



la Biennale di Venezia

55. Esposizione
Internazionale
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Eventi collaterali



RHIZOMA

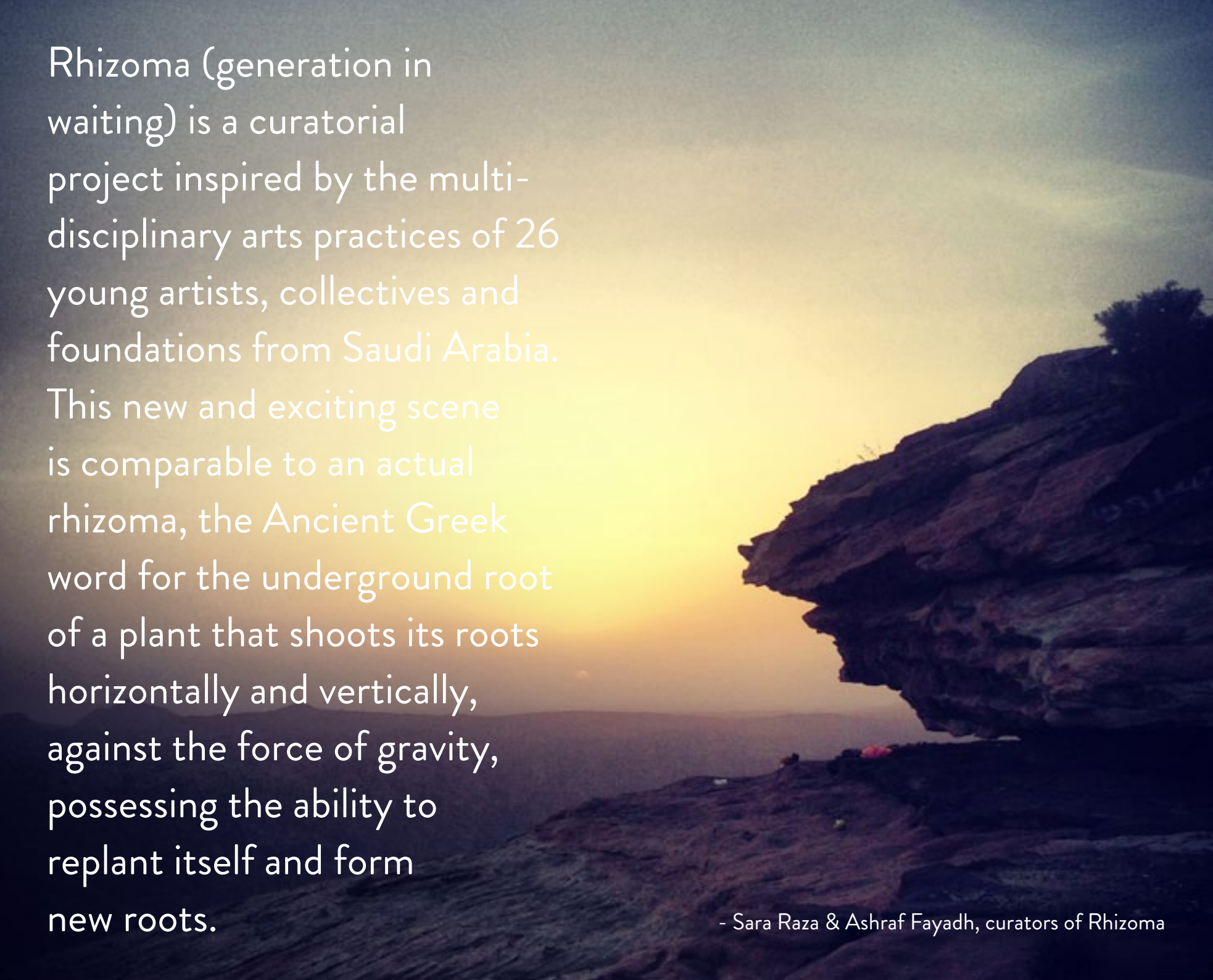
(generation in waiting)

**EDGE
OF
ARABIA**

FOUNDING PARTNER



Abdul Latif Jameel
Community Initiatives



Rhizoma (generation in waiting) is a curatorial project inspired by the multi-disciplinary arts practices of 26 young artists, collectives and foundations from Saudi Arabia. This new and exciting scene is comparable to an actual rhizoma, the Ancient Greek word for the underground root of a plant that shoots its roots horizontally and vertically, against the force of gravity, possessing the ability to replant itself and form new roots.

- Sara Raza & Ashraf Fayadh, curators of Rhizoma



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MAY 30 – SEPT 24 2013
Tuesday – Sunday, 11:00 – 18:00
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Abdul Latif Jameel
Community Initiatives

Art plays a significant part in making our lives infinitely rich. It is an opportunity to express the human creative skill and imagination we treasure and pursue, dear to our hearts. For this reason, it is an honour to support Edge of Arabia.

We like to touch people's lives and hence find it critical to give our nation's youth the highest quality of life they deserve, such as by becoming entrepreneurial artists themselves. Our presence alone, in the region and the Kingdom in particular, confirms that we have created a distinguished flavour of artistic expression, and thus are ranked amongst the finest and most sophisticated art institutions the world has to offer. In our upcoming exhibition titled, RHIZOMA, "Generation In Waiting", the stage will be set for our young up and coming generation of Saudi artists to combine visual art with technology, science and natural philosophy.

To inform you briefly, Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI), the corporate social responsibility arm of ALJ, was founded in 2003. Five initiatives were born and are up and running successfully to do with job creation, education, arts and culture, social and health well-being, and last but not least research and activities in the area of poverty alleviation.

As we come to a close of this brief discourse, we would like to comment why this year 2013, marking our 10th anniversary at ALJCI, is important to us. We are at the beginning of our journey and will face different struggles but we have all the hope to reach to as many initiatives as possible. We believe that as of this date, we can proudly say that we have successfully initiated positive social change in the communities we touch. Our aspirations will never stop and our reach is ever becoming more extensive and dynamic.

Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives

The views in the artwork exhibited are those of the artists and do not reflect those of ALJCI. ALJCI does not accept responsibility or liability for the contents of any of the artwork.

يلعب الفن دوراً هاماً في إثراء حياتنا، وبمنحنا فرصة للتعبير عن مهارتنا الانسانية، وعكس ما يحول في مخيلتنا ابداعيا، وهي أشياء مؤثرة على نفوسنا وقريبة من قلوبنا. ومن هذا الخلال يسعدنا أن نشارك في دعم "حافة الصحراء"

لدينا شعف بإحداث تأثير إيجابي على حياة الناس، ما جعلنا نسعى إلى أن نساهم في توفير حياة كريمة للشباب بلادنا، ودعمهم لكي يصبحوا هم أنفسهم فنانيين وروادا لأعمالهم. إن تواجدنا هنا هو دلالة واضحة على أننا في منطقة الشرق الأوسط بشكل عام، وفي المملكة العربية السعودية بشكل خاص، قد عملنا على المساهمة في ابتكار تعبير متفرد وسعينا لأن نكون ضمن أرقى وأفضل مستويات الفن التي يمكن أن يقدمها العالم. وفي المعرض القادم الذي يحمل اسم ريزوما، "جيل في الانتظار"، سيتأهب المسرح لاستقبال الجيل القادم من الفنانين السعوديين، الذين سيمزجون بين الفن والتقنية، وبين العلم والفلسفة الطبيعية.

لقد تأسست مبادرات عبداللطيف جميل الاجتماعية في عام 2003 لتصبح ذراع المسؤولية الاجتماعية لمجموعة عبداللطيف جميل، بحيث تقدم عددا من المبادرات التي تساهم في توفير حياة كريمة للمجتمع. ومن هذه المبادرات: توفير فرص العمل، مكافحة الفقر في العالم، التعليم والتدريب، الصحة والرفاهية الاجتماعية، والفن والثقافة.

ان العام 2013 يوافق مرور عشر سنوات على تأسيس مبادرات عبداللطيف جميل الاجتماعية، ولكننا مازلنا في بداية الطريق، فأمامنا الكثير من التحديات، ولدينا الكثير من الآمال والطموحات وسنسعى إلى مواصلة إحداث تأثير إيجابي على المجتمعات التي نعمل فيها، فجزوة الحماس متقدة في نفوسنا وسنعمل على توسيع نطاق مبادراتنا لتصل إلى أبعد نطاق ممكن.

مبادرات عبداللطيف جميل الاجتماعية

آراء الأعمال الفنية المعروضة هي آراء الفنانين ولا تعكس آراء مبادرات عبداللطيف جميل الاجتماعية. مبادرات عبداللطيف جميل الاجتماعية لا تقبل المسؤولية أو مسؤولية محتويات أي من الأعمال الفنية المعروضة.



RHIZOMA

(generation in waiting)

ريزو ما

”جيل في الانتظار“

By Sara Raza

Rhizoma (generation in waiting) is a curatorial project with infinite possibilities to form multiple endings and create new beginnings. The exhibition's premise was inspired by a new and exciting contemporary art scene inside Saudi Arabia and was informed by the current artistic practices being performed by a new wave of young Saudi artists.

Curatorially, the challenge was to assess the way in which art was being practiced and performed inside Saudi Arabia and link that within a rigorous conceptual framework. The nature of art production was strikingly comparable to an actual rhizoma, the ancient Greek word for the underground root of a plant that shoots its roots horizontally and vertically, against the force of gravity, and possesses the ability to replant and form new roots if cut away from

ريزوما ”جيل في الانتظار“ هو مشروع فني منظم، يحمل من معناه ابتكار نهايات متعددة وبدايات جديدة، من الامكانيات الالهائية. ركيزة المعرض مستوحاة من المشهد الفني المعاصر والحديث بالمملكة العربية السعودية، والممارسات الفنية الحديثة التي تعمل وفقها وتقدمها الموجة الجديدة من جيل الفنانين السعوديين الشباب.

كان التحدي الذي واجهته أنشطة تنسيق المعرض، هو كيفية تقييم الصلة، ما بين أسلوب الممارسة الفنية المقدمة في المملكة العربية السعودية، والإطار المفاهيمي الدقيق، والأمر المذهل في هذا البحث كان، أن طبيعة الإنتاج الفني يمكن مقارنتها بالريزوم الحقيقي، والريزوم كلمة من اللغة اليونانية القديمة وتعني جذر النبات الذي ينمو ساقه تحت التراب، ويطلق جذوره أفقياً ورأسياً مقاوماً قوى الجاذبية. ويتمتع النبات بالقدرة على تشكيل جذور

its original source. Philosophically, these ideas have been put forward by French theorists Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari within their seminal text *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980) in which they employed the term “rhizome” to discuss myriad examples of non-linear and multiplicity orientation of data representation present within human histories, biology and the study of genealogy. Furthermore, contributions made by 10th century Islamic Persian and Arab polymaths such as Ibn Sina and Al Farabi, who professed at length about the order of natural philosophy, science,

‘They are the “youtube generation”, young and bold in their expressions’

mathematics and logic have also served as a source of inspiration. Collectively, these ideas have shaped the exhibition’s thematic and artistic selection of young artists and served as an important starting point from which to explore the underground movement brewing inside Saudi Arabia as it is purposely making its ascent upwards.

The artists selected for this exhibition came of age during the advent of the internet and are part of a large youth cohort that is rapidly increasing. These artists are thus technologically astute and well versed in the different modes of communication that social media platforms and fast instant messaging services provide. They are the “youtube generation”, young and bold in their expressions and stylistic devices and hold a non linear position in the formation of contemporary Saudi Arabian art and its history, which hasn’t necessarily followed a

chronological trajectory in its formation, but is rather the product of cultural and global shifts occurring in the fast pacing developing Gulf region. These new artists co-exist within both popular culture and within a subterranean art movement that embraces craft, technology and design alongside contemporaneity.

In essence Saudi Arabia’s young emerging contemporary artists form part of *Gulf Futurism*, a term coined and borrowed from Qatari artist and writer Sophia Al Maria, who has commented on the amalgamation of popular cultural and various social phenomena associated with young people growing up within the age of post-oil Gulf during the 1980s and 90s. In the case of Saudi Arabia and its burgeoning contemporary art scene what is most fascinating to witness amongst this new generation are the transitions and ruptures that are occurring simultaneously within both a rural and urban societal and cultural context.

All the way from Abha the capital of the Asir province, the oil rich city of Dammam in the Eastern Province to the major metropolitan cities of Jeddah and Riyadh, artists have formed artistic and creative hubs.

These hubs possess the unique ability to exist both within their respective centres, but also sit comfortably on the edge as well.

The edge of Arabia is perhaps not a bad place to reside it also happens to be the name and directional force behind one of Saudi Arabia’s most relevant contemporary arts platform (EOA), who are the commissioners of this project. Firmly rooted in the now, EOA have been reflecting on the current moment, needs and concerns of the next generation of artists and invited me to curate this exhibition at the 55th Venice Biennale. After a series of conversations with EOA it became apparent to me that the project

يشكل الفنانون السعوديون المعاصرون الشباب بشكل اساسي، جزءاً من الحركة الفنية المستقبلية بالخليج، وهذا المصطلح ابتكرته الفنانة والكاتبة القطرية صوفيا الماريا، التي درست وكتبت الكثير عن الظواهر الاجتماعية الثقافية والشعبية المتنوعة المرتبطة بالشباب الذين نشأوا في فترة ما بعد الفورة النفطية في الخليج، ابان الثمانينات والتسعينات من القرن الماضي. اللافت للانتباه بين الجيل الجديد في حالة المملكة العربية السعودية وازدهار المشهد الفني المعاصر، هو مانتشده النواحي المجتمعية والثقافية من تحولات وتشظيات، في الحواضر والارياف على حد سواء.

فعلى امتداد الطريق، من أبها،

عاصمة منطقة عسير، والدمام،

تلك المدينة الغنية بالنفط

بالمنطقة الشرقية، إلى المدن

الكبرى، جدة والرياض، شكل

الفنانون محاور للإبداع والفن.

وتتمتع هذه المحاور بقدر فريدة على التواجد داخل هذه المراكز والامتداد بيسر الى حوافيها.

