

Eschaton

2009-Ongoing · Photography, digital collage

A long-form archive of threshold images, melancholy landscapes, ritual fragments, and endings.

Eschaton began at the seaside, watching bathers in contemporary Egypt. I was drawn to a quality of liberation I couldn't name: the way bodies moved differently near the shore, how proximity to water seemed to grant permission for gestures unthinkable elsewhere. The beach is a liminal zone.

Conservative dress meets salt air; the rigid structures of daily life begin to dissolve. My subjects, unknowingly, were performing a constant cultural negotiation: every adjustment of fabric against skin, a small act of translation between competing systems of meaning.

Through painterly layering in post-processing, I became an orchestrator. The original encounter is preserved and fundamentally altered. I rearranged the figures into filmic narratives that refuse conventional storytelling in favour of something more mysterious, more propagandistic in their emotional reach.

A particular humour emerged, neither accidental nor intentional. It arose from the collision of the mystical and the mundane, the sincere and the absurd. Sexual politics surfaced in encounters simultaneously erotic, sinister, and comic. My subjects seemed to exist in several emotional registers at once. What struck me most was the lack of self-consciousness. In a culture where self-presentation is carefully calibrated, these moments at the water's edge revealed something raw. Gestures became flamboyant or awkward, as if the usual social scripts had been temporarily suspended.

The men's postures began to echo Hollywood of the 1940s and 50s: a presentation eager to please, somehow feminized by the relative exposure of their flesh next to the solidly covered women beside them. The reversal fascinated me. In a context where masculinity often emphasizes coverage and control, these moments of exposure produced a vulnerability that read as performatively feminine. The men inhabited a different masculinity, more fluid, more openly desirous of approval, more willing to be looked at than to look.

Through deliberate surface ageing, I recreated these figures to evoke nostalgia. But nostalgia for what? For a time that never quite existed. For a freedom that remains perpetually just out of reach. The dreaminess was intentional, a way of honouring the aspirational quality of these encounters while acknowledging their complexity. I was careful not to let the dreaminess go unchallenged. In some images, I punctured the reverie with a pair of polarised sunglasses or a sudden, up-to-date vulgarity, markers of the contemporary that refuse to let the viewer forget the original, not-so-distant encounter.

The rearrangements against synthetic Middle Eastern backdrops became the most overtly political layer. By insisting on the constructedness of the product, I make visible the constructedness of all

cultural imagery, the way authenticity itself is always already mediated. Eschaton is less about Egypt than about living between worlds: cultural, temporal, and personal. The beach is only the stage where the usually invisible work of cultural translation becomes visible. Freedom is not a destination but a practice, a series of small rebellions in the movement of a body toward water.

About this portfolio

This reading portfolio reproduces the current website image sequence. Plate references identify images for correspondence; they are not edition numbers. Captions use the available studio records. Dimensions and editions that are not recorded are not inferred. Image counts refer to displayed images, which may include details or alternate views. Series: <https://www.nerminehammam.com/work-eschaton>



Beauty Will Keep Us

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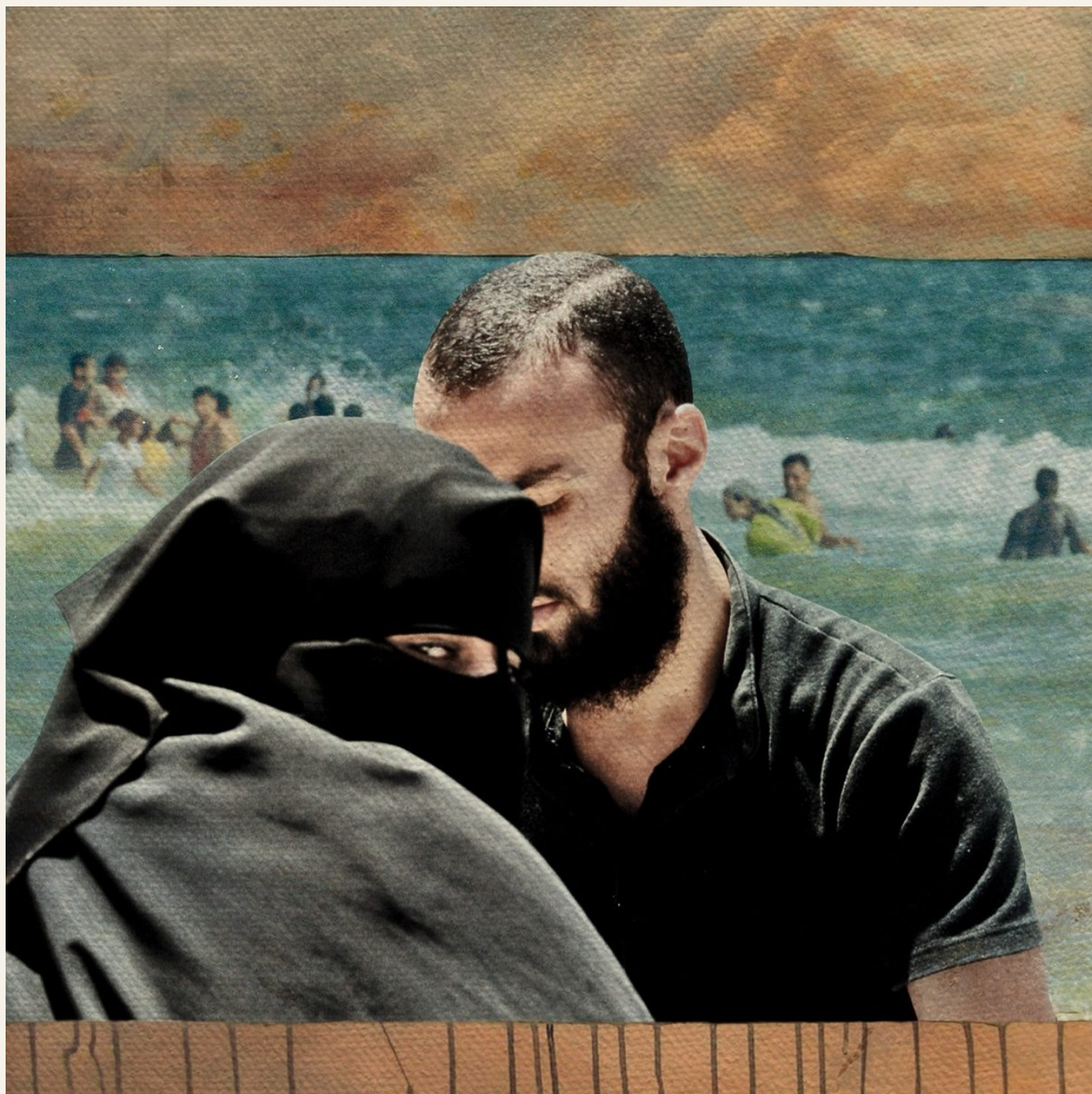


Cornish Afterlight

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Cornish Hymn for the Lost

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Cornish Oracles

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Cornish Thresholds

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Cornish Weather of the Heart

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Follow the Thread

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Notes from a Salt Country

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Recognition of the Unsaid

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Sand Assemblies

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The Ceremony of Encounter

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The Dune Archive

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The Gatherings of Salt

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The Serpent's Interval

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The Theory of Encounter

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The Tide's Committee

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Where Beauty Goes to Hide

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beauty will save the world 2

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cornish crisis of the serpent

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cornish recognition

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encounter

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follow your bliss

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iceland lm

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never enough

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sand gatherings

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the Beauty of Melancholy

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the lore of the thread

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