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THE SHORT CENTURY

23 APRIL - 24 DEC., 2016 / SHARJAH MUSEUM

Curated by • [Karim Sultan](#) • [Suheyla Takesh](#)

Historical periods are not defined by calendar dates, but by significant events that mark the end of one era and the beginning of the next. The 20th Century is "The Short Century," a term popularised by the historian Eric Hobsbawm for an era that saw many of the most dramatic and extreme shifts in human history.

This era was witness to the most violent wars, the largest human migrations, the rapid expansion of cities (now the largest centres of human life), the dominance of mechanised industry, and the rapid rise, conflict, and collapse of expansive ideologies that underpinned them.

The Short Century begins in the European context with the First World War in 1914, and ends in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union. In our region, the Century bears parallel borders: the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) or the fall of the Ottoman Empire (1920) marks its beginning, and the Gulf War (1990-1991) marks its conclusion. Each end demarcates stark shifts in politics, society, and cultural production.

This exhibition explores a number of artistic narratives in the Arab world, from representations of landscape and portraiture, responses to social and political developments, and the rise of nationalisms. As counterpoint alongside these expressions are the developments of abstraction – *tajreed* – and *hurufiyya* (an indigenous letterism).

Illustrated here are the multiple entry points and trajectories of the many overlapping, and sometimes opposing, expressions of modernism and modernity that rise, peak, and fall throughout the Short Century, and provide context to expressions of the globalised contemporary art of the present day.

Artwork from The Short Century



UNTITLED (FROM TH...
Abdel Hadi El Gazzar
EGYPT



PORTRAIT
Elias Zayat
SYRIA

UNTITLED
Yvette Achkar
LEBANON



UNTITLED (BLACK)
Shakir Hassan Al Said
IRAQ

UNTITLED
Aref El Rayess
LEBANON



UNTITLED
Munira Al Kazi
KUWAIT



MARTYRS
Faisal Laibi Sahi
IRAQ



COMPOSITION
Saleh Al Jumaie
IRAQ



BEDOUIN TENT
Faik Hassan
IRAQ



COMPOSITION (PALE...
Mohammed Kacimi
MOROCCO



THE PARSNIP SELLER
Mahmoud Sabri
IRAQ



UNTITLED
Madiha Umar
IRAQ



THE GOAT'S BONES
Ahmed Ben Driss El
Yacoubi
MOROCCO



UNTITLED (RED)
Ahmad Shibrain
SUDAN



UNTITLED
Mohammed Melehi
MOROCCO



AUTUMN IN YOSEMIT...
Etel Adnan
LEBANON



THE LAND OF SOLID...
Mounirah Mosly
SAUDI ARABIA



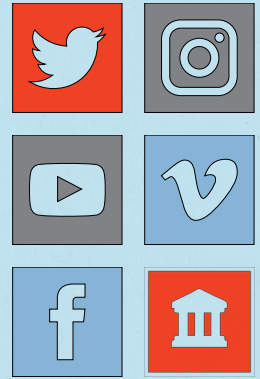
WAR PAINTING
Afifa Aleiby
IRAQ

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