

Relatively Speaking

By Mahmoud Hojeij

"i was trained to learn that a white piece of paper is usually the beginning of an idea. this is how art, or writing for that matter starts. but how would you feel when a white piece becomes the final outcome of your idea? that merely gives you the feeling that you're about to start all over again. where you finished is almost where you started and thus there is no finish line, its open. art has the ability to start and finish at the same time.

i was trained to think that the size of an object is the exact measure of that same object. why would a certain centimeter decide to measure differently? i just finished measuring this piece and now it does not look like itself anymore. it seems that centimeters do change, so you have to be careful.

i was trained to watch out for specific areas in maps. maps are made so that we can locate pieces of land, countries, and whole continents. a given kilo meter square is kind of final, as far as we know, and we are almost sure where that specific kilo-meter square is located. the minimum you can expect from a map is to show you how far or close certain locations are, not only from each other, but also from you. look again; maps are never finished so you can not be sure about anything.

i was trained to look at a number and show respect. once a number is mentioned, you feel the argument is over. a statistics with scribbled numbers or graphs is enough to prove a point. would anyone dare or try to argue the fate of a number? well.

this is exactly what this exhibition is all about. the argument starts right here. what is there to question but the numbers around us? or the maps that we are supposedly part of? or even all the statistics that we are constantly bombarded by? why should a centimeter tell me about the measurement as opposed to the feeling of an object?

maps, graphs, statistics and quoted information in general no longer serve to end an argument, but rather they serve to initiate it. with time, maps are losing respect, numbers are losing credibility and information is seeking help; who is going to step in except an artist?

the moment an artist stands in front of a number or any piece of information, it is transformed into an image. artists work with images without any pre-judgments or suppositions, and so by default information passes through the same process. nothing is final, and just when you think it's over and done with, it could merely be the very beginning.

come to think of it, maybe information in general does not want to be so utterly rigidly fixed; I see graphs screaming wanting to get out of their shapes and be something else and maps crying for change. perhaps this is why when you look at a number you can feel its agony, the need to go forward and not stand still.

the pieces in this exhibition are trying to help. maybe they can work out something, maybe not. art is neither innocent nor should it be. a given theory that summarizes our main goal; pushing information further along and farther ahead until there is no longer a number, or fact for that matter.

*i was trained to look at an image and show respect.
i will always do, relatively speaking."*