ربما تكون حافة الصحراء ليست بالمكان الملائم للإقامة فقط، بل وتصادف أيضاً أن حملت اسمها ابرز واهم منصة فنية سعودية، وهي التي أطلقت هذا المشروع ورعته. بجذور ضاربة في الحاضر، تعنى وتهتم حافة الصحراء باللمحة الراهنة، وباحتياجات وانشغالات وهموم الجيل الآتي من الفنانيين، ومن هذا المنطلق فقد قدمت لي دعوة للإشراف على معرض ضمن بينالي فينيسيا الخامس والخمسين. وبعد سلسلة من الحوارات الجادة مع حافة الصحراء، اتضح تماماً أن المشروع يجب أن يمضي، في اتجاه واقع غير منتظم يقدمه بشكل مباشر. الفنانيين الذين اتعامل معهم والذين تفاوتت همومهم من التخريب الابداعي الذي يطال الهندسة الإسلامية في الفن والتصميم المعاصر إلى الأداء في الفضاء الجماهيري وفي المدونات ووسائل التعبير الاجتماعية. إن النموذج الثقافي والإبداعي المتواجد الآن داخل المملكة العربية السعودية يربط بين الفنانيين المتفرقين وأنشطتهم من خلال تكوين ثقافة جذرية ترتبط ولا ترتبط بالفن والمجتمع. ومن خلال الصلة بهذه المجموعة من الفنانيين المتنوعين، والمثقلين الثقافيين، تعرفت على المساهم الشاعر والفنان الفلسطيني اشرف قياض.

جديدة إذا تم قطع الجذر من مصدره. من ناحية فلسفية، تم تعزيز هذه الأفكار من قبل المفكرين الفرنسيين غيليس ديلبوز وفليكس غواتاري في كتابهما *ألف هضبة: الرأسالية والشيزوفرينية* (1980)، والذي وظفا فيه المصطلح “ريزوم” لمناقشة أمثلة عديدة عن التوجه المتعدد لتمثيل البيانات المتكاملة التي يشتمل عليها التاريخ البشري وعلم الأحياء وعلم الأنساب. علاوة على ذلك، شكّلت إسهامات علماء المسلمين الفرس والعرب، أمثال ابن سينا والفارابي، في القرن العاشر، والذين تحمقوا في دراسة الفلسفة الطبيعية والعلوم والرياضيات وعلم المنطق، مصدر الهام آخر. اجمالاً، قادت هذه الأبحاث إلى صياغة فكرة المعرض النهائية، وبالتالي اختيار الفنانيين الشباب الذين سيشاركون فيه، وصارت نقطة انطلاق هامة، يمكن من خلالها استكشاف

إنهم “جيل اليوتيوب”، شباب جريء يتمتع بالقدرة على التعبير، بقوة

ملامح الحراك الفني المتنامي، الذي تزخر به المملكة العربية السعودية. تم اختيار الفنانيين المشاركين في هذا المعرض من جيل شهد ظهور الإنترنت، وهم يشكلون جزءاً من مجموعة متنامية باضطراد، وبالتالي فإن هؤلاء الفنانيين يتمتعون بالمعرفة التقنية المتعددة الأنماط، التي توفرها وسائط التواصل الاجتماعي وخدمات الرسائل القصيرة. إنهم “جيل اليوتيوب”، وهم شباب جريء يتمتع بالقدرة على التعبير، بقوة وبوسائل انيقة، ومن هذا الحال فانهم يضعون انفسهم في مسار غير متساق، سواء بالحركة المعاصرة للفن التشكيلي في المملكة العربية السعودية، او في آلية نموها التاريخي، بل بما استوجبه التحولات الثقافية التي حصلت في العالم، والتي القت بظلالها على منطقة الخليج برمتها. ان هؤلاء الفنانيين الجدد يتحركون ضمن مساحة الثقافة الشعبية الواسعة، وضمن حركة فنية صاعدة، تتبنى الجوانب الحرفية والتقنية، إلى جانب المعاصرة على حد سواء.

should take the direction of (un)structured realities, which was directly informed by the artists that I was engaging with and whose concerns ranged from the subversion of Islamic geometry in contemporary art and design to performance in the public space, blogging and social satire. The cultural and creative paradigm presently occurring inside Saudi Arabia links disparate artists and their practices through the formation of a new rhizomatic culture that is both connected and disconnected with art and society.

Furthermore, it was through connecting with this particular critical mass of diverse artists and cultural operators that I also became acquainted with contributor Ashraf Fayadh, a Palestinian poet and artist.

Ashraf's expertise on the ground inside Saudi Arabia meant that he had acquainted himself with the local arts scene and formed alliances with alternative non-mainstream artist groups providing the project with an injection of gritty realism.

The common cultural denominator within the project, one that has connected me with the artists was that quite literally we all came into the project somewhere in the middle. As a whole we serve as a multi-faceted group of visual cultural critics and the space that we collectively occupy is non-linear. Suspended somewhere within this middle space, we exist within a third space of both difference and indifference, and most importantly one that is not necessarily tied to purely geographical sameness.

The artists selected to take part within this exhibition reflect multiplicity and charter non-linear rhizomatic journeys. All twenty seven artists, including collectives, present within Rhizoma adhere to these ideas, they include: Nouf Alhimari, Rami Alqthamy, Shaweesh, Ahaad Alamoudi, Ahmad Angawi, Basmah Felemban, Eyad Maghazil, Saeed Salem, Sami Al-Turki, Sarah Al Abdali, Sarah AbuAbdallah, Telfaz 11, U-Turn, Nora A.Almazrooa, Nasser AlSalem, Eiman Elgibreen, Mala'a Al-Amoudi, Mohammad Makki, Heba Abed, Omamah AlSadiq, Abdulkarim Qassem,

Dana Awrtani, Eiman Elgibreen, Abdullah Alothman, Batool Alshomrani and Huda Beydoun.

This selection of artists and their unique artistic practices offer a slice of a fast-evolving genre of visual culture that is experimenting with visible and invisible frontiers, cliches, contradictions, logic and illogic.

Dispelling stereotypical depictions concerning the position of women in contemporary Saudi Society is an on-going concern amongst the works of several female artists within the exhibition. In *What She Wore* (2013) a photographic blog consisting of a collection of photos of young Saudi women wearing abayas, artist Nouf Alhimari spoofs the popular fashion blogging trend to reveal young Saudi women within various cities and settings offering both incongruous and banal images. In contrast, performance and video installation artist Sarah AbuAbdallah presents the *Salad Zone* (2013), a video installation of three seemingly disparate videos that are intentionally non-linear within their stylistic structure. AbuAbdallah's videos enable audiences to find themselves within the centre of somewhat absurd and humorous domestic urban scenarios. Also introducing humour within her work is Ahaad Alamoudi whose *Heya (She)* (2013) gas canister installation and video of the same title reflect quite literally on the perceived metaphoric notion of an explosive woman. Satire is also a tool within Omamah AlSadiq's ongoing *300Camels* (2012-13) blog in which the artist explores the origins of her name, which literally translates as '300 camels' in Arabic. AlSadiq has been collecting images of camels throughout the Middle East and soliciting members of the public to send their camel sightings to her which she posts through social media platforms (including her blog), to create an eclectic

مقاطع الفيديو التي تقدمها سارة ابوعبدالله للمشاهد، ان يجد نفسه ضمن سيناريوهات سخيفة بعض الشيء ولكنها تحمل روح المرح والدعابة. تدخل الفنانة عهد العمودي، كذلك روح المرح والدعابة في أعمالها، فعملها "هي" (2013) يجسد تركيب من اسطوانة غازية وفيديو يحمل الاسم نفسه. ويعبر تماماً عن فكرة المرأة النائرة. وتستخدم أمامة الصادق الهجاء كأداة في مدونتها المتواصلة "300 بعير" (2013-2012) التي تقوم فيها الفنانة باستكشاف جذور اسمها الذي يعني حرفياً 300 بعير. تقوم أمامة الصادق بجمع صور الجمال من مختلف أنحاء الشرق الأوسط، وتطلب من الجمهور ارسال صور جمالهم ليها لتضعها في منصات التواصل الاجتماعي (بما فيها مدونتها)، لتصنع ارشيفاً مبتكراً. ومن ناحية أخرى، تقوم الفنانة إيمان الجبرين، التي تحضر لنيل درجة الدكتوراه، باستكشاف موقع الفنانات السعوديات في سجل التاريخ الفني الغربي والهندسة المعمارية، وضمن سلسلة "لا تنظر إليّ أنظر إليّ فني" (2013) التي تستخدم فيها إيمان الجبرين وسائل متعددة، تستكشف إيمان تاريخ الفن والثقافة الشعبية، من خلال تقليد أشكال فتاة الباليه التي يستخدمها الفنان إدجار ديغاس، والتي سخر منها الموهوب البريطاني سكاوت سيمون كاول، وتشمل صوراً لفنانات سعوديات يقدمن أعمالهن ليتم الحكم عليهن من قبل شخصية شهيرة، وهذا العمل هو تعليق ساخر على الفن والموهبة، وكذلك عن التناقضات وهيمنة الثقافة الأوروبية. وبالمثل، يتساءل عمل تركيبات قطع الأجر التي تحمل وجوه نساء بعنوان "هل يصنع الوجه فرقا؟" (2013) عن شرعية وهوية النساء السعوديات. وتعتمد إيمان الجبرين إلى هيمنة وجوه النساء على قطع الأجر كرمز للطبيعة التي صنعها الإنسان وبناء الهوية.

تقوم أعمال العديد من الفنانين، بدراسة البيئات غير الرسمية، والقضايا المرتبطة بالأرض والملكية، وذلك في إشارة إلى التغيير الهيكلي والمادي الكبير الحاصل في المملكة العربية السعودية. يوظف الفنان والمصمم أحمد عنقاوي مهمة ابتكار نسخة معاصرة من المنمنمات التي تم ابتكارها في مكة المكرمة أيام الخلافة العثمانية عن المسجد الحرام في لوحة تحمل عنوان "منمنمة القرن الواحد والعشرين" (2013). يقدم عنقاوي في نسخته هذه زخارف صغيرة مثل البلدوزرات التي تلتهم التراث المعماري العثماني التاريخي في مكة المكرمة، ويستبدل النماذج الهندسية القياسية التي تحملها اللوحات المنمنمة التقليدية، ويقدم

كانت الخبرة العملية التي يتمتع بها اشرف، داخل المملكة العربية السعودية تعني أنه على معرفة بالمشهد الفني المحلي، ولديه علاقات مع مجموعات وتكتلات فنية موازية للتيار الفني السائد.

وفي إطار المشروع، كان القاسم الثقافي المشترك الذي ربط بيني وبين الفنانين، هو أننا قدمنا إلى المشروع من مكان ما يقع في منتصف الطريق، هكذا فقد عملنا كمجموعة نقدية ثقافية بصرية متعددة الأوجه، وكانت المساحة التي نشغلها غير خطية، ونتيجة أننا أصبحنا معلقين في مكان ما في المنتصف، فقد تواجدا ضمن مساحة ثالثة تتكون من الاختلاف واللا اختلاف، وهي مساحة تعتبر الأكثر أهمية والتي لا ترتبط بالضرورة بالتماثل الجغرافي البحت.

يعكس الفنانون الذين تم اختيارهم للمشاركة في المعرض التعددية، ورحلات ريزومية غير خطية، وجميع الفنانين الستة والعشرون، المتواجدين في معرض ريزوما يتمسكون بهذه الأفكار، وهم نواف الحميري، رامي القناني، شوايش، عهد العمودي، أحمد عنقاوي، بسمة فلبان، إباد مغازل، سعيد سالم، سامي التركي، سارة العبدلي، سارة ابوعبدالله، تلفاز، إيوثيرين، نورا المزروع، ناصر السالم، إيمان الجبرين، ملأ العمودي، محمد مكي، هبة عبيد، أمامة الصادق، عبدالكريم القاسم، دانة عورتاني، عبدالله العثمان، بتول الشمراني وهدى بيضون.

تقوم هذه المجموعة المختارة من الفنانين من خلال أنشطتهم وممارستهم الفنية المتفردة بتقديم لمحة من ثقافة بصرية، تتطور سريعاً وتحرب جهات مرئية وغير مرئية، وقوالب وتناقضات وجوانب منطقية وغير منطقية.

من المؤكد أن مسح الصور النمطية عن مكانة المرأة في المجتمع السعودي المعاصر يعد مهماً جداً يجري تناوله في أعمال العديد من الفنانات المشاركات بالمعرض. تسخر الفنانة نواف الحميري في مدونتها "ما ترتديه" (2013) من نزعة تدوين الأزياء الشعبية لإظهار الشباب السعوديات في العديد من المدن والمناطق يقدمن صورة غير منطقية ومبتذلة. وعلى النقيض، تقدم فنانة الأداء والفيديو سارة ابوعبدالله مقطع الفيديو المركب "منطقة صلد" (2013) الذي يتكون من ثلاثة مقاطع فيديو متباينة، وتعتمد الفنانة أن تكون غير خطية او نمطية في استخدام التركيب الفني. وتتيح

archive. Adversely, PhD candidate and artist Eiman Elgibreen explores the position of Saudi Arabian female artists within the canon of Western art history and architecture. Within the mixed media series *Don't look at me look at my art* (2013) Elgibreen layers art history and popular culture by mocking Banksy's popular vista of French Impressionist artist Edgar Degas's ballerina figures being judged by infamous British talent scout Simon Cowell including images of Saudi female artists showing the celebrity judge their works. The work is a satirical visual commentary on art and talent as well as contradictions and Eurocentric dominance. Similarly, Elgibreen's brick installation with women's faces *Does a face make a difference?* (2013) questions the validity and identity of Saudi women. Elgibreen superimposes women's faces upon bricks as a metaphor for the fabricated manmade nature of construction and the building of identity.

