladi





Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, June 2011.  
*Photo Lara Baladi.*



Protesters during a speech in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, April 8, 2011.  
*Photo by Mosa'ab Elshamy.*

On #Jan25 2011 – the hashtag used by activists to refer to the Egyptian uprising -just as the YouTube video 'Tiananmen-Cairo Courage in Cairo'[3] went viral, a friend posted on Facebook a video of Jean-Paul Sartre delivering a speech to an audience of French autoworkers striking at the Renault factory in Boulogne-Billancourt 40 years earlier. In his speech, Sartre outlined the necessity to strengthen political solidarities among students, intellectuals, and workers.[4] It was as though Sartre was protesting with us. As the political tension grew, the cascade of images and videos of a packed Tahrir Square uploaded to YouTube and other websites echoed footage from other uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as the sights and sounds of a vast array of past social movements. While participating in and producing documentation of #Jan25 over the eighteen days during which the revolution unfolded, I started an ongoing archival project called



*Vox Populi*.<sup>[5]</sup> This archive consists of data related to chronological events unfolding on the ground and major events taking place around the world since #Jan25 and in parallel, data related to historical events, philosophical speeches, banned cartoons, and more footage that all resonate with Tahrir. Today, *Vox Populi* is also comprised of a series of projects, art installations, sculptures, public events and essays that branch out from the archive.

Tahrir Cinema was the first project that emerged from the *Vox Populi* archive. I co-founded it with non-profit Egyptian media collective Mosireen<sup>[6]</sup> (Mosireen means 'determined' in Arabic) to offer a space to screen and view archival footage by various groups. The Cinema emerged out of the 2011 summer sit-in on Tahrir, during which people took to the square and erected tents for the second time in six months. A huge piece of cloth was stretched above to protect them from the summer heat; the warm evening breeze inflated and deflated the cloth as it hovered above like a giant oyster. This oyster was the lung of the square; a lifebuoy next to a revolution banner at the entrance to one of the tents, which marked that summer as 'Tahrir Plage.'



Tahrir square, July sit-in, Cairo, Egypt, 2011.

*Photo Lara Baladi.*

The impulse behind Tahrir Cinema was the fact that there were no images on the square, but rather a lot of sound. Angry and anxious, people were less united than when the revolution started – though just as determined, if not more so, to make it succeed. For Egyptians, the louder the sound, the better. Speakers or megaphones are in every mosque, at every wedding, every funeral – every event. From stages built around Tahrir, the cries of women echoed the voices of men yelling out their political opinions across the square in reverberant microphones. I felt the need to bring images into this cacophony, and serendipity brought me together with people with a similar impulse.

At the entrance of the square, day by day, by the Kasr El Nil Bridge, we projected a programme of films on a makeshift screen to a rapt audience seated on the ground,. It was an immediate success. We showed video clips from the ongoing revolution, recalling and reflecting on the events unfolding since January, not only in Cairo, but also in Alexandria, Mahalla, the Canal cities, among others. Suez in particular fought hard and a lot of blood was shed. Journalists from *Al Masry El Youm*, filmmakers, artists and citizens alike shared their experiences on filming the revolution. Activists of the *No To Military Trials* campaign screened testimonies of the violence inflicted by the army on civilians. Using USB flash drives, DVDs and other (now obsolete) storage devices, we created a space where filmmakers could show their films but also where everyone could exchange raw footage on the revolution at any point in time in the square.





Tahrir Cinema, Tahrir square, Cairo, Egypt, July sit-in 2011.  
*Photo Sherief Gaber.*

But what the media called the 'Facebook Revolution' was only true for a couple of million out of the 90 million Egyptians who had access to the Internet. I recall the spectators' shock when, one night in Tahrir Cinema, I projected a selection of videos of the 18 days in early 2011 from the *Vox Populi* archive. Although they had gone viral, the majority of the audience had never yet seen them. The extraordinary experience that Tahrir Cinema was and its impact on the crowd reinforced my belief that archiving was crucial; that it was, in fact, another tool against the regime. Tahrir Cinema thus contributed to the continuing process of collecting, archiving, and disseminating footage on the revolution. Besides its political role and in spite of the imminent collapse of this phase of the revolution, Tahrir Cinema had a tempering effect on the crowd. It channelled sadness, laughter, anger, and most of all our need for solidarity. In front of the mesmerizing and somehow comforting screen, in the bittersweet tenderness of these summer nights, the smell of the sea almost made it to the square.

