



the khaliq shoman foundation darat al funun

the khailid shoman foundation
darat al funun



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a home for the arts

Darat al
Funun is,
today, a
living place
where the
public
experiences
the visual
arts in
harmony
with
other
forms
of self-
expression



On a hill, overlooking the heart of Amman, stands Darat al Funun, a home for the arts and artists of Jordan and the Arab World. Since its founding in 1993, Darat al Funun has come to realize its vision of bringing together the various forms of artistic expression and revealing the dynamism of contemporary ideas and art practices.

Within Darat al Funun's spaces, creative art and critical discourse are fostered. Its indoor and outdoor exhibition areas, workshops, and artists-in-residence program provide a platform for the visual arts. The mounting of innovative exhibitions, film screenings,

live performances, and multidisciplinary activities create an environment conducive to intercultural, artistic exchange.

At Darat al Funun, visiting and resident artists produce and exhibit artworks in a variety of media, from painting to printmaking, sculpture to installation, and photography to video art. Artists conduct workshops and hold talks. The screening of films on the history of art and the specialized reference publications of the library are invaluable resources for those interested in serious research on art from ancient to contemporary times. Guided tours are organized for students and groups around the exhibitions. Literary meetings and book signings have also been programmed on a regular basis. Amid rows of illuminated Roman columns, performing arts shows are staged. Darat al Funun is, today, a living place where the public experiences the visual arts in harmony with other forms of self-expression.

Darat al Funun's grounds cover almost four dunums (one acre) of terraced gardens that encompass three historic houses dating back to the 1920's and the remains of a sixth-

century Byzantine church built over a Roman temple. The restoration of the buildings and antiquities, with all the history that they hold, has contributed to preserving Jordan's cultural heritage. Their rehabilitation for contemporary use has enriched them with new visions of the Arab art of our time.

In 2002, Darat al Funun was incorporated into the non-profit Khalid Shoman Foundation, established in memory of the banker and patron of the Darat. Art works from his private collection are on display alongside temporary exhibitions, emphasizing the need to preserve the work and aesthetic expressions of Arab artists for future generations.

As artists create new visual languages that explore regional or universal questions and draw inspiration from their exchanges with one another, the world of contemporary Arab art thrives. For some of these artists, Darat al Funun is a stepping-stone to greater exposure; for Arab artists living abroad, it serves as a vital link with their homeland. In these ways and more, Darat al Funun's aspiration to become a haven for the arts is being fulfilled.



A close-up photograph of a concrete floor that has cracked into several large, irregular pieces. The cracks are deep and run in various directions, creating a fragmented surface. The lighting is somewhat dim, casting soft shadows in the crevices of the cracks.

the place

"This is
a very
special site,
a place
where,
it seems,
there was
continuity
in cult
spanning
millennia –
one cult
taking
the
place
of another"



In the southern gardens of Darat al Funun lie the ruins of a sixth-century Byzantine church and an old cave. British explorer Major C. R. Conder, who excavated part of the church, first identified the site in 1881. Adjoining the church was a cave, which Conder speculated was "sacred as a tomb or cave-dwelling of some saint." In the early 20th century, the Dominican fathers R. Savignac and M. Abel recorded two inscriptions among the ruins, one of which indicated that the church may have been dedicated to St. George. The other inscription raised the possibility that the church was built over or near a Roman temple dedicated to Herakles.





Left & Right Pottery and mosaics unearthed from the Darat's archaeological site

In 1993, Dr. Pierre Bikai, director of the American Center for Oriental Research (ACOR), conducted excavation and restoration work on the site.

Dr. Bikai explains: "An inscription bearing the name of the Roman god Herakles found at the site has led to speculation as to whether an earlier monument, perhaps dedicated to that god, existed at or near this site. Byzantine churches were often built above Roman temples and at this site there are many Roman elements, including columns and inscriptions. The cave was probably in use before the church was built and probably had some religious significance since the plan of the church was dictated by the presence of the cave. Perhaps it held, or was thought to hold, the tomb of one of the Amman martyrs or some significant person."

"An inscription mentioning St. George was also found at the site. The relationship between Herakles and St. George is relevant to the structure. Known for his strength, Herakles was one of the heroes of classical mythology. St. George is, of course, known for having killed a dragon. F. M. Abel (1908:570) commented: 'The metamorphosis of Herakles into St. George is easy since the two characters have physical strength as an attribute.' There is a further association between St. George and al-Khadr, the legendary being of Islam. The common factor that al-Khadr and St. George share is that they both appear as horsemen. There is some evidence that the cave was associated with al-Khadr well into the 20th century. This is a very special site, a place where, it seems, there was continuity in cult spanning millennia – one cult taking the place of another, each embodying some of the features of the earlier one. The Christian church perhaps dedicated to St. George and perhaps on or near the site of a shrine dedicated to Herakles, in turn, became a memorial for al-Khadr."

The church had the form of a rectangular hall laid out in an east/west orientation, with a semi-circular apse to its east and an entrance to its west. The hall was divided into three parts



by two rows of three columns each. The eastern part of the church was separated from the rest by a chancel screen, which spanned the entire width of the hall. The central part of the chancel was covered with colored tiles while its two sides were covered with mosaics. In the western part of the church was a baptismal font, an oval cut into the floor.

The cave, which lies in the southern part of the site, contains four niches, one of which may hold the remains of a tomb. The cave was incorporated into the church's structure as indicated by the walls that were built within its confines. In front of it, a mosaic can be found. There is evidence which suggests that a second cave lies east of the first one. However, this cave remains unexcavated.

Most of the mosaics in the site are made up of large tesserae. Their predominant color is white. Some red, yellow, and blue is used. Among the mosaics in which forms are visible, the chief motif is a floral one.

As part of the church's restoration, its column drums were reset and the single Corinthian capital still present was placed on the northeastern column. A second capital, thought to have been taken from the site, was obtained from a private collection and returned to its original location. Remnants of the mosaic floor were also unearthed. The ancient artifacts that were recovered from the site are now on display in a special room in the Darat's library. These include a Nike relief, an Arab imitation of a Byzantine coin, two complete Abbasid lamps, a nearly complete steatite lamp dating back to the late Abbasid or early Fatamid period, and pottery from various phases of the Islamic era.

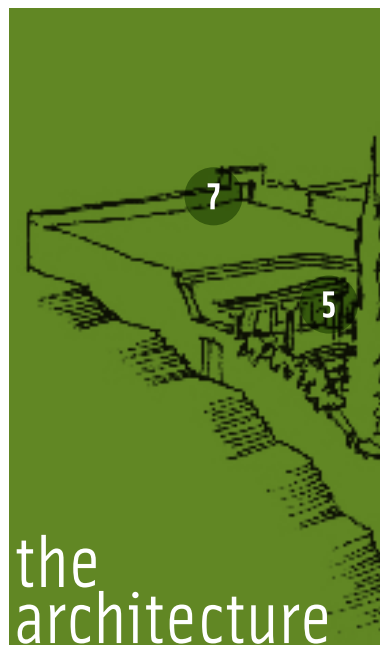
The
Byzantine
church built
over a Roman
temple is
a dramatic
setting
for the
performing
arts shows
and other
outdoor
activities
organized
by Darat al
Funun >>

Right The sounds of
"Hadra," Tunisian songs
and praise by Fadel al
Jaziri, permeate the site



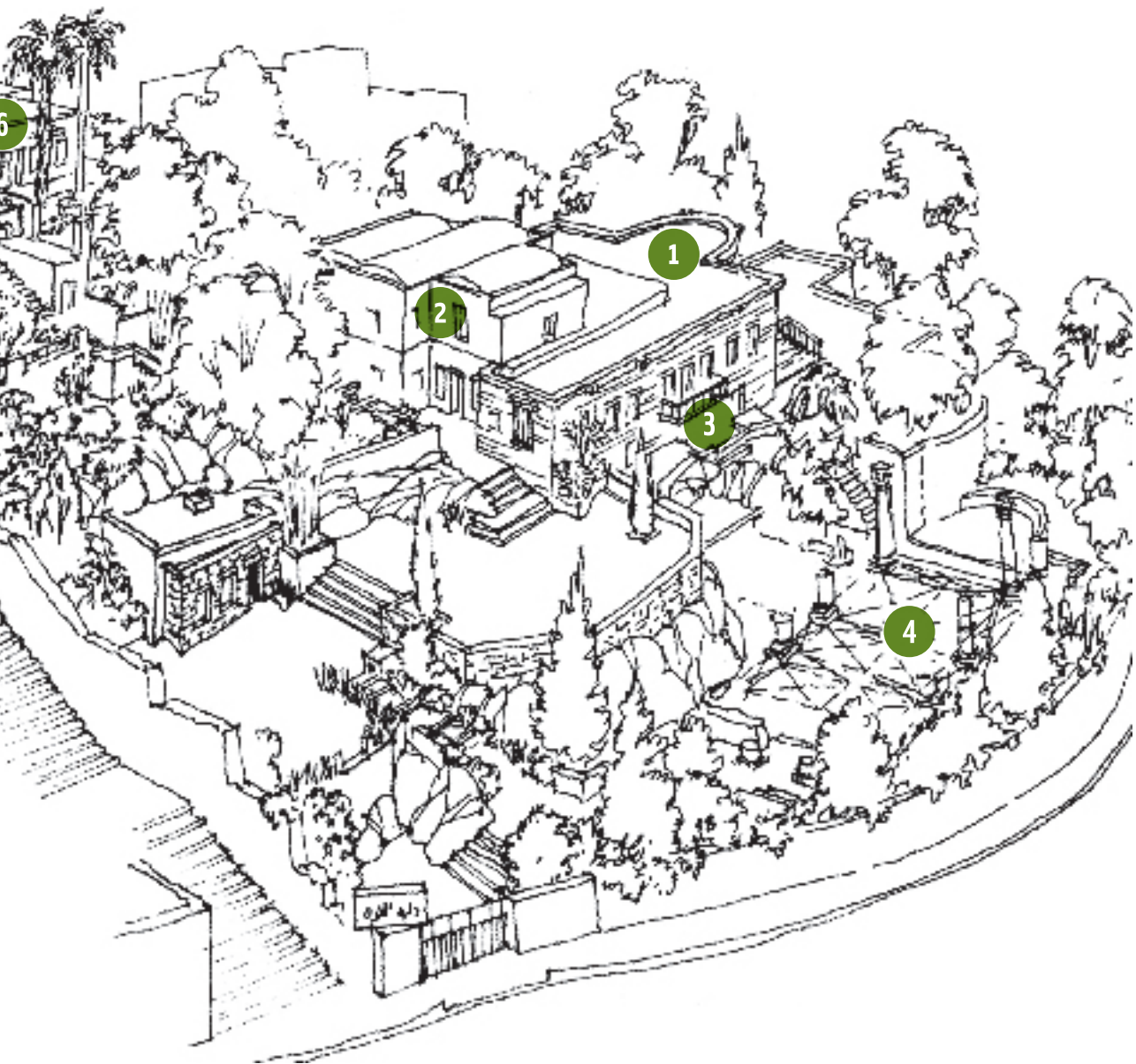
Following the opening of Darat al Funun, other long forgotten buildings have been converted into spaces for the arts