Investigating informal architectures and issues pertaining to land and ownership is explored within the works of several artists in reference to the changing structure and physicality of Saudi Arabia. Artist and designer Ahmad Sami Angawi employs the labouring task of creating a contemporary version of a traditional Makkah Ottoman miniature painting of the holy Masjid Al-Haram in Makkah for the present day aptly entitled *21st Century Makkah Manuscript* (2013) In Angawi's version he introduces motifs such as small bulldozers that are eating away at the historical Ottoman architectural legacy inside Makkah, replacing the standard geometric patterns presented within traditional miniature paintings. In addition,

he also presents *Wijha 2:148 [And everyone has a direction to which he should turn...]* (2013) a large lenticular photograph that juxtaposes an old image of the Masjid Al-Haram from the 19th century with a new contemporary image of the site, to compare and contrast the architectural changes that are presently occurring. Correspondingly, Ramy Alqthamy's *Albetra* (2013) is an actual concrete graffitied block that references borders that are both real and manmade, which impede the ebb and flow of people and ideas. Challenging capitalist ideology is artist Sami Al-Turki with his *Hammour* (2013) mixed media installation. Hammour features a tray of sand upon which a moving image of the large white fish known as hammour is projected as both a metaphor for the popular slang term of hammour given to large Saudi corporations who are perceived like hammour fish to consume everything in the sea bed. Also commenting on consumerist culture is Saeed Salem's *Neonland III* (2013) triptych, which depicts a man praying under a neon lit artificial palm tree. The relationship between consumerist ideology and capitalism is further explored by performance and street artist Shaweesh's photographs that explore mainstream Saudi Arabian culture alongside American cult figures as featured within his *Superheroes* (2013) series which features a spoof of Captain America and Yoda from the cult classic film *Star Wars*.

New media outlets such as the internet are fast becoming a new platform for many artists inside Saudi Arabia, one which enables them to explore multiplicity within their dissemination of contemporary visual cultures. Launched in 2011,

Telfaz 11 present an array of works offering socially satirical sketches that explore Arab identity, systems and structures through comedy and parody.

Another internet-driven collective is U-Turn, spearheaded by filmmaker Mohammad Makki and artist Eyad Maghazil

الخلفية. وقد ابتكر الفنان محمد مكّي، حلقة خاصة بعنوان "تكي" (2013) لمعرض ريزوما. يظهر فيها الفنانين المشاركين في المعرض. يعتبر استخدام التصميم الهندسي سمة سائدة في أعمال العديد من الفنانين المشاركين في المعرض. وتعتبر عن الحوارات الدائرة حالياً، بشأن العلاقة بين الحرفية التقليدية الإسلامية والفنون الجميلة المعاصرة. تقدم سلسلة "إضاءات" (2013) للفنانة دانة عورتاني رؤيتها للإضاءة التقليدية الزخرفية والهندسية، لتتطابق مع المنهجيات والتقنيات التقليدية، ولتتوفر مخرجاً من التصاميم التي يتم تنفيذها باستخدام الكمبيوتر. وفي عمل يجمع أنماطاً فنية عديدة ويمثل عودة إلى الحرفية التقليدية، تقدم الفنانة والمصممة سارة العبدلي لمعرض ريزوما عملاً تطبق فيه مبادئ الاستنسل لصناعة ثريا بعنوان "قصيدة الذرات" (2013)، مستوحاة من قصيدة بنفس الاسم، قدمها الشاعر التركي الفارسي والصوفي، الرومي في القرن الثالث عشر. ويستكشف هذا العمل المعلق المبادئ العلمية والإسلامية للذرات والجزيئات، ويسعى إلى ابتكار إحساس درامي بين الشكل والظل والضوء. وبالمثل، ابتكرت المصممة والفنانة بسمة فلمبان تصميماً بعنوان "حقائق مستخلصة" (2013)، وهو عمل على أشكال هندسية معقدة من الطباعة والبليوكسيغلاس، ويتعامل هذا العمل مع الأماكن المرئية وغير المرئية والفراغ، والتي توجد بين الإنسان والملاحة والعلاقة الرياضية بين الفضاء والجسم. وتدرس الفنانة ملاً العامودي أمثلة تفاعلية هندسية في عملها "قطعة" (2013)، وهو لوحة ألعاب من وسائل متعددة، تدعو الجمهور للمشاركة في عملية اتخاذ القرار استناداً إلى المنطق الرياضي وحل المسائل الهندسية.

يسعى الفنانون إلى ابتكار تعبير جديد ونمط اتصال جديد، ويتطلعون لإيجاد لغات بصرية جديدة، تعبر عن التوجهات الحالية بالطريقة التي يتم التواصل عبرها باللغة العربية من خلال وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي

ولكل وجهة هو موليها)

وجهة (2:148)

عنقاوي كذالك عمله "وجهة"، (ولكل وجهة هو موليها)، (سورة رقم 148 آية رقم 2)، (2013)، وهي صورة فوتوغرافية ضخمة تمزج صورة قديمة من المسجد الحرام من القرن التاسع عشر مع صورة عصرية للموقع، من أجل المقارنة مع التغييرات المعمارية التي تتم في العصر الحالي. في المقابل، يقدم رامي الثبتي عمله "البتراء" (2013) والذي هو كتلة خرسانية حقيقية ترمز إلى الحدود الحقيقية التي صنعها الإنسان، والتي تعيق انسياب الناس والأفكار. ويتحدى الفنان سامي التركي الرأسمالية بعمله "الهامور" (2013)، وهو تركيب من وسائل متعددة، الهامور هو صينية من الرمال، عليها صورة متحركة لسمكة بيضاء اسمها الهامور، وترمز للمصطلح الشعبي "الهامور" الذي يعني الشركات السعودية الضخمة التي تصور بأنها هامور يلتهم كل شيء في فاع البحر. ويتناول الفنان سعيد سالم في عمله "تابلينون الثاني" (2012) موضوع الثقافة الاستهلاكية، حيث يصور رجلاً يصلي تحت شجرة نخيل صناعية مضاءة بالنيون وفي مقابله "كشك النيون" (2013) وهو تمثال يبيع كل يوم أدوات سعودية تتراوح ما بين بالونات الأطفال إلى الأحذية. ويتم استكشاف العلاقة بين الأيديولوجية الاستهلاكية والرأسمالية من قبل فنان الرسم على الطرق شاويش، في صورته الفوتوغرافية التي تدرس الثقافة السعودية السائدة، إلى جنب شخصيات أمريكية، مثلما هو في سلسلة أعماله "أبطال خارقين" (2013) التي تقدم صورة ساخرة من كابتن أمريكا ويودا من فيلم حرب النجوم الكلاسيكي.

تتحول الوسائل الجديدة مثل الإنترنت وبشكل سريع إلى منصة جديدة للعديد من الفنانين في المملكة العربية السعودية، وتمكنهم من استكشاف التعددية من خلال نشر الثقافات البصرية المعاصرة.

تم إطلاق تelfaz 11 في عام 2011، وتشمل مجموعة من الأعمال الدرامية التي تم إنتاجها ما بين عامي 2011 و 2012 لتقدم أعمالاً ساخرة تدرس الهوية العربية والنظم والتراكيب في قالب كوميدي.

وهناك مجموعة أخرى تقوم على الإنترنت وهي "يوتيرين" التي يقودها صانع الأفلام محمد مكّي، والفنان إياد مغازل، والتي تقدم محتوى على نمط تلفزيون الواقع وتستكشف الهومو الاجتماعية لدى الشباب السعودي، وتوثق حياتهم عبر حلقات متتالية كثيراً ما تتم بالتعاون مع فنانين آخرين غالباً ما يظهرون في

'And everyone has a direction to which he should turn...' Wijha 2:148

'artists are looking to create new visual languages that mirror current trends in the way in which Arabic text is communicated'

the collective provides raw reality television style content that explores the social concerns of Saudi Arabia's youth culture. Documenting the lives of Saudi Arabia's youth through successive episodes often in collaboration with other creatives and artists whose works are regularly featured in the backdrop. In particular, Mohammad Makki has created two special episodes under the title of *Takki* (2013) for Rhizoma featuring participating artists.

The use of geometric design is a prevalent theme in several artists' works within the exhibition in order to reflect on current debates concerning the relationship between traditional Islamic craft and contemporary fine arts. Artist Dana Awrtani's *Illuminations* (2013) series offers her traditional take on the historical Qu'ranic decorative tradition of illuminations employing floral motifs and geometric embellishment, which conform with traditional methodologies and techniques, providing a departure from generic computer generated designs. In a more subversive practice that combines several artistic styles and marks a return to traditional crafts is artist and graphic designer Sarah Al Abdali. For Rhizoma, she applies the principles of stencil making to create a paper cut out chandelier entitled *Poem of the Atoms* (2013) after a poem of the same title by acclaimed 13th century Turkic-Persian Sufi poet Rumi. The cascading suspended work explores the scientific and Islamic principles of atoms and molecules and also serves to create a sense of drama between pattern, shadow and light. Similarly, designer and artist Basmah Felemban has created a playful yet geometrically complex silk screen and hand drawn plexi glass design entitled *Drawn*

out Truths (2013), which toys with the visible and the invisible and the void spaces that exist between human navigation and the mathematical relationship between space and the body. Also investigating interactive examples of geometry is Mala'a Al-Amoudi. She presents *Nuqta (Dot: The decision game, 2013)*, a mixed media board game that invites audiences to take part in a decision making game in accordance with mathematical logic and problem solving rooted in geometry.

Intent on creating a new syntax and mode of communication artists are looking to create new visual languages that mirror current trends in the way in which Arabic text is communicated via social media and email. Artist and designer Heba Abed's *Lost in Transliteration* (2013) typifies this trend by presenting a series of images from children's textbooks accompanied by a new language that combines the Arabic alphabet with Western numerals to create a new hybrid syntax. Also subverting tradition and history is traditional calligrapher Nasser AlSalem whose detail-orientated calligraphic works explore the paradox between the historical tradition of Islamic calligraphy and contemporary signs and slogans. For Rhizoma, Salem has made a special work that explores the theme of generation in waiting as a new slogan and signifier for making new histories.

Making the invisible visible Huda Beydoun's photographic series *Documenting the Undocumented* (2013) explore the issue of labour and undocumented immigrant works in Jeddah. Her photographs feature labourers and service workers in their ordinary working environment, however, their identities are masked with opaque Mickey Mouse features and their costumes

'يسعى الفنانون لإيجاد لغات بصرية جديدة، تعبر عن التوجهات الحالية بالطريقة التي يتم التواصل عبرها باللغة العربية'

والبريد الإلكتروني. يصور العمل الفني "ضاع في الترجمة" (2013) الذي تقدمه الفنانة والمصممة هبة عبيد هذا التوجه من خلال سلسلة من الصور لكتب دراسية خاصة بالأطفال وتصاحبها لغة جديدة تميز بين الحروف العربية والأرقام الغربية الابتكار جعل هجينة جديدة. ويقوم الخطاط ناصر السالم في عمله باكتشاف التناقض بين التراث التاريخي للخط الإسلامي، وكل علامة وشعار عصري. يقدم الفنان ناصر السالم، في معرض ريزوما عملاً خاصاً يستكشف موضوع "جيل في الانتظار" كشعار في دلالة على صنع تاريخ جديد.

تتناول الفنانة هدى بيضون، من خلال سلسلة من الصور الفوتوغرافية "توثيق اللا موتي" (2013)، قضية العمالة والمهاجرين غير الشرعيين والعمل في جدة، وذلك من خلال تحويل اللا مرئي إلى مرئي. وتقدم هدى في صورها الفوتوغرافية عاملين وعمالاً في بيئة عملهم المعتادة، إلا أنها تحجب هويتهم بأشكال ميكى ماوس وتزين ملابسهم بنقاط. وهذه الأعمال الساخرة تعلق على العلاقة غير

سارة رضا - المشرفة على معرض ريزوما، تدرس لنيل درجة الدكتوراه بكلية رويال للفن بلندن، مشرفة مساعدة في مركز مرابا للفنون بالشارقة، ومحررة مشاركة لمجلة آرت آسيا باسيفيك (غرب ووسط آسيا).

المستقرة في منطقة الخليج بين العمالة الوافدة وأصحاب العمل. ويقدم الفنان والجندي عبدالكريم قاسم مزيداً من التوثيق في عمله "الوصايا" (2009-2013)، وهو سلسلة من سبع وصايا، جمعها الفنان من زملائه الجنود الذين يعملون على حماية الحدود السعودية مع اليمن. ويطمس الفنان أسمائهم لإخفاء هوياتهم، ولكنه يعبر عن رغباتهم بعد الموت. موضوع التواصل ما بين النفس والذات العليا شكل موضوعاً متكرراً في أعمال العديد من الفنانين المشاركين في المعرض، وذلك عبر الربط المفصلي ما بين السمعي والبصري. يقدم الفنان عبدالله العثمان ضمن أعماله التي يستخدم فيها وسائط متعددة عمله الفيديوي "السؤال" (2012)، ويسأل فيه الفنان ثمانية وعشرين مشاركاً عن الله، ويسجل تعابير وجوههم، ليتلقت سلسلة من الانفعالات الجسدية التي تتفاوت، ما بين النشوة إلى الدنيوية، بينما يحجب ردود أفعالهم اللفظية الفعلية. ربما يمكن اعتبار عمل الفنانة بتول الشمراي، الصوتي "أذان" (2012)، بمثابة الموسيقى التصويرية غير الرسمية للمعرض.

decorated with polka dots. These satirical works comment on the Gulf's precarious relationship between guest workers and their employers. Further documenting the invisible, artist and soldier Abdulkarim Qassem's presents *The Wills* (2009-13), a series of seven wills collected by the artist of fellow soldiers enlisted to protect Saudi Arabia's border with Yemen. Their names are scribbled out in a bid to conceal their identities, instead what is revealed is their practical desires after death.

Seeking communication with oneself and higher entities is also a recurrent theme within several artists featured in Rhizoma and is articulated via the correlation between the aural and visual. In his video *The Question* (2012), multi-media artist Abdullah Allothman asked twenty eight participants about God and recorded their facial expressions, capturing an array of physical reactions from the ecstatic to the mundane all the while muting their actual verbal reactions. Further, Batool Alshomrani's audio piece *Untitled 'Athan' (call to prayer)* (2010), an audio work featuring the Muslim call to prayer is perhaps the exhibition's "unofficial" soundtrack. Reverberating through the exhibition space for 3.47minutes at five separate intervals throughout the day for believers this sound signifies their literal call to prayer, whilst for others it is just background noise and part and parcel of the "everyday". Rounding out the exhibition's selection and in a bid to solicit real social engagement is sculpture artist Nora A.Almazrooa's very functional ceramic coffee cups installation. Entitled *Intertwined Echoes* (2013) and *Chinese Whispers* (2013), these cups dotted throughout the exhibition space act as both incubators and invitations for engagement in real time and in person reminding artists and audiences that they really do need to talk.

