



ATWORK - CAIRO, EGYPT

DECEMBER 3RD - 5TH, 2015

**At
Work[®]**

« Giving me unlimited freedom, was AtWork`s strength. »

Reem Hamed , AtWork Cairo participant

« AtWork connects people together that are not necessarily in the same community, which broadens ones social skills and views of others knowing that we all share the same interests. » - Monia Sakr , AtWork Cairo participant



ATWORK

AtWork is an educational format, conceived by *lettera27* and Simon Njami, which uses the creative process to stimulate critical thinking and debate among the participants.

The key element of AtWork is a workshop conducted by an artist or a curator on the chosen topic. The topic stimulates the collective discussion and a personal self-reflection on the issues of identity, the role of art and culture in the society at large, the importance of critical thinking in any artistic practice.

As a final output of the workshop each student produces a personalized notebook, which fixes the process of self-reflection triggered by the workshop. Each notebook takes on its own character and is the reflection of a thought at work.

The produced notebooks are exhibited in an art show, co-curated by the students themselves. The notebooks can then become part of *lettera27*'s "artist notebook collection", unique pieces of work created by different artists on Moleskine notebooks. The collection is meant to reflect the variety, wealth and complexity of contemporary art and is used to inspire future AtWork participants to create their works.



ATWORK CAIRO WORKSHOP AT DARB 1718 - CONTEMPORARY ART & CULTURE CENTER

AtWork Cairo workshop was held on December 3rd - 5th, 2015 at Darb 1718 artistic center, which involved local art students and young creative talents and was conducted by Simon Njami. The workshop took place during the Cairo Off Biennale “Something Else” and took its title after the event. Please see the workshop Flickr album [here](#).

AtWork Cairo was facilitated by the assistant art professor of Cairo American University Heba Amin. Heba is also a visual artist, a cultural activist and one of the key figures behind the subversive action against racism of the US TV series Homeland this last fall, which caused huge international publicity and debate on race representation in the Western media.

Read Heba’s article «**The Question of Artistic Freedom**» on Why Africa? where she reflects on the freedom of expression in Egypt and the role of AtWork in this context.



Heba Amin

Assistant art professor at the American University in Cairo, visual artist and cultural activist.



Darb 1718 - Contemporary Art & Culture

Darb 1718 is an Egyptian non-profit organization founded in 2008. Its premises includes a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces that host different art mediums and cultural events.

Darb 1718 houses two art exhibition spaces, theater, dance and concert stages, outdoor cinema for independent film screenings, gardens and rooftops in addition to an artist residency to accommodate international artists and curators. The center provides workshops, programs and initiatives to educate and mentor emerging artists and offers them a space to exhibit their work alongside established artists.

It is a hub connecting Egyptian artists from several walks of life with the local and international art and culture scene. Darb 1718 is an art center and gathering point for all art events in Egypt. A wide stage for Cairo's Contemporary Art Scene.

www.darb1718.com

Something Else - Cairo OFF Biennale

Something Else, Off Biennale Cairo is a contemporary, non-profit independent visual arts initiative that attempts to support Egyptian and international contemporary art. The first activity within this initiative is organizing an international one-month contemporary art event starting November 28th, 2015.

The event will consist of art exhibitions, art performances, films, Music, diverse workshops, street art, talks and lectures by local as well as international artists and art connoisseurs that will take place in diverse art and cultural spaces in Cairo. Something Else, Off Biennale Cairo has already invited several local and international art practitioners (well known, mid-career and emerging artists) to participate in the event in order to realize its different aspects.

The event aims to shake the grounds and attract international attention to Egypt as a vibrant art producer within the regional and international art scene.