The fear that the vision born in Tahrir would die soon after the 18 days may have been another reason why, after Mubarak stepped down and when the army attacked protesters in Tahrir on 9 March 2011, archiving took on a new meaning and urgency. Street artist Keizer's[7] graffiti of a half camera, half gun and a man filming with the slogan 'We Are Watching You Back', represented a whole new movement countering the national media propaganda. Archiving initiatives along with ongoing documentation of Tahrir became a weapon in the battle for the square, for hearts and minds and ultimately the battle for Egypt.

Throughout 2011, during the period of 'El Thawra Mostamera' ('the revolution continues'), the frenzy to archive the aftermath of the 18 days increased. On the first anniversary of the 25 January 2011 revolution, in the face of a compromised political outcome to the past year's uprisings, and to remind SCAF (Supreme Council of Armed Forces) of their determination to pursue the fight for democracy and for a better future, Egyptians once again marched to Tahrir. On that same day, the participatory multi-vocal documentary, *#18DaysInEgypt*, was launched online.[8] The slogan 'You witnessed it, you recorded it. Now, let's write our country's history' invited people to upload videos on Tahrir. Similar to the movement in the square and the leaderless revolution, this web-based 'director less' documentary – a series of mini-narratives – offered a space for revolutionaries to tell their personal stories on Tahrir, alone,... together.

*#18DaysInEgypt* also marks a pivotal time in how culture has been fabricated, shared and consumed. Since the mid-1990s, art spaces had been dominating the Egyptian cultural sphere. With the support of private spaces, of local and foreign funding, the production of all kinds of art forms was flourishing. Artists' strategies were adapted to the political context, mirroring the leaden stagnancy of the regime. Their work stirred up the silt at the bottom of the lake and broke its calm surface. Wael Shawky's installation, *The Green Land Circus* (2005) is a case in point. A large circus tent took over the entire factory space of downtown Cairo's Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art. The audience could walk across the space on a path made of planks of wood to watch





Graffiti by Keizer, Cairo, Egypt, 2011.  
Photo Lara Baladi.

sampled videos of freak-show entertainment – grotesque metaphors for Egyptian social dynamics.

Toward the end of the Mubarak regime, visual artists including myself were more than ever breaking boundaries of space and censorship, and pinpointing pressing social and political issues. We began to move out of the traditional gallery space into a public space and/or making works *in situ*. Young artists, on the other hand, had already moved away from private galleries, avoiding the state-owned spaces to open new avenues for creativity. For example, Medrar, a non-profit collective was created in 2005 in Cairo. Its mission statement was then already proposing a different type of collaboration between artists, one that is less market oriented, privileging 'cooperation over competition.'<sup>[9]</sup>

In 2012, Bruce Ferguson, curator, writer and, at the time, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University in Cairo, gave a lecture at the Sydney Biennial, titled 'Not in the Time of the Pharaohs.' He spoke of 'at least four works' produced in Egypt just before 2011: 'the couple of years preceding the revolution that shine some symbolic "light" into the cracks in the political regime.'<sup>[10]</sup>

Among these was one of the most powerful and controversial public artwork of the time, Amal Kenawy's *Silence of the Lambs*. In this provocative performance, staged in downtown Cairo's streets in 2009, the artist led a herd of men (mostly workers who she had hired for the event) and women on all fours.<sup>[11]</sup> Although it did not take long for the police to interfere and stop her, she made her way, against all odds, across Champollion street towards Tahrir. Ferguson also mentioned Asuncion Molinos' installation,<sup>[12]</sup> which addressed pressing environmental issues, and Ahmed Bassiouny's 2011 performative video piece, 30 Days of Running in the Place, which pointed at the state of political, social and economical inertia Egypt was in.<sup>[13]</sup> My own work was also named: Borg El Amal (Tower of Hope) (2008–09), an ephemeral construction and sound installation, was inspired by the informal architecture of Cairo's slums. Built *in-situ* on the government owned Opera Grounds, it sought to highlight an alarming level of poverty and the tension that was escalating in Egypt pre-#Jan25.

Visual art produced since and during the aftermath of #Jan25 was diametrically opposed to these installations in nature. With the revolution, a dam broke so fast and so forcefully that it gave way to a tidal wave of creativity, a massive, long-repressed expression of the self that finally burst free. Young artists grabbed the revolution's momentum and responded, surfing the wave of the constantly evolving political situation. Graffiti in the form of political slogans, painted murals and stencilled revolution iconography transformed many public spaces. In the virtual realm too, the artistic gesture, freed and democratized, had become a kind of contemporary digital version of the Polaroid. Artists and citizens alike used photography, video, and political satire in social media





Amal Kenawy, *Silence of the Lambs*. Street performance, Cairo, Egypt, 2009.  
Photo Nikki Columbus.

and blogs, impacting instantaneously on political life.



