



Following a year-long residency with the City of Austin, I began to focus more on social practice and connecting with individuals outside the world of art. With **“Transient”** my 2019 solo show at **Prizer Arts & Letters Gallery**, I continued an exploration into issues related to immigration, belonging, communication and language.

Utilizing sound installation, sculpture, and photography, the exhibition occurred during the 2019 East Austin Studio Tour, an annual event that draws thousands of visitors. The exhibit was a meditation into residential spaces, our relationship to them, and to each other.

The work included audio recordings in different languages with speakers, many of them immigrants, discussing feelings of belonging. Staged in a converted house in a neighborhood undergoing gentrification, over 800 visitors added personal reflections on where they lived and felt most at home.

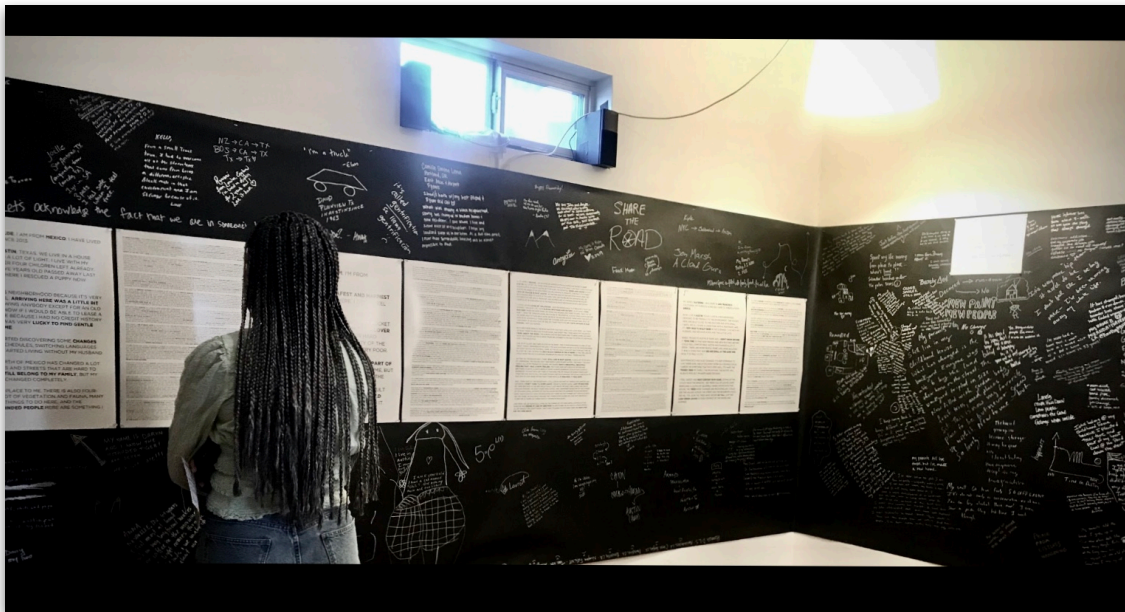
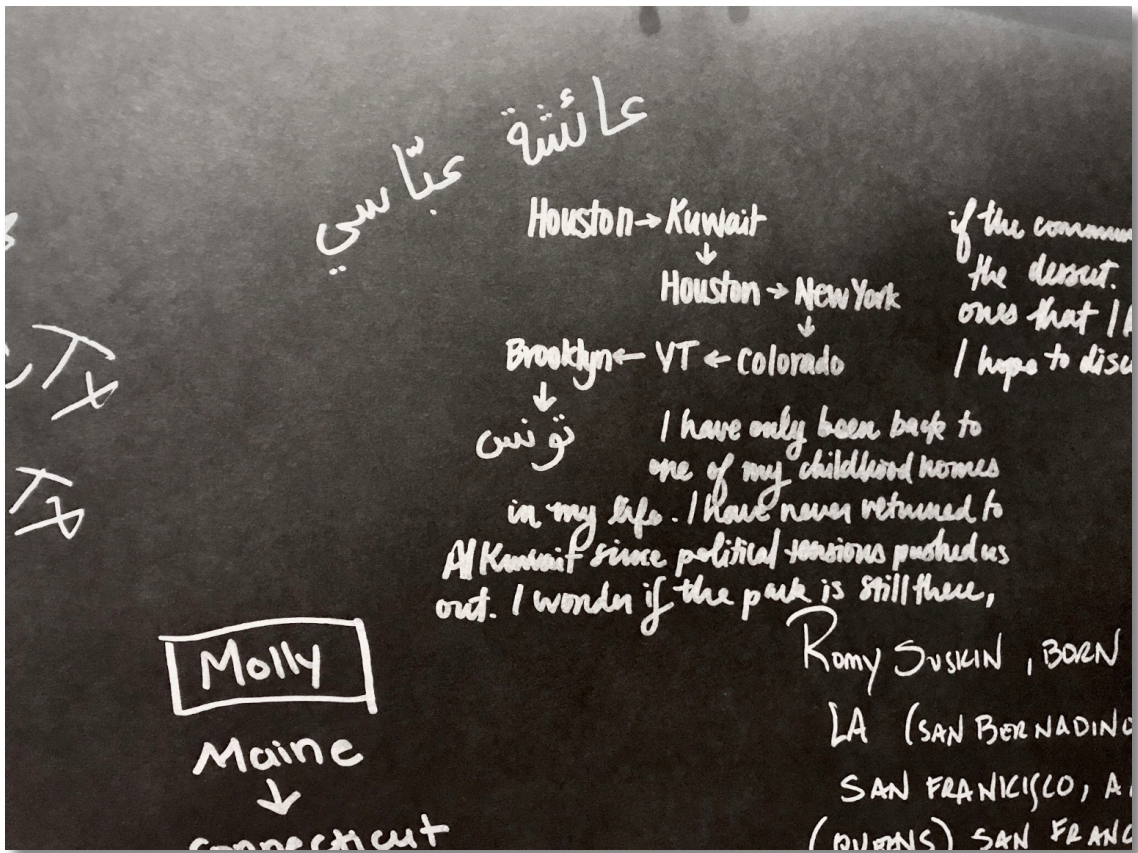


