

32nd Salon d'Automne: Statement of the Jury

In honor of the legacy of the Salon d'Automne and at the same time in recognition of the potential for new paths made possible by the reopening and reconfiguration of the Sursock Museum, the Jury has selected works by 52 artists and collectives, chosen from an initial pool of 322 applicants. These works, made by artists ranging in age from 22 to 82, include painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, collagraphy, intaglio, embroidery, gouache, mezzotint, collage, photography, assemblage, installation, and video.

The Jury was fully cognizant that reducing the number of participants in the current Salon to less than half the size of past editions would be seen as a radical measure. In addition to criteria pertaining to quality and relevance, our selection sought to amplify what we perceived as the areas of strength running through the proposals overall, and to consider how the works held together as an exhibition.

The artists responding to the Sursock Museum's open call offered a great diversity of answers to questions of style, medium, skill, experience, exposure, political engagement, and artistic aspiration. The Jury was struck by the prolific, exuberant state of painting evinced by the proposals, and impressed by the experimentation at play in projects involving ceramics and serial photography. Our selection wants to acknowledge and further celebrate this vitality. We were captivated by new voices, different directions, breaks from earlier ways of making within an established artist's oeuvre, and promise, particularly in the work of artists who are very young, either in age or practice. Often and firmly, we veered away from stereotypical tropes. We were especially attuned to works of emotional intensity, vivid attention to color and texture, obsessive gesture, and quiet meditation on the conditions and circumstances of the artists' lives, which are also our own, those of the city and its myriad residents.

As a jury, we met in late September after a month of reviewing all of the proposals individually. Our deliberations were long and difficult but they were also determined by near to complete consensus. Our selection was much smaller than the Museum had anticipated, though we were keenly aware that in dramatically downsizing the scale of the exhibition, we were necessarily eliminating numerous and beloved alumni of the Salon. We did so with great care and extended consideration while also recognizing the breadth of opportunities that are now available to artists across the country, one of the many factors allowing the Sursock Museum to chart new paths for the Salon d'Automne, accommodating degrees of rupture and continuity, allaying displacement, and embracing change.

We are grateful to the Museum's administrators and board for their trust and acceptance of the audacity of our selection, and for abiding in our hope that it will host an

exhibition with room to breathe—supporting new vision, incarnating rigor, conveying playfulness, endorsing criticality, and heralding a time to hear different voices in and from Beirut. We know that our mandate as a jury is short lived. We hope it will be the start of a conversation to be continued throughout this edition and the ones to come, with roles exchanged, wearing different hats, and looking through other lenses.