Deconstructing multiplicity is an ongoing curatorial feature within the Rhizoma exhibition, where the participating artists take on the role of creating alterity

and producing new vocabularies in art and culture. They demonstrate this new order by creating "other" realities that push the boundaries of the status quo, ultimately, allowing for new realities both real and imaginary to take flight.

Sara Raza - Curator of Rhizoma,
PhD candidate at Royal College of Art,
London, adjunct associate curator at
Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah and co-editor
ArtAsiaPacific Magazine (West and
Central Asia).

**'تعتبر خاصية تفكيك التعددية،
الميزة الاساسية للتنظيم الجاري
ضمن معرض ريزوما، حيث يسعى
الفنانون المشاركون إلى ابتكار
وانتاج، مفردات جديدة في الفن
والثقافة. ويعبرون عن هذا النظام
الجديد عن طريق، اقتراح حقائق
جديدة، واقعية او افتراضية، تدفع
حدود الواقع الراهن لتحل محلها في
نهاية المطاف.'**

**'They demonstrate this new order by
creating "other" realities that push
the boundaries of the status quo,
ultimately, allowing for new realities
both real and imaginary to take
flight.'**

in a cold and dry place في مكان بارد وجاف

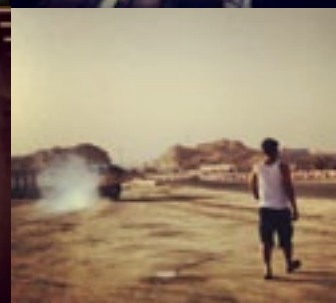
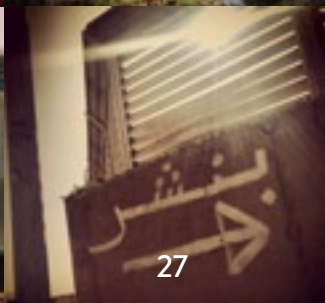
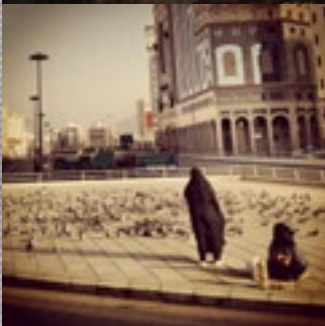
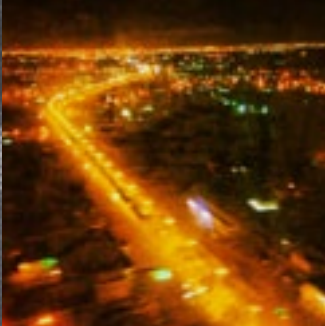
كل شيء سيبقى على حاله ، بما في ذلك آلام الأسنان المتكررة
الخيبة التي علقت في حلقي مثل عظمة سمك مدببة
والتشيلو الذي كان يتكئ على فخذي الأيسر بمنتهى الإتيان !
ستستمر الكوارث الطبيعية أيضاً في الحصول
لأن الأرض مثلنا .. تشعر بالملل الدائم !
الأرض قطعة فحم كبيرة .. مغمورة جزئياً بالمياه
ورماد السجائر أكثر نعومة من بتلات زهرة حديثة التفتح !
في مكان بارد وجاف سأحصل على بعض الغثيان
وأراقب السيارة التي تفقد شكلها تدريجياً بإيقاع زمني رتيب
مدعياً أن زمن الفرح لم يأت بعد
وأني أذكر جيداً طعم التوت الأرضي .. الذي كان دائماً يرضي غرورك
بالكامل .. كونه الوصف الأكثر دقة لحلمتك العزيرة !
البذور بدورها .. ترعبها فكرة التحول إلى شجرة
مثلما ترعبني تماماً فكرة الاستيقاظ من النوم .. واستقبال يوم جديد
من حسن حظ النباتات .. أنها لا تمتلك جهازاً عصبياً
تابعي البحث عن حلمك .. وسأتابع البحث عن حقيقتي
لأن الواقع بالنسبة لكلينا .. أمر لا يعول عليه .
يذهب صوابي بعيداً
يتلاشى مثل دخان في غرفة جيدة التهوية
يتسلل البرد من نوافذها بشجاعة منقطة النظير.
قد تسبق حاجتنا للهواء .. حاجتنا للدفع
عندها فقط نكون أحياء بطريقة طبيعية !
دعي المزيد من البرد يتسرب
وأديري قرص القمر إلى الأسفل
دعي البحر يتراجع إلى الخلف .. أطفئي النجوم
اقطعي التيار الكهربائي عن الشوارع
أزبحي أصابعك قليلاً
أريد أن أرى وجهك بوضوح .
تختلف رؤيتنا للأشياء
رغم أننا نمتلك نفس العيون تقريباً

تتشابه نظرنا بالمقابل لغزارة التراب على سطح هذا الكوكب
وفوق قصتنا التي تحتوي على الكثير من المشاهد المؤثرة .. رغم
اختلاف دماغينا !
كلانا كان على حق ..
النهار .. هو الكذبة التي تمكنا من رؤية الأشياء على حقيقتها ..
بشكل مؤقت
الليل .. هو حقيقة أننا أجسام معتمة ، تتحرك فوق كتلة كروية معتمة
.. عالقة في الفراغ.
القمر مشوش ومموه المعالم
مثل قرص فوار مضاد للحموضة
يسبح في كوب - نصفه (فارغ) - من الماء !
اشربي قهوتك المسائية بالشغف الذي كنت قد تركته عرضة للصدأ
في وقت سابق .
سامزق الأمس وألقيه من النافذة
وأنظف طفاية السجائر للمرة السادسة
وأكرر الأغنية نفسها كلما أحدث عمال البناء ضجيجهم الوقح في
المبني المجاور.
كان من الممكن للإنسان أن يبقى بدائياً
وأن يتكاثر جنسياً بشكل منتظم
لكن حاجة الإنسان الماسة للحفاظ على شكل القطيع
جعلته يصنع أوراقاً نقدية أخف وزناً من ألواح الملح .. كما أنها غير
صالحة للأكل !
لا يمكنني أن أشتاق إليك .. حفاظاً على صحتي النفسية
وعلى الهدوء الذي يسمح لحشرات الليل
ونباح الكلاب البعيدة
وبعض السيارات التي تمر في الشارع المجاور .. بمزاولة نشاطها
الرتيب .. من باب التسلية ليس أكثر.
نحن لا نستطيع رؤية الغد
فالزمن هو الشيء الوحيد الذي لا ندركه بحواسنا .. لذلك نحن نتحول
إلى صيغة الماضي بسرعة كبيرة
وليس بأيدينا شيء نفعله ، للتحكم في ذلك !
البرد يسيطر على الصباح
والدخان يتصاعد على شكل حلقات تشبه فماً يتثاءب بعمق.
لا تزال علاقتي متوترة مع الزمن ..
وأحتاج أن أنام قليلاً !

Explore ASHRAFFAYADH



118 likes



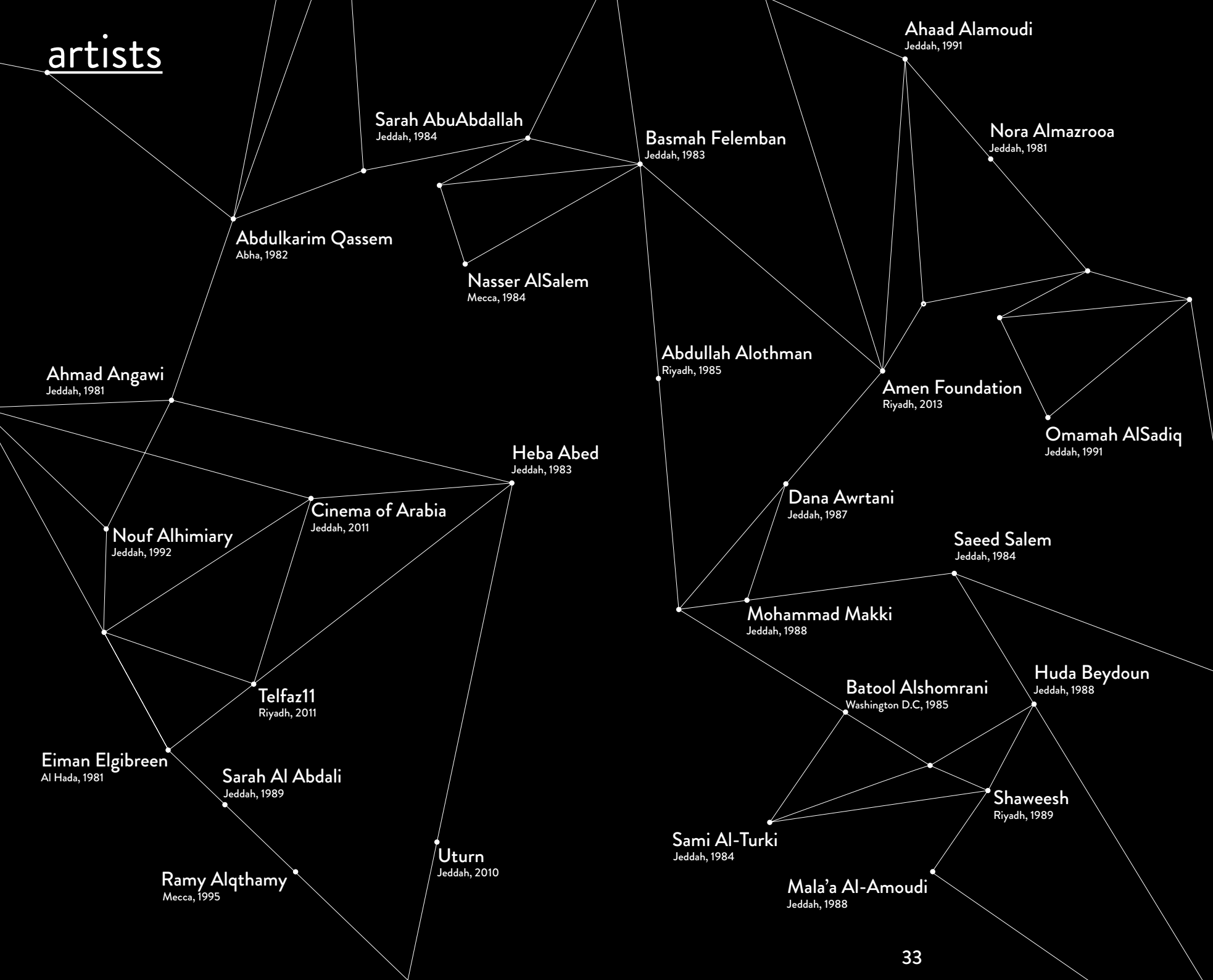
في مكان بارد وجاف in a cold and dry place

Everything will remain the same, together with frequent toothaches
Disappointment is stuck in my throat just like a sharp fish bone
The cello, which was beautifully leaning on your left thigh!
Natural disasters will also persist
Because the earth, just like us .. is feeling chronically fatigued!
Earth is a large piece of coal .. partially submerged with water
And cigarette ash is softer than petals of a blooming flower!
I will catch nausea
I will keep watching the cigarette that gradually and monotonously loses shape
Pretending that the time for joy is not yet due
And remembering the taste of strawberries very well.. the taste that used to entirely satisfy your ego as the most accurate resemblance to your beloved nipple!
In its turn the seed...is terrified by the idea of turning into trees
Just like me; terrified of waking from my sleep, and facing a new day
Plants for their good luck; they don't have nervous system!
Persist on seeking your dream, and I will persist seeking my reality
Because reality for both of us is unreliable
My mind runs far away
Vanishes like smoke in a well-ventilated room
Climbs the cold it's windows with unmatched courage
The need for air may precede the need for warmth
Only then, we will be normal living creatures!
Let more coldness infiltrate
Spin the moon dial downwards
Let the sea retreat, turn off the stars
Cut off the power supply from the streets
Release your fingers slightly

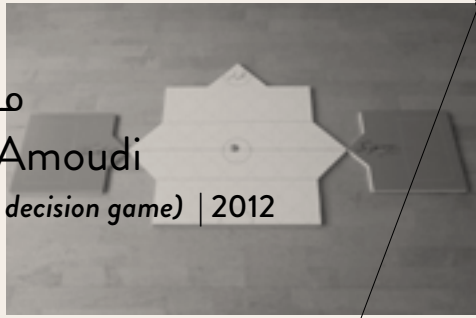
I want to see your face clearly
Our visions of things may differ
Although we have almost the same eyes
However, we share a vision with the huge dirt on the surface of this planet
And beyond our story full of dramatic scenes, we have different brains
We were both right ..
The day is the lie that helps us see things for what they are, but temporarily
The night is the fact that we are opaque objects, that move over an opaque spherical mass hanging in the space
The details of the moon are confused and camouflaged
Just like an effervescent tablet
Swimming in a half-empty cup of water!
Take your evening coffee with the passion that you earlier left to rust
I will tear yesterday apart and throw it through the window
I will clean the ashtray for the sixth time
And repeat the same song whenever the construction workers make rude noises at the nearby building
It was possible for the human being to remain primitive
To reproduce sexually on a regular basis
But the insisting human need to maintain the shape of a herd
Had forced him to make cash papers lighter than salt slabs, and inedible!
I cannot miss you; I need to preserve my mental health
I need to preserve calmness that allows night insects
And, barking of distant dogs
And, some of the cars passing on the nearby street ... doing the same thing .. just for fun
We cannot see tomorrow
Time, is the only thing that our senses cannot realize .. that is why we move into the past tense very quickly
We cannot do anything about this!
Coldness dominates the morning
Smoke is rising in rings like a deeply yawning mouth
My relationship with time is still tense
And I need to sleep a little!