The project was a meditation on residential spaces, our relationship to them and each other



The exhibit also featured a gallery of photographs that document residential spaces and our personal, transitory relationship to the places we live, work and frequent. Some of the places in the photographs no longer exist or have significantly changed since the photographs were taken. Who belongs in these spaces? Who do they belong to?

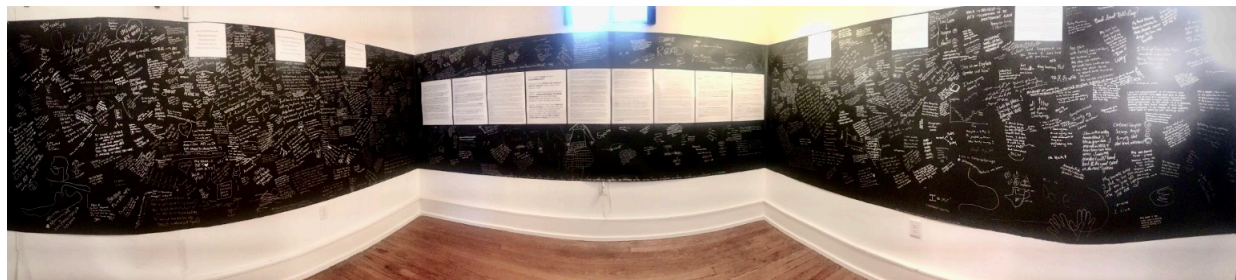
** Images from a visit of my hometown, Alexandria Egypt, after the revolution of 2011, 30" x 40"*



Issues related to equity and inclusion are central to *Transient*. As an artist of color and an immigrant, I feel a responsibility to create work that relays the experience of marginalized people to a broader audience. *Transient* explored what it means to feel (or not feel) a sense of belonging in relation to space because of factors such as ethnicity or the language one speaks. It explored personal stories of immigration, struggling with loss, and trying to create a new home.



The work touched on issues related to race, gentrification and displacement. Who “belongs” in a particular place? What does it feel like to no longer feel welcome in a place you’ve lived most of your life?



The exhibit included audio recordings in different languages (Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Dutch, Spanish, English, and Greek) with speakers discussing feelings of belonging. We also welcomed viewers to participate and add their stories about this complex problem. We provided a safe space where people from different places could share intimate personal experiences and add their own personal reflections on where they lived and felt the most at home. The exhibit had over 2000 visitors and over 800 visitors added their own personal thoughts and stories.



Get made-to-order meals, snacks & more on the go.



ARTS

"Rehab El Sadek: Transient" at Prizer Arts & Letters

The artist's newest exhibition takes a temporary stand in the place where you are

