



ROSE ISSA

Pioneering Contemporary Visual Arts and Films from the Middle East & North Africa since 1982



Portrait by Alex Atack.
Courtesy of Canvas magazine

Rose Issa is a curator, writer and producer who has championed visual art and film from the Middle East and North Africa in the UK for more than 30 years. She has lived in London since the 1980s, showcasing upcoming and established artists, producing exhibitions with public and private institutions worldwide, and running a publishing programme.

Through curating numerous exhibitions and film festivals, she introduced Western audiences to many artists who have since become stars of the international scene, including: Ayman Baalbaki, Shadi Ghadirian, Monir Farmanfarmaian, Bahman Ghobadi, Hassan Hajjaj, Fathi Hassan, Farhad Moshiri, Abbas Kiarostami, Rachid Koraichi and Nja Mahdaoui.

VISUAL ARTS

As well as holding exhibitions at Rose Issa Projects in London, she frequently co-curates exhibitions with international private and public institutions, including SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies,) London (2023); the Middle East Institute, Washington DC (2019); Beirut Art Fair, Lebanon (2017); Crawford Art Gallery, Cork (2014); Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar, Doha (2014); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013, 2006); Leighton House Museum, London (2013; ongoing since 1992); Beirut Exhibition Center (2010–11); the

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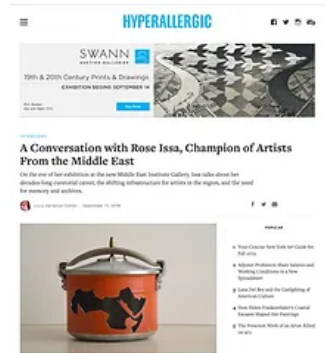
Portrait by Sueraya Shaheen

Petersburg (2007); ING Bank, Geneva (2007); the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin (2004); the CCCB (Contemporary Cultural Centre), Barcelona (2003); the IFA – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (2002–3), Stuttgart; the Barbican Art Centre, London (2001, 1995); and the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam (2011–2013; 1996–1997).

Rose also lends work to and advises on collections for public and private institutions and organisations around the world, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2014); Drawing Room, London (2014); Cultuurcentrum Brugge, Belgium (2014); FotoFest Houston (2014); Uppsala Art Museum, Sweden (2014); Museum of Fine Art, Boston (2013–2014); the Smithsonian (Sackler/Freer Gallery and National Museum of African Arts), Washington (2013); CAB, Brussels (2013); the Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2012); the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2009); Paul Klee Museum, Bern (2009); the British Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the Museum of Mankind, the Victoria and Albert Museum, all in London; the Written Art Foundation, Wiesbaden; the National Museums of Scotland; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the World Bank, Washington DC; and the National Gallery of Jordan.

Rose was also a jury member for the National Pavilions at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and sat on the jury for the Arab British Centre (2013).

Since 2015, after the closure of the Rose Issa Projects space in London, she has been focusing mainly on co-publishing, co-curating exhibitions for institutions worldwide and giving talks and lectures at different events.



ROSE ISSA PROJECTS

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[rose issa](#)



THE CATALYST
Interview by Juliet Hight,
Aramco World, Jul–Aug 2013
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PUBLICATIONS

Founder of the publishing units Rose Issa Projects and Beyond Art Production, Rose publishes monographs and comprehensive catalogues addressing the current concerns and trends of contemporary visual arts from the Arab world.

Recent titles include: "Arabicity: Contemporary Arab Art", Saqi Books (2019); "Ourouba: The Eye of Lebanon", catalogue accompanying a major exhibition at the Beirut Art Fair, featuring works from Lebanese private collections (2017); "Signs of Our Times: From Calligraphy to Calligraffiti", Merrell Publishers (2016); "Nermine Hammam: Cairo, Texas, a Photographer's Diary" (2014); "By Hassan Hajjaj: Photography, Fashion, Film, Design" (2014); "Maliheh Afnan: Familiar Faces" (2013); "Raeda Saadeh: Reframing Palestine" (2012); "Farhad Ahrarnia: Canary in a Coal Mine" (2011); "Ayman Baalbaki: Beirut Again and Again" (2011); "Selma Gürbüz: Shadow of My Self" (2011); "Omid

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ROSE ISSA, A WOMAN OF MANY LAYERS
 by Gareth Smyth, *The National*,
 17 Sep 2019
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produced the first-ever publication on Iranian Contemporary Art, "Iranian Contemporary Art" (Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2001) and has also co-published the two major overviews of contemporary photography from the Middle East: "Arab Photography Now" (with Kehrer Verlag, 2011) and "Iranian Photography Now" (with Hatje Cantz, 2008), as well as the first and leading text on Iranian cinema: "Life and Art: The New Iranian Cinema" (British Film Institute, 1999).

FILM FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

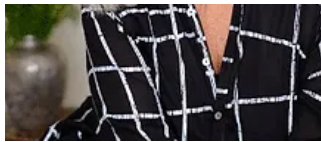


In 1982 Rose Issa launched the first-ever Arab Film Festival in Paris and worked with the Délégations Étrangères at the Cannes Film Festival (1982-1986). For a further 26 years until 2008

info@roseissa.com

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30 ARTISTS, 30 YEARS
 Interview by Alessandra Cianetti
 Bagri Foundation, May 2020
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the National Film Theatre ("Hollywood on the Nile", 2003; "Life and Art: The New Iranian Cinema", 1999; the first "Arab Film Festival", 1987); the Barbican ("Unveiled Lives: Women in Iranian Cinema", 2001; "Mysteries, Melodramas, Comedies", 1995). In addition she curated a season of films for Britain's Channel 4TV (2005) and collaborated with them on "Cinema Iran", a series of documentaries on Iranian cinema. Rose was also the advisor and co-director of the documentary "Moving Pictures: Tunisian Women Film Directors", for BBC2TV (1995).