artists



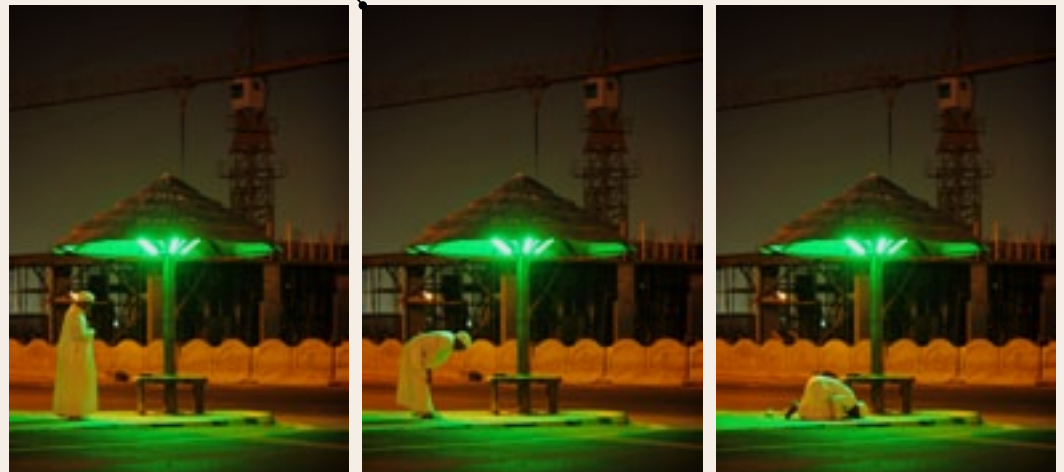
ملا العامودي
Mala'a Al-Amoudi
Nuqta (Dot: The decision game) | 2012



سعيد سالم
Saeed Salem
Neonland III | 2013

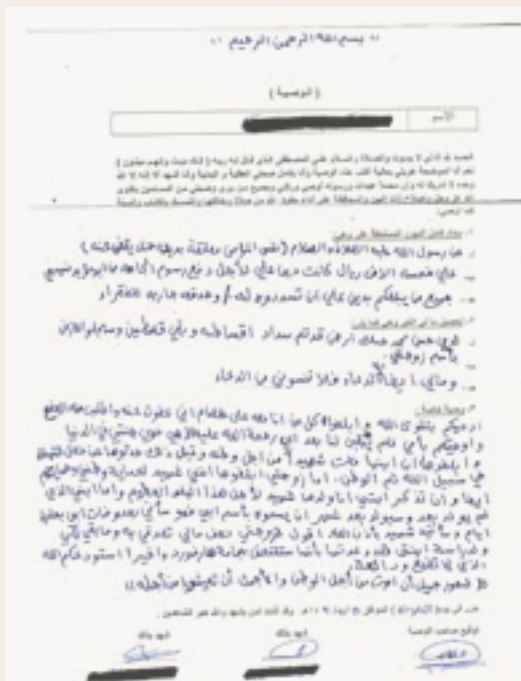
“These neon kiosks are a symbol of Jeddah ... they are iconic and you only find them in this city. To me, they symbolise both the old Arabic culture: a place to meet and talk; as well as something very futuristic.”

Making a decision can be very challenging. In the Arabic language, the word *Qarar* means ‘make a decision’, while the word *Ferar* means ‘escaping the reality’, or not making the decision. The difference between the two words is a dot (*Nuqta*), a small dot that make a huge difference.



Different feelings, concerns and stories have been extracted from five wills made by people in the last moments of their life as they travelled to places from which there was no promise of a safe return. These individuals met an unknown fate, experiencing sensations that they had never felt before, and it was at this precise time that they wrote their rare and telling texts, addressing their wills to their relatives, inspired by the five commandments issued by the Prophet Mohammed.

عبدالكريم قاسم
Abdulkarim Qassem
The Wills | 2009-13



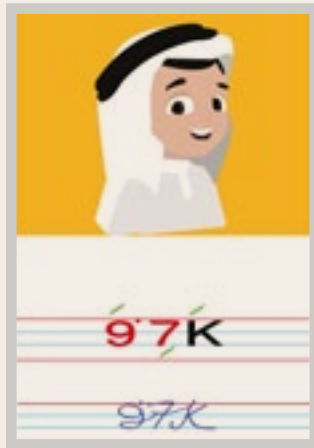
Borders are fictitious, man-made lines that allow an individual to enjoy a certain security and stability. Yet it is frightening how a human being can become disconnected within his or her mental walls, and somehow stuck between imaginary lines.

Albeta is a modular, rectangular shape made from concrete, and one commonly used for building; these shapes are placed on the corners of structures and act as vantage points, allowing the viewer to perceive borders in a given space.

هبة عابد

Heba Abed

Lost in Transliteration | 2013



‘Lost in Transliteration’

Omar Berrada interviews Heba Abed
about her series for ‘Rhizoma’

With the advent of text messaging and web chatting, and in the absence of Arabic keyboards, a transliteration system has been devised by young Arabs which allows them to communicate in Arabic while using a Qwerty keyboard. The system makes use of numbers to represent Arabic letters absent from the Latin script. It is sometimes referred to as Arabizi, or Arabish, or Franco-Arabic.

Omar Berrada: In “Lost in Transliteration”, you use Arabizi, with some variations, but you reverse the premise. It is no longer about people who know Arabic and manage to communicate with it despite a technical obstacle. Instead Arabizi is used as the method of learning Arabic in elementary school, as unlikely as that may seem. Why did you decide to focus on education in general, and textbooks in particular?

Heba Abed: You can understand the identity of a community through its culture and knowledge of that culture. For this, I think a school-based education is a good starting point. I used both current textbooks as well as ones I used as a child, though I had a hard time finding my old Arabic books even online so most of it was from books currently in circulation (LO3`ATE AL-JAMEELA). I re-drew the covers of the Arabic language books for both the Elementary and Grade 1 levels.

“next generations will
lose themselves in
the struggle between
globalisation and
national identity.”

What were you trying to show? And why do you call it a “wrong transliteration”?

My job as an artist is to draw awareness of issues in my community in a visual way. Using our classical Arabic books in my work was to solve a linguistic issue with satire. These books do not actually exist in Franco-Arabic, but the work is a signal of the status that these innovative figures of speech might hold in the future.

You have worked with a common Arabizi transliteration system, except that you add an unusual element above or underneath certain letters: the Arabic diacritics, i.e. the shadda (indicating the doubling of a letter) and the vowels (which in Arabic are not part of the alphabet but, rather, come above or under the consonants). The thing is that they are not necessary in the transliteration, as they are redundant with the Latin vowels, or with the actual doubling of consonants. Did you include them for decorative reasons?

For several reasons, including for a sense of the ironic. Anyone who cannot read Arabic and English together will not be able to read the text, but even those who can read both languages and have never heard of Arabizi will not be able to read it properly either. The presence of the Arabic diacritics, for example the shadda, gave it an Arabic feel while misleading the viewer. And that’s exactly the

point: 'blind spot thinking' creates a void or lack of meaning for the viewer when there is a lack of correlation between symbols.

If poetry is what gets lost in translation, then what is it that gets lost in transliteration?

It's not only about poetry. I'm lost in transliteration even though I'm fluent in Franco-Arabic! And I assume many people viewing the work will get lost too. My mother struggles to read the text sometimes! And then she gets it. I think the next generations will lose themselves in the struggle between globalisation and national identity.

I understand your transliteration project to be a humorous or satirical art experiment, exploring this idea of the scotoma, or blind spot. But what would you think if someone decided to really implement this in school education? (As you may know, since the late 19th Century there have been occasional calls for an actual romanization of the Arabic writing system, take for instance Lebanese poet Said Akl, who devised his own transcription system, and published several books of poetry in the Lebanese dialect using a 36-letter alphabet based on the Latin alphabet.)

Well, that does not shock me at all. There are many people who tried to replace our Arabic language alphabets

with Latin substitutes. In fact Abdulaziz Fhmi Bash, who was from the Ottoman period and preceded Said Akl, wrote a book about how transliteration would replace the Arabic alphabets with Latin. In Spain, there was a decorative form of written Arabic called mudéjar which inspired me a lot in the Franco-Arab series.

I would like to devote the last question to the silk-screen calligraphy pieces. I see them as the opposite of the transliteration pieces. The calligraphic tradition has traditionally dealt with religious piety and high poetry. Here you take basic chat-room words or abbreviations such as "hilarious", "BRB" and transliterate them into the Arabic alphabet, creating from them a calligraphic design. In a way you are sanctioning them as Arabic words. On the other hand, a verb like قرأ (read), when transliterated into 8R2, doesn't, in appearance, seem to have anything Arabic about it anymore.

The silkscreen series was a kind of different project. I replaced traditional phrases and motifs of Arabic calligraphy with a glossary of words that seemingly lack linguistic eloquence but ones that are commonly used today. What links both series is their humour. After all, who would expect to read "BRB" and "TYT" transliterated in Islamic traditional motifs?

A writer and translator, Omar Berrada co-directs Dar al-Ma'mûn in Marrakech. Previously, he curated public programs at the Centre Pompidou. With Yto Barrada he recently edited Album – Cinémathèque de Tanger, a multilingual book about film in Tanger and Tangier on film.

شاويش Shaweesh

Captain America, from the Superheroes series | 2013



"I respond to local social issues and I show them in an ironic and funny way. I mix pop culture with Saudi or Arabic culture."



عبدالله العثمان
Abdullah Alothman
The Question | 2012

Courtesy of Alaam Artspace

In *The Question*, I interview 28 artists, writers, thinkers, actors, students and labourers and ask them about their belief in Allah. I wanted to know how their lives change when their faith changes. The result offered many possibilities and distractions and led me to many other questions, but not to any one answer. I recorded the reactions of their answers as they spoke, the tiny and ambiguous details and emotions of worry, doubt, fear and indifference. The visual reaction is more truthful than spoken words.



Immigration is a burning issue in Saudi Arabia at the moment. Walking around and trying to document the immigrant workers was not an easy job, most were terrified and anxious that I might report them because in many cases they were working without papers.

Mickey Mouse is a character that everyone relates to. He is a figure of joy and happiness. On the other hand, he can also be a vulnerable character, who shows a nervousness and discomfort that I associate with the illegal workers while they were having their pictures taken.



“I explore art which leans toward the margins of life”

هدى بيضون
Huda Beydoun

Documenting the Undocumented | 2013



نورة المزروع
Nora Almazrooa
Intertwined Echoes | 2013

My work is an attempt to capture a moment in time of rapid change, nurturing it, analyzing it, interrogating it, and letting it grow. My surroundings are inputs that are processed in an artist's mind, and then produced in a form of an art object. These objects aren't necessarily pleasing aesthetically; but the approach is more about depicting an infinite journey or exploration, as well as an attempt to find one's capability to articulate ideas in that complex matrix.

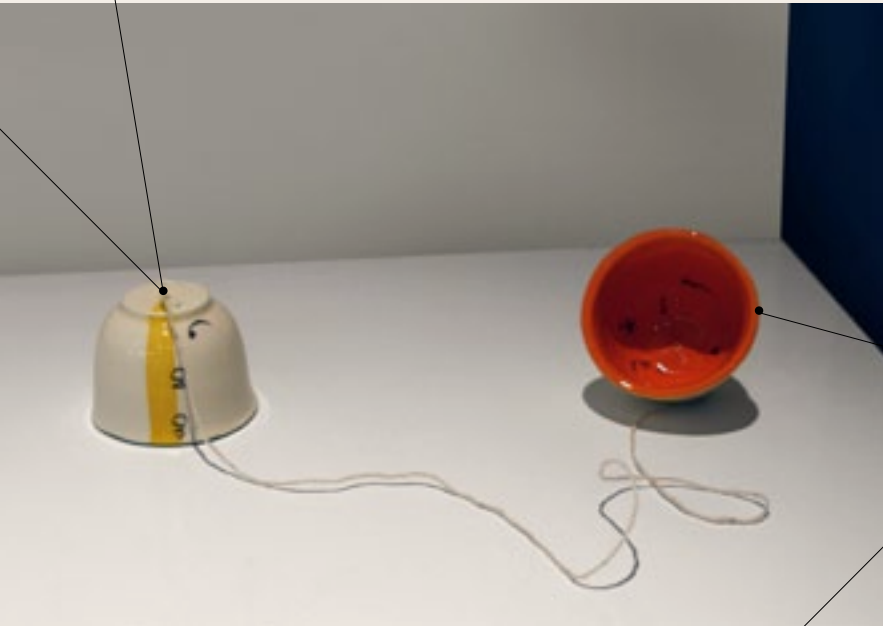


أمامة الصادق
Omamah AlSadiq
300 Camels | 2012-13

The project is about spreading 300 stencils of camels all around the world, which is the meaning of my name, Omamah.

أمامة = الثلاثمائة من الإبل و سميت به عدة صحابات

The concept is to let everyone experience street art in a very simple way so to do this I created a poster with instructions for people to follow. This allows me to connect with the world through all types of media and also prove that Arabs are living in a very modern way. We're no longer a bunch of nomadic tribes riding on camels.



نوف الحميري
Nouf
Alhimiary
What She Wore | 2013



**Brownbook Interview with
Nouf Alhimiary**

You have a love for vintage media and antique cameras. How do you incorporate this bygone aesthetic into your contemporary artistic practice?

Vintage media and antique cameras have withstood the test of time. They are a means of conveying an idea or a visual message that can support contemporary and modern ideals within them.

What aspects of women's lives in Saudi Arabia do you try to highlight through your work?

My main focus is portraying the life I'm actually living as a young Saudi woman through my photography, which makes feminism a recurring theme in my work.

In what ways does your study of English Literature inform your artistic practice?

It doesn't necessarily inform it. However, since I'm exposed to a great deal of feminist criticism and work, I get to see how similar women's issues are globally.

Can you describe the project you are preparing for Rhizoma at the Venice Biennale?

What She Wore is a series of pictures and a spinoff of the popular online concept *Outfit of the Day* in which women globally post pictures

“The art scene is very raw”

of their different outfits on blogs (something even Saudi women participate in when residing outside of the country). I was inspired to make a Saudi version of it and so here you have it, portraits of women on different occasions and in various locations wearing what they normally would – an abaya, the unchangeable outfit of Saudi women. Something that many noted when these works were first exhibited was how these women from afar looked like the same person, which could make you wonder why in Saudi we are being discouraged from displaying a sense of individuality.

