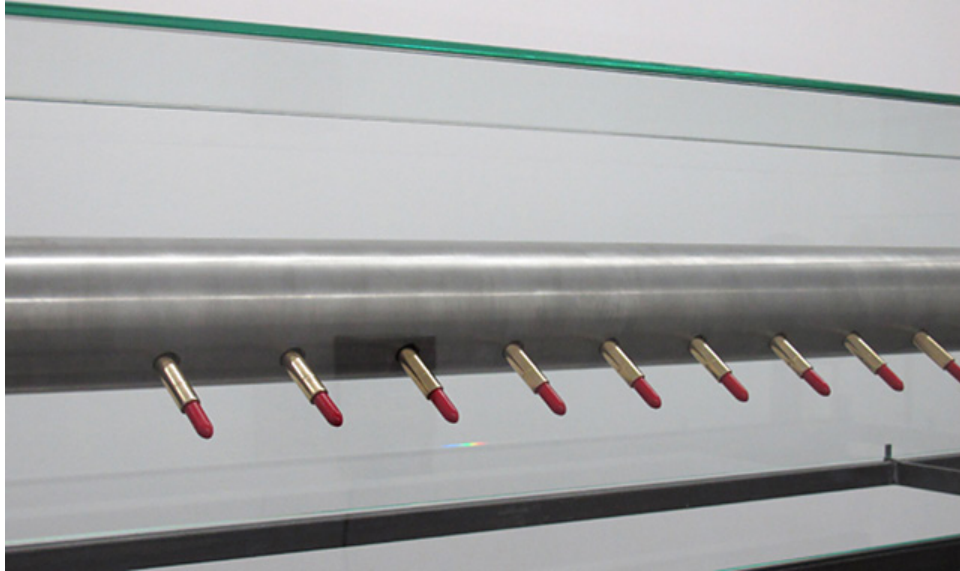


# BLOUIN ARTINFO

## SLIDESHOW: Pascal Hachem's Political Machines



Pascal Hachem, Loophole, 2013 (detail) Courtesy the artist and Selma Feriani

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Pascal Hachem's solo show at Selma Feriani Gallery has something of the mechanical theatre. Half a dozen meticulously executed contraptions enact for the viewer such complex ideas as the instrumentalization of martyrdom, the erotics of war, and global complicity in the arms industry.

Encased in a glass display box, "No Martyr ... No My Martyr" (all works 2013) features a bronze rocket sliding back and forth inside a tube, as if pulled by the opposite sides. What they might represent loses all relevance. The two poles stand as faceless ideologies eager to claim the martyr for their cause.

The cylinder shape is repeated throughout the show as a phallic, rocket-like motif. It crops up in the many lipstick replicas echoing the red and gold Fajr-5, an artillery rocket developed in Iran in the 1990s, and used, among others, by Hezbollah and Hamas. In Hachem's rotating "Loophole," they threateningly rise one by one, as if about to be launched.

The artist fires in all directions. His chalkboard-black donation box ("The Icing on the Cake") lifts up to reveal another one stating in Arabic "I don't want to be connected with that" — a direct attack on the lack of transparency in the use of collected funds. In "Kneeling," a car bomb mirror reflects the words "Beliefs in Self-Deception" embroidered underneath a rolled up praying mat. Hachem's mechanical theatre is a dense and satisfying show. And a convincing demonstration that aesthetically pleasing contemporary works can also be politically convincing.

***Pascal Hachem, "Beliefs in Self-Deception," until March 2nd, Selma Feriani Gallery, London***