

Ramallah: Subcontracted Nations Exhibition's events continue



On 28 June 2018, the Public Programme / A. M. Qattan Foundation (AMQF) launched *Subcontracted Nations*, the inaugural exhibition at the new AMQF Cultural Centre. The exhibition features 53 works by more than 60 artists.

Subcontracted Nations draws its title and content from the proliferation of processes of subcontracting between states and private investment sector in our world today – whether subcontracting of health services, privatisation of public resources, or education. All the latter has been instrumental in the process of fragmentation and compartmentalisation of public services, and diminution of the role and obligations of the state. The exhibition aims to

shed a light on the notion of service providers, of the middleperson, of outsourcing, and on how far has this spread across our societies and of which magnitude this is influencing the management of nations.

A question posed by the exhibition pertains to how the different forms of neoliberal subjugation of societies are kept within socially and economically acceptable limits, yet considered optimal for undermining any individual or collective initiatives to resist or oppose these forms. Consequently, neoliberal structures serve to maintain a delusion of social agency through consumption.

Curator Yazid Anani says the exhibition explores the concept of the modern nation and relationship between the state, society and people. It questions the current forms of states and how feasible the existence of the state in its present form is against privatised services.

Art works are arranged within a large framework of “scaffolds”. Anani explains that the scaffolds provide the “organising” idea of art works. It is similar to the systems which the state imposes to govern the territories under its control. “We can have a full view of some works. For others, we need to get closer to have a complete vision. However, all works, whether outside or inside the framework of the state structure (scaffolds), are under the shadow of the state (scaffolds).”



On some works in the exhibition

At the entrance to the exhibition, there is a huge seal of the Palestinian National Authority. Titled *Documented and Certified*, this work is by Majdi Hadid. “The incompatible seal reflects the stage of deficiency between the notary public and the public.” Hadid says.

Hadid was born and brought up in Ramallah. He studied graphic design and printing in Ottawa, Canada, where he worked for several years. He returned to Palestine to build a successful career. Currently, Hadid manages iPrints Inc., his private design and printing company. iPrints Inc. is a leading firm with a high level of advisory and managerial experience in design strategies and organisational approaches. iPrints Inc. also delivers professional services in the fields of creativity and innovation.

Jumana Abboud, a Palestinian-Canadian artist, showcases a 7:14 minute video work titled *The Pomegranate*. The is a close-up of the artist’s hands

while attempting meticulously to place the seeds back into the pomegranate shell. It is difficult to return the seeds to their place of origin. In this work, Jumana questions the meaning of restore something back to its place and regain balance. This idea can be measured against the attempt to settle man in a non-native land or return him to a place where he has been absent for a long time.

Jumana uses painting, video, motion performance, objects, and texts to navigate the themes of memory, loss, and perseverance. She is interested in the themes of memory, which can be read through the body, rituals or cultural practices, folklore, and storytelling. Jumana's works always reflect the Palestinian cultural landscape, which invokes conflict in order to persevere in the midst of a broader political context, where a constant process of alienation and innovation generates.

Over an area some six metres, hundreds of "defeated silver flags" oscillate, facing a pedestal fan that constantly blows air on the flags according to the blown air of a timed power factor. *No flag flutters in the wind* is a work by Jerusalemite artist Mirna Bamieh. Silver flags made from deformed silver pipe cleaners and cellophane paper are arranged in a grid. In this work, Mirna symbolises peoples' mobility with different currents and non-resistance of the influence of these currents.

Mirna obtained a B.A in Psychology from Birzeit University in Ramallah, M.F.A. in Fine Arts from Bezalel Academy for Arts and Design in Jerusalem, and Ashkal Alwan Home Works study programme in Beirut.

Her work attempts to understand and contemplate the ever-shifting politics, while equally questioning notions of land and geographies of in-between temporality. Her work looks more at scenarios that take the language of the absurd and the ironical and uses them as tools for political commentary.

Mirna is recipient of the Young Artist of the Year Award 2012 (YAYA 12) of the A. M. Qattan Foundation and Award of the Mosaic Rooms in London.

The Exhibition includes films screening, musical performances, debates, and lectures. Subcontracted Nations continues to receive visitors on weekdays, except Friday and Sunday, from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm until 30 September 2018.