

PRESS RELEASE
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16 COUNTRIES, 15 DAYS, 40 EVENTS

LONDON CELEBRATES CONTEMPORARY ARAB CULTURE IN MAJOR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

The programme was announced today for the second edition of **Shubbak, A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture**, with 15 days of exhibitions, concerts, films, plays, family events, talks and seminars in venues across London over two weeks from **22 June to 6 July 2013**.

Building on the success of the first Shubbak Festival in 2011, and celebrating the growing cultural influence of the city's Arab population, artists originating from countries including Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen will come together in London for this year's Festival.

Among the host venues are the Barbican Centre, the British Museum, Tate Modern, The Mosaic Rooms, Arab British Centre, Asia House, ICA, Serpentine Gallery, Rich Mix and the London College of Fashion.

The Festival's opening weekend welcomes the whole community with free family events at the Lyric Square in Hammersmith, and moves into the night with an explosive double bill at the Barbican Centre on **Saturday 22 June** featuring two of Algeria's most outspoken musical rebels, rock and rai performer, Rachid Taha, and steely singer-songwriter, Souad Massi.

The programme puts the spotlight on major Arab artists who have established careers, yet are little known outside the Middle East, as well as showcasing new talent:

- London's best experimental theatres will host a series of international premieres of work by significant Arab writers from countries including Syria, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco.

- There will be a major programme of films presented in collaboration with Ciné Lumière at the Institut Français, the British Museum and the ICA.

- The visual arts programme includes the first major exhibition of the visionary Sudanese artist, 83 year-old Ibrahim El-Salahi at Tate Modern, showing alongside the highly acclaimed exhibition of Lebanese artist Saloua Raouda Choucair.

*Music is threaded through the entire programme including a rare appearance by Lebanese composer and oud master Marcel Khalifé, a unique concert by the Cairo-based Nubian singers and drummers collective, Nuba Nour, and an evening devoted to contemporary Arab composers in the newly restored splendour of the Nasser Hall at the Egyptian Cultural Centre.

- Talks and discussions include everything from an international conference on contemporary art in the Middle East at SOAS, to a fascinating discussion as part of the Faith and Fashion Series at London College of Fashion, examining the trend for ‘conservative chic’ expressed by young Muslim women turning to the hijab.

- Families are invited to participate in three special weekends of free events: at the Lyric Square Hammersmith; in Kensington Gardens, hosted by the Serpentine Gallery and Qatar Museums Authority as part of Qatar UK 2013, and the popular Lebanese Festival Day on Cavendish Square.

The closing night on **Saturday 6 July** will be an all-out party at The Flyover Portobello, showcasing a fresh blend of Arab hip-hop, soul and reggae, and featuring the most inspiring young Palestinian artists from the USA, UK Jordan and Palestine. Artists announced so far include: Z The People, El Far3i, Walaa Sbeit and Native Sun.

In the words of Festival Chair, Omar Al-Qattan: “These are turbulent and challenging times for the region but they are also rich with expectation and hope. No-one can guide us better through them than the region’s writers, artists and creators and London is one of the best places to celebrate that extraordinary vitality and creativity.”

Eckhard Thiemann, Artistic Director, said: “This programme is an open invitation to everyone in London to glimpse the dynamic state of Arab culture today. Youthful, experimental, generous, daring. A shot in the arm for London, and a chance to celebrate the best of the arts from all over the Arab world.”

Shubbak is sponsored by the A. M. Qattan Foundation and is supported by Arts Council England, the Mayor of London’s office, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in London, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith London BID, Institut Français, Qatar UK2013, Qatar Museums Authority and the British Council. Shubbak official opening is sponsored by Barclays.

For full details of the programme including dates, times and booking information, the Shubbak website is launched today:

www.shubbak.co.uk

Twitter: @shubbakfestival

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Notes to Editors:

A.M. Qattan Foundation

The A.M. Qattan Foundation is an independent, not-for-profit developmental organisation founded in 1993 in the United Kingdom. Since its establishment, the Foundation has worked towards the development of culture and education in Palestine and the Arab World. With a particular focus on children, teachers and young artists, it operates through three main programmes: The Culture and Arts Programme, including The Mosaic Rooms in London and *Selat* in Lebanon; The Qattan Centre for the Child (QCC) in Gaza City and The Qattan Centre for Educational Research and Development (QCERD).

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