

The Mosaic Rooms present a unique programme of free contemporary art exhibitions, talks, films, and other special events. We are a non-profit gallery and cultural space in West London dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary culture from and about the Arab world.

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Suspended Accounts

The Young Artist of The Year Award (YAYA)

15 January–27 February 2016

Tuesday–Saturday 11am–6pm, FREE

Private view: Thursday 14 January, 6.30–8.30pm

The biennial award — organised by the A. M. Qattan Foundation's Culture and Arts Programme in the Occupied West Bank city of Ramallah — is open to young artists under 30 of Palestinian descent, from any part of the world. The award is named The Hassan Hourani Award in honour of one of the winners of the first YAYA, who passed away in a tragic accident in August 2003. Since its inception YAYA has presented generations of young artists ambitious to occupy a space in the art world.

Every two years an open call for applications is made locally and internationally. Applicants are invited to submit proposals for a work or related group of works that are to be made specifically for the Award. The shortlisted artists are given financial support and period of time to develop and produce their proposed work, with the support of a curator, which will then be exhibited.

This year was the first year the award issued an open call for the curatorial role and asked applicants to respond to a thematic framework, in this instance the 'Archive.' Viviana Checchia, a curator and critic and the Co-Founder and Chief Curator of Vessel in Italy, was selected. Checchia devised the theme of 'Suspended Accounts' and engaged in a lengthy curatorial process with the artists. She is currently working as Public Engagement Curator at CCA, Glasgow.

From the finalists the first, second and third prize award winners are selected by a jury of internationally renowned creatives. In this edition the jury comprised Asunción Molinos Gordo, Kamal al-Jafari, Michael Rakowitz, Nida Sinnokrot and Samia Halaby. The jury selected Bashar Khalaf as First Prize winner, Noor Abu Arafah for Second Prize, and Noor Abed and Farah Saleh in joint Third Prize.

The 2014 edition took place in a local context that was weighted by the consequences of the last Israeli war on Gaza, and in a regional context troubled by conflict, giving such cultural opportunities as YAYA increased resonance and significance at this time.



The Mosaic Rooms are pleased to present a selection of work from the A.M. Qattan Foundation's *Young Artist of the Year Award 2014*, (YAYA14), for the first time in the UK. The works shown are diverse — spanning film, performance, installation and painting — unified through the shared theme of 'Suspended Accounts.' Originally curated by Viviana Checchia and envisioned by her as a long-term project, the work grew from an intensive process in which the curator and the nine finalist artists connected, critiqued and developed their work over time, through virtual forums as well as one-to-one discussion and group sessions. The process was shared with various art practitioners who offered critical support and guidance to the young artists. Checchia has used the same principle for this London presentation: the six selected artists and curator have been meeting online to discuss and re-envision the work in the particular context of The Mosaic Rooms. This has also resulted in an associated public programme of four events.

Beneath the overarching concept, the works are explored through three subthemes. In 'Invisible Narratives' the artists aim to reveal what remains unseen. Hamody Gannam's sound installation of archive boxes,

Wadi Nisnas, aims to remember the stories the Israeli occupation attempts to erase, through a series of interviews with the residents of Wadi Nisnas, a segment of what remains of Haifa's old city. In Farah Saleh's interactive video dance installation *A Fidayee Son in Moscow*, she invites viewers to experience the Interdom, a Moscow school built to host children of international revolutionary parents — including those of the Palestinian leftist leadership. The artist examines the significance of gesture through the history of a certain socio-political group.

Thinking in terms of 'Self-Historicisation' the artists use references to the past to question present identity. Iman Al Sayed's mixed media installation *Re-repeat*, explores her father's memories and archival material as a means of connecting with her own Palestinian identity, questioning the function of memory both real and imaginary. Meanwhile Bashar Khalaf's *A Shadow of the Shadow* seeks to bring the vision of established Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour into the present; each painting in Khalaf's series sits in dialogue with a specific painting by Mansour alongside it.