Hanna El Degham, *Pyramid of Crisis*. Mohamed Mahmoud Street, Cairo, Egypt, 2012.  
Photo Lara Baladi.

Freed from censorship and from the near-impossible task to obtain official authorizations, artists quickly took over the public space. Street graffiti art, videos, films and other self-produced media expressions, were not political art as we knew it, but a form of 'artivism' – art as a weapon against the oppressing state that seeks to confront and reject the political system in place, and by extension the contemporary art market as well. The walls on Mohamed Mahmoud, for instance – a street off Tahrir that witnessed several violent battles between security forces and protesters, became a landmark for revolutionary graffiti. The slogan 'Erase and I will draw again' was a response by revolutionary artists to the systematic attempt by the army to delete every trace of the



revolution. The army painted the walls white. The artists drew new graffiti. The multi-layered walls in Mohamed Mahmoud functioned as a much-visited memorial for martyrs, a sort of *Guernica* of the Egyptian revolution and a public space for revolutionaries' freedom of speech.



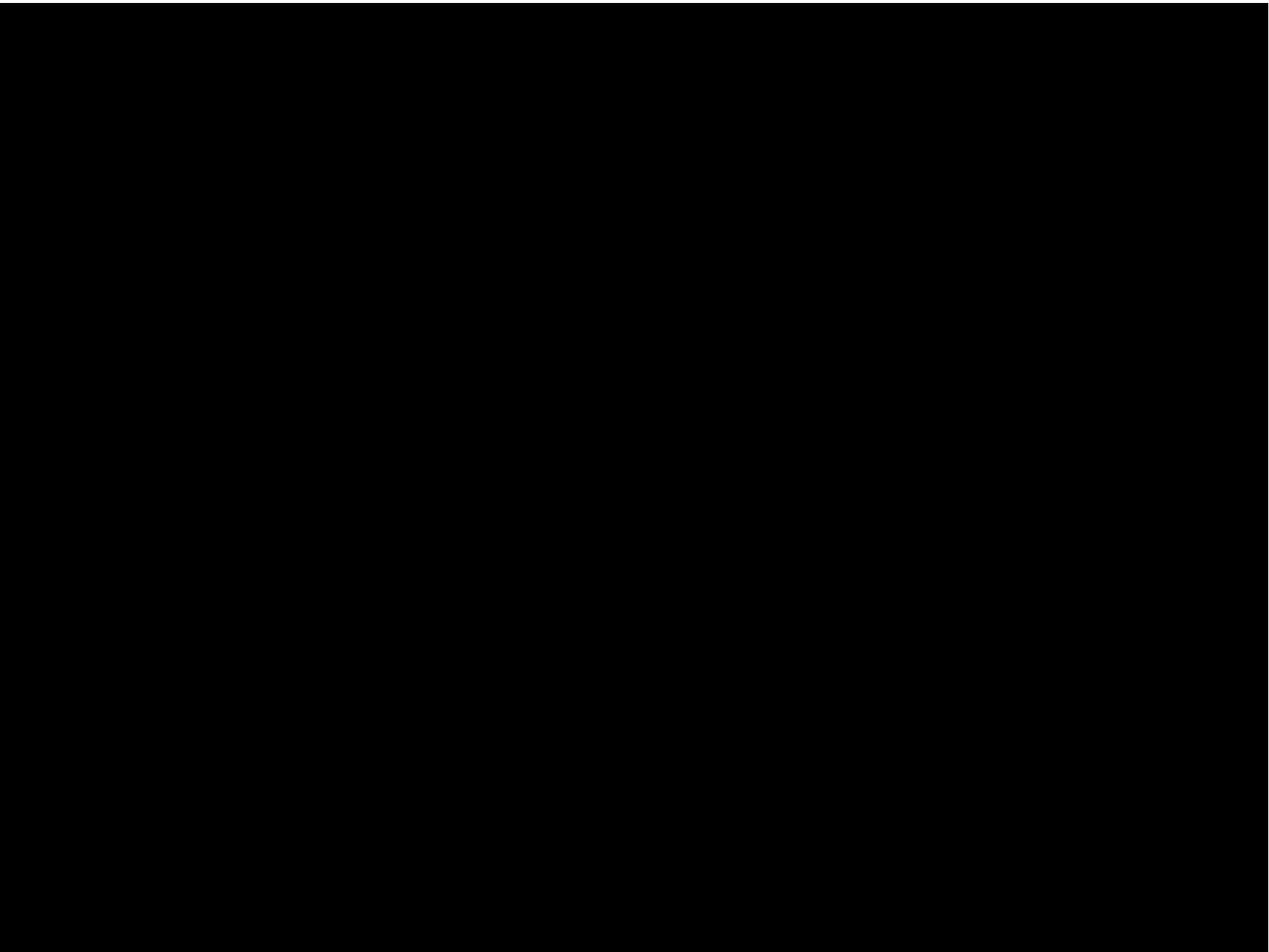
Tahrir square, Cairo, Egypt, 2014.  
*Photo Salah Hashem.*