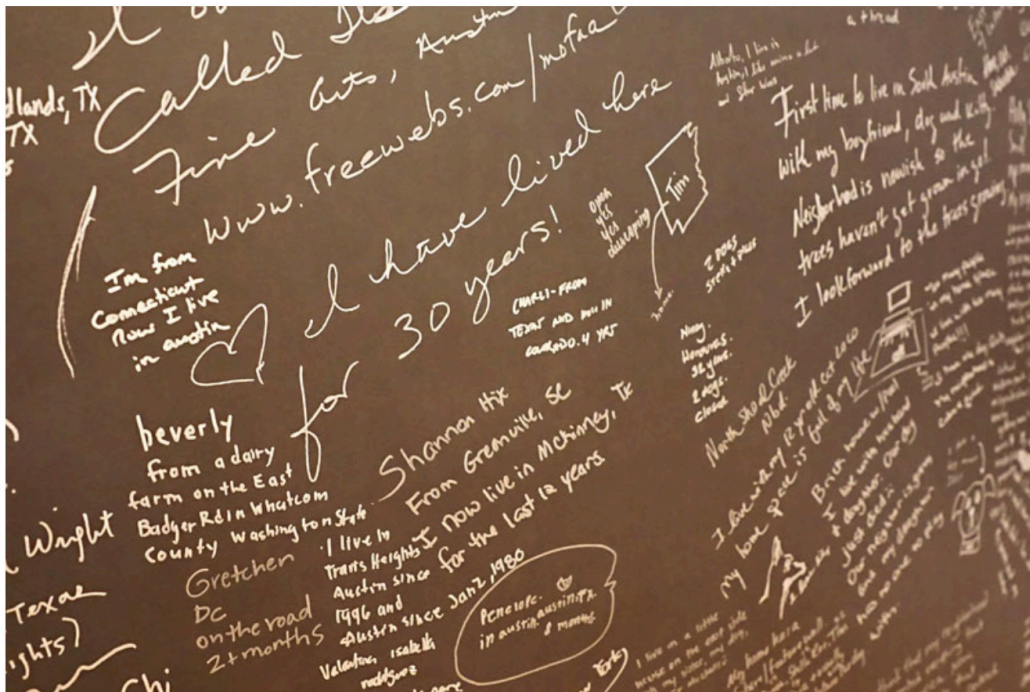
REVIEWED BY WAYNE ALAN BRENNER, FRI., DEC. 13, 2019

Share 34

Tweet

print

write a letter



Rehab El Sadek, the city of Austin's first **Artist-in-Residence**, she of **this past summer's "Memory Palace" exhibition** at Big Medium, in which she externalized – via sculptural installation and objects of many layered textures – sections from her mind's matrix of personal history in the Middle East, is currently occupying the Eastside's Prizer Arts & Letters Gallery with her creations in a show called "Transient."

"El Sadek meditates on residential spaces and our relationship to them and to each other," explains the show's statement. "Visitors to the gallery will be invited to contribute to the show by adding their own reflections on home."

That first part is what welcomes you to the Prizer space, with its recontextualized building materials seeming like chunks of flesh excised precisely from the infrastructure of a city in progress, smears of thick wall-coating plaster roughly fronting blackened shelves held up by table legs of lathed wood, choice cuts from some meatropolis now presented in a minimalist butcher's display. Raw wood, too – bare branches of trees and whole saplings denuded of foliage – leaning against the walls, among these evocations of urban industry, adding a touch of nonhuman nature to the stark, whitewashed vestibule.

Enter the hallway next and peruse the photographs along both walls as you go: Black-and-white images captured by the artist, building up a sense of place, or at least the idea of a distinct place, via the accumulation of details and the cohesions of subject and framing. Here are icons of the architecture through which a person has moved in daily life, akin to how a viewer has just moved through El Sadek's city-excerpting vestibule.

And, at the hallway's end, a small room painted black, offering what's promised in the second part of the gallery's exhibition note: The contributions of visitors. But it's not just a bunch of notecards on which you're invited to write your impressions of the show. No, you're prompted to answer a series of questions, to share your own relationship with residential spaces: Where are you from; what was it like there; why did you leave; what brought you here; how long have you been in this place; and so on. But, again, no typical notecards or visitors' logbook: Fine-tip markers of white ink are provided, and so everybody's been writing their responses on the black walls themselves, and thus those walls have become another part of the exhibition, a floor-to-ceiling surround of alphabet-patterned visuals. But now you're also standing, as one does in any residence and especially in **the people-dense environment of cities**, *within* all those lives (here, within the textual *recordings* of those lives) that have been there before you, that are, even, concurrent with your own.

For however long that situation – your visit to this exhibition, your sojourn in this city, your days upon this earth – might last.

We've left places; we've moved to other places; and we may not, so to speak, be in Kansas anymore. But wherever we're living, there's a wind that seldom ceases to whisper among the bones of the complex structures we've built to contain us. And all we are is **dust in that wind**.

“Rehab El Sadek: Transient”

Prizer Arts & Letters, 2023 E. Cesar Chavez

www.prizerartsandletters.org

Through Jan. 4

Transient Audio Participants: Mary Koniavitis, Australia / Greece / USA - Sumaira Tazeen, Pakistan / Canada - Matilde Trujillo, Mexico / USA - Rutger Lem, Netherlands / Suriname Hatice Kuey, Turkey / USA - Katerina Tsisis, Greece / USA - Alonso Estrada, Mexico / USA - Regina Mitchell, USA - Riham Rassem, Egypt / Lebanon.

Sound Engineering: Todd Waldron.

Thanks to: Carrie Kenny - Alberto Martinez - Drew Johnson - Carl Smith - Josh Benson.

This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department.