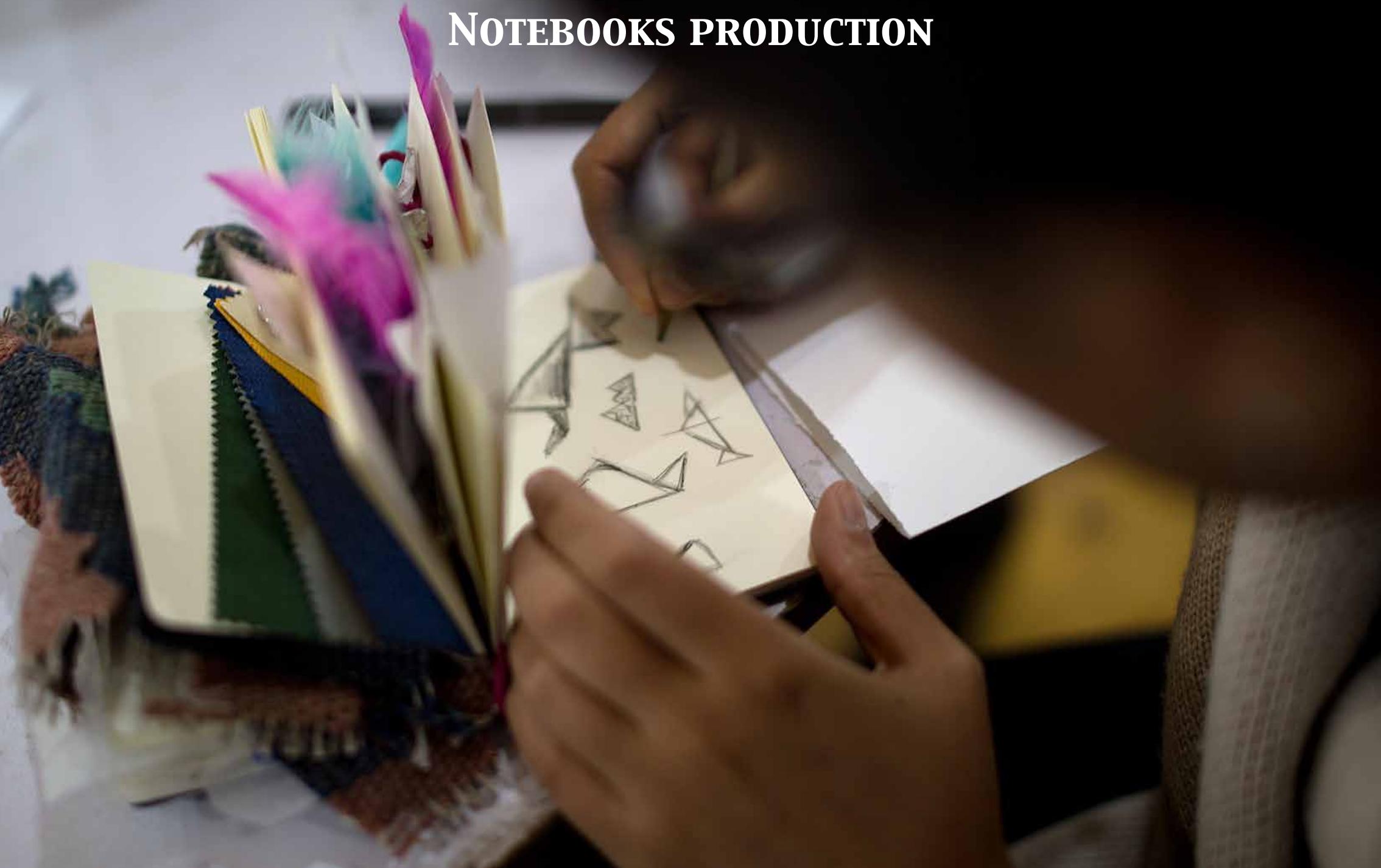
www.somethingelse-off.com

WORKSHOP IN PROGRESS: COLLECTIVE DISCUSSION





NOTEBOOKS PRODUCTION







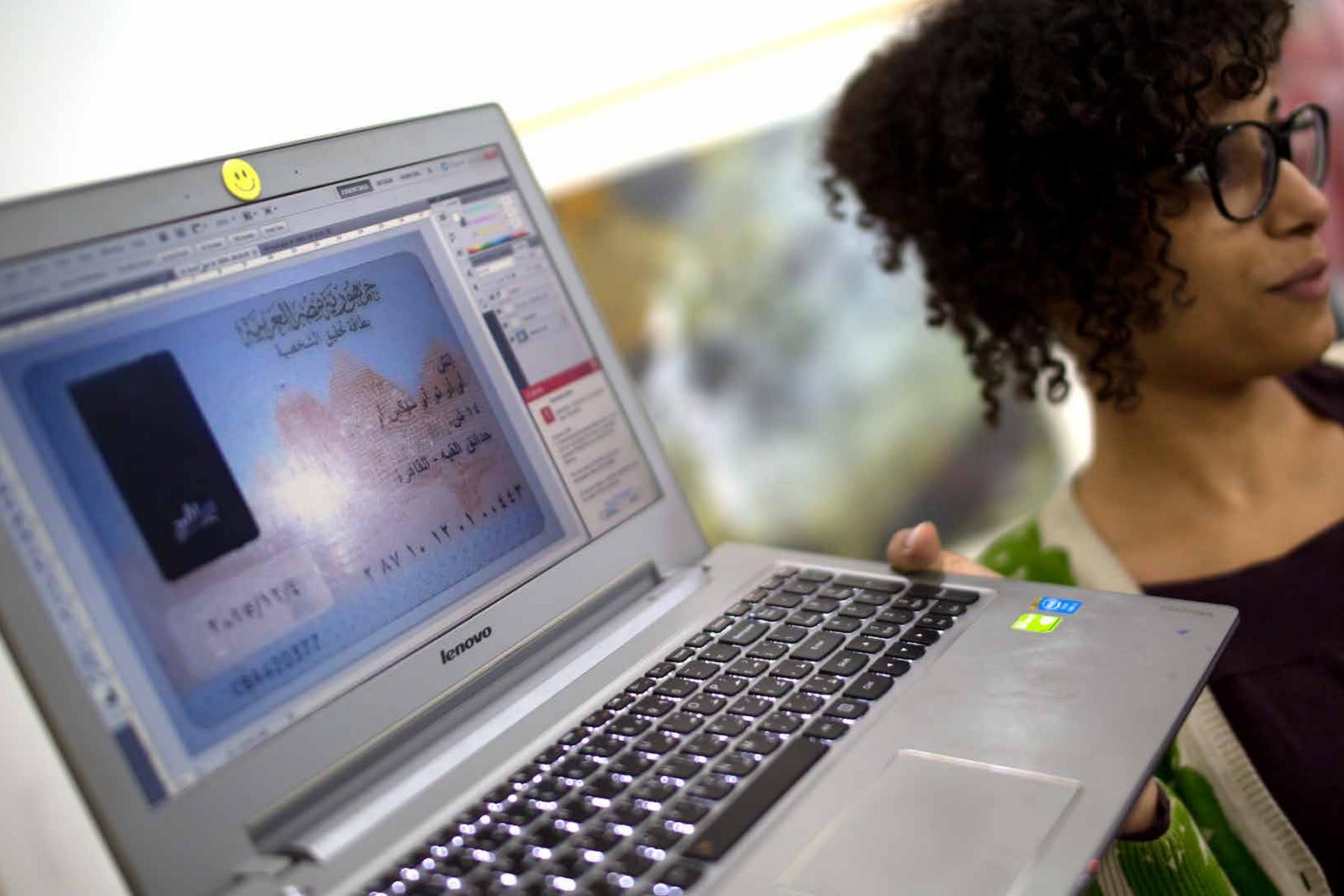




NOTEBOOKS PRESENTATION



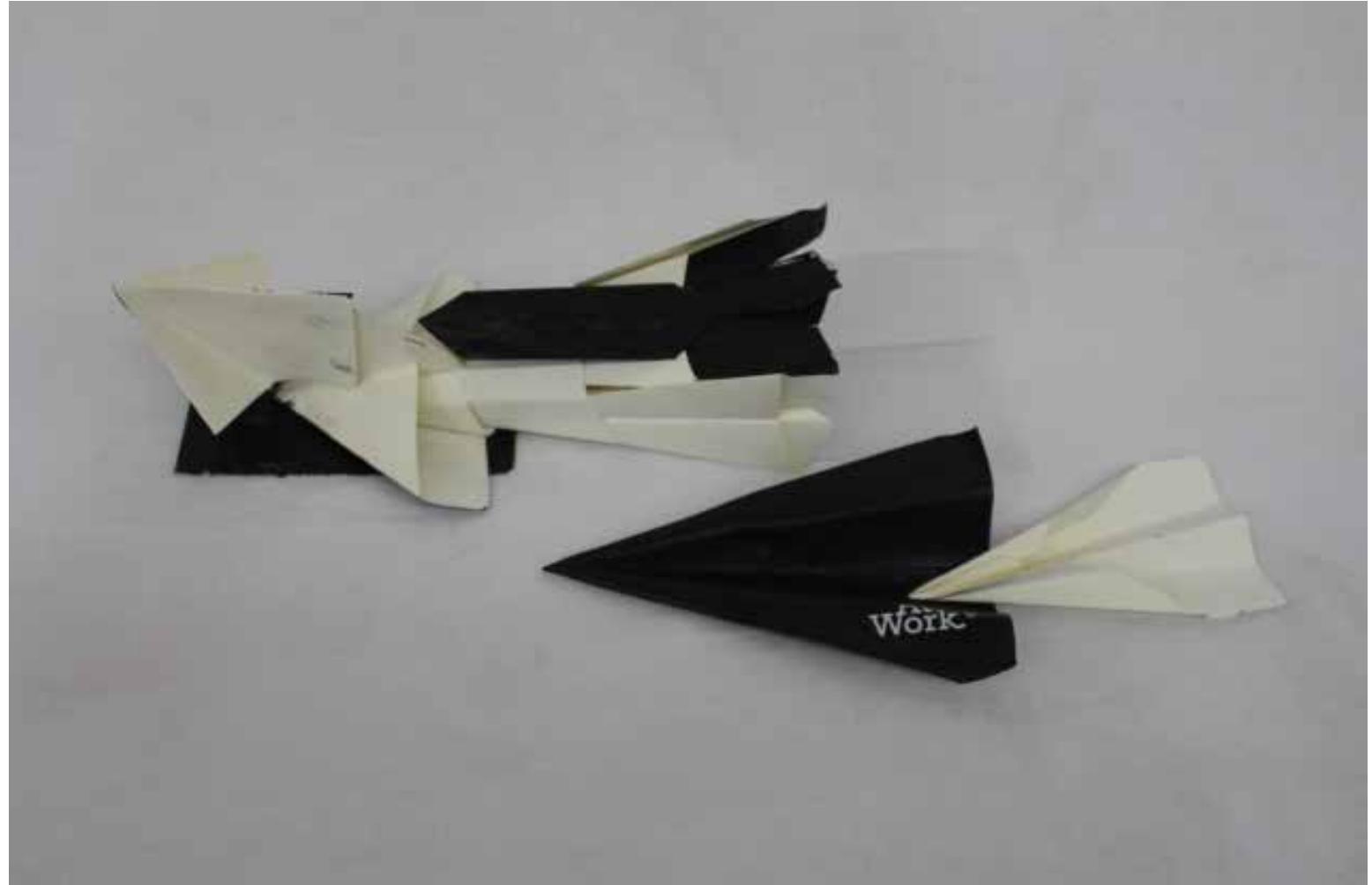




NOTEBOOK CONCEPTS

I was exploring in the workshop, «Physical Freedom» and as a result, I worked on my sketchbook as an object to dismantle rather than to draw or sketch in. I let the sketchbook guide me into a new form rather than working out a complete idea and execute it. What I ended up with was a representation of my subject; which is how the materials used in a sketchbook were not free to choose to be a sketchbook, nor did the machine that put the sketchbook together decide its form nor did I, consciously, choose the form that was produced.

Rana Khalil - junior visual arts student at AUC





Bipolar personality is a cold war

Fajr Soliman, born in Egypt in 1991. She graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Mural Painting Department. Fajr is an Egyptian contemporary visual artist, street artist and her artwork expresses her special concern for women, social issues and different psychological problems in the Arab world. Her paintings are the embodiment of the emotional link between Fajr and all the current difficulties faced by the people. Fajr uses animals as iconic and symbolic representations of the problems and evils of society.

Participated in numerous exhibitions and street art and worked last exhibition: 2015, “ I am women “ exhibit , at casori contemporary art museum, Napoli , Italy and Embassy of Austria exhibition in Cairo, Egypt.