Once overlooking a Circassian village that occupied Amman's central valley, Darat al Funun's houses are now situated within easy reach of the city's bustling downtown area. At the time of their construction, around 1920, Amman was experiencing the beginning of its urban expansion; buildings were just starting to spill out of its central valley and climb up the slopes of the surrounding hills.



The houses of Darat al Funun were among the first residences erected in the area by Jordan's prominent families. When the Foundation chose them as the ideal setting for a home for the arts, the main building and its surrounding grounds were in a critical condition. Two Jordanian architects carried out the restoration of Darat al Funun's complex. From 1992 to 1995, Ammar Khammash renovated the three buildings and their surroundings, and added a library onto the roof of the main building. In 2005, Sahel al Hiyari redesigned the upper boundary walls and the entrance, introducing modern architectural concepts to the site.

Following the rehabilitation and opening of Darat al Funun, other long forgotten buildings in the area have been converted into spaces for the arts, giving the neighborhood a new lease on life.



1 | Main Building 2 | Library 3 | Workshops 4 | Archaeological Site 5 | Blue House 6 | Dar Khalid 7 | Modern Facade

the main building

Influenced by the Venetian style, the building is representative of the Mediterranean architecture that was in fashion in cities such as Beirut, Haifa, and Jaffa in the 1920s



According to Nimr Pasha al Hmoud, his grandfather, the mayor of Salt, then one of Jordan's major cities, began construction of the main building in 1918. The two-storey building served as the official residence of the British commander of the Arab Legion, Colonel F. G. Peake, until 1938. It is said that T. E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, was a guest at this house. In 1939, the building was leased to the Jordanian government and served for a short while as the Prime Minister's office. From 1939, when Glubb Pasha became commander of the Arab Legion, until 1956, when the Arab Legion was Arabized, the house was used as a club for British officers. In 1956, it was converted into a private school, the Arab School for Girls. The building was abandoned in 1978 until it was salvaged by the Foundation.

Renovation work on the main building began in 1992 under the supervision of Ammar Khammash. He explains that the approach was one of "minimum intervention... The stone elevations of the houses... were left untouched. They retain the marks of tools that were once held in the hands of strength and skill. In these elevations resides a hand written text, the footprints and chisels that once rang under the impact of the hammer and the identity of an individual stonemason."

In Khammash's restoration, "[c]hanges were limited to those, which help synchronize the new function of the buildings with their inherent qualities." He retained the main building's three-bay plan, transforming its interior space into three inter-connected galleries. A library, with a triple vaulted ceiling, reminiscent of the

With its
limestone
walls and
ornamented
tiled floors,
the house is
one of the
few examples
of traditional
Jordanian
architecture
that has been
conserved in
Amman >>

Right The external staircases and grand semi-circular entrance portico of the main building's eastern facade







Umayyad desert castle of Amra, was added onto the building's roof. The architect explains that "[t]he addition was built out of concrete blocks to make a clear contrast with the old parts, avoiding the use of stone which might have created an unpleasant mimicry." At the same time, the "[c]ontrast was limited to the texture of the walls, without a great difference in colour," allowing the new and the old to harmoniously blend together. Three of the windows from the original building were incorporated into the library; they overlook the middle exhibition hall, giving readers a view of the artworks on display. Twin external staircases rise from the garden to a grand semicircular entrance portico.

With its limestone walls and ornamented tiled floors, the house is one of the few examples of traditional Jordanian architecture that has been conserved in Amman.

Left Works from the Khalid Shoman Private Collection are mounted in the main building's middle hall, as part of the collection's premiere exhibition

the blue house

Built by workers from Jordan's Circassian community, the house was named after the color of its porch, doors, and wrought iron window bars





In its front
courtyard,
surrounding
a fountain
shaded by
lush trees,
is Darat al
Funun's
café, where
artists,
students,
and visitors
meet >>

The Blue House, as it is called today, was originally built by workers from Jordan's Circassian community for Ismail Haqqi Abdo, a former governor of Akka in Palestine. In 1994, renovation work began on this house in order to create additional space for exhibitions and for screenings of films on the history of art. Khammash added a distinctively Circassian porch during the building's restoration. The house was named after the color of its porch, doors, and wrought iron window bars. In its front courtyard, surrounding a fountain shaded by lush trees, is Darat al Funun's café, where artists, students, and visitors meet.

Left The sunbathed Circassian porch of the Blue Building

Right Young visitors crowd the Darat's café



dar khalid

In October 2002, the house was dedicated to the memory and legacy of Khalid Shoman and named Dar Khalid





Khalid
Shoman's
patronage
of the arts
was an
expression
of his faith in
the creative
resources
of the Arab
World >>

The third house was once the residence of Sheikh Fouad al Khateeb, poet and advisor at the court of Emir Abdullah. In the mid-1950s, Jordanian Prime Minister Suleiman Nabulsi lived in it for seven months. The building was renovated in 1995 to provide living quarters and studios for resident artists.

In October 2002, it was dedicated to the memory and legacy of Khalid Shoman and named Dar Khalid, which, in English, means Khalid's House.

Left An installation
in the gardens of
Dar Khalid

KHALID SHOMAN

October 13, 1931 - June 30, 2001

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Khalid Shoman studied at St. George's School in Jerusalem, Palestine and Victoria College in Alexandria, Egypt. He read economics at Jesus College, Cambridge University, earning his bachelor's degree in 1955 and his master's degree in 1959.

In 1956, Khalid Shoman was appointed Assistant General Manager of the Arab Bank, a leading financial institution founded in Palestine in 1930 by his father, Abdul Hameed Shoman. The following year, he joined the Arab Bank's Board of Directors. After the passing of his father in 1974, Khalid Shoman was elected Deputy Chairman and Deputy General Manager of the Arab Bank. In 1978, he became Deputy Chairman of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, a non-profit organization, dedicated to the memory of his father, which encourages research and development in the sciences and humanities.

Khalid Shoman's interest in the arts led him, with the help of his wife, Suha, to build up a collection of contemporary Arab art for the Arab Bank, the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, and their own private collection. In 1988, when the Foundation established an art gallery in which exhibitions and weekly lectures on art were held, Khalid Shoman gave his full support to his wife in directing these activities. Throughout their experience of dealing with the needs of artists and the wider public, the idea of creating a "Home for the Arts" progressively developed, materializing in 1993, with the establishment of Darat al Funun.



the modern facade

In 2005, Sahel al Hiyari designed a new front for the upper part of the Darat and carried out general restoration work throughout that area of its site. He explains that "[t]he idea behind the boundary walls and the entrance emerges from the very nature of the site itself, which in essence is a complex stratification of diverse historical layers that have their roots in ancient history and extend to the present. Such a specific context calls for an intervention that avoids a nostalgic interpretation of the site's historical and cultural content, whereby history is reduced to a ready-made image or a stylistic exercise."

