

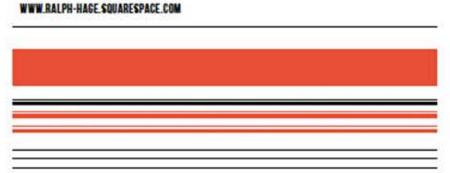
ART-MAP
MOVING CURATORIAL PROJECT



## RALPH HAGE

## LEBANON | BEIRUT

Ralph Hage is a Lebanese Canadian artist. In 1989, and after his studies in the visual arts were interrupted by the escalation of the Lebanese war, he immigrated to Canada where he completed a B.A. and an M.A. in Art History, a PhD. in Semiology and a Post-Graduate diploma in Education. He has had solo shows in Montreal, Beirut and New York and is currently an assistant professor in the Lebanese University's Faculty of Fine Arts.

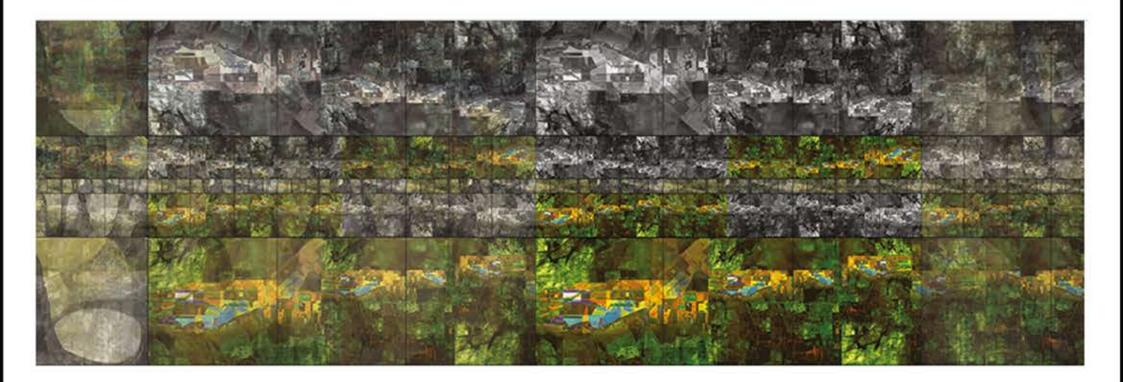


For the last ten years I have willfully avoided exhibiting my work in view of gaining the quiet necessary for me to redefine it.

In redefining one's own work, one can ask, "what is art for?" One way of answering this question is by starting with a description of the current historical context within which most of us are working; that of a triumphant nihilism; of a philosophy of meaninglessness underlying much of Contemporary Art, where hype about prices has superseded value; of tired gestures of appropriation, irony and tautological conceptualisms incessantly repeated for the last fifty years and still described by its proponents with the same but increasingly desperate messianic tone. This situation has led me to reject a large proportion of what is termed "Contemporary Art" as a dying historical style. For despite it's apparent visual and disciplinary variety, Contemporary Art is a style, in that its apparently different manifestations share a series of dogmatic ideas, paradoxically attempting to impose themselves as a war on dogmatism.

In opposition to much of this pseudo-radicalism and the false intellectualism underlying it, I truly believe, and with no "irony" whatsoever, in the construction of a meaningful existence through art. Like Spinoza, I see happiness as an ethical value and aesthetic experiences as one of the fundamental links to the world and to our fellow human beings. The construction of meaning through aesthetics is for me an ethical, social and spiritual choice.

So what is Spirituality (or more precisely, Mysticism)? One way of defining it is as the contemplation and expression of what is – the indefinable place



where the world both differs from and coincides with itself. My latest project is composed of series of formally and thematically linked artworks, inspired by the fugue – a deeply geometrical musical form duplicating I believe the emergence of consciousness. Akin to the fugue, I create processes determining geometric variations within which intuitive aesthetic choices occur and where self-similarity, recursion and pattern-creation are played out, in this attempting to replicate the emergence of consciousness. This study or expression of consciousness, however flawed – and it is probably flawed – is deeply related to my pantheistic beliefs. Among them, the idea that consciousness is an inherent property of the universe, one that can be rigorously and rationally or perhaps intuitively described.

CATEGORY | PRINT

TITLE | A SUSTAINING VOID

DIMENSIONS | 30CM X 960CM

MATERIAL | PRINT ON CANVAS

DATE | 2016

## A SUSTAINING VOID

An artist book in a continuous scroll format with a series of aphorisms.

PONTE DE LIMA PORTUGAL | 66