Art galleries adapted to this new context and embraced the needs of revolutionary artists to produce reactionary art. They offered space for workshops and discussions, for projects related to the on-going revolution, for events such as *Tweetnadwa* where activists of all stripes gathered to discuss issues such as the reform of the police or the judiciary system, in short, Tweet-like interjections. And so, new distribution networks appeared. Art as we knew it not only left the gallery spaces for the streets but also for online platforms, that is, for platforms of knowledge and spaces of resistance. Online projects, web-platforms and communities (Facebook groups) supporting the revolution were also in full bloom. Many of these web-platforms were archiving projects, each focusing on a specific aspect of the revolution ranging from pamphlets distributed in the square, testimonies, graffiti and even jokes from the revolution, among other data. These archiving endeavours were initiated by institutions such as the American University in Cairo, media initiatives such as Mosireen, by artists and citizens. The more the revolution lost territory, the more vital it became to archive Tahrir and its aftermath. Today, the more oppressive the current regime is, the more necessary – but also the more vulnerable and susceptible to censorship – these knowledge platforms have become.

Five years later, along with this shift in the cultural spheres, there are more restrictions than ever on freedom of speech and artistic expression. The law criminalizing non-profit organizations signed in 2013, including cultural initiatives, receipt of foreign funding 'seen to impact national security,' affected many cultural spaces leading some to shut down. Censorship on music and cinema is now applied more forcefully than it ever was under Mubarak. The present oppressive context combined with an entirely new art scene has further breached the gap between the visual Art market and underground art. In the music scene, *Mahragan*, or 'festival' in Arabic, is the name for a whole new genre of electronic music. This music, born in the streets, which is at the core of youth popular culture has, since the revolution, spread to a broader, local and international, public.<sup>[14]</sup> *Shebab* and women alike amalgamate dance moves borrowed from hip hop, *zikk*- literally 'remembering,' a form of religious trance, Egyptian belly dance and sometimes mime, on a reverberating, unembellished synthetic music mixed with *tabla*, the traditional Egyptian drum. *Mahragan* plays a large role in today's art scene. It is symptomatic of a larger movement in the arts in which a new generation of Egyptians artists is working outside of official spaces, finding new territories to express themselves, whether in public spaces, in the streets or in private homes. As Mia Jankowicz recently writes in an article published in *Mada Masr* in May 2016, 'Against Helplessness in the Arts':



The present reason for this silence is obvious, and serious: that speaking out can put people in danger, in particular those who are legally responsible for NGOs or who are authors of even marginally critical work. This, combined with the expense of venues and the lack of production money, drives us to make galleries, meetings, book launches and experimental music gatherings in private apartments.<sup>[15]</sup>



***Shebab* (youth) celebrate Mubarak's resignation on *mahragan* (festival) music in Talaat Harb street near Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, 2011.**  
**Copyright Lara Baladi.**

In 2014, Maged Atef and Sheera Frenkel wrote from Cairo for *BuzzFeed news* that Egypt had signed a contract with the sister company of the American cyber security firm, Blue Coat: 'our job as a company is to give them the system. I train the government how to run it and we give them the programme,'<sup>[16]</sup> Ali Miniesy, the CEO of See Egypt, said. While surveillance systems have always been an integral part of Egypt's governance, if this is true, it is the first time that such an extensive system as the Deep Packet Inspection technology – enabling geo-location, tracking, and combing through Facebook, Skype, Twitter, among other social networks – is being used in Egypt (and most certainly like in many more countries in the world.) Since 2014, the crackdown on the Internet has been relentless.