Designing an origami fairytale that documents places that I saw especially architecture monuments.

The idea started with designing buildings and thinking of materials, as soon as I took the notebook. However thinks started to change as I analysed my drawing. One thing they had all in common : the triable.

Next, I started adding more triangular shapes and I ended up with an origami form. Again the process and analyses continued, till I discovered that our feet has also the triangular shape.

So, I started to design my own fantasy shoe in a triangular shape and discovered that all the places that we go, we go with a shoe, this shoe knows and documents like the camera, the places that we went to.

Since every journey starts with a step,I designed my own imaginary shoe/ step that is made out of different material reflecting architecture building as well.

Maybe one day I will be a shoes designer, who knows.

Reem Hamed, graduated with an archiecture and interior design bachelor degree from Florence, Italy. Currently she works as an architect engineer.

Intriguing/crafting an internal experience

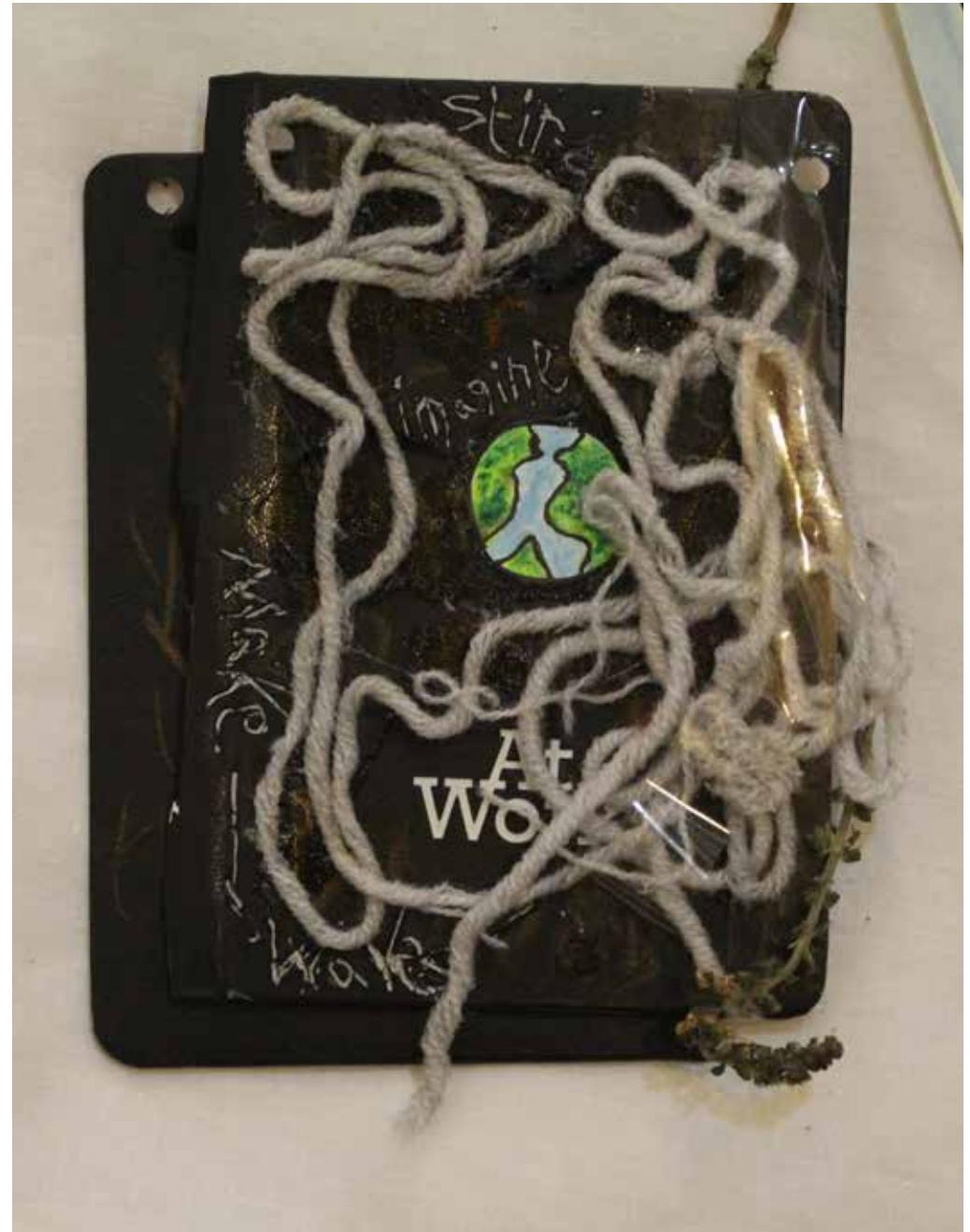
In my piece, I tried to imagine things that would intrigue three internal states/areas of thoughts, impressions or emotions, to occur inside each individual while observing the compositions in this series of images and words. The real piece or is mainly what happens inside the viewer head. I induced some direct questions to increase the sense of dialogue between the pieces and the observer. It is, to me, a simple way to objectify the essence of what can spark an internal set of reactions.