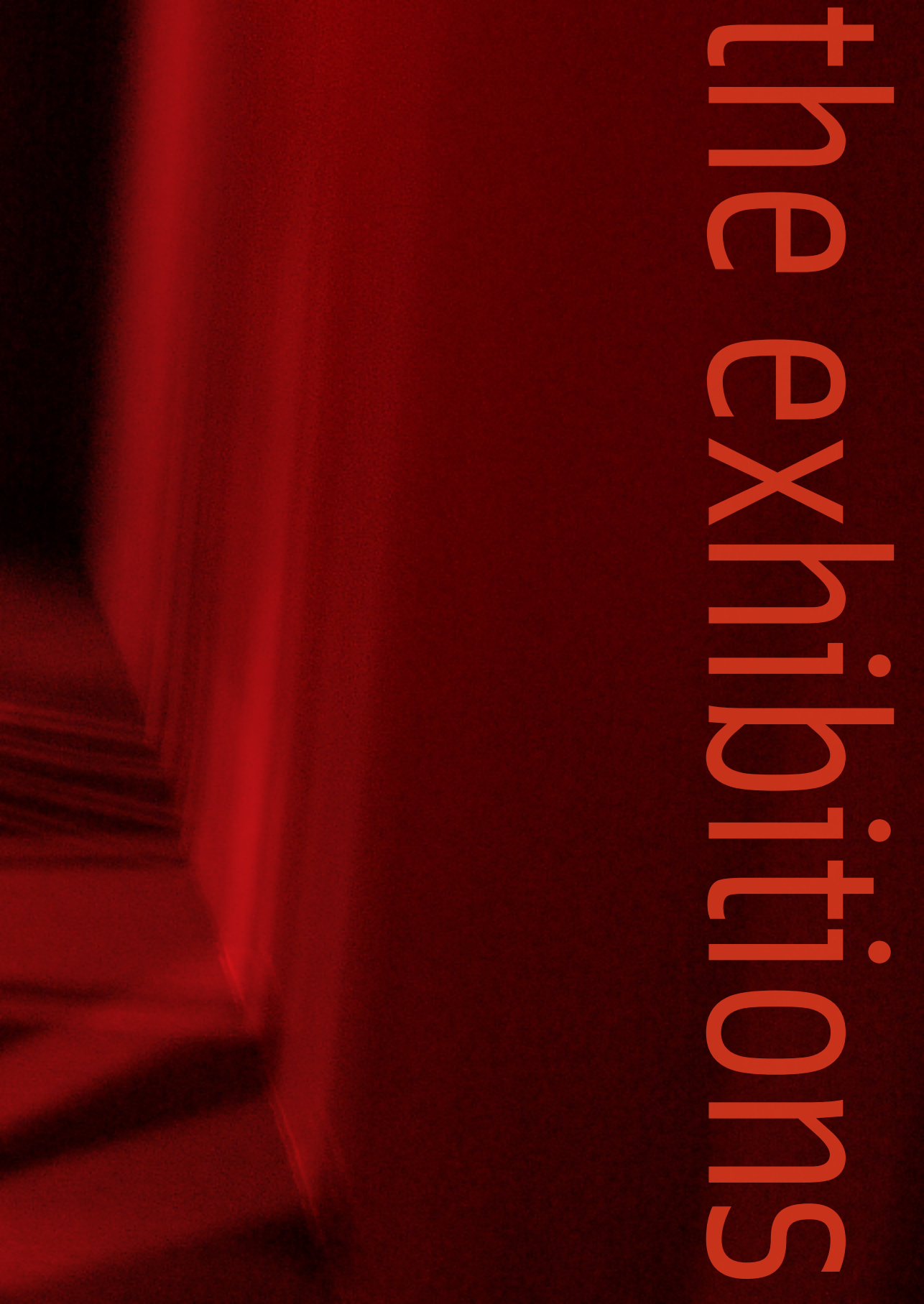
In his intervention, al Hiyari used a combination of stone and concrete, materials which "produce two diverse languages." The language of stone is one of age and tradition, of careful craftsmanship and rough unevenness. That of cement is one of modernity, industry, prefabrication, and mechanized production. Yet these two distinct languages "co exist and form the cadence of that specific district in particular, and of Amman in general."

Such an approach "endorses the plurality and contrasts present within the site, thus remaining consistent with the site's history, process of development, and function as a home for the arts."





the exhibitions



Darat al Funun's innovative exhibitions survey contemporary Arab art, explore new media, and highlight the private collection



By organizing exhibitions that survey contemporary art in the Arab World, explore new media, showcase works from the Khalid Shoman Private Collection, or highlight recent acquisitions, Darat al Funun has contributed to a greater professionalization of the art world in Jordan. Its broad exhibition program introduced the public to various notions of curatorial intent as well as site-specific installation practices.

From 1993 to 2002, a rotating permanent exhibition titled

"Collective Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists," provided visitors with a bird's eye view of the art made by Arab artists living in the region and abroad. It facilitated the acquisition of their works by interested collectors and gave visitors the opportunity to draw comparisons between artists, periods, and media.

Retrospective and solo shows, such as the Centenary of Jordanian-Turkish artist Fahrelnissa Zeid (2002), have also been staged. These shows highlight the development of the work of prominent Arab artists throughout the various stages of their careers, the maturation of their style, and the versatility of their practices and interests.

Throughout 2000 and 2001, Darat al Funun organized a series of exhibitions which explored the theme of a "Journey through the Contemporary Arts of the Arab World." The series began with "Artists from the Arabian Peninsula," then showcased "Artists of the Valley of the Nile" (Egypt and Sudan), followed by "Artists from Mesopotamia" (Iraq). The journey went on to show "Artists

from Bilad Al Sham" (Jordan, Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon) and concluded with "Artists from Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco." These themed exhibitions laid an important foundation for Darat al Funun's work by giving viewers the tools to reflect on the area's rich history and observe its evolving contemporary art scene.

Since 2004, Darat al Funun's exhibition program has emphasized Arab artists working in installation, photography, video, and multimedia art. The exhibition "The Wall and Checkpoints" (2006) featured works by five Palestinian artists, which explored the devastating impact of the checkpoints and separation wall imposed by the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people. One of the main motives behind the exhibition was to pinpoint the relationship between experimental art practices and the need to address complex political concerns through cultural production.

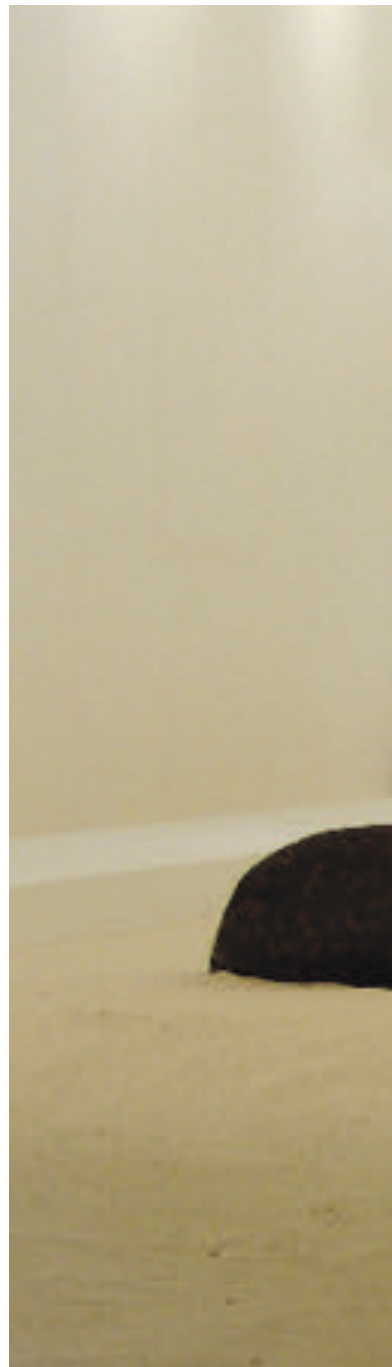
In keeping with the Darat's efforts to show the achievements of the past while promoting the innovations of the present, exhibitions on archaeology and architecture



Previous Setting up an installation by Tarek al Ghousein for the exhibition "The Wall & Check Points"

Top An exhibition of a selection from the Khalid Shoman Private Collection, featuring "So Much I Want to Say," a video by British-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum

Right An installation of rock art from eastern Jordan in the exhibition "Out of the Desert"





were organized. In 2005, an exhibition of modern architectural designs and drawings was mounted. That same year, "Meetings with the Past, Treasures for the Future" presented the various sites uncovered and discoveries made over the past 50 years of Jordanian-European cooperation in the field of archaeology.

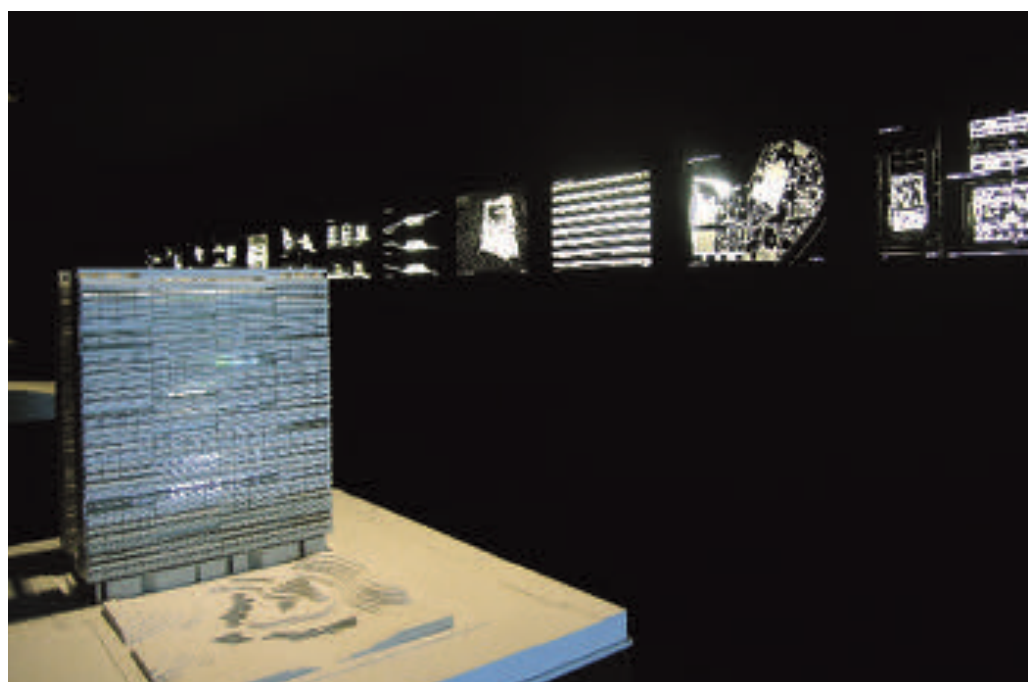
Displaying the old and the new side-by-side, the thematic exhibition "Out of the Desert" (2006) was a visual celebration of the Jordanian desert and all that it has inspired throughout the ages. New discoveries made in Beidha in the Petra region were exhibited for the first time, together with a restored scroll found in the cathedral of Petra, and an installation of stones exemplifying the ancient rock art of Jordan. Running parallel to this was a show of video art and etchings by two contemporary Jordanian artists who took inspiration from the ancient Nabatean city.

