

a snatch of spoken dialogue gestures against legibility, but people want to unpack further and find answers that help to make sense of... events, both past and present.

Bengali audiences have a different relationship to this material. Not everyone takes lightly certain distancing strategies within the narration. A Bangladeshi writer told me after watching it: "You create an emotional schema here which might even work against you in 'desh.'" That's a more complicated response, one worth parsing further.

**Rania:** I've been thoroughly surprised, intrigued and thrilled by the audience's response. I had never imagined that a personal passion could be shared with so many different people.

The restitution and circulation of these images generated an amazing range of responses, from strong emotions, to a sense of having taken a trip "down memory lane", to having been caught in a dream or to having gone on a strange and addictive trip. It triggered reflections about the cinema, film, Egypt and its society, about women, violence and representation. Some claimed the necessity of fighting censorship; others confirmed their interest in being exposed to unknown worlds and unsuspected images.

Soad Hosni as an actress and a woman moved them beyond her representations, and her luminous talent and tragic destiny spoke to them regardless of cultural differences. Quite intriguing is the issue that keeps resurfacing in the questions with the public. Having restored omitted sexual scenes and kisses that are no longer shown on Arabic television, some people criticized the film as having verged on soft porn; while others argued that the reuse of classical narrative images of women constructed to please men's gazes was problematic for them. Both groups consider the images as somewhat taboo material to be tampered with, putting themselves outside of a new viewing experience or field of reflection. How is it to them to watch these images now: the told and the retold? What does pushing boundaries and blurring borders do to their memory and senses? They preferred to hang on to their certainties. The reuse of existing images and raw material is a constant in my work, as well as the desire to further the reflection on mirrored images.

**Maha:** The audience reaction varies greatly according to people's familiarity with the films and with Egyptian cinema in general. Those unfamiliar with Egyptian cinema often discover that there actually is an Egyptian cinema industry. There is also an increased familiarity with images and people who seem less archaic than what transpires of them through mass media. As a side effect, there is their seeing of the Pyramids, maybe for the first time, out of context (the touristic context), but actually in their real context; national political rhetoric, inferiority/superiority complexes, local gender politics, local politics of space and time...

For an Egyptian audience, I have encountered the excitement of seeing scenes that are so familiar being inserted into a different context, entertained curiosity about how many films I have seen and used, been given suggestions of films that I have missed, and sometimes even encountered the unspoken suspicion: "But is it Art?"

# Lebanese Rocket Society: Elements for a Monument. The Golden Record

In the early 1960s, in Lebanon, a group of students of Haigazian, an Armenian University, led by a professor of mathematics, Manoug Manougian, designed and launched many "rockets for exploration and space study". Later, this program expanded, with other researchers joining them and with the Lebanese Army supervising the project. The Lebanese Rocket Society was born.

The project had no military character and was aimed at promoting both science and research.

This experience stopped suddenly in 1967 and has since been completely forgotten.

## The Golden Record

### Sounds of Earth and of Lebanon

As of 1962, the group of the Lebanese Rocket Society had installed, at the tip of the rockets, a transmitter which broadcasted the message, "Long Live Lebanon!", on the waves of the Lebanese national radios throughout the launching and the flight of the rocket. This information published by the press at the time echoes, in our imagination, the U.S. space probes such as Phoenix and, above all, Voyager 1 and 2 which, in 1977, also launched messages, engraved on golden records, intended for would-be extra-terrestrials; they consisted in a selection of sounds meant to "establish a portrait of the diversity of life, of history and of culture on Earth", a kind of message of peace and friendship.

The first probes will only arrive close to a star in 40 000 years.

*The Golden Record* from the Lebanese Rocket Society is a golden record on which was engraved a soundtrack created on the basis of sound archives dating back to the 1960s, and inspired by the memories of the various Lebanese scientists who shared in the adventure. The sounds chosen reflect a given time in the history of the 1960s, when the world was politically divided in two blocs; when it seemed there was a progressive and revolutionary alternative; and when the revolutionary movements seemed to be interconnected. Space research was one of the great symbols of that period. It was also the epoch of Pan-Arabism, the epoch of the great Arab dream.

"This is a present from a small, distant world; a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours."

Extract from the official communiqué of President Jimmy Carter, installed in the Voyager probes on June 16, 1977.