As recently as May 2016, in such articles as 'Deadlock in legislation regulating press freedom in Egypt' published on *Mada Masr*, Mohamed Hamama has written on what he has called the 'unprecedented violation' of police entering the Journalists' Syndicate and arresting journalists (in one case, accusing them of inciting protests during a sit-in at the syndicate).<sup>[17]</sup> In an earlier article published in November 2015 , also on *Mada Masr*, he wrote on a draft press and media law completed in August 2015 and proposed by The National Authority of Media and Journalism legislation that 'may end up stifling the nascent electronic media scene under the pretext of organizing it.' In the article, he added that 'the draft law sets up a unified legislative structure for print and digital media through the Supreme Media Council, the creation of which was stipulated in Article 211 of the [2014] Constitution. It would organize the affairs of all broadcast and print media, as well as digital sites "and others," and would include a committee that evaluates content.'<sup>[18]</sup>

Yet, despite the increased surveillance, censorship and control on spaces of expression, the Internet in Egypt continues to provide a platform for resistance that has nevertheless been reduced to opinions expressed and circulating on social media rather than specific voices and blogs.<sup>[19]</sup> But how can a historical event as significant as the 2011 Egyptian revolution survive such a repressive context? Aside from the question of how things are archived and the infinite number interpretations archives can generate, a subjective selection, filtered



according to political, social and religious beliefs, is bound to occur. Additionally, given more than half of the Egyptian population is illiterate and has no access to the Internet, a large number of people are automatically excluded from the process of archiving history. Furthermore, many of the archive platforms on the revolution have already either been censored, their activity slowed down or discontinued, or have been deactivated. The latter are witnesses of the slowly disappearing traces of the history of Tahrir: virtual ruins of the largest social movement of the 21st century.

The [Tahrir Archives info graph](#) I created along with this essay indexes essentially English sites and web pages. It includes the 'dead' sites as much as the ones that are still active. Far from being exhaustive, this project, in progress, is the first step towards mapping archive platforms on the 2011 Egyptian revolution. While the word 'archive' takes its origin from Greek *arkheia* 'public records,' from *arkhē* 'government' and traditional archive practices operate on consent via a deed, how can we imagine archives created by (all) the people rather than by governments? Can we imagine a deed or gift for digital archives? Can activists/archivists negotiate consent between the owner of the content, creator of the content and subject of the content of the archives in the digital age?



Click the image above to enter *Vox Populi: Tahrir Archives*

The sit-in known as 'the Battle of Mohamed Mahmoud' was one of the most violent of 2011. Tahrir was transformed once again into a medieval war camp. Tear gas, mixed with the smell of popcorn, pollution and humidity, was floating everywhere, infiltrating, down into the metro entrances, the guts of Cairo. Cutting through the thickness of the air, the cotton candy man, true to form, was selling his pink cloud, tracing his way through the crowd. Standing on the *saniyya*, (the 'centre of the square' or 'tray' in colloquial Arabic,) groups of people were talking, held in suspense. As I stood there also discussing the outcome of the revolution and witnessing people lose their lives, a biblical scene appeared before my eyes – time slowed down. A sea of people parted to let three men on a motorcycle drive through. The man riding at the back was carrying a wounded *sheikh* (an Islamic cleric.) He looked like a contemporary version of Mary – as she is often depicted in Coptic illustrations of the Flight to Egypt, majestically holding Jesus in her arms, traveling behind Joseph on a donkey. Maybe this scene is distorted today in my memory, maybe I have omitted important details. But, whatever remains of it, my story of an instant in Tahrir is only a small part of the greater story of the revolution, an unprecedented period in history millions of people experienced.

As the revolution went on, information was mediated back and forth in and out of the square, expanding the Tahrir phenomenon outside of Egyptian borders and transcending its nationalistic nature into a truly global, historical event. Egyptians took to the square both with their physical presence and virtual one, embracing their role not only as revolutionaries but also as the makers and writers of history. In a time when virtual connectedness appears to be based on shared beliefs and values more than nationality or social class, thinking history in the digital age and instinctively sensing the importance of archiving as a responsibility for the future, Egyptians collected, archived and organized documents on Tahrir as it happened, defying the way that history has been, again and again, written by the victors.