Darat al Funun has mounted exhibitions of art and artifacts from private Jordanian collections with the objective of presenting diverse forms of creativity. In 1998, "A Vision, An Identity" introduced a collection of modern paintings and antique objects from Jordan, and in 2001, "Silk Memory" showcased a rare collection of traditional Palestinian and Jordanian costumes. In 2005, the exhibition "Palestine-Jordan 1500-1900" featured a collection of works by European artists who visited the region during that time.

Last but not least, Darat al Funun cooperates with Arab and international institutions on organizing exhibitions with the aim of increasing awareness of developments in the art world.

Top "Architecture," a state-of-the-art exhibition on modern architecture featuring Jordanian architect Sahel al Hiyari

Bottom "Elsewhere," a video installation by Jordanian artist Suha Shoman, in the exhibition "Of Time and Light"







the workshops

Artists are invited to make use of the workshops as well as train with experts in painting, print-making, and new media art



Darat al Funun's studios and workshops, located on the ground floor of the main building, are open to artists throughout the year. Artists are invited to make use of the available workspaces and technical facilities as well as train with experts or artists-in-residence in the fields of painting, printmaking, and new media art.

In 1993, Darat al Funun, in cooperation with the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, established a specialized printmaking studio. The studio was equipped with a sophisticated printing press, housed by Darat al Funun, for the National Gallery. Iraqi artist Rafa'

al Nassiri directed the printmaking studio in its first two years. Since then, several other specialists have conducted workshops. Annual graphic art exhibitions, such as "50 Years of Iraqi Graphic Art," have also been held. In 2000, Darat al Funun acquired its own on-site printing press, enabling artists and students to work and train in this medium.

Since 1995, Darat al Funun has held an annual summer festival, a multi-disciplinary celebration of the arts. Exhibited throughout the festival are works produced during the year in the workshops. Young talents are invited to participate and new ideas are discussed. Alongside the displays and installations in the Darat's indoor and outdoor spaces, a whole range of events are organized, including musical performances, poetry readings and film screenings. The summer festival of the Darat is not only a summation of the year's activities, in which artistic achievements and expressions can be appreciated and enjoyed, but also an initiation into a new year of continued inspiration and productivity.

In 1999, an annual, month-long discussion

on art and training in the workshops was initiated by Darat al Funun and was named The Summer Academy. Inspired by the Salzburg Summer Academy, it was directed by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Kassab Bachi, a member of the Academie der Kunste in Berlin and a former professor of drawing at the Berlin College of Fine Arts. Over the course of four years, more than 60 young artists from Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon attended the academy. The works produced by these artists were exhibited, at the end of each summer, in the Darat's archaeological site.

To strengthen knowledge and appreciation of classical art and art techniques, Jordanian artist Muhanna Durra conducted an extensive, six-month long drawing and painting course in 2003, that was attended by Jordanian artists. In conjunction, Durra presented films on the history of art at weekly screenings, which were accompanied by discussions.

In 2005, Paris-based Syrian artist Ziad Dalloul ran the Darat's annual summer workshop. Under his supervision, fifteen Jordanian and Arab artists were trained in





printmaking and drawing, benefiting from useful encounters with other artists and visitors.

Throughout the years, workshops were conducted in a variety of fields, including the techniques of papermaking, gilding and illumination. Recently, in order to keep artists up-to-date with new media, there has been emphasis on staging workshops in video, installation, and digital art.

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Darat al Funun's artists-in-residence program has stimulated artistic exchange. Since its inception, the Darat has extended invitations to artists to work, exhibit, and conduct workshops in their given field of expertise. Many artists from the Arab World and abroad have participated in this program.

Cooperating with international institutions, Darat al Funun has been, since 1998, an acknowledged center in the UNESCO-Aschberg cultural program; since 2002, it has collaborated with the Arts Council of Switzerland (Pro Helvetia) on an artists-in-residence program. These programs are open to young artists from all over the world.

Left Artist Marwan Kassba Bachi with the students of Darat al Funun's Summer Academy

MICHELLE
MICHELLE
MICHELLE

Early Renaissance and the Early Renaissance

the library



Darat al Funun's specialized library has a large selection of reference publications on the history of art and art movements



Darat al Funun's specialized library has a large selection of reference publications, in both Arabic and English, on the history of art and art movements of the Western and Islamic Worlds, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

A constant in-flow of new and major references enables readers to delve deep into the practical and theoretical aspects of art.

Visitors also have access to a series of films that focus on topics in

the history of art, and the lives and works of prominent artists, from the Renaissance through the early 21st century. These films can be viewed privately or when they are screened for the general public, along with a discussion session, as part of the "Tuesdays at the Darat" program.

Free Internet access offers library users a wealth of information in the fields of the arts and keeps them up-to-date with the activities of museums around the world. Darat al Funun has been online since 1997. Its website (www.daratafunun.org) includes archival pages devoted to 70 Arab artists and to the exhibitions held at the Darat.

Since 2000, sessions of Diwan al Mimar, a discussion forum on architecture, have been held in the library. Established by the Center for the Study of the Built Environment (CSBE), the Diwan's sessions are attended by speakers from Jordan as well as from abroad. These speakers have included Mario Botta, Oleg Grabar, and Suha Ozkan.

PUBLISHING PROGRAM

In addition to printing catalogues to accompany its exhibitions, Darat al Funun inaugurated a publishing program in 1995. Its first publication was "Hiwar al Fan al Tashkili" (Dialogues on Art), an edited collection of lectures delivered at the Foundation's art gallery from 1990 to 1992 under the supervision of Iraqi artist Shaker Hassan al Said. In 1997, it released "In the Footsteps of Empedocles," an art book of etchings by Moroccan artist Najia Mehadji and poems by French poet Pascal Amel, produced during their residency at the Darat. A third kind of publication released by Darat al Funun was "Umma fi al Manfa" (A Nation in Exile), which juxtaposes the work of four Arab artists. A text by Moroccan writer Abdelkebir Khatibi introduces the prints of Algerian artist Rachid Koraichi, inspired by the poems of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, and hand written by the Iraqi calligrapher Hassan Mass'oudi.

Darat al Funun also compiled and published a series of articles by the late Palestinian writer and art critic Jabra Ibrahim Jabra





under the title “Al Fan wal Fananun: Kitabat fi al Naqd al Tashkili” (Art and Artists: Critical Essays on Contemporary Art), as well as an anthology on the lives and art of various Jordanian artists, entitled “Shahadat wa Dirassat” (Testimonies and Essays).

Another type of publication put out by Darat al Funun was an edited collection of lectures in the field of literature delivered by influential writers, poets and thinkers from the Arab World during the Darat’s “ Sunday Literary Meetings.” Jordanian poet and writer Ibrahim Nasrallah directed this program.

As part of its support for art publications, the Darat has contributed to sponsoring several books such as Abdul Rahman Munif’s “Rihlat al Hayat wal Fan” (Voyage of Life and Art) about Marwan Kassab Bachi.

Left The bookshelf lined walls and triple-vaulted ceiling of the Darat’s library

A dark, moody photograph of a tunnel. The perspective is from inside the tunnel, looking down its length. A car's headlights are visible in the distance, illuminating the road ahead. The walls of the tunnel are dark and textured, and the overall atmosphere is mysterious and dramatic.

the collection

The collection includes works by established and up-and-coming Arab artists who have contributed to the regional art scene



Artworks from the Khalid Shoman Private Collection are exhibited at Darat al Funun on a regular basis. The collection encompasses a wide range of works by Arab artists, including book illustrations, drawings, paintings, etchings, sculptures, photographs, installations, and video art.

The collection has been carefully selected to include works by artists who have contributed to the development of the Arab art scene over the past four decades. Images of new media works by up-and-coming Arab artists complement the collection.

FEATURED ARTISTS

Rajwa Ali
Jananne al Ani
Farid Belkahia
Kamal Boullata
Ziad Dalloul
Ismail Fattah
Tarek al Ghousein
Rula Halawani
Shaker Hassan al-Said
Mona Hatoum
Adam Henein
Ali Jabri
Mohamed Kacimi
Marwan Kassab Bachi
Amal Kenawy
Rachid Koraïchi
Nedim Kufi Mohsen
Maha Mustafa &
Ibrahim Rashid
Moataz Nasr
Rafa' al Nassiri
Faisal Samra
Mona Saudi
Samer Tabbaa
Adnan Yahya
Fahrelnissa Zeid

MORE ARTISTS FROM THE COLLECTION

Youssef Abdelké
Mohammad H. Abdullah

Nawal Abdullah
Etel Adnan
Monif Ajaj
Himat Ali
Jehad Ameri
Mohammad Ameri
Aziz Amoura
Dia Azzawi
Ragheb Ayyad
Tayseer Barakat
Amine al Bacha
Shawki Choukini
Ghada Dahdaleh
Rashid Diab
Dana Erekat
Emmanuel Guiragossian
Paul Guiragossian
Samia Halaby
Tahia Halim
Mohammad Hawajri
Hala Hilmi
Nabila Hilmi
Sahel al Hiyari
Hani Hourani
Jumana Husseini
Hakim Jamain
Ghada Jamal
Ali Kaaf
Mohammad Omar Khalil
Rafik Kamel
Ammar Khammash
Khalid Khreis
Samer Kurdi
Huda Lutfi
Halim Mahdi

Suleiman Mansour
Najia Mehadji
Fateh al Moudarres
Ibrahim Nasrallah
Mohammad Nasrallah
Hind Nasser
Ahmad Nawash
Said Nuseibeh
Mahmud Obaidi
Samer Usama
Mohamed Kaitouqa
Karim Rassan Mansour
Abdelrazak Sahli
Bassel al Saady
Nicholas Sayegh
Ismail Shammout
Adnan Sharif
Laila Shawa
Wael Shawky
Nabil Shehadeh
Suha Shoman
Rula Shukairy
Salah Saouli
Nasser Soumi
Dodi Tabaa
Mahmoud Taha
Vera Tamari
Vladimir Tamari
Oraib Toukan
Gouider Triki
Saif Wanly
Ala' Younis
Afaf Zureik
Sima Zureikat
Wijdan



Rajwa Ali

Al Salam Alaykum | 2002 | sand and stone installation | 255 x 255 cm

Born in Amman, Jordan -1969- Lives and works in Jordan.