Accurate graphic reading of all the sound editing and mixing used to create the Golden Record of the Lebanese Rocket Society



*Fig. 1 and 4*

View of the outside cover of Lebanese Rocket  
Society, *The Golden Record*, 2011



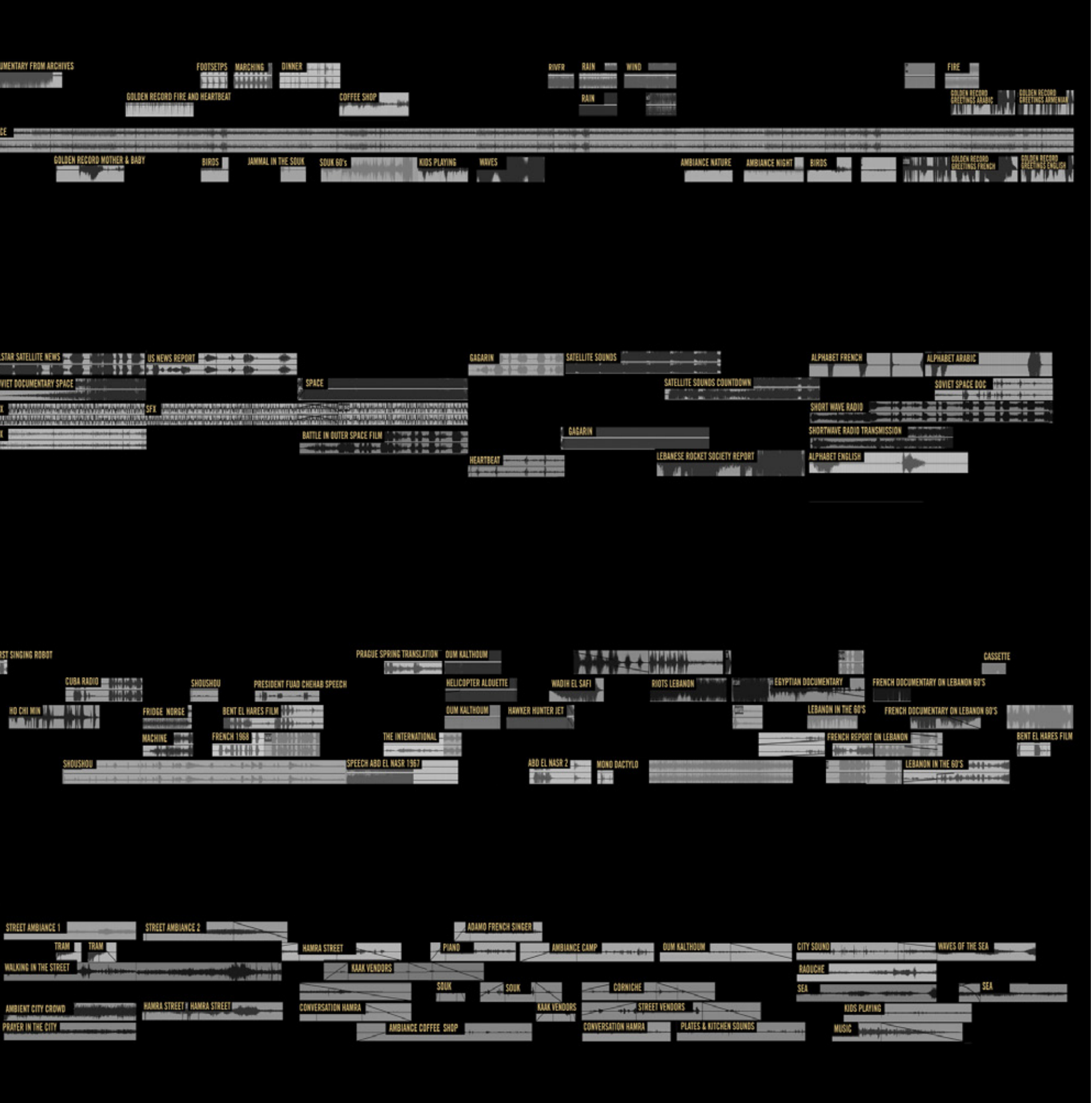


Fig. 2 and 3  
View of the inside cover of Lebanese Rocket  
Society, *The Golden Record*, 2011



Fig. 3

**The Golden Record**

"Sounds of earth, a tribute to the Voyager Golden Record"

A project by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

From « The Lebanese Rocket Society, elements for a monument ».

Sound and Mix: Nadim Mechlaoui, Studio DB

Design: Karine Wehbe

*Fig. 4*