What do you find exciting about art and cultural production in Saudi Arabia right now?

How true it is to our culture, yet how it manages to be modern at the same time. The art scene is very raw in a way.



في البدء كانت الكلمة In the beginning was the Word

Nasser AlSalem's world
by Huda Smitshuijzen-AbiFarès



ناصر السالم
Nasser AlSalem
Generation in Waiting | (sitespecific) 2013



Arabic calligraphy is one the most venerated forms of Islamic Art. Its ubiquity and visual diversity makes it a flexible medium that can be limitlessly explored and applied to various expressions of visual culture. Arabic calligraphy embodies three complementary aspects that are intricately intertwined: the spiritual meditative aspect of the act of writing, the communication aspect and meaning being transmitted, and the beauty of the letterforms and their craft (often executed in different materials and styles). Arabic calligraphy is the means by which non-physical thought and emotions are given tangible form: tracing the story of life with words. It is used to fix a historical moment, a thought, the spiritual quest of humanity, and much more. These aspects of Arabic Calligraphy are well-known to Nasser AlSalem. Through his work as a visual artist, many of these facets of calligraphy are visible. He strives through his work to engage his contemporaries in debates about the human condition, inviting us to reflect on the socio-political topics and the universal spiritual struggles we face in our daily lives. His focus on the conceptual dimension and the poetic powers of language ties together the visual diversity of his body of work. His medium is writing, but he invites us to read with our feelings and eyes, to deconstruct the work and look deeper within our selves for its significance.

Nasser AlSalem was born in 1984, in Mecca, where he later trained as a calligrapher and graduated with a degree in Islamic Architecture from Umm Al-Kora University. From an early age he received intensive classes at the Haram al-Sharif with the master calligrapher Ibrahim al-'Arrafi and recently received his Ijazah (or calligraphy certificate). In our discussion about his work, al-Salem described the holy city's influence on his work as manifold. He says: "the spiritual and human character of the city is more powerful than its aesthetic aspect." For him, Mecca and the Hijaz have a particular social character rarely seen in other cities. "The fraternity amongst strangers, where no one is a stranger, and the close-knit social fabric of the community is a unique characteristic of the city. The people of Mecca pride themselves for being in the service of the pilgrims of Islam." According to al-Salem this constant contact with people from different national,

social and economic backgrounds has created an unusual mix of traditions and ways of life unique to the city. And his experiences growing up in Mecca have shaped his belief in the unity of humankind through faith and spirituality. The near-miraculous image of the pilgrims performing various religious rites in unison (like a well-synchronised choreography moving to a universal rhythm), despite their diversity in every possible sense, remains strong in his memories. This appears in works like the seven-piece series of silkscreen prints History of the Kaaba (a 2010 work about the Kabaa's history from its original foundation by the prophet Abraham to its destruction on Judgement Day). The same can be said of in his later and abstract series of Kul in which he tries to visualise and explain what is impossible to either visualise or explain: the mystery of life and Kul (everything), or a sense of the universe as a whole. The image pulses with energy radiating from a core and extending outwardly, giving the impression of an infinite universe, without dimension or scale: visualising an open-ended question with infinite potentialities.

“Before we are able to read the text we recognise the image and understand the message in a visceral way.”

Nasser AlSalem's work has been informed not only by his educational background and training, but also by his personal experiences growing up in a unique and 'holy' urban context. Yet, his starting point for every work is the message, the word, whether it originates from a verse in the Holy Quran or whether it comes from poetry or vernacular expressions. Language is his muse. The words come to him as a response to a certain question that he feels needs to be raised, or a situation (personal or social) that he feels the urge to respond to. He looks for answers in his faith, in universal

truth, in multi-layered words that generate more questions. The Arabic language provides him with a rich arsenal of words that possesses a particular quality that wavers between the poetic and the evasive. It allows him to speak indirectly and allude to abstract concepts that cannot be explained, but rather felt and experienced. The 'word' dictates his art work, it influences the formal aspects of the letters, the composition, and the choice of material to be used. Sometimes the work is executed on a flat surface yet invokes a greater depth as in the Kul series. Or the flat laser-cut stainless steel surface of the piece And Also In Your Own Selves, Do You Not See?, due to the material used, creates a spatial extension that literally makes the viewer a part the image and one with the text. Sometimes the letters form a type of negative or recess, flattening the three-dimensional space into equally spaced and divided parts as can be seen in the maze-shaped square Kufi pieces (Whoever Obeys Allah, He Will Make For Him A Way Out, 2012). In other works, words protrude from the surface as neon lights that change

shape as the viewer moves around the piece, as well as changing colour and intensity depending on the surrounding light conditions (as in the series God is Alive, He Shall Not Die, 2012).

Nasser AlSalem believes that the truth of emotion in the work is what makes it powerful. He needs words to explain the world around him. He seeks to visualise and engage others in a discussion that transcends aesthetics and that strives to touch our emotional core. His works allow the viewer to engage with the work personally, provoking us to deconstruct its form and finally to arrive at our own conclusions. In his work he aspires towards the renewal of calligraphy as a 'contemporary' art form. He says: “the aim of my practice, other than a personal form of devotion, is to prompt the viewer to re-think the definition of calligraphy as they know it, and to dispel the notion that it is limited to the category of Islamic art and craft. I wish to demonstrate its

far-reaching conceptual potential and the role that it has to play in contemporary artistic practice.”

Nasser AlSalem's work is a means for archiving 'urban' society and recording it for future generations. In his large scale mural, Inna allāha la yuhibbu al-musrifin (He Likes Not Those Who Commit Excess, 2012), the image of the all too-recognisable image of the barcode covers a whole wall in a repetitive pattern that invites us to 'enter the work' and reflect from within about our point of view. In another piece, Guide Us Upon The Straight Path, 2013, the text turns into a diagram of a heartbeat chart. Before we are able to read the text we recognise the image and understand the message in a visceral way. His new works reflect this new development in his artistic practice: employing visually expressive calligraphy and poetic vernacular language in the service of intellectual discourse and the engagement with

everyday social issues. He coined his new approach “khatt al-khatt' (roughly translated as 'rewriting writing').

In his latest works for this exhibition: Mamnū' al-Tadkhīn (No Smoking), Mamnū' al-Taswīr (No Photography), and Jīl fi al-Intidhār (A Generation in Waiting) he addresses the social restrictions of everyday life and questions their implications for contemporary visual arts in particularly conservative contexts. He plans to carry on developing new expressive forms of calligraphy that emanate from the core of the language and its smallest component of meaning. For Nasser AlSalem 'everything' (kul) begins with the Word.

Huda is Founding Creative Director of the Khatt Foundation. Design curator, researcher and author.

“renewal of calligraphy as a 'contemporary' art form.”

“There are certain things in life you can either choose to cry or laugh about. I pick the latter, because I enjoy dark humour”.

إيمان الجبرين

Eiman Elgibreen

Don't look at me look at my art | 2013

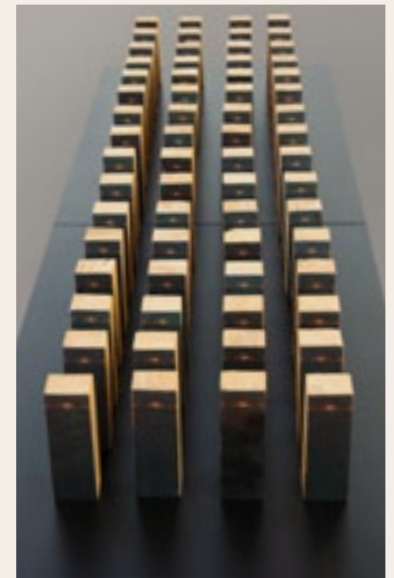


سارة أبو عبدالله
Sarah AbuAbdallah
Salad Zone | 2013

The work offers glimpses of multiple narratives such as that of familial domestic tensions, a juvenile dream of going to Japan, the tendency to smash TVs in moments of anger and eating fish.

Does a face make a difference? | 2013

The images of the young girls used in this sculpture are in fact those of 64 accomplished Saudi women who took a stand against materialistic trends in society that risk leading to their professional accomplishments being dismissed or underrated.



بسمة فلمبان Basmah Felemban

Drawn out Truths | 2013



Interview with Brownbook

Basmah Felemban nurtures a passion for tradition. It can be seen in her work that prioritises the hand-made and the locally produced. It can be detected in her commitment to exploring Islamic references in a bold and arresting manner. And it can even be found in her objective to talk to the older generations of her family about her arts practice, “to actually have them understand.”

Following a flutter of accolades - she won the 2012 Create & Inspire competition with her work *Jeem* and was invited to exhibit the piece at museums and galleries in London, Jeddah and Dubai - the 20-year old Saudi artist is making her debut in Venice with the *Sidana* series. A series of suspended glass sheets bear intricate geometric designs in the vague shape of a figure wearing a niqab and burqa; viewers are invited to pose behind the glass and have their photo taken in which only their eyes can be seen amid the riddle of design. An interesting relationship emerges between the viewer's interaction with the work in the space and the photographic image of the viewer interacting with it.

“The whole point of what I do is its purpose,” Felemban explains. “Art for me is about sharing stories and starting conversations, not about being pretty. I believe that artists should try to be inclusive and connect to as much of the society as is possible.”

This arrangement of art in

relation to society seems one particularly relevant to the character of the contemporary art scene in Saudi Arabia. Society here does not refer to Saudi's taboos, which have been talked about to death, but rather as a dynamic, evolving entity with a potential for creating a culture and a common history. Felemban feels that a lot of artists today are actively interested in making work that speaks to a generation, promotes a sense of social awareness and aims for building a legacy that can be passed on to their successors.

“We know we're at the very beginning of creating something,” she holds. “That's why it is so important to be critical about what you're doing because we know that we are creating a foundation for the next generation to build upon.”

Kate Busby is a British-Kuwaiti artist and writer. She writes for ARTnews and Harper's Bazaar Art Arabia.

أحمد عنقاوي Ahmad Angawi

Wijha 2:148 And everyone has a direction to which he should turn... | 2013

Photographic credits:

Abdulghafar, Al-Makkiyah Foundation

Archive (1890) &

Abdulraman Abdoh (2012)

Son of a renowned Saudi architect, Ahmad Angawi is strongly aware of his environment and its heritage, and is committed to reviving an appreciation of it among a generation of young Saudis who sense a disconnection from their past amidst rapid social and economic change.

Angawi spends his time engaging with craftsmen across the Arab world, learning, teaching and collaborating.

“I feel that our heritage and traditions are so rich that I’d prefer to put my efforts into unearthing them rather than responding to contemporary trends. The Middle East has so much that is worth re-discovering.”



“In some areas of the Gulf states, there is a feeling of dead beauty. The history museums often feel abandoned and the local craftsmen have lost a sense of their legacy especially since the rise of industrial production. But this situation actually creates an interesting possibility for artisans to explore their profession with new eyes.”

Angawi describes making wudu or ablutions before beginning an artwork, facing the direction of the ka’aba as he crafts. “There is a hadith or religious saying pointing out that work is a form a prayer. And what could be more beautiful than making something precious in such an atmosphere? Artisans used to have their own *dhikr* (meditative remembrance) they’d chant as they made their geometric designs because it was a good way to enjoy the making process. People today suffer a lot because they only think

about the destination and not the journey.”

For Rhizoma, the artist will be showing two works: a lenticular entitled *Wijha 2.148 [And everyone has a direction to which he should turn...]* which refers to a particular Quranic verse, and *21st Century Makkah Manuscript*, a delicate composition of ink, gold, silver and watercolour on Wasli paper which will be hung facing Mecca and positioned at an angle that encourages viewers to lean in to examine it. This anticipated physical interaction evokes the objective of Angawi’s practice as a whole, to create work which stimulates a desire to get closer to the feeling with which the work was made.

Words by [Kate Busby](#)





باب نبی

باب اسلام

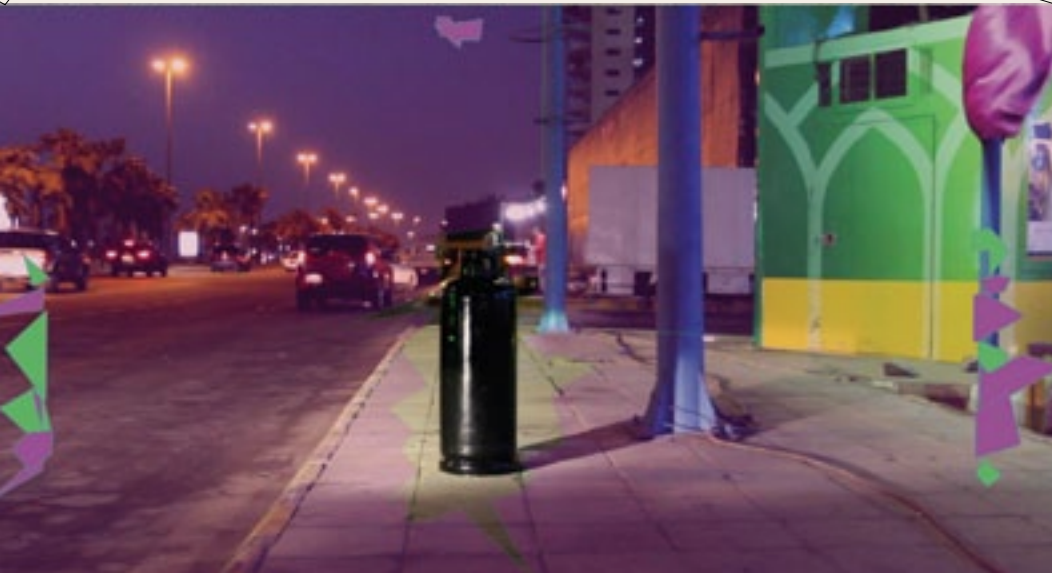
Heya (She) is a piece of comical and social commentary. It comes from the fact that our society is one in constant change, and within that evolution women become a source for everything, the past, present and future.

