

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE FROM THE ARAB WORLD  
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the  
mosaic  
rooms



## Press Release

### *Tracing Landscapes*

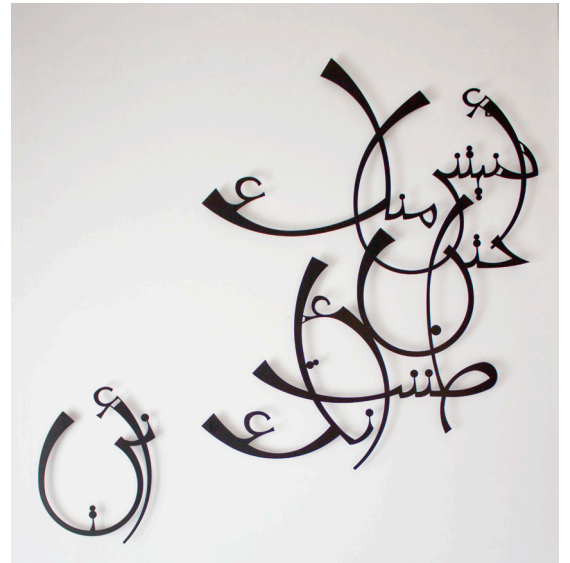
Dia Batal

9 - 27 September 2015

Private View: Tuesday 8 Sept 6.30pm-8.30pm

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

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



The Mosaic Rooms, London, are pleased to present a special exhibition of new multimedia works by spatial designer Dia Batal for London Design Festival. Batal uses the art of Arabic calligraphy to transform text into objects, which seek to engage audiences in contemporary issues of identity and belonging. In this exhibition, Batal not only re-envision this traditional art but also conventional architectural forms and objects.

Suspended in front of one of the gallery windows, the designer has created a Mashrabiya, a window screen customarily wooden and ornamental in form. The designer's fragmented interpretation is designed to act as a memorial for the Palestinian children killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza in summer 2014. *Playing on the Beach is a Dangerous Course* features embroidered panels, using cross-stitch traditional to Palestinian embroidery, with the individual names of 30 victims taken from the records of the over 500 deceased. Dedicated to the four boys killed on the beach, the piece examines shifting rituals and mourning spaces in times of conflict. Tactile, delicate, and ephemeral, subject to temporal changes in light and shade, this impermanent commemoration creates space within a threshold, a possible place of remembering.

Ideas of home and belonging are looked at in two new pieces in metal. Using text taken from the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, Batal explores the meaning of place in an age of migration and immigration, of moving here but coming from there. One work draws inspiration from navigational tools such as compasses. She creates an object that points to home, a device to determine a psycho-geographical direction, a bearing full of both intent and longing. Through the artworks, home is also signified as an internal orientation, one that we guide to remain on our own course of belonging.

This is further examined in the new multimedia work done in collaboration with Maya Chami, in which the story of Batal's grandmother is unfolded through the fragmented narratives of a journey

of displacement. Forced to leave her home in Palestine, and never able to return, this is an emotive animation that examines the significance of involuntary departures from a homeland, and how and where the idea of home can remain after such conflict.

By looking back the designer is also projecting forward. In an attempt to create a learning resource for her own child, who is growing up in a geographic location different to the one in which she was raised in, she retraces and portrays elements of recalled landscapes. In a series of silkscreen prints Batal uses alphabet posters to remember the towns and cities of Palestine before 1948; in another she celebrates the birds of the Arab world.

Dia Batal was born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1978 where she studied design, before moving to London to complete her MA in Design and Critical Practice at Goldsmiths College. Her work has been shown in collective and solo exhibitions in Beirut, Manama, Amman, Paris, Liverpool and London. Batal has also worked on a number of community outreach projects for institutions such as British Museum, V&A, Iniva and The Mosaic Rooms amongst others. She is based in London.

**For further details, images and to arrange interviews contact Rosa Attwood at [press@mosaicrooms.org](mailto:press@mosaicrooms.org) or on + 44 207 370 9990.**

### Notes to Editors

- Dia Batal is available for interview.
- Images and biography are available on request.
- Entry to the exhibition is free. The Mosaic Rooms are open from 11am–6pm Tuesday to Saturday; during London Design Festival the exhibition will also be open 12–5pm on Sunday.
- The exhibition is accompanied by a public program of talks and events. Visit [www.mosaicrooms.org](http://www.mosaicrooms.org) for full listings
- 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 their free-entry contemporary art exhibitions, their multidisciplinary events, artist residencies and learning and engagement programme. They work in partnership with national and international organisations to disseminate their combined arts program to the widest possible audience. The Mosaic Rooms' program is run by Rachael Jarvis, Director. The Mosaic Rooms are a project of the A.M. Qattan Foundation.
- The Mosaic Rooms are situated on the corner of the Cromwell Road and Earl's Court Road in Kensington, London, a short walk from Earl's Court Underground Station and Exhibition Centre. For further information about The Mosaic Rooms and the A.M. Qattan Foundation visit [www.mosaicrooms.org](http://www.mosaicrooms.org).
- The exhibition has been supported using public funding by Arts Council England.
- The exhibition is a part of London Design Festival 2015.



Supported using public funding by

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ENGLAND**



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