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## EPISTOLARY ART

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By Selections Arts Posted 5 August, 2019 In ART

Laure Ghorayeb reflects on her artistic collaborations with her son, Mazen Kerbaj

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sketchbooks, scraps, and rolls. There is a four-handed artistic style, in which the mother's strokes communicate with the son's distinctive silhouettes.

Q: You've been collaborating with your son, Mazen Kerbaj, on several artistic projects since your joint blog was published during the 2006 war. How did the idea of corresponding via scrolls, which you exhibited in *Correspondance(s)*, come about?

A: Had Mazen [who lives in Europe] stayed in Lebanon, we would never have come up with the exhibition – when you see someone, you no longer have the need to write. At the beginning we used to write letters to one another, but letters tend to disappear, be lost. Corresponding via scrolls enabled us to exchange emotions, and at the same time be engaged with one another artistically, which could prompt the breakout of new, positive and even dangerous things for a mother-son relationship.

Q: How does it feel to reveal intimate details of your life?

A: We knew that what we were doing was right, positive and gratifying. It forced us to take responsibility for our actions, our refusals, our joys, our knowledge, our future, our missteps. The scrolls were never written to provoke. We never thought we would exhibit them. It's something very intimate. There's no cheating in them, only spontaneity, reality, feelings of affection.



Sursock Museum - Laure et Mazen/ *Correspondance(s)* - Christopher Baaklini Installation view of the exhibition Laure et Mazen : *Correspondance(s)* at the Sursock Museum. Photo: Christopher Baaklini. Courtesy Sursock Museum.

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so that neither of us encroached upon the other's rights.

Q: In all your artistic work, there is a very close relationship between writing and drawing. How do you relate to these two modes of expressions?

A: I write through drawing, and while drawing, and vice versa. I consider that neither drawing nor writing are enough for me. Instinctively, I express myself with signs.

Q: What do you fear most as an artist, and what motivates you to keep making art?

A: I've always been afraid, and never thought that I would become someone someday. I devoted myself to art as if a religion. I still don't think I'm valid or qualified. And the more I feel I'm not valid as an artist, the more I try to surpass myself, since I've also got the eyes of a critic. It's less motivation than the desire to surpass myself that drives me. Mazen tells me I'm a great artist, but he doesn't convince me. That might be what pushes me to create. I can draw 50 figures in a minute, but that doesn't mean I'm convinced I know how to draw.

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