A graduate in the history of art and sculpture from Goldsmith College, London, Ali sculpts and assembles natural elements, revealing their hidden spiritual essence.

"In Ali's sculptures, one can see the simplicity of Zen philosophy. Her straight lines and uncomplicated cubes add a certain Sufi purity to her stones... [Ali's] employment of water and placement of light within her stone and wood pieces, as integral organic parts of the sculpted compositions, take on a crispness and ambiguity which add to the mystical qualities of her work."

Wijdan Ali, Jordanian artist and founder of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts



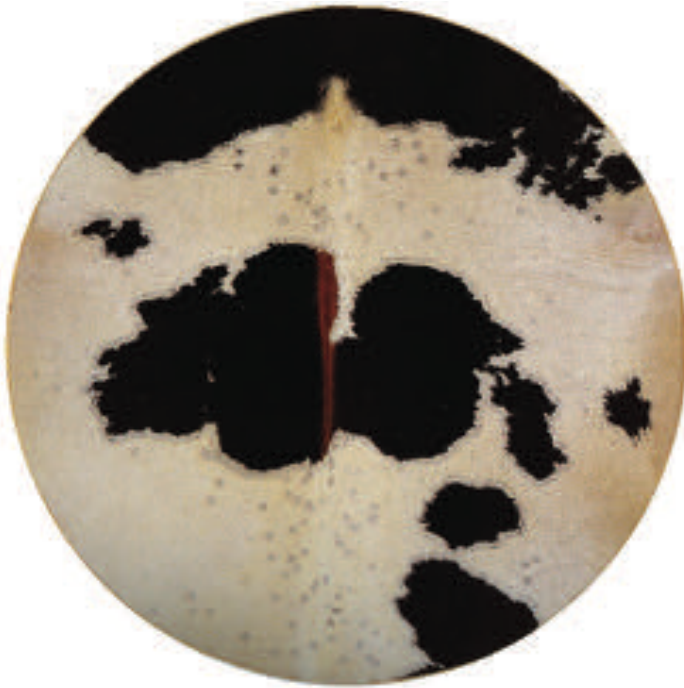
Jananne al Ani

Muse (location stills) | 2004 | C-Type photographs | (6) x 93 x 127 cm

Born in Kirkuk, Iraq -1966- Lives and works in London.

"Al-Ani's practice is a diverse one, but a few common themes and strategies stand out. Again and again, she tackles the issues of conflict, loss and displacement, but she tackles them in an allegorical mode, setting up theatrical situations in which personal traumas take on a broader historical resonance. She repeatedly implicates her audience, turning the experience of viewing into a reflexive and occasionally uncomfortable one. That is not to say that her work is austere or sermonizing. It offers an array of sensory and intellectual pleasures, but those pleasures are made contingent on the viewer's awareness of his or her own liminal and occasionally compromised position in her dramas. Al-Ani has made a bracingly difficult and engaging body of work, showing in the process an uncommon faith in the continuing relevance of art as a means of historical and political illumination."

Marcus Verhagen, Belgian writer, critic, and curator



Farid Belkahia

La derive des continents | 2005 | dutch leather stretched on wood | dia. 153 cm

Born in Marrakech, Morocco -1934- Lives and works in Morocco.

"In 1962, Belkahia ...was made Director of the Art School in Casablanca.... [H]e organized the first street exhibition in Marrakech, setting out works of art in a public square... Belkahia... experiment[ed] with... [a] traditional Moroccan material: animal hide... Such [a] material... inevitably evoke[s] the traditional techniques of parchment-making and tattooing, but Belkahia's use of it obliges us to suspend this reference and think instead in terms of a thoroughly unequivocal modernism... While the borrowing from tradition naturally implies an act of memory, it is nonetheless true that Belkahia's work is founded on a long process of forgetting... Freighted with symbolic signs and characters from tifinagh (Berber alphabet) and contained within the primordial form of the circle, the arrows direct our gaze towards an obvious duality: up and down, movement and immobility, life and death."

Rajae Benchemsi, Moroccan writer and art critic



Kamal Boullata

From the series "Surrat al-Ard" | 1997 | acrylic on canvas | 131 x 131 cm

Born in Jerusalem -1942- Lives and works in Menton, France.

"Behind..[Boullata's] passion for geometry lies the tradition of icon painting, which forged the beginnings of his artistic training, a tradition that has maintained a venerable continuity between Byzantium and the Arabo-Islamic civilization of the Middle East... But Boullata does not content himself with exploring this double tradition; he displaces it, as an artist and as aesthetician... He himself considers his work, its evolution in time and space, as a "portable laboratory," so useful in the most difficult moments of exile... The series... ['Surrat al-Ard'] dialogues and struggles with the art of the mosaic... Here we are confronted with the singular mise-en-scene of a star-like polygon in perpetual asymmetry...[Boullata] places it in motion, in series, in technical metamorphosis, as if he is searching in these permutations for the reflections of a broken mirror in the Ancestor's sleeping gaze."

Abdelkebir Khatibi, Moroccan writer and art critic



Ziad Dalloul

Chambre-sous-bois | 2002-2005 | oil on canvas | 130 x 324 cm

Born in Suweida, Syria -1953- Lives and works in Paris.

"Dalloul's works rapidly took on an epic quality, dominated by vast elemental backdrops, a blend of sculpting, primeval forces and lava flows of color spilling across the canvas. The overall effect is rich and deeply alluring, particularly so with the large format paintings. The colours are those born of the soil – often represented en terre ombre brûlée – and of nature itself: slate greys, deep reds, browns, greens and purples contrast with pale creams, greys and ochres, all swirling around in a primeval soup of creation."

James Parry and Mona al Said, contributors to *Canvas Magazine*

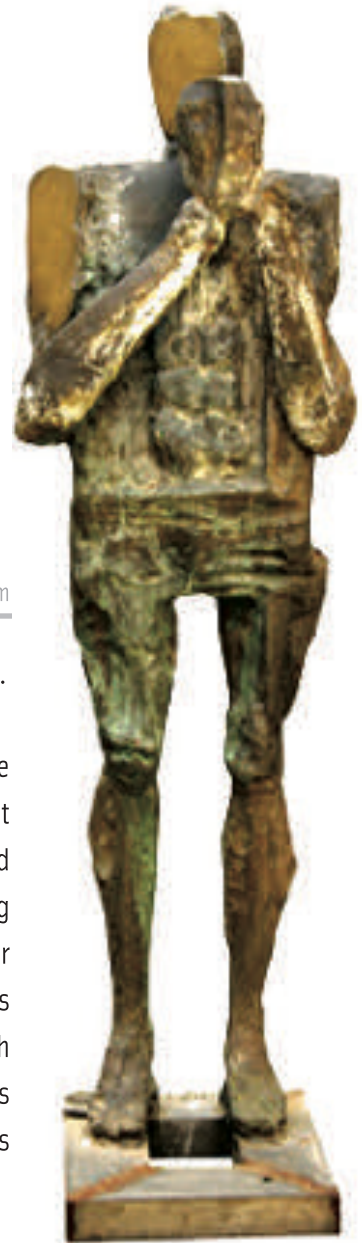
Ismail Fattah

Man & Mask | 1995 | bronze sculpture | L. 138 cm

Born in Basra, Iraq - 1934-2004 - Lived and worked in Iraq.

Ismail Fattah's public sculptures and monuments are the most striking of Baghdad's artistic landmarks. His greatest masterpiece is The Martyr's Monument, with its halved turquoise dome. Fattah's painted works place a strong emphasis on the human figure, whether through their portrayal of the body or face. His art is distinguished by his ability to truly and powerfully capture expression. Through his unique manipulation and animation of line, Fattah's drawn forms appear to protrude almost as much as his sculpted ones.

May Muzafar, Iraqi writer and art critic





Tarek al Ghousein

Self Portrait Series | 2006 | photographs

Born in Kuwait –1962– Lives and works in Sharjah, UAE.

“As a Palestinian with Kuwaiti citizenship who is barred from entering Palestine, Ghousein’s photographs consider how identity ... [is conveyed] through symbols that are no longer rooted in place, unfixed from their territory and resigned to dramatic shifts in meaning... Ghousein has placed six... images, each printed on translucent rice paper and hung from the ceiling with fishing wire. The effect is such that each photograph seems to float at shoulder level in the tiny rectangular space, luring viewers into the room to negotiate a path around and between them. The delicacy of the material contradicts the sturdiness of Ghousein’s subjects, which are huge slabs of concrete, reminiscent of the barrier wall in Palestine.”