Pierre Nora writes in his essay, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire (The Places of Memory),' published in *Representations*, Vol. 26 Spring 1989:





Protesters carry wounded to a field hospital near Tahrir square, Cairo, Egypt, 2011.  
*Photo Holly Pickett.*

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer...[20]

As many as there were people standing in the square in 2011, there are stories to be remembered and told, like the one I recall of the sheikh being rescued by heroic strangers. These stories are bound to change, vary, and be coloured by – or fade away with – time. As Nora concludes, '...memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.'[21] Whether we remember stories from Tahrir through the lens of images, films or other types of data, whether they arise in our consciousness during a conversation or in a dream, and even if each time we remember them differently, we continue to resist by remembering and by interpreting the archives again and again, nevertheless keeping our history alive.

[1] For reference, see: <http://www.tarekhefny.com/#meltdown-tour-adversary>.

[2] For reference, see: [www.thawramedia.com](http://www.thawramedia.com).

[3] See the video here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1m4\\_q\\_HP5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1m4_q_HP5o).

[4] See the video here: <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF88024228>.

[5] For reference, see: <http://tahrirarchives.com/>.

[6] For reference, see: <http://mosireen.org/>.

[7] For reference, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keizer\\_\(artist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keizer_(artist)).

[8] For reference, see: <http://beta.18daysinegypt.com/>.

[9] For reference, see: <http://www.medrar.org/about/who-we-are/>.

[10] For reference, see: <https://www.brucewferguson.wordpress.com/2012/07/06/144/>.



[11] Editor's note: For a description and critique of the work, see Shuruq Harb's essay, 'Not So Silent', on *Ibraaz*, here: <http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/148>.

[12] For reference, see: [http://www.asuncionmolinosa.com/proyectos/wam\\_a\\_2.html](http://www.asuncionmolinosa.com/proyectos/wam_a_2.html).

[13] Ahmed Bassiouny was shot dead by state security forces while filming in Tahrir on 28 January 2011, known as the 'Day of Wrath'. He was one of the first martyrs of the revolution. The following summer, not without controversy, his work was shown in the Egyptian pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale.

[14] Editor's note: For more, see Salma Abdel Salam's essay on the subject, 'Un/Interrupted Formations', on *Ibraaz*, published 30 March 2016: <http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/145>.

[15] Mia Jancowicz, Against Helplessness in the Arts, *Mada Masr*, published 24 May 2016: <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/culture/against-helplessness-arts>.

[16] Maged Atef and Sheera Frenkel, 'Egypt Begins Surveillance Of Facebook, Twitter, And Skype On Unprecedented Scale', BuzzFeed.com, published 17 September 2014: [https://www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/egypt-begins-surveillance-of-facebook-twitter-and-skype-on-u?utm\\_term=.qgd1PWQb95#.gc4qV4yYG6](https://www.buzzfeed.com/sheerafrenkel/egypt-begins-surveillance-of-facebook-twitter-and-skype-on-u?utm_term=.qgd1PWQb95#.gc4qV4yYG6).

[17] Mohamed Hamama, 'Deadlock in Legislation Regulating Press Freedom in Egypt', *Mada Masr*, 4 May 2016. <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/deadlock-legislation-regulating-press-freedom-egypt>.

[18] Mohamed Hamama, 'New Plans Regulate Digital Media', *Mada Masr*, published online on 4 November 2015: <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/new-plans-regulate-digital-media>.

[19] Many bloggers have either reduced their activity online or entirely stopped blogging while many archiving projects are either deactivated or feature posts dating from 2012 or latest 2013.

[20] Pierre Nora writes in his essay, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire (The Places of Memory)', published in *Representations*, Vol. 26 Spring 1989.

[21] Ibid.

TAGS

RevolutionEgyptSocial NetworksStreet ArtConflictSocial Media

Civil SocietyNew MediaArchiveCairo

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Lara Baladi

**Lara Baladi** is an Egyptian-Lebanese artist who is internationally recognized for her multidisciplinary work. In her investigations into myths, archives, personal histories and socio-political narratives, Baladi makes use of a wide range of mediums including architecture, installations, collage, tapestry, perfume and sculpture.

Within her artistic practice, Baladi is active in socially engaged projects. In 2006, she founded the artist residency Fenenin el Rehal (Nomadic Artists) in Egypt's White Desert. During the 2011 Egyptian revolution and its aftermath, Baladi co-founded two media initiatives, Tahrir Cinema and Radio Tahrir.

Since 2014, Baladi has been a Fellow at MIT's Open Documentary Lab In 2015–16, she was the Ida Ely Rubin Artist in Residence at MIT's Centre for Art, Science and Technology (CAST). She has been a lecturer in MIT's Art, Culture and Technology (ACT) program since 2015.

She is on the Board of Directors of several institutions in the Middle East.



