



Press Release

The Gap Between Us

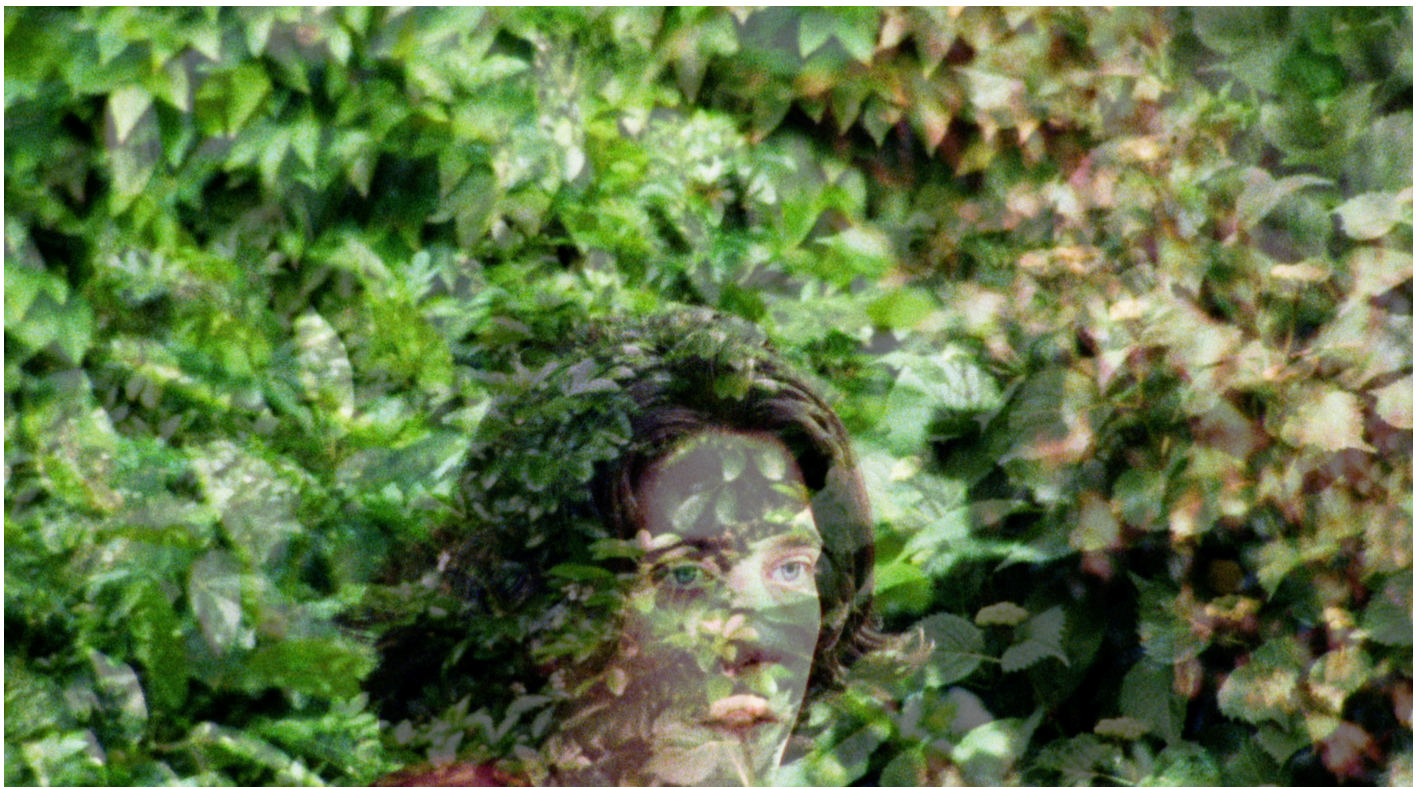
Basma Alsharif

19 January - 31 March 2018

Private View: 18 January, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Exhibition Open: Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, FREE

The Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW



Ouroboros 2017 (film still), Basma Alsharif. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Imane Farès.

The Gap Between Us presents the first UK solo exhibition by artist and film-maker Basma Alsharif, with three key works from different periods of the artist's practice. The L.A. based artist of Palestinian descent looks at how we represent concepts of history, conflict and subjectivity, and explores how to experiment with new visual narratives. Alsharif creates rich imagery, manipulating and editing original film footage, seeking to unsettle perceptions and evoke affective experiences in the viewer. The exhibition's central work will be *Ouroboros* (2017) Alsharif's first feature length film, screened here in a gallery context for the first time.

