



JOHN HALAKA
LANDSCAPES OF DESIRE

06.05.11 - 25.05.11

John Halaka Landscapes of Desire

The Mosaic Rooms is proud to present the debut UK exhibition of renowned activist artist John Halaka.

The drawings in the series *Landscapes of Desire* take their inspiration from the ruins of Palestinian homes and villages destroyed during and after the 1948 exodus. Halaka uses the images to reflect an ongoing effort to annihilate a Palestinian culture that refuses to disappear and an indigenous people that refuse to be swept away. Depicting the ruins of stone homes from devastated Palestinian villages such as Kufr Bir'im, Lifta, Al-Bassa, A'mka and Kweikat, the drawings are a declaration that the persistence of memory is a crucial act of political resistance and cultural survival.

These drawings are rendered with ink and one or two repeatedly stamped words. The words model and define the forms portrayed in these line drawings. The landscapes appear almost as specters, suspended in a state of transition between becoming visible and vanishing, suggestive of a reality bordering both disappearance and re-emergence. Most importantly, the repeated words employed to construct the drawings become a visual mantra, compelling us to "remember," "resist," "return," "rebuild" and prepare to "forgive."

Halaka comments: " I view forgiveness as one of the most challenging, yet the most critical final stages of a successful non-violent resistance campaign waged by

the Palestinians against their occupiers....History teaches all who have suffered or continue to suffer under the tyranny of an oppressor, that without cultivating an emotional state of forgiveness the victims risk becoming the monster they wish to destroy. "

John Halaka is of Palestinian descent and was born in El Mansoura, Egypt, in 1957. He is a Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of San Diego, where he has taught since 1991. He received his MFA in the Visual Arts from the University of Houston in 1983.

John Halaka has exhibited his work in solo and group exhibitions both locally and nationally in the USA. His work was included in the exhibit *Made In Palestine*, organized by the Station Museum, in Houston Texas, as well as *IN-VISIBLE*, the inaugural exhibition at the Arab American National Museum in Detroit, Michigan. His recent documentary film credits include *The Presence of Absence in the Ruins of Kufr Bir'im* (60 minutes, released November 2007, SittingCrow Productions) and *Wounds of the Heart: An Artist and her Nation* (53 minutes. April 2009. SittingCrow Productions).

Halaka's recent work in both painting and documentary filmmaking investigates issues of identity construction from personal, familial and political perspectives. Both mediums which serve as a vehicle for meditation on these concerns. His images raise questions, for himself as well as for the viewer, about some of the pressing issues of our time.



Desire-Survival, Ink and Rubber Stamped Ink on Paper, 2010. 117 x 203 cm



Remember-Forgive, Ink and Rubber Stamped Ink on Paper, 2009. 122 x 213 cm



Survival, detail, ink and Rubber Stamped Ink on Paper, 2009. 56 x 76 cm

Artist's talk: 7th May 2011, 12pm
RSVP info@mosaicrooms.org, 020 7370 9990

Exhibition open Mon-Fri 11-6pm, Sat 11-4pm

Nearest Underground station: Earl's Court (Earl's Court Road exit)

Buses: 74, 328, C1, C3

Parking: One disabled parking space is available by prior arrangement.

Parking meters are available in Lexham Gardens behind the building.

cover *Desire*, detail, Ink and Rubber Stamped
Ink on Paper, 2009. 56 x 76 cm

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226 Cromwell Road
London SW5 0SW
www.mosaicrooms.org