Cover and previous page Bashar Khalaf, *A Shadow of the Shadow*, 2014, series, oil on canvas

Facing page Hamody Gannam, *Wadi Nisnas*, 2014, installation detail; Farah Saleh, *A Fidayee Son in Moscow*, 2014, video still





In 'Imagination', the artists are projecting alternative or fictional visions. Noor Abu Arafeh's video installation *Observational Desire on a Memory that Remains*, is an attempt to present an alternative archive of Palestinian art history — translating undocumented and imagined works in the medium of film, whilst questioning what remains in memory. Noor Abed's video installation *Penelope* explores ideas of futility, homeland and time, taking inspiration from Homer's *Odyssey*.

Scattered globally, or born and raised away from the land of their parents, many of these artists seek to connect with their Palestinian identity by imagining, reflecting on, or appropriating others' experiences. Exploring the memories of others, examining archives, imagining and constructing undocumented artifacts, questioning recorded histories, and interrogating ideas of identity, the exhibition presents an insight into the practices of today's emerging Palestinian artists.



Facing page Iman Al Sayed, *Re-repeat*, 2014, installation detail

Top Noor Abed, *Penelope*, 2014, video still

Above Noor Abu Arafeh, *Observational Desire on a Memory that Remains*, 2014, video still

Jan-Feb Events

YAYA PROGRAMME

Curator's Tour

Saturday 16 January, 12pm

Viviana Checchia will discuss the works in the exhibition, and the curatorial process of the award, working with the shortlisted artists, and the exhibition in Ramallah in 2014.

FREE

'What if' histories: detection, real fictions and alternate facts **Saturday 30 January, 11.30am**

Curator and art historian Federica Martini discusses 'Firasa', a term taken from Sufi philosophy, based on the idea that from clues we can infer the unknown. This talk will establish a dialogue with the exhibited video by Noor Abu Arafah.

FREE

Wadi Al-Nisnas

Saturday 30 January, 12.30pm

Following on from the above Walaa Sbait, a community arts practitioner born in Haifa, will discuss Wadi Al-Nisnas, one of the few Arab neighbourhoods left in the city. The talk gives further context to Hamody Gannam's installation of oral stories from the area.

FREE

Latent Gestures

Tuesday 19 January, 5pm-8pm

Artist Farah Saleh leads this workshop that will investigate how artists can contribute to change by exploring social and political memories, while using the body as archive. Participants will attempt to archive an array of gestures and movements present in their personal and collective stories.

FREE

LITERATURE

Worldwide Reading

Thursday 14 January, 6-6.30pm

As part of this international event there will be a reading for the Palestinian poet and artist Ashraf Fayadh, currently sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia for 'apostasy', in association with English PEN.

FREE

Burning Country

Wednesday 27 January, 7pm

Join author and media commentator Robin Yassin-Kassab in conversation with Malu Halasa about this new novel, which explores the horrific and complicated reality of life in present-day Syria and draws on new first-hand testimonies.

FREE

TALKS

Possible & Imaginary Lives

Thursday 11 February, 7pm

Yasmine Eid-Sabbagh discusses an exhibition and book project that tells the story of four Palestinian-Lebanese sisters who have travelled through the history of the twentieth century. Based on family photographs and taped interviews — it is a narrative of both actual and imagined events, documentary and myth.

FREE

FILM

My Love Awaits Me By The Sea

Thursday 4 February, 7.30pm

Acclaimed poetic documentary narrating the story of director Mais Darwazah, who takes a journey back to her homeland, Palestine, for the first time. Like YAYA the film is also in tribute to Hassan Hourani.

Tickets £6.50 online

PERFORMANCE

The Moment

Thursday 25 February, 7.30pm

Award winning Egyptian dancer and choreographer Salah El Brogy performs his solo contemporary dance piece. Inspired by Sufism, it is a high-octane energetic exploration of a spiritual journey. Followed by a Q&A with Salah.

Tickets £10 online

Free events: rsvp@mosaicrooms.org

Full listings: www.mosaicrooms.org



**AN A.M. QATTAN
FOUNDATION PROJECT**