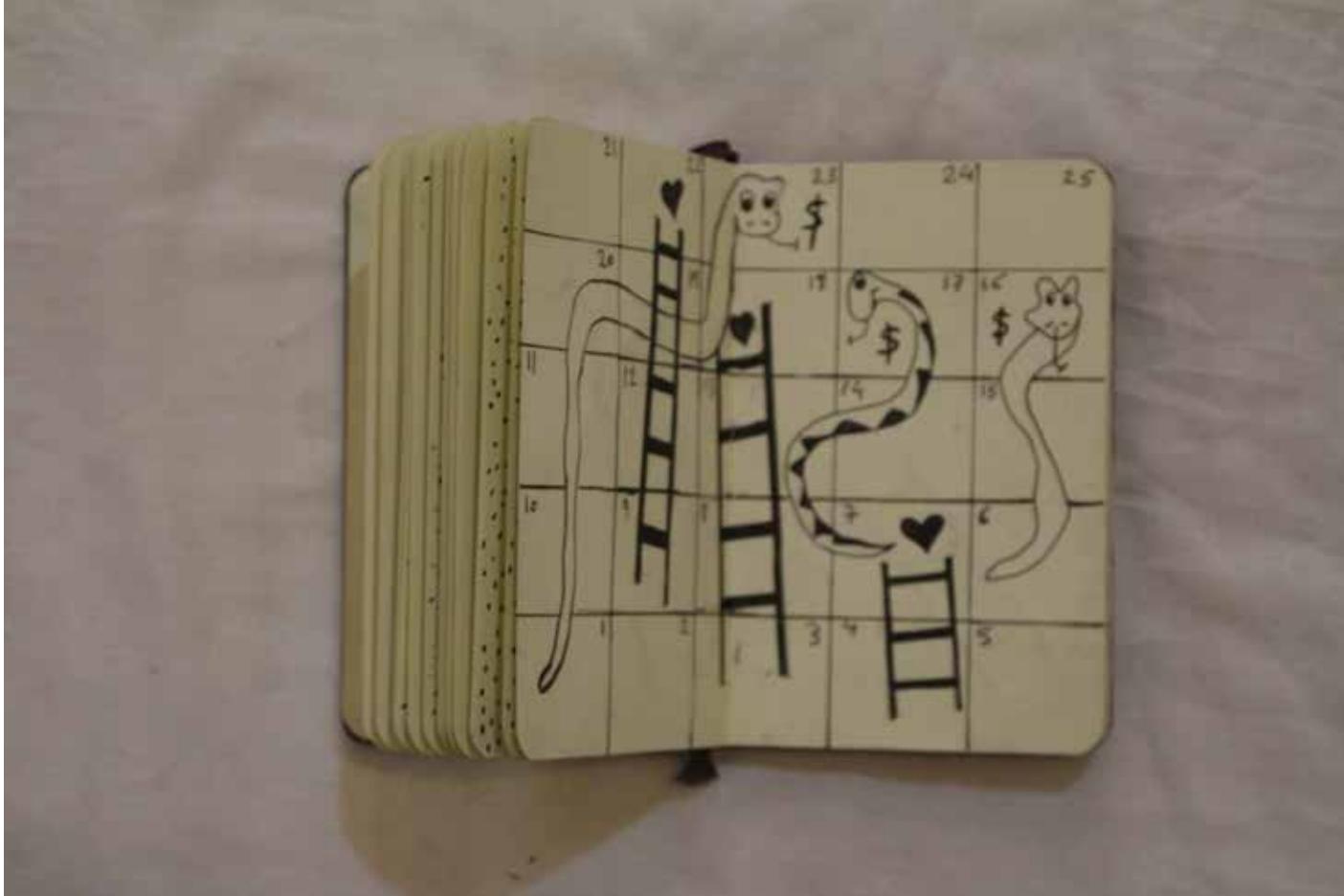
Since one of the most things I suffer from while creating, in any particular medium from all mediums I have experimented with, is embodying my abstract thoughts, ideas and feelings. My comfort zone now in expression is when I let go of my persistence to come up with a strong form that can contain all that I want to express, and combine tools from these mediums to come up with something abstract in its own form. in this project. I tried to let go of the belief that it is hard to intrigue an experience only by using objects that do no involve all senses.