Kaelen Wilson Goldie, American art critic and editor, The Daily Star, Lebanon



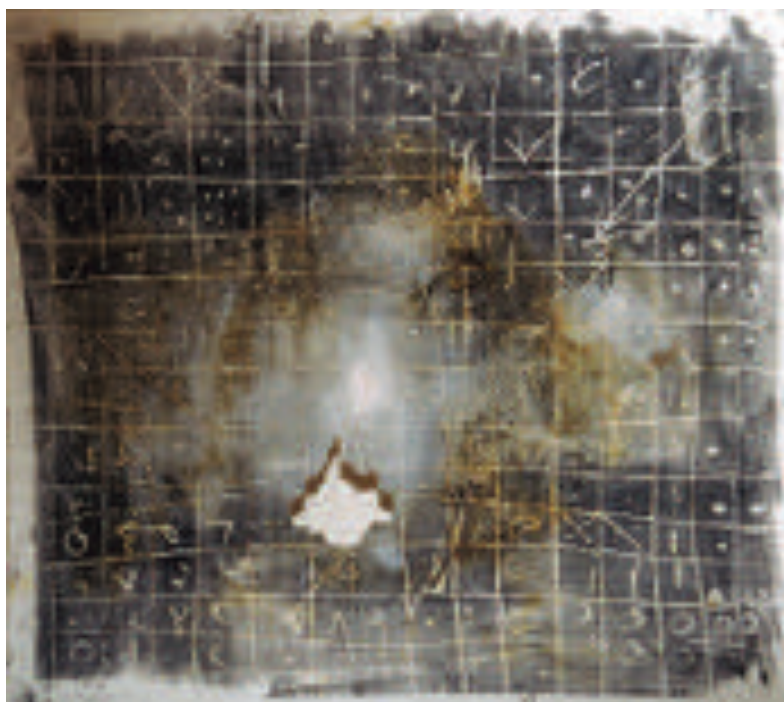
Rula Halawani

Images of the Wall | 2006 | photographs

Born in Jerusalem -1964- Lives and works in Jerusalem.

"Halawani worked for many years as a photojournalist, tasked with documenting the political landscape in Palestine with cool objectivity for such press agencies as Reuters and Sigma... [Her] photographs depict Israel's concrete barrier wall near the Qalandia checkpoint at night, illuminated only by the headlights from her car... Each image is haunted, devoid of human presence, and dominated by the imposition of grossly utilitarian, outrageously oversized concrete planks."

Kaelen Wilson Goldie, American art critic and editor, The Daily Star, Lebanon



Shaker Hassan al Said

Untitled | 1990's | ink on paper | 70 x 70 cm

Born in Samawa, Iraq - 1929-2004 - Lived and worked in Baghdad.

"Shaker Hassan was one of the most prominent and innovative Iraqi painters. In 1951, he took part in the founding of the Baghdad Group of Modern Art, led by Jawad Salim. His 1969 exhibition "Ma'arig" (lit. routes of ascent to heaven) was a landmark in both his artistic career and the development of the modern art movement in Iraq. In 1971, he founded the One Dimension Group, a collective of artists concerned with the creative potential of calligraphy within a modern context. Subsequently, Shaker Hassan incorporated numbers, signs and symbols into his works and produced paintings inspired by the appearance of weathered walls."

May Muzafar, Iraqi writer and art critic



Mona Hatoum

Measures of Distance | 1988 | video

Born in Beirut, Lebanon -1945- of Palestinian origin. Lives and works in London.

Regarded as one of the most important artists of her generation, Mona Hatoum was awarded the Sonning Prize in 2004 for “her contribution to the advancement of European civilization” and the Roswitha Haftmann Prize.

“[The video] ‘Measures of Distance’...is perhaps the most touching of Mona Hatoum’s artistic statement[s] in which she examines her position as an exiled female artist. The author’s voice translates letters of her mother from Arab[ic] into English, represented visually as a texture of calligraphy over the texture of her body and skin. Measuring a multitude of distances/oppositions, [Hatoum looks at]... differences between home and exile, writing and reading, reading and translating, mother and daughter, autobiography and artistic invention.”

From Media Art Net, an online resource offering information on media art



Adam Henein

Untitled | 1989 | bronze sculpture | L. 89 cm

Born in Cairo, Egypt -1923- Lives and works in Cairo.

A prominent Egyptian sculptor, Adam Henein conducted the restoration of the Sphinx of Giza and has been the commissar of the Aswan International Sculpture Symposium since 1996.

"[H]e draws his themes from the natural environment and creates stylized forms, mythic and sublime. His sculptures have something unchanging about them that shrinks time, embracing in their contemplation both past and future. On this subtle bridge that Henein sets up between modern and ancient worlds, his works suggest the memory of a world where simple beauty aspires to its continued renewal."

Brahim Alaoui, Moroccan, Chief curator at the Institut du Monde Arabe



Ali Jabri

Suburb Horizons - Maan | 1994 | gouache on paper | 89 x 65 cm

Born in Aleppo, Syria - 1940-2004 - Lived and worked in Jordan.

"Most concerned with the heritage of the past as well as its contemporary expression... [Ali Jabri's] work, figurative, formal, based on a realist stroke indicates a patient observation of the places and emblems of the Arabic and classical worlds... However, [Jabri]... expresses the cultural fragmentation of his [world]... through... [works] suffused with an atmosphere of interruption, dissonance, and loss. The dichotomy persists between ancient beauty and fragments of present time."

From the catalogue "Voyage en Jordanie," an exhibition held in 1997 at the Salle Saint-Jean, Hotel de Ville de Paris



Mohamed Kacimi

Untitled | mixed media on canvas | 130 x 170 cm

Born in Meknès, Morocco - 1942-2004 - Lived and worked in Rabat.

"One of the more unusual characters of the Moroccan art scene, he quickly left behind the scriptural and calligraphic influence of his early paintings to develop a highly original style where the abstract and the figurative, often phantom-like, meet. He has also been involved in installation pieces and continues to write texts reflecting his political and philosophical views."

"'The crossed body' comes up in Kacimi's writings and paintings over and over again... The body does not travel the world; the world travels through the body, irrespective of what you are born into or the cultural identity stamped on your own humanity."

Jean Loup Pivin, architect and director of the contemporary African art publication *Revue Noire*



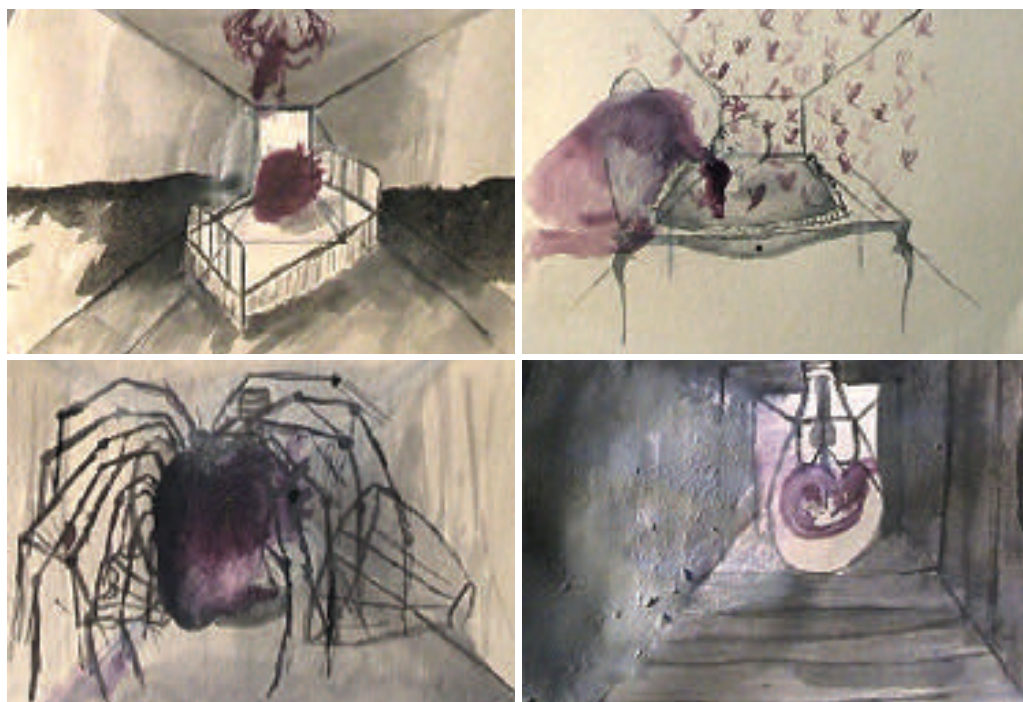
Marwan Kassab Bachi

The Friend | 2002 | oil on canvas | 230 x 160 cm

Born in Damascus, Syria -1934- Lives and works in Berlin.

"Marwan paints images of human beings, very subjective images, never individual portraits. The person portrayed is always exemplary, unique and anonymous all at once. Such images... reveal a crisis of identity, [but] they also expose its contrary: an identity with consciousness and feelings, an identity with the world. Marwan's paintings question life and ego, touch upon the secret, and circle about it, reflecting it. Emerging in his paintings as a vision – as a "face"- the secret, disappearing, proclaims itself, vanishes. There to be seen, it again withdraws."

John Merkert, Director of the Berlinische Art Gallery



Amal Kenawy

The Purple Artificial Forest | 2004 | video animation

Born in Cairo, Egypt -1975- Lives and works in Cairo.

