

Told Untold Retold : Art Reoriented

Marking the 2010 inauguration of Mathaf, the Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, the exhibition provides a contemporary context for the museum's unique collection of modern art from the Arab world. *Told Untold Retold* is laid out along a non-linear Alice-in-Wonderland-like maze. Upon entering the space, the visitors are confronted with three entryways, each leading to one of the three sections of the exhibition. Behind each lies a labyrinth in which vivid stories unfold. The first section, "Told," evokes autobiographical accounts and nostalgia for the things that were. The second, "Untold," anticipates an imagined future that speaks of things that could be. And the third section, "Retold," proposes an alternative narrative to the things that are. In a nod to the character of the hero in epic tales, the visitors are forced to choose which one of the three sections to enter first, thereby editing their own experience of the show. Once they are through, they have to trace their way back to the main entrance and choose which section to visit next.

Told Untold Retold brings together 23 artists, each with one newly commissioned installation, through which every artist evokes a specific story. Central to each of these is the use of time as a concrete compositional element and a reflection on the act of journeying; a condition that has come to describe the rampant fluidity of today's society. These stories evoke the predicament of today's artists who are in constant transmigration across a diversity of cities and locations. In that sense, *Told Untold Retold* acts as a metaphorical ground for a voluntary self-exile, a subversive confrontation, celebrating a willful act of uprooting that is reflective of the transient condition of our world.