

PRESS RELEASE

SOLAR FLARE, ALWAYS RED

Raja'a Khalid

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About the works:

1984 was a year of champagne wishes and caviar dreams.

An X-class solar flare erupts on the surface of the sun. There are reports of radio blackouts and radar disturbances.

In Dubai, against a backdrop of sunshine and palm trees two men discuss the feasibility of making an airline for the city.

Eight thousand miles away Madonna puts out MATERIAL GIRL. A new gospel of deterritorialized materialism is born. On *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* Robin Leach ends each episode with a toast "to everyone watching at home – CHAMPAGNE WISHES AND CAVIAR DREAMS." The backdrop is always sunny with palm trees.

The works in *SOLAR FLARE, ALWAYS RED* are inspired by mythologies of power, the aesthetics of consumerism and economies of desire – (1984–present).

Manmade landscapes defined by UV rays, tinted windows, highway mirages, sirens, hallucinations and body work. Matte, pearl, satin, candy clear, chrome and plasti dip. Preserved palm leaves and Sephora *Always Red*. Long lasting colors that will. not. budge. In the Old Kingdom, elaborate mummification and embalming rituals were reserved for the Pharaohs and elite members of society. Adornment improved one's attractiveness in the eyes of both ordinary people and the gods. That was privatized immortality then. Now is the time for Tom Ford *Oud Wood Beard Oil* and Oakley *Ballistic* sunglasses.

About Raja'a Khalid:

b. 1984, Saudi Arabia / Lives and works in Dubai, UAE

Raja'a Khalid's practice is concerned with the Arabian Gulf region and its contemporary narratives of class, ultra luxury and consumer culture. Her current work aims to subtly critique the Gulf's own streaming motifs of soft power alongside notions of wealth, masculinity, game, athleticism, desire and crypto-religiosity. She received her MFA in Fine Art from Cornell University, where she was also the recipient of the Cornell Council for the Arts Grant in 2013. Recent awards and residencies include the NYU Abu Dhabi FIND Research Fellowship, 2014; the Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen International Fellowship for Art and Theory; 2015, the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten Guest Residency, 2015 and the International Curatorial and Studio Program Residency, 2015. Her work has been shown in New York, London, Dubai, Vienna and Basel.