"[Amal Kenawy] says that she has chosen abstraction as her medium because it is suited to transport her ideas. Free from conventions and expectations, she hunts down the images of her dreams that in turn take a hold of her." Kenawy represents her dreams in, "archetypal forms [that] are reminiscent of Louise Bourgeois: the spider, the bed, and the bars. Sheet after sheet is filled with ... [them], image after image is added up to a boundless abundance. Her dream of an artificial purple forest [is] cut to become [even] more abstract and [to play] faster as time goes by.."

Anne Maier, German critic and curator

Kenawy's work was featured in the exhibition Africa Remix (2004-2007), which toured major museums including the Centre Pompidou and the Hayward Gallery.



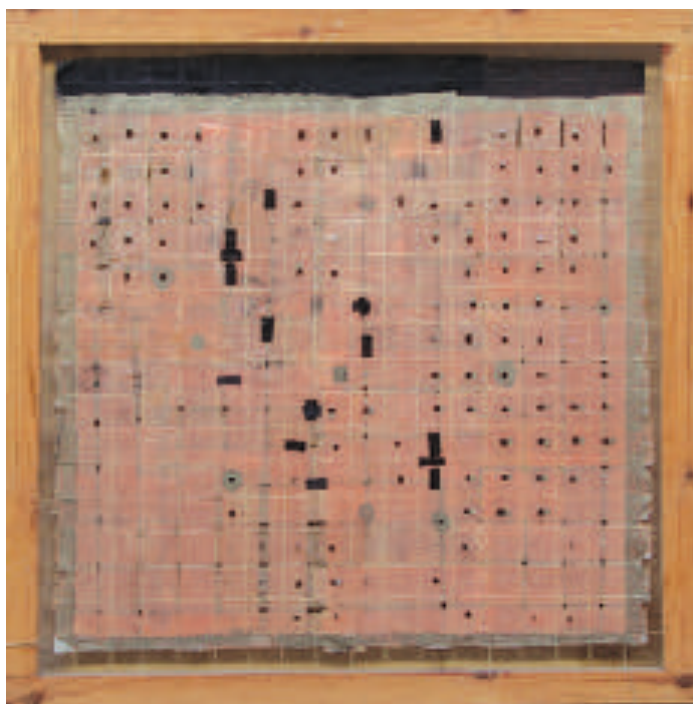
Rachid Koraïchi

From a series inspired by the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish | 1997 | graphic | 76 x 57 cm

Born in the Aures, Algeria -1945- Lives and works in Paris.

"Rachid Koraïchi grew up in a Sufi family... [which explains] the artist's interest in texts from the mystic traditions of Islam." His artworks and etchings are inspired by the writings of Mohammed Dib, Bencheikh, and Palestinian poet laureate Mahmoud Darwish, as well as René Char and Michel Butor. "Over the course of his career, the characters of a personal alphabet have proliferated, investing his work with a force by which letters become signs or by which signs come to life in the form of personages... [To Koraïchi,] the human figure is a sign among other signs, created and named, as in the case with other message-bearing letters..."

Maryline Lostia, French professor of philosophy



Nedim Kufi Mohsen

Untitled | 1993 | string, paper and wood | 100 x 100 cm

Born in Baghdad, Iraq -1962- Lives and works in Cairo and Amersfoort, Holland.

"Nedim Kufi rejects traditional methods of painting. Trained in etching, sculpture, ceramics and graphic design, he interweaves different methods and techniques using raw materials taken from his surroundings. Inorganic as well as organic materials (paper, string, rags, dyes, henna, flowers, soil etc...) are applied to either canvas or wood. In his atelier there is no trash, things are continuously recycling into other forms."

"Over the years this has led the artist to discover the 'creative formula' that permits him to analyze the hidden beauty of the materials he works with. He compares his character and work method with that of the 'attar' (the perfumer): Both stimulate an intimate sensorial interaction between the object, the viewer and the artist."

From the online text for the solo exhibition "Attar of Beirut" held at Espace SD in 2006



Samer Tabbaa

Red Blue Tar | 1993 | tar on wood | 115 x 82 cm

Born in Taif, Saudi Arabia -1945- Lives and works in Jordan

"Tabbaa believes that a sculptor's approach must be that of one who is willing to conduct a dialogue with the marble; to listen carefully and to carry on creatively from there. 'A lot of my work is a reaction to what is already there in the material,' he says... More recently, the artist has been working with less resistant materials such as pigments, graphite, lead and wood. He is also interested in paintings, or what he refers to as 'two-dimensional sculptures' in which he carves indentations, for example, places pieces of wood onto sheets of rusted iron... Tabbaa believes his work has become more 'conceptual' as he looks for new ways in which to be artistically stimulated by the materials he encounters."

Nada al Awar, Lebanese-Australian writer



Ibrahim Rashid | Landscape without Boundary | 2004 | oil on canvas | 138 x 106 cm

Maha Mustafa | Blue Lines | 2004 | aluminium & mixed technique

Maha Mustafa & Ibrahim Rashid

Mustafa was born in Kirkuk, Iraq -1960- Rashid was born in Baghdad, Iraq -1957- They both live and work between Malmö, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark.



"Maha and Ibrahim who first met at the Academy of Art in Baghdad have since then worked together in a kind of continuous dialogue." They are both concerned with the relationship between mankind and the environment. Through their work, they explore "the antagonism between high technology and nature... While Maha concentrates on sculpture [and installation], Ibrahim is above all a painter."

Clemens Altgård, Swedish writer and critic

"Beyond 100 C°," an installation first exhibited at the Malmö Museum, is one of their major works.



Moataz Nasr

The Echo | 2004 | video installation

Born in Cairo, Egypt -1961- Lives and works in Cairo.

"Nasr's Egypt is only a metaphor for a web of issues that reach far beyond the strictly local confines of his country... echoing questions posed throughout the continent, and beyond this, perhaps even echoing the basic questions posed by existentialist philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Jean-Paul Sartre."

"In this way, a metaphor that has its origins in a commentary on Egyptian society proves equally valid in Paris, Dakar, or New York. The finger is pointed at this state of impotent passivity to which we are all condemned at some point or other..."

Simon Njami, Cameroonian curator and art critic

Nasr's video art was featured in the exhibition Africa Remix (2004-2007), which toured major museums including the Centre Pompidou and the Hayward Gallery.



Rafa' al Nassiri

Untitled | 1995 | acrylic on wood (paravan) | 160 x 80 cm

Born in Baghdad, Iraq -1940- Lives and works in Jordan.

"[Rafa' al Nassiri's] paintings do not describe; they are an inner vision made visible... [He] has obliterated all references to the objects we know. From his former studies in China he retained the spirit of Buddhism... Abstract art is natural to him. He knows that the cosmos is full with the invisible, and that what we see, the visible, is always and only a sign toward the purity of the vision. ... His latest works are pure energy, a dark energy that is made perfectly present, so perfectly expressed that it becomes beautiful... Like a Japanese Zen master he reaches a great economy of expression. Like with great poetry where less is more, his works do not explain; they show. They are. And what are they? They are the surface of the tragedies we experience... there's exile, and there's pain, and there's compassion, and there's the war in Iraq ... [T]he viewers of Rafa's paintings can read the moment of history in which we are, the turmoils, the pain and the ecstasies of the soul of this Iraqi artist..."

Etel Adnan, Lebanese artist and writer



Faisal Samra

Nabatiyat | 1998 | clay and collage | 20 x 25 cm

Born in Bahrain -1955- of Saudi origin. Lives and works in Bahrain.

"In contemplating the latest works of Faisal Samra, one becomes aware of the mysterious silence veiling the works. A silence in which memory sleeps in the wings of time. A silence as acute as it is latent. Opposites, enveloped in the ethereal presence of this silence. Embracing the vast and the intimate, the solid and the volatile, the personal, in anonymity; the opulent caged in a singular form... The artworks of Faisal Samra reveal the sensitivity and awareness achieved through years of progressing. Through careful research of his subjects, with love for the plasticity of his materials. With an obsession to find an image. Images, shadows of the past. Undercurrents of memory sleeping in the silent corners of our minds. Accumulations of lives, experiences, impressions, sensations; and the memory of it all."

Frans J. Sterk, Dutch curator



Mona Saudi *Homage to Brancusi* | 1983 | sculpture | L.95 cm

Born in Amman, Jordan -1945- Lives and works in Lebanon.

"Mona Saudi's entire production would be perfectly justified in claiming to derive from geometry and the spirit of geometry. A geometry of the body turned in on itself... in an enveloping motion which, leaving nothing for anyone to get a hold on it from the outside, directs all its formal energies inwards, towards the centre. A centre which, as a seed or a source, may become either the starting - or the end - point of a spiralling geometry of vegetable growth or spouting liquid."

Joseph Tarab, Lebanese art critic



Adnan Yahya

The Innocents | 2004 | oil on wood | 40 x 40cm

Born in Amman, Jordan –1960– Lives and works in Jordan.

Yahya's works, from his earlier ink drawings to his more recent oil paintings, are like a profound narrative that reflects on the tragedy and aspirations of his people. They tell the Palestinian story in an expressive and symbolic style.

Yahya grew up in a refugee camp. The massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila in Beirut was a turning point in his art. Yahya's once lacerated individual human figures became lost within unidentifiable, decaying masses, which nonetheless defied death.

From the catalogue of the exhibition "From Sabra and Shatila... to Independence?" held at Darat al Funun in 1999



Fahrelnissa Zeid

Untitled | 1960's | oil on canvas | 546 x 221 cm

Born in Istanbul, Turkey - 1901-1991 - Lived and worked in Jordan the last 20 years of her life.