عهد العمودي
Ahaad Alamoudi
Heya (She) | 2013

The project is about the ownership of land. In an ideal scenario, all one would need to do is find a piece of land and purchase it, build on it then live there. But this is not possible for most people: a real estate or land broker would be better off selling air to a drowning man. These organisations tend to be run by the uneducated and corrupt, yet they are big and strong - like the hammour.



سامي التركي
Sami Al-Turki
Hammour | 2013



The traditional cycle of an individual's productivity starts with them being a craftsman/woman aware of his/her culture and ends with giving their surrounding environment what it needs to nurture a balanced lifestyle.

سارة العبدلي

Sarah Al Abdali

Poem of the Atoms | 2013

Interview with Sarah Al Abdali
for Brownbook Magazine

“I believe in the value of what the hand can produce in partnership with the five senses.”

You have been labelled one of Saudi Arabia's first 'street artists.' What does this term mean to you?

Labels are only images created by other people. Therefore, their meaning doesn't have any importance to me.

What are the recurring themes in your work?

Reflections and thoughts inspired from my daily life. And the absence of a homeland once called the Hijaz.

In what way does your educational background as a graphic designer influence your art practice?

My graphic design background is currently on hold! I'm doing an MA in Traditional and Islamic Arts because I believe in the value of what the hand can produce in partnership with the five senses. Machines and software have created an artificial pattern of visuals, products, lifestyles and

behaviours. The traditional cycle of an individual's productivity starts with them being a craftsman/woman aware of his/her culture and ends with giving their surrounding environment what it needs to nurture a balanced lifestyle.

How does your art engage with the social realities of Saudi Arabia?

Whether in Saudi or elsewhere, an artist's sensitivity does not choose to represent a country but something deeper; reality.

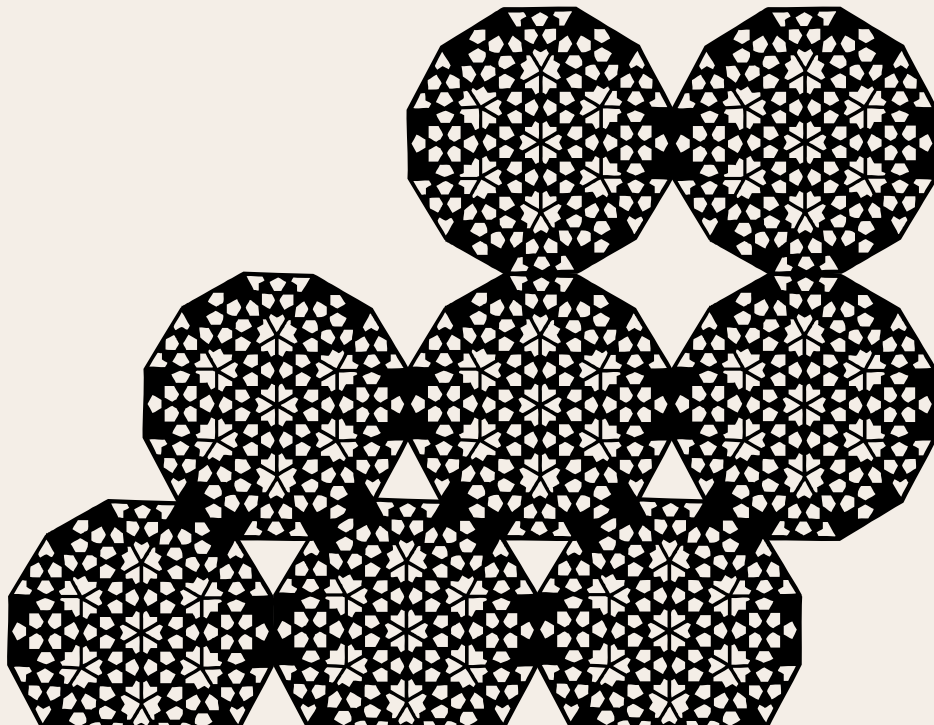
Can you describe the project you are preparing for Edge of Arabia's Rhizoma at the Venice Biennale?

Inspired by the basic unit of matter, the atom, I composed *Poem Of The Atoms*. The idea of a unit bonding with others to form molecules which eventually build to form all the structures within and around us. The pattern of an adapted,

traditional Islamic pattern was used while making present the sub-grids that are usually hidden in any final piece of geometry. The grids were kept to emphasise the variety of geometric shapes used. The name of the artwork refers to Rumi's poem which concludes that all atoms celebrate the unity of the universe and the greatness of the Almighty. The installation of paper cut-outs that formulate the abstract structure of molecules experiments with the potential of giving a flat, geometric pattern a sense of depth by the repetition of layers.

What do you find exciting about art and cultural production in Saudi Arabia right now?

I find that it's not 'exciting' as much as interesting to observe.



دانة عورتاني

Dana Awrtani

Khatem Al Suliman (Seal of Solomon) | 2012
from the Illuminations series

All the illuminations I have made use eight-fold symmetry, which plays a crucial role in all Islamic arts. Geometrically speaking the eight-pointed star is commonly referred to (in Islamic tradition) as the 'Khatam al-Sulayman' (Seal of the Prophets).

The colours used are the traditional red-blue-gold combination, which has an underlying language: the gold embodies the Divine Eternal light; the blue, a symbol of God's Mercy or 'Rahma'; the red, a bridge of colour to bring the other two together.

Untitled "Athan" is based on the re-contextualisation of the traditional canto that, in Muslim societies, calls believers to the mosque for the 5 daily prayers. Determined by the position of the sun in the sky, the Athan is both reminder and confirmation of the relationship and commitment that the believer has towards his/her own spirituality.

Connected with a software that automatically determines the correct time of each prayer, a megaphone, installed on the exterior side of the palazzo, will play five times a day the canonic islamic call to prayer as from a minaret. The echo of it is intended to spread from the Venice Gran Canal to the contemporary intellectual community, in a call to dialogue, awareness and reciprocal knowledge.



بتول الشمراني

Batool Alshomrani

Untitled 'Athan' (Call to prayer) | 2010

The Amen Art Foundation



Abdulnasser Gharem in conversation with [Anna Somers-Cocks](#) about The Amen Art Foundation he is starting in Saudi Arabia aimed at supporting the next generation of Saudi artists, which will debut at the 55th Venice Biennale.

Anna Somers Cocks:
Tell me about this Amen Foundation you are creating. Why do you call it that? And what does “Amen” mean? In Christian service it means, “So be it.”

Abdulnasser Gharem:
The good thing about the word “Amen” is that you find it in Islam, Judaism, and Christianity, even in Buddhism. When Muslims agree they will do something good, they say “Amen,” which means they will

commit to what they just agreed on.

Why create a foundation to help young artists?

I want the young artists not to suffer. When I was young, it was difficult just to get an art book or any information because the whole of society was resistant to being an artist, even my family. They thought it would be a disaster for me because they had never seen a museum, or any example of Saudi artist that they could look at and say, oh yeah, I want my son to be like that.

Where will your foundation be based?

Most people say, go to Jeddah, it's more open. But Riyadh is the capital. I should go where the power is, where the ideology is coming from. But again, it's a dialogue. I will show them what I've made in this foundation.

They will see the young artists. I want to offer this young generation the best art environment they can find. They will find the library; but I will not put any library. No, it will be a well-curated library....

How will it work?

Right now I'm trying to build the systems, the structure, and the programs of the foundation. I've read a lot of books about how to start a foundation, but we want fresh ideas from the people, from artists, engineers, financials, gallerists, museums. We would like to build from the ground up, so that when the young artists come, they'll find the foundation. It will educate even their parents. It will help the whole of society. It will affect the artists, and it will encourage the people to search for a new platform, for a new salon, for a new idea. People will see the artist

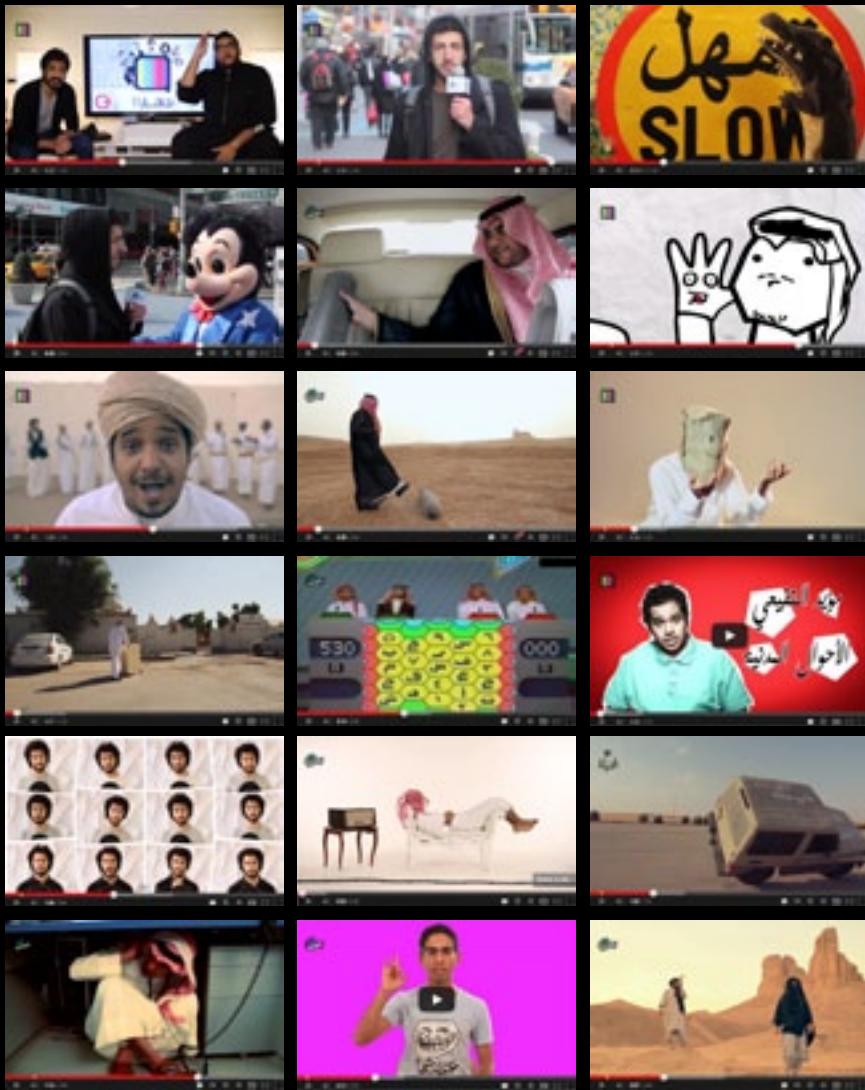
as negotiating their issues. People will be involved. They will not just come to watch. No, they want to come and be involved by helping, by negotiation, by some idea, but at least have a position. They will position themselves: 'Where do we stand? Where are we?'

Yes, yes, I do rather agree with you. So when will you have this foundation up and running?

We will introduce TelFaz11 at the Venice biennale on the 29th May. These young artists came to my studio and now they are the most powerful artists on the Internet. Can you believe it?

“ it will encourage the people to search for a new platform, for a new salon, for a new idea.”





تلفاز 11 Telfaz 11.tv

Telfaz 11 is the first Arabic online video network based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, aimed at supporting creative culture in the region. It strives to help its society realise their creative potential through its dedicated online viewing platform.

Interview with Alaa Yousef (co-founder of Telfaz 11) for Vice Magazine & Brownbook Magazine

How important is the Internet as a platform for creative practitioners in the Middle East?

It is probably the most important platform for creative practitioners in the Middle East.

Can you describe the project you are preparing for Edge of Arabia's Rhizoma at the Venice Biennale?

We will participate with some of our popular online content in a project that reflects the intertwining of culture, self expression, and the booming YouTube movement happening in our region.

How did Telfaz11 come about? What's the story behind its inception?

Founders Alaa Yousef and Ali Kalthami found that Saudi Arabia had amazingly talented and creative locals but for some reason they weren't getting exposure or support from the general public or companies that could hire these talents and support them financially. So, Alaa and Ali started the Telfaz11 network to nurture the careers of these local creatives

as well as the local creative culture. Telfaz is the Arabic word for television and the number 11 in Telfaz11 is an homage to the year 2011, the year where great changes occurred in Middle Eastern region, changes that changed not only the way the world looks at Arabs, but also the way Arabs look at themselves.

Have you ever had a show taken off YouTube and do you think the Saudi government is worried about the rate at which YouTube is increasingly being consumed in Saudi Arabia?
No.

What's your most controversial show?
We have two controversial shows. Temsa7LY and La Yekthar.

Temsa7LY is the more controversial show at the moment mainly because it is shown more frequently (once a week). It is considered a controversy because first of all, the star of the show is a loud-mouthed alligator puppet who boasts that his is the best show on YouTube. Also, the show's comedy is considered unsuitable for children, and even offensive by some who feel that all programming should have a positive message and mission.

However, the producers of the show believe that putting a smile on the viewer's face is a positive mission on its own.

How do you make something go viral in Saudi Arabia?
It has to be relevant to the Saudi community and has to have a shock or wow factor.

What potential contributions can technology make to developments in experimental art?
Technology has made it easier for us to create content, which in turn has created a phenomena and a movement in the region.

يوتيرن
Uturn

UTURN is an online entertainment channel that provides local and professional content for Internet users.

السينما العربية
Cinema of Arabia

Cinema of Arabia is an independent film initiative which fosters an appreciation of Arab arts and culture, with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia.

Takki is produced by Uturn and Cinema of Arabia. It is written and directed by Mohammad Makki.



Interview with Mohammad Makki
for Vice Magazine

Why do you think that YouTube is popular in Saudi Arabia?

Because we have no cinema. YouTube is one of the best sources of entertainment in Saudi.

Can you explain Saudi Arabia's Internet access to me? Are you able to view everything on YouTube?

Saudi Arabia's access to the Internet is quite limited. Many websites and videos are blocked.

Describe your series Takki to me. What sorts of story-lines do you run?

It's about a boy who wants to be a successful filmmaker in a country that has no cinema, who also likes a girl who happens to be his best friend's fiancée. Basically, it's a boy-meets-girl kind of story.

Why did you decide to make Takki?

Because I was hungry for filmmaking and storytelling that actually pays the bills.

Do you anticipate continuing Takki and creating another series? Do you want to work in Saudi Arabia forever?