2018 will mark 70 years since the Nakba, the forced displacement of the Palestinian people on the founding of the state of Israel. Alsharif is an artist in the diaspora whose work negotiates a new relationship with what it means to create art about Palestine. She has been called a post Palestinian artist by film-maker Eyal Sivan. Starting from the position that if the fulfilment of the hope of return seems impossible, and a resolution to living with dispossession is always beyond reach, she asks: what is next for the Palestinians?

Ouroboros is a feature length experimental film shot across five locations. The ouroboros is the ancient Egyptian symbol of the snake eating its own tail, a reference to the cycle of destruction and renewal. The film's allegorical story explores this constant process of ending and beginning. It opens with waves breaking off the coast of Gaza and follows a young man through geographically distanced landscapes, as he searches for escape from the emotional pain of heartbreak. Alsharif takes a sensory approach to her material, at times reversing film,

moving between muffled silences, dialogue and intense melodic sound. We see Gaza at a distance, the images filmed from above by drones, and interior spaces by steady cam, the viewer is positioned in a kind of surveillance role. Unable to visit the blockaded territory at the time, Alsharif worked with Media Town in Gaza, a documentary film production and Media Services Provider to remotely direct these scenes with the collaboration of her Palestinian producer Mohanad Yaqubi of Idioms Film. The film builds towards a sort of reunion, one that Alsharif has described as only possible through a kind of forgetting and letting go.

Alsharif has developed a significant body of film work in her career. *We Began By Measuring Distance* dates from 2009 and won a jury prize at the ninth Sharjah Biennial. The film follows the activities of a group who pass their time measuring distances between cities on the map. Blurring reality and fiction, time and distance, we see the group's measurements displayed on screen, these morph into significant dates in the history of Israel/Palestine. The film is an exploration of conflict, but Alsharif refuses to exhibit the images of violence to which we are habituated. Instead she questions what these representations of violence and the recording of these events in history has achieved to end it.

High Noon, a film accompanied by eight photographic stills, embodies the dissonance of experiencing multiple times and places at once. Colour saturated images of two locations, in Japan and in California, are merged together. Both places lie on the Greenwich meridian, the 19th century system of Greenwich meantime which established an international standard to measure time. Alsharif seeks to escape these constrictions, as the camera cuts across time zones in a hypnotic drift, accompanied by a low fi electro soundtrack.

Having developed her practice nomadically between Chicago, Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, Amman, the Gaza Strip and Paris, Alsharif's personal experience is reflected in her work which she defines as a non-geographically based subjective viewpoint. Through these three film works Alsharif offers us a vantage point that seeks to break previous representations of familiar and political issues.

About Basma Alsharif

Basma Alsharif is an Artist/Filmmaker born in Kuwait of Palestinian origin, raised between France, the US and the Gaza Strip. She has a BFA and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She works between cinema and installation, with an interest in the human condition in relation to shifting geopolitical landscapes and natural environments. Major exhibitions include: the Whitney Biennial, les Rencontres d'Arles, Les Modules at the Palais de Tokyo, *Here and Elsewhere* at the New Museum, Al Riwaq Biennial Palestine, The Berlin Documentary Forum, the Sharjah Biennial, and Manifesta 8. She received a jury prize at the Sharjah Biennial 9 and was shortlisted for the Abraaj Prize 2018. She is represented by Galerie Imane Farès in Paris, distributed by Video Data Bank and Arsenal.

Notes to press

- Basma Alsharif will be available for interview. Images and more details are available on request.
- The exhibition will be accompanied by a public programme of talks and events.
- Entry to the exhibition is free. The Mosaic Rooms are open 11am-6pm, Tuesday-Saturday.
- The Mosaic Rooms are a leading London-based non-profit cultural organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary culture from and about the Arab world. They provide an international platform for the arts, particularly new work, and create opportunities for collaboration and professional development between artists, collectives and organisations from the Arab world and the UK. They do this through free contemporary art exhibitions, multidisciplinary events, artist residencies and their engagement programme. They work in partnership with national and international organisations to disseminate their programme to the widest possible audience. The Mosaic Rooms is run by Rachael Jarvis, Director. The Mosaic Rooms form part of the A.M. Qattan Foundation.
- The Mosaic Rooms are situated on the corner of the Cromwell and Earls Court Road in Kensington, London. Visit www.mosaicrooms.org