



Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck. *Instrumentalized #24*. 2017. Pattern-imprinted translucent polyester shirt, semi-stretched flat on canvas, with hanging cardstock tag. 76 x 35 x 3.5 cm (artwork), 151 x 35 x 3.5 cm

somewhat self-defeating, foregrounding a paralysis of making 'political' art without falling into the trap of being instrumentalized.

His strategy in all of this is fairly straightforward: he hides. His hand is hidden behind the wall-bound voice-of-authority timelines and didactic panels that comprise his works, in a crafty step-back-and-let-the-facts-speak-for-themselves gesture. He retreats into appropriation, reactivating and cunningly tinkering with the archive. The artist disappears into the warren of art historical references and the modernist canon. Didacticism itself is a vanishing act.

His show *Instrumentalized* at Dubai's Green Art Gallery (20 January–1 March 2018) displayed this approach through two bodies of work. *Chronoscope 1952–1953, 11pm* (2012–17) is a collage of footage from the eponymous 1950s Longines-sponsored American current affairs television programme, and originally consisted of 15-minute interviews by two

journalists with a lone authority on a given topic – the Korean War, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, the nuclear bomb, human rights, colonialism and so on. "Normally, you would only see one point of view," Balteo-Yazbeck explains. "But I edited it almost like a Cubist painting, so that we can see the same issue from several points of view."

Intentionally 'staged' through editorial sleight-of-hand, Balteo-Yazbeck's *Chronoscope* presents a TV set full of interviewers probing their numerous opinionated guests, many of whom would never, in 1950s reality, have been invited into the same room. "My first intention with *Chronoscope*," he continues, "was to show how highly choreographed it is, how it functions as a form of propaganda. The second was to highlight, in the present, just how unresolved the Cold War is." Indeed, the issues debated are still smouldering today – tension in Korea, waning faith in the United Nations, concern over colonial powers and issues of self-governance, Middle