

**ETEL ADNAN** A Lebanese-American poet and essayist who moved from the United States to Paris several decades ago, Adnan is also a painter. Her captivating oeuvre has recently been rediscovered thanks to the efforts of a younger generation of Lebanese artists; five works were on view this fall at the Beirut-based Galerie Sfeir-Semler's booth at the FIAC art fair in Paris. For some thirty years, beginning in the 1950s, Mount Tamalpais in California was Adnan's only subject; she painted it on small-format canvases, carefully choosing her colors to convey the West Coast light. A remarkable consistency of approach was evident during my recent visit to the eighty-six-year-old artist's studio; her new paintings continue to impress with their freshness and intensity.



9. Above: Abdullah Al Saadi, *Camar Cande's Journey*, 2010–11, 151 watercolor paintings and video. Installation view, Sharjah Art Museum. From the 10th Sharjah Biennial.

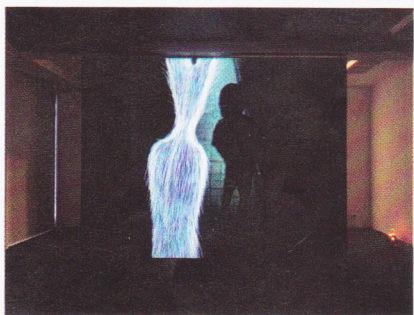
10. Below: Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe in a photo booth on Forty-Second Street, New York, 1969. From Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (Ecco, 2010).

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**PHILIPPE PARRENO** (Serpentine Gallery, London; curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Julia Peyton-Jones, and Kathryn Rattee) Parreno customized this exhibition so that visitors were guided in a timed sequence from one room to the next. I felt tremendous emotion in front of the wonderful film *Invisible Boy*, 2010, which recounts the story of an immigrant's child in New York. The artist had scratched drawings on the filmstrip, depicting the monsters that arise in its protagonist's anguished fantasies. After the end of the work, the blinds automatically went up and, through one of the Serpentine's windows overlooking the park, I saw a flurry of (artificial) snowflakes in the midst of the London fall. The magic was there, once again.

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**10TH SHARJAH BIENNIAL: "PLOT FOR A BIENNIAL"** (various venues; curated by Haig Aivazian, Suzanne Cotter, and Rasha Salti) Despite a profusion of uneven films, this biennial contained several strong and promising works. In particular I was struck by Rosalind Nashashibi's *Shelter for a New Youth*, 2011, a mysterious and erotic installation paying homage to Pier Paolo Pasolini; Abdullah Al Saadi's *Camar Cande's Journey*, 2010–11, which recon-



structs his travels in watercolor paintings and video; Ahmad Ghossein's *My Father Is Still a Communist: Intimate Secrets to Be Published*, 2011, a moving personal story in the form of a video reconstructed from audio clips exchanged by his mother and father in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia; and Hatem Imam's *Vicarious Dreams*, 2010–11, a set of seven etchings of construction sites in Beirut. Let's hope that the biennial can survive the brutal dismissal of its director Jack Persekian.

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**PATTI SMITH, JUST KIDS** (Ecco) Shortly after the paperback was published late last year, this book won a National Book Award. The prize was richly deserved—especially in the eyes of those who still have a teenager's romantic soul. Smith writes about living with Robert Mapplethorpe, their beauty, their fragility, their ambitions, their talents, and their love, but also the difficult moment of their separation when Mapplethorpe died. This memoir brims over with authenticity and purity of soul. □

*Translated from French by Molly Stevens.*