

CONTEMPORARY CULTURE FROM THE ARAB WORLD
VISUAL ART / LITERATURE / FILM / MUSIC / FOOD

the
mosaic
rooms



Press Release

LARISSA SANSOUR

In the Future, They Ate From The Finest Porcelain

3 June - 20 August 2016

Private View: 2 June 6.30pm-8.30pm

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

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



Film still from *In the Future, They Ate From The Finest Porcelain*.

The Mosaic Rooms presents the first London solo exhibition of internationally-exhibited artist Larissa Sansour. Sansour's work explores the crossover between the fictional and the factual, interrogating personal and political issues. In this ambitious show, Jerusalem-born Sansour creates a vision of a futuristic world where the excavation of the past is a battleground. The artist offers a poetic and charged reflection on the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel/Palestine, where the material past is used as a tool to justify territorial claims and assert historic entitlement.

The exhibition features an acclaimed 29-minute video piece, large format photographs and two object-based installations never before exhibited in the UK. In the video, which gives the exhibition its title, the artist presents a vision of a post-apocalyptic world in which a hooded figure, haunted by her past, plants fabricated archaeological evidence to secure the destiny of her people. The film's protagonist is the leader of a narrative resistance group; Sansour uses the co-option of narrative as fact to examine the origins of history, authorship and ownership. This is in particular reference to Israel/Palestine but more broadly reflective of other contested spaces and colonial contexts.

Revisionist Production Line continues Sansour's exploration of archaeology as a tool of contemporary warfare. In this installation a production line appears to be mass-producing porcelain plates printed with the keffiyeh pattern, a symbol of Palestinian nationalism. Like the porcelain shown in the film, the implication is that these will be similarly used as objects purposefully planted in the ground for future excavation and historical claims. The piece highlights the contemporary political use of archaeological practice as a means to post-manufacture fact and support pre-stated histories.

This is furthered in the newest installation, *Archaeology in Absentia*. Here the audience encounters a series of exquisitely crafted bronze bombs. Inside each is a metal disc inscribed with coordinates referring to a site in the West Bank where Sansour has recently buried porcelain during a live performance. Each bomb therefore refers to absent artefacts, yet to be unearthed, yet to intervene in historical records. Intended to belong in various museum collections, these metal pieces offer a reversal of standard museum display – instead of objects that belong to the past, they reference a future yet to be revealed. The installation poses important questions about the role of museums and their collections in the formation of national identity, the presentation of history and constitution of the future.

Born in East Jerusalem, Palestine, in 1973, Larissa Sansour now lives and works in London. Her work is interdisciplinary, utilising video, photography, sculpture and installation. She describes the central theme of her work as exploring 'the tug and pull of fiction and reality in a Middle-Eastern context', and has recently used both science fiction and comic books to explore this. Her work has been exhibited at Tate Modern, London; the Centre Pompidou, France; the Istanbul Biennial; Sharjah, UAE; and the Louisiana Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark.

A public programme of talks and events that examine the themes in the exhibition in more detail will accompany the show. The exhibition is part of a 2016 season at The Mosaic Rooms that reflects on the use of narrative and forms of cultural production, and their influences in present formations of, or absences within, national identity and accepted histories.

For further details, images and to arrange interviews email press@mosaicrooms.org or on + 44 207 370 9990.

Notes to Editors

- Larissa Sansour will be available for interview. Images and more details available on request.
- Entry to the exhibition is free. The Mosaic Rooms are open from 11am–6pm Tuesday to Saturday.
- The exhibition will be accompanied by a public programme of talks and events.
- 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 programme to the widest possible audience. The Mosaic Rooms' programme 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 Earl's Court Road in Kensington, London.
- Visit www.mosaicrooms.org