Rana Ashraf, 21 year old human being with quite a surreal list of interests. I shoot a lot of videos, I write and I draw. My portfolio is available on: [behance.net/ranaashraf](https://www.behance.net/ranaashraf)

I am interested in almost all genres and forms of art. but specially video, contemporary theater, flash fiction writings, music and drawing.

I formally study public administration and governance and informally I studied Astronomy, sociology and currently visual arts and film-making. Nature, travelling, friends, family, art and music are everything to me.





The notebook depicts the idea of past, present and future.

The past is represented in a noise that is running in my head, the present is reflected by Snake and Ladder game as a symbol of life opportunities and the future is glued, as a symbol of fear of the unknown.

Nourhan Refaat, a young Egyptian artist, started her photography journey since 2010, she is doing photography in a small corner in her room, creating images that deliver stories using simple props and relying on self-portrait in most of the work.



Abdallah Mahmoud



Abdallah Mahmoud



Nadeen El Rashidy



Omar Adel



Menna Ali



Monia Sakr



Islam El Nebishy



Farida Abdel Maksoud



An **AtWork group** was created on Facebook, where participants can share their thoughts on the workshop, post pictures/videos/articles related to the workshop experience and to their artistic practices in general. The community is meant to be a space for the participants to interact with each other, as well as with the hosting cultural organizations, curators, artists and other AtWork chapters' participants, creating an international network to exchange, get exposure for their work and find out about various calls and residencies opportunities.

AtWork Cairo participants actively embraced the Facebook community and continue to engage with it even after the workshop is over.

**Rana Ashraf**

February 15 at 1:10pm

hello 😊

hope you're having a gentle day wherever you are, and that the hysteria of the world is not ruining your days.

I see very interesting pieces posted here of people who participated, so i'm really eager to see more of the work of all artists here

in the name of atwork's family. I miss the energy.

here's my work

behance.net/ranaashraf

Like Comment Share

You, [Elena Korzhenevich](#) and 6 others like this.



Elena Korzhenevich Share your work with Rana and with each other, people!

This is why we are here in the AtWork family! 😊

Like · Reply · 2 · February 15 at 2:57pm



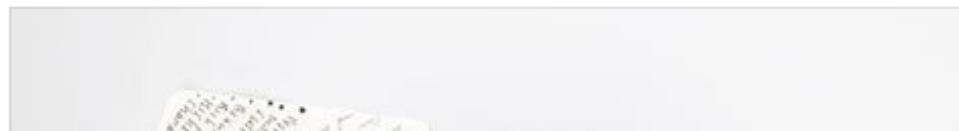
Write a comment...



Elena Korzhenevich with [Kazungu Martha](#) and 18 others.

February 15 at 1:01pm

Do we know what know? Mugisha Batte asked the key question of AtWork with his notebook produced during AtWork Kampala. Can you believe exactly a year has passed already? : "After a few days of our workshop, I realized that many people think that they know things. Some are used especially to common words, but they are not fully informed about them. In several talks of Simon with different individuals he asked them to replace the word shoes in the question with their own words... [See More](#)

**Nourhan Refaat**

February 4 at 3:47am

I would like to share my post experience with At Work workshop carried out in Egypt 😊 the workshop has inspired me about the creative process, through providing us the opportunity to think about a concept for doing an art piece out of the notebook.