I'm planning to continue Takki for another three seasons, filming and releasing one season a year. I would love to make short films in between.

“sometimes it's easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.”

Working as a filmmaker in Saudi Arabia is challenging - but as long as I'm challenged, I'm excited.

In the UK, a drama is typically popular if it contains one of the following: sex, violence, drugs. But you're not allowed to show any of those things on screen, right? Do you show anything controversial?

Many parts of the show can be seen as controversial: having a girl as a lead character, having music in the background, having women and men in one frame. Plus the topics we discuss on the show can be controversial, for example a Saudi girl rides a car with a Saudi boy whose not related to her by marriage or blood.

What's the reaction been to Takki? Have you received any praise? Any criticism?

The reaction has been great and we are grateful for that. There is some criticism of course but the series is praised more often than not, which is good.

I read that you film a lot of male-female interaction on the streets in Saudi Arabia without any permission. That seems risky. Have you ever got into trouble?

Yes, I am worried every time we have to film in the streets or public places without permits, but we have to do it. In Banksy's words, “sometimes it's easier to ask for forgiveness than for permission.”

Do you think that social media and online video channels are helping young people in Saudi Arabia to understand more about the rest of the world?

Yes, definitely. Internet has become our oxygen.

“the internet
has become our
oxygen.”

“أصبح الانترنت
بالنسبة لنا
الأكسجين الذي
نتنفسه”

Saudi Arabian social media users have proven to be among the most active in the Middle East region. In each social network, Saudi Arabia leads by example. The Social Clinic, a Saudi based social business & media consultancy, teamed up with The Loft, a Saudi based creative hub, to develop & design what we call "The State of Social Media in Saudi Arabia 2012."

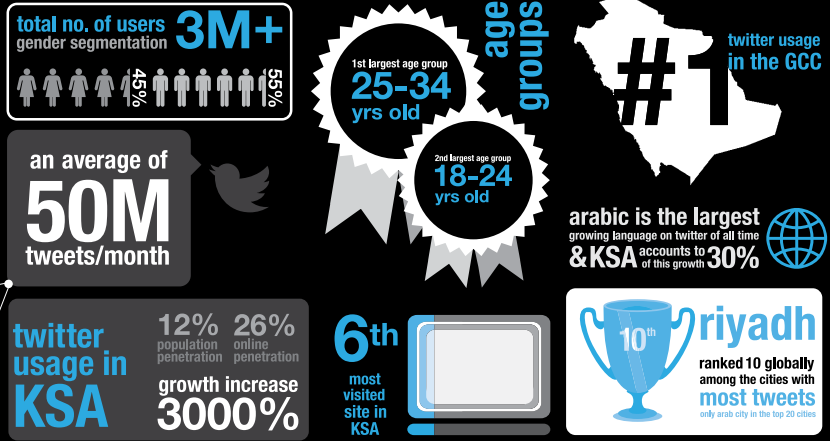
the state of social media in Saudi Arabia

5 of the head turning findings we share in our infographic:

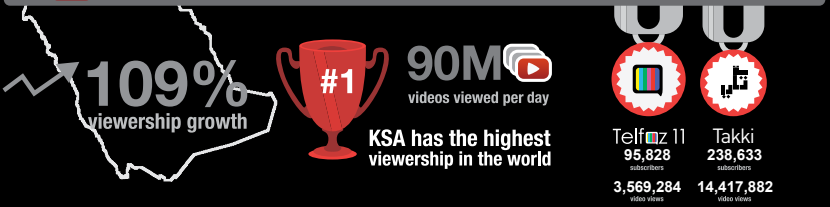
1. 90% of Facebook users in Saudi Arabia use Facebook in an Arabic interface, the highest in the world.
2. One third of Facebook users in Saudi Arabia use Facebook through their mobile.
3. Saudi Arabia has the highest growth penetration rate in the history of Twitter at 3,000%.
4. Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, ranks 10th globally in terms of the number of tweets tweeted; more than 50 million monthly.
5. The highest number of videos watched on YouTube from one nation is in Saudi Arabia, with more than 90 million videos per day.

The information we shared is as of December 2012, which is the last time any updated information or statistic was out. We took 4 social networks, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, & LinkedIn; and in each, the numbers skyrocketed out beating regional and global records.

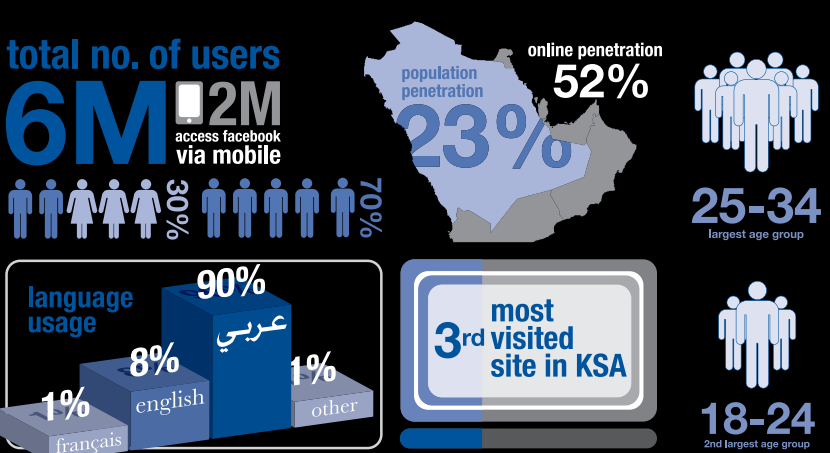
twitter



You Tube



facebook.



The information in this infographic is as of December 25, 2012. For sources, citations or a more detailed analysis of the research, kindly contact research@thesocialclinic.com

the second chapter of edge

Sincerity is the gold dust of the modern age. You can find pockets of it in many places, but it remains rare and there is always a high price to be paid for its pursuit.

Take for instance, the story of Edge of Arabia. It began as the sincerest of ideas: to champion artistic voices on the periphery, and in so doing to inspire new possibilities at the centre of the Islamic World. This idea attracted challenges: a struggle with the established order, a test of loyalties and friendships, years of late nights and forgotten weekends. But today, Edge of Arabia is a recognised and respected art platform, which in turn has helped cultivate a grassroots movement among a new generation of artists from Saudi Arabia.

The temptation, as the edge moves closer to the center, and amidst the accelerating opulence of the Middle Eastern art scene, might be to lose sight of the original objective's humility. But in 2013, with Edge of Arabia's third appearance at the Venice Biennale, the organisation remains as intent

as ever on showing that they stand for those unique voices in danger of being overlooked.

"The geographical and cultural 'edge' is where we were inspired to start this project," asserts founder, Stephen Stapleton. "In Saudi Arabia, what now unites a lot of the young artists is that they are standing up for their own art history, which has been overlooked in many ways and does not necessarily share the same vocabulary as what's happening elsewhere. Our show in Venice, Rhizoma, examines exactly that. You see it particularly in the artworks where abstract Islamic influences are reinvented, presented as living, breathing entities and not limited to decoration."

"Rhizoma is not about individuals, it's about networks. There are a lot of ideas and energy present in this show, and it's unrefined with good reason: if it was refined, it would be a pretence. Instead, curator

Sara Raza is looking at process, presenting twenty-six artists, two YouTube collectives and a Foundation searching for their voice because the context in which they are creating reveals something significant about Saudi Arabia and about this important generation."

When Edge of Arabia began, its founders supported themselves with other jobs (one was a teacher, one a doctor and the other a soldier). Today, Edge of Arabia artists are represented by galleries of repute with work featured in international museum collections. Many are now considered staple figures of a first wave of

"An artist is a figure replete with struggle; the epic journeys of individuals are never easy."

significant contemporary artists from the region. That such a small group of artists could have such a remarkable impact over its five years of activity is an inspiration to the new generation. But, this is no rags-to-riches fairy tale: rather than international exposure resulting in Saudi art being clawed from obscurity and shunted into the mainstream - vulnerable to forces of

compromise - it has remained where it began, preserved and protected on the edge.

Stapleton goes on to explain that even with its successes, Edge of Arabia is still battling against the prevailing current. "There are, for instance, several struggles at work in Rhizoma: the first is to make a transition from the established group of Saudi artists that include its founders, Ahmed Mater and Abdunasser Gharem, to the younger generation; the second relates to the role of an artist in society, an individual who is idealistic and marginalised but who can imagine, and is willing to fight for, a better world: the third is the challenge for those involved to stand up for the high ideals and values of the project, while also taking advantage of its benefits.

"An artist is a figure replete with struggle; the epic journeys of individuals are never easy. Edge of Arabia has been a spiritual struggle for those involved, but there was always a belief that artists are individuals with a sincere vision capable of seeing beyond what is. Can we imagine an Islamic society coexisting with a secular culture? Can the physical and cultural landscapes of the Middle East survive the accelerating pace of development? Faced with such dilemmas, I believe it is the artist who can prove a path-finder."

Words by Kate Busby

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In Tamer Group, the initiative that perhaps best illustrates the Group engagement with the community is its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platform, SA'AID. The name of the programme means 'forearm' in Arabic which symbolizes the part of the body that connects the body 'Community' to the hand which symbolize 'the company'. SA'AID is structured to address five main areas; health awareness and education; art and culture; environmental conservation; workplace wellness; and women's empowerment.

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www.tamergroup.com

ayyam projects

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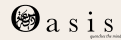


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Thanks

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Akim Monet

Alaan Artspace

All the Artists

Amr Zedan

Anna Somers-Cocks

Annabel Wightman

Anne-Sophie Stapleton

Ashraf Fayadh

Athr Gallery

Ben Bowmaker

Dan Faine

Elena Scarpa

Fady Jameel

Hamza Serafi

Haya Shaath

Hisham Samawi

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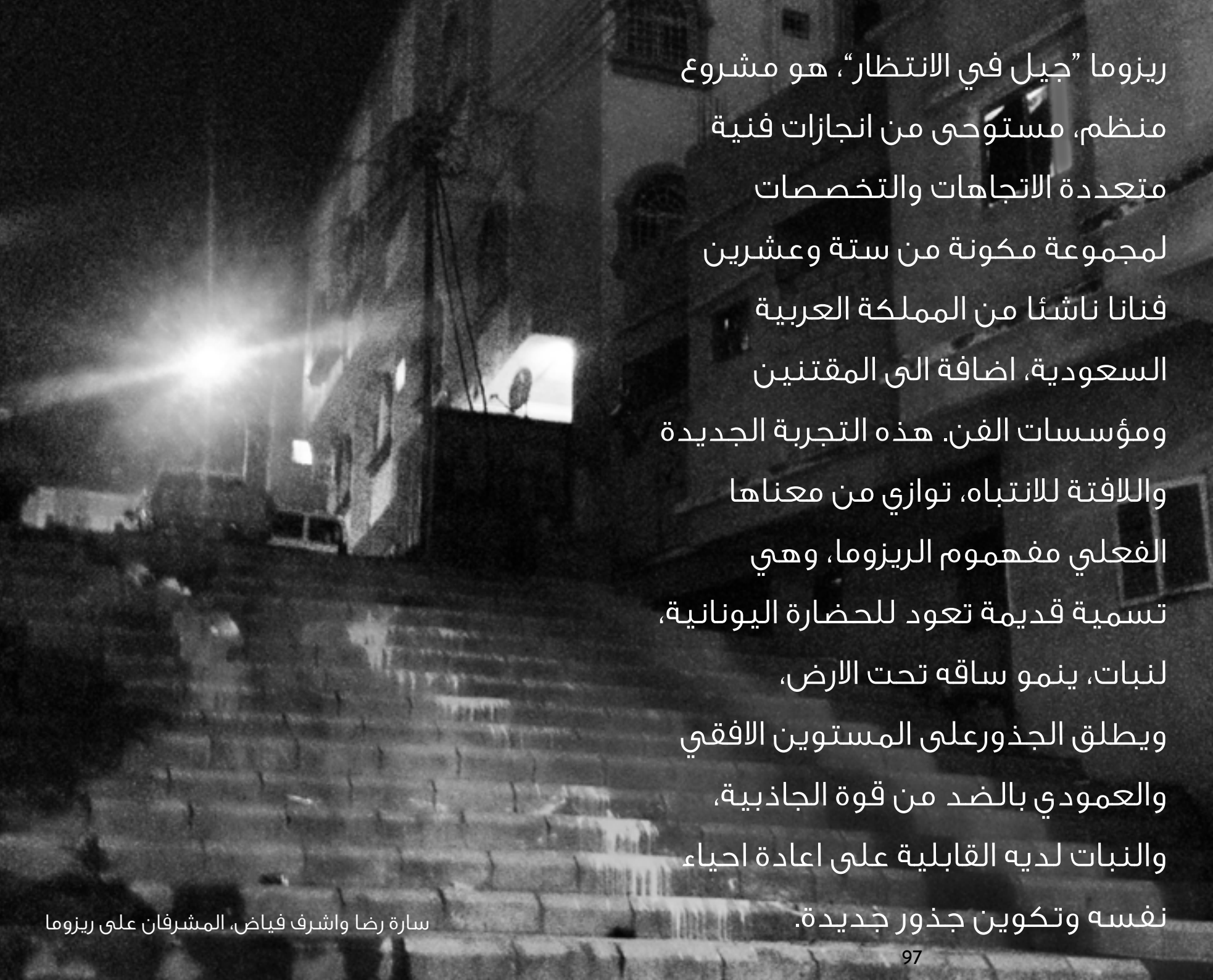
Sebastiano Bianchini

Sultan Gallery

Sven Knowles

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ريزوما "جيل في الانتظار"، هو مشروع
منظم، مستوحى من انجازات فنية
متعددة الاتجاهات والتخصصات
لمجموعة مكونة من ستة وعشرين
فنانا ناشئا من المملكة العربية
السعودية، اضافة الى المقتنين
ومؤسسات الفن. هذه التجربة الجديدة
واللافتة للانتباه، توازي من معناها
الفعلي مفهوم الريزوما، وهي
تسمية قديمة تعود للحضارة اليونانية،
لنبات، ينمو ساقه تحت الارض،
ويطلق الجذور على المستويين الافقي
والعمودي بالضد من قوة الجاذبية،
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