Influenced by the teachings of Roger Bissiere at the Academie Ranson in Paris, Fahrelnissa Zeid played an active part in the Paris art scene throughout the 1950's and 1960's. She displayed her work at various art galleries including Galerie Colette Allendy (1949) and participated in numerous exhibitions organized by the French art critic Charles Estienne such as that of the "New Ecole de Paris" (1952), the Salon des Realites Nouvelles (1953), and the Salon de Mai. Following her move to Amman in 1975, the artist established the "Fahrelnissa Zeid Institute of Fine Arts," where she introduced her students to abstract art and exhibited



along with them for the first time in 1981. In 1990, a retrospective exhibition of her work was mounted at the Neue Galerie- Sammlung Ludwig in Aachen and in 2006, one was held at the Istanbul Modern Museum.

"Her paintings portray the parade of strange nations that migrate from one place to another; they expose –in strange lights turning to crimson- reds, blues of huge glass cases, heavy as lead coils, enveloped in violent blacks. This light resembles the fabulous lights of Gothic stained glasses. Let this thick and impenetrable wall of Eastern stained glass, which grasps one in an unknown and transparent way, be a boundless and free line conveying the latest messages of Islamic arts to French art..."

Charles Estienne, French writer and art critic



Emily Jacir

Crossing Surda | 2005 | video

Born in Dallas, USA -1970- Lives and works between Ramallah and New York.

"Surrounded by restrictions devised by the modern bureaucratic mentality-laws and scraps of paper that either permit you to go somewhere or prevent you from going-the Palestinian has to resort to improvisation or persistent stubbornness to overcome these obstacles. . . Emily Jacir's series *Where We Come From* cuts through all that, reducing an intractably untidy mess to the simple, humane question 'What can I do for you in Palestine, where you can't go but I can?' Having done what was asked of her, she further reduces the answer to a creative juxtaposition of wish, wishfulfillment, and wish embodied in picture and text: writing and image elegantly brought together with a clarity that most Palestinians cannot experience in the present. Her compositions slip through the net of bureaucracies and nonnegotiable borders, time and space, in search not of grandiose dreams or clotted fantasies but rather of humdrum objects and simple gestures like visits, hugs, watering a tree, eating a meal-the kinds of things that maybe all Palestinians will be able to do someday, when they can trace their way home, peacefully and without restriction."

Edward Said (1935-2003), Palestinian literary theorist and Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University



Oraib Toukan

Icon Series | 2006-2007 | digital C-type prints (metallic) | 70 x 105 cm

Born in Boston, USA -1977- Lives and works in Amman.

"Oraib Toukan seem to question the perpetual tension between the process and residue of memory... [Her] works... are marked by an insistence of the artist to highlight the make-ability of memory and forgetfulness, and how the latter are inscribed within a socio-political consciousness... This is perhaps best exemplified by her Icon Series (2006–2007) photographs, where she tries to uncover a representative iconography of Jordanian identity... They [the icons] have a presence because somehow it is expected or required, and therefore emit a symbolism that is depleted, if not mass-produced. At first glance this iconography does not seem to yield anything memorable. If anything, it insinuates that collective and individual identity necessitate each other: only not in the unilateral and causal relationship the iconographic display wants us to believe. Icon Series shows much is to be found in the singular instance when we remember why we perform certain actions, rather than in the relics of a memory that is not necessarily yours, and results more in a loss than in (re)-gaining anything truly meaningful."

Nat Muller, Dutch independent curator and critic



Walid Raad

I Only Wish that I Could Weep | 2001 | film still 7'36"

Born in Chbanieh, Lebanon - 1967 - Lives and works between Beirut and New York.

"Founded in Beirut in 1999, The Atlas Group is devoted to researching and documenting Lebanese contemporary history, more precisely the history of the 15 years of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990/91)... To pursue the concerns of The Atlas Group, Walid Raad has selected the venerable if uninspiring neutrality of an archives system... Although it is clearly stated that the documents are actually produced by The Atlas Group, this comment is hardly noticed because they contain such a convincing potential to be genuinely real. Consequently, confusion between the real and the imaginary arises, whereby the meaning and significance of the 'documents' undergo a fragmentation. Walid Raad has only recently broached this crossroad situation, emphasizing publicly the Archive's fictive character. He has pointed out that the material is to be read as a set of hysterical documents, which are not attached to the real recollections of a concrete person but are recruited from the collective memory. He opts for the profoundly fictive and manipulable in the allegedly factual, so as to overstate the querying of historical contexts and their construction."

Britta Schmitz, German, Senior Curator at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof



Akram Zaatari Saida June 6th 1982 | 1982-2006 | composit image, C-print | 127 x 250 cm

Born in Saida, Lebanon -1966- Lives and works in Beirut.

"The inscription of the personal in relation to 'events', by way of the photographic document and the archive, is one of the most compelling and consistently interrogated forms used by artists coming out of Beirut. Akram Zaatari has produced an extensive body of film and photographic works based on the personal experiences of war. His large photographic panorama June 6, 1982, 2003-6 is based on his own experience as a child of sixteen of the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. The work is made from photographs he took from the balcony of his home on the first day of air strikes... Returning to these photographs more than twenty years after the event, Zaatari's enhancement of the image to the point of extreme aestheticisation signals the spectacular nature of these displays of destructive force and the 'absolute boredom' he came to experience between them."

Suzanne Cotter, British, Senior Curator at Modern Art Oxford

2007

An exhibition of video art and paintings by Egyptian artist Amal Kenawy

2006

"Out of the Desert" – a themed exhibition of ancient artifacts and modern inspirations from the Petra region including video and graphic art by Jordanian artists Suha Shoman and Hakim Jamaïn

"The Wall and the Check Points" – an exhibition of photography, installation, and video art by Palestinian artists Emily Jacir, Rula Halawani, Tarek al Ghoussein, Dana Erekat and Rashid Mashharawi

An exhibition of photography and video art by Egyptian artist Moataz Nasr

2005

A modern facade is designed for the upper part of Darat al Funun

"Architecture" – a state-of-the-art exhibition on modern architecture featuring Jordanian architect Sahel al Hiyari

A selection from the Khalid Shoman collection, exploring the theme of alienation and exile, is exhibited, including "So Much I Want to Say," a video by British-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum

2004

"Homage to the Late Iraqi Artists: Shaker Hassan, Ismail Fattah, and Nuha al Radi"

An exhibition of works by Syrian artist Marwan and the students of Darat al Funun's Summer Academy from 1999 to 2003

2003

Premiere of the Khalid Shoman Private Collection

2002

Darat al Funun is incorporated into the Khalid Shoman Foundation, established in memory of Khalid Shoman

The third building is dedicated to Khalid Shoman, the patron of Darat al Funun, and named Dar Khalid

Collaboration begins with the Arts Council of Switzerland (Pro Helvetia) on an artists-in-residence program

The ninth anniversary of the "Collective Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists"

"Centenary of Fahrelnissa Zeid" – a tribute to the work of the Jordanian-Turkish artist

2001

"100 Shaheed 100 Lives" – an exhibition held in cooperation with the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre, Ramallah

"The Mission, the Role, the Collection of the Sursock Museum" (1962–2001)

"Journey through the Contemporary Arts of the Arab World:" Artists from Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, in cooperation with the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

2000

"Journey through the Contemporary Arts of the Arab World:" Artists from the Arabian Peninsula, Artists from the Valley of the Nile – Egypt and Sudan; Artists from Mesopotamia – Iraq; Artists from Bilad Al Sham – Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria

The first bi-monthly session of Diwan al Mimar, a discussion forum on architecture, is held in the library

1999

The Summer Academy is launched under the supervision of Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Kassab Bachi

"The Vehicle" – an exhibition of photography, in cooperation with the Arab Image Foundation, Beirut

"Meeting Point Amman" – an exhibition of works by Jordanian artists at the Konsthallen in Goteborg, in cooperation with the Svenska Institute and the Modern

Museum of Stockholm,
International Program

The first summer festival is
held

1998

An exhibition is held on
the occasion of the tenth
anniversary of the Abdul
Hameed Shoman Foundation's
support for the arts

A publishing program is
inaugurated

1994

The second building, the
Blue House, is renovated
to accommodate additional
exhibition galleries.

1993

"Silk and Clay" - an exhibition
of works by Algerian artist
Rachid Koraichi, in cooperation
with the Association Francaise
d'Action Artistique (AFAA) and
the French Cultural Center,
Amman

The main building of Darat al
Funun and the archaeological
site are inaugurated

1997

The Darat goes online, with
archival pages devoted to
Arab artists and its
exhibitions.
(www.daratafunun.org)

"Collective Exhibition of
Contemporary Arab Artists"
- the launching of a rotating
permanent exhibition held
between 1993 and 2002

A specialized printmaking
studio is established in
cooperation with the Jordan
National Gallery of Fine Arts

1996

"From Picasso to Our Present
Days" - an exhibition of
works from the collection of
Museo del Grabado Espanol
Contemporaneo, Marbella in
cooperation with the Spanish
embassy and the Instituto
Cervantes, Amman

1992

The idea of establishing a
"Home for the arts" comes into
being and work on the Darat's
site begins

1995

The third building is restored
to serve as quarters for
resident artists.

1988

The Abdul Hameed Shoman
Foundation opens an art
gallery under the direction of
artist Suha Shoman

1978

An exhibition of works
produced by late Jordanian
artist Ali Jabri from
1985 to 1995

The Abdul Hameed Shoman
Foundation is established;
Khalid Shoman becomes
Deputy Chairman

Overview.

credits

The artworks featured in this book are all part of the Khalid Shoman Private Collection.

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