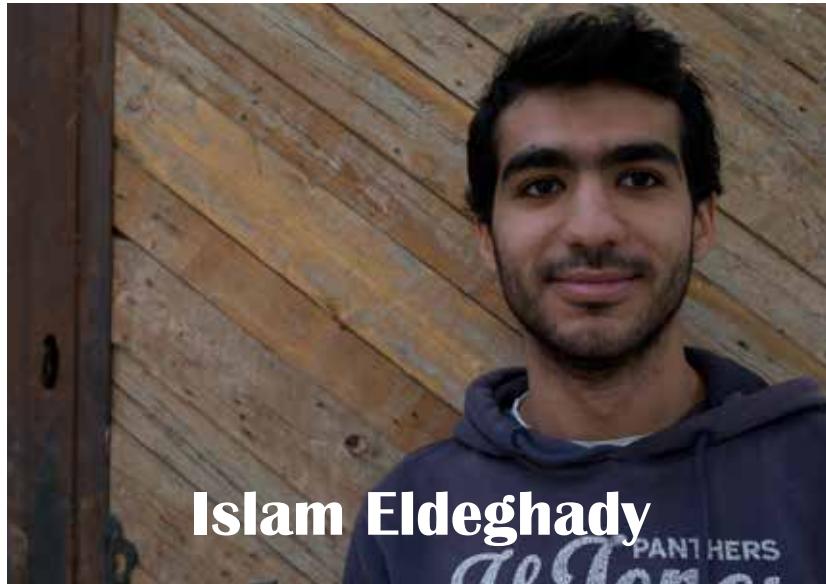
Ever since the workshop ended. And I started translating all my thoughts into visuals, a thing I had to go through in the workshop. And this is to enhance my visulaization as an artist and creativity.

I don't care whe... [See More](#)



Like Comment Share

ATWORK CAIRO PARTICIPANTS





Monia Sakr



Nadeen El Rashidy



Nourhan Abu Gabal



Nourhan Refaat



Omar Adel



Rana Ashraf



Rana Khalil



Rana Rafik



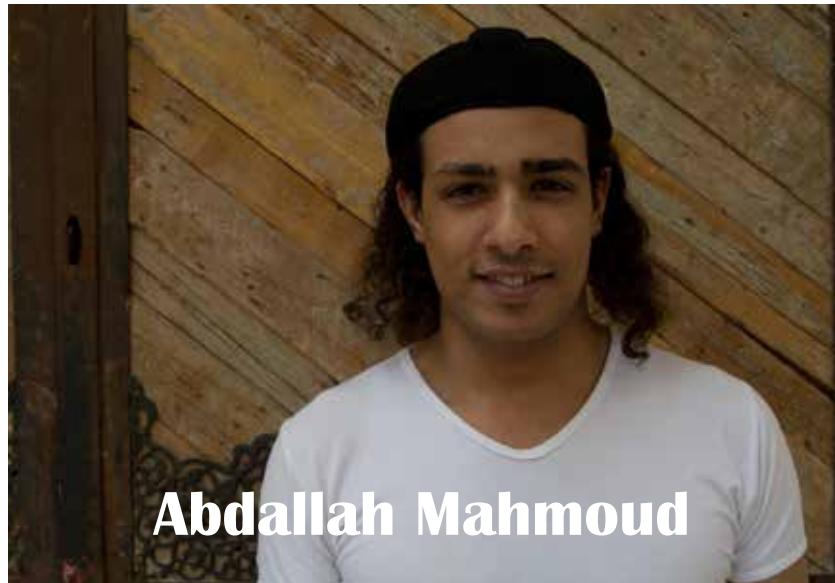
Reem Hamed



Sara Hamdy



Shatha El Deghady



Abdallah Mahmoud

ATWORK CAIRO TEAM



AtWork Cairo 2015 Chapter 04

AtWork is conceived by *lettera27* and Simon Njami
In partnership with

Darb 1718 -
Contemporary Art & Culture Center
www.darb1718.com

Something Else
www.somethingelse-off.com

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