



PALESTINE SQUARE | ميدان فلسطين

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5 Palestinian Contemporary Artists You Should Know



Untitled 9 - Self Portrait Series (2002-03).

Tarek Al-Ghoussein

Photographer and photojournalist Tarek Al-Ghoussein, born in Kuwait in 1962, currently resides in the United Arab Emirates. His work is inspired by the both the prejudice and restrictions Palestinians confront not only in the West, but also the East. *Self-Portrait* (2002 –), for instance, stages solitary individuals in a Keffiyeh in front of airplanes or ships. Initially the viewer might suspect foul play, but it's obvious that the image is innocuous, and thus forcing the viewer to confront their reflexive suspicion of Keffiyeh-clad Middle Easterners. Sometimes life mimics art: In 2003, Al-Ghoussein was accosted by a Jordanian police officer while taking a self-portrait in a Keffiyeh. A 22-hour interrogation followed. "What was I doing, who was I, why was I wearing the Palestinian scarf, why that particular scarf—not the red scarf or the other type of black scarf? And it just made me realize how charged that scarf was. And how much, even in the Middle East, it has become almost a symbol of terrorism," Tarek recalled. Apart from fear, there's the barriers. His recent photographs of desert barriers evoke the actual barriers that impeded the movement of Palestinians both inside and outside their homeland. Al-Ghoussein has never set foot on Palestine.



Untitled 5 (2008). Stuck in a trench, despite the opening, the figure is immobile.



Untitled 10 – B Series (2005-06).



Untitled 9 – Self Portrait Series (2002-03).



Untitled 8 – Self Portrait Series (2002-2003).



Untitled 2 – Self Portrait Series (2002-2003).

Khalil Rabah

Khalil Rabah, born in Jerusalem in 1961, currently lives and works in Ramallah. There may be few artists who embrace the make-believe as imaginatively and passionately as Rabah. If the hallmarks of a modern state include a national airline carrier and museum, then Rabah has brought the United States of Palestine to life.

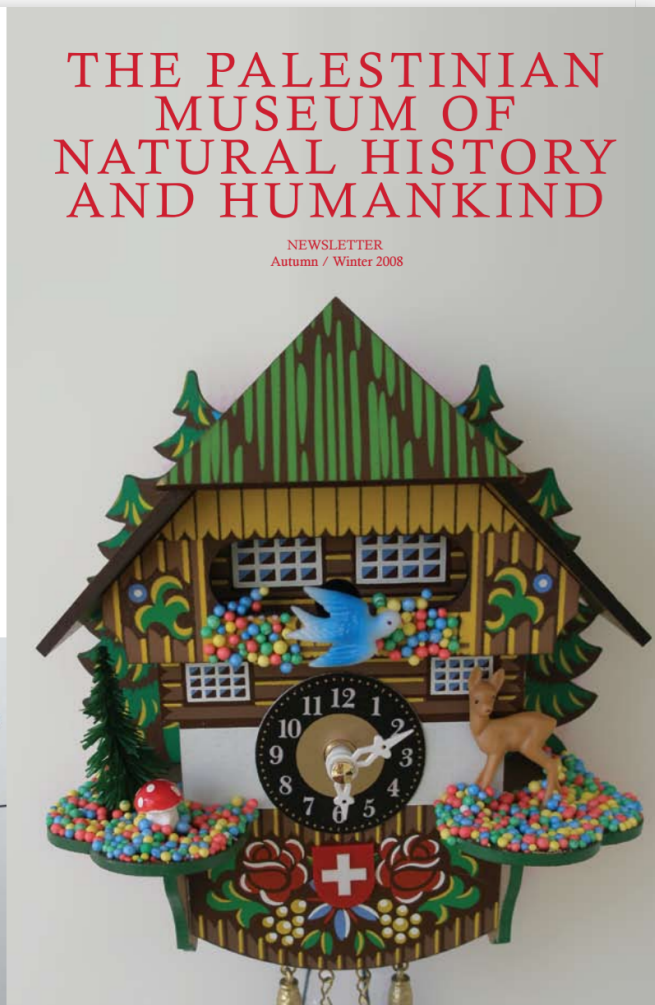


2008 (Nafas)

The Palestinian Museum of Natural History and Humankind

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Mr. Rabah's real-fake museum is basically an ever-changing conceptual essay on colonialism, destruction and survival. It's funny, mournful, bitter, perverse, pro-nationalist, anti-nationalist, illusion-deflating, consciousness-raising, politically piercing and free. Would that other museums in the city exhibited even a fraction of its qualities.

–The New York Times, April 11, 2013

Khaled Jarrar

Khaled Jarrar, born in Jenin in 1976, similarly focuses on Palestine through video, photographic and performative works that contrast the playful nature of his objects with the high-stakes issues he examines and depicts (such as football shoes made from concrete chipped from Israel's separation

barrier). His work is baldly political and often autobiographical. In 2007, he staged an exhibition at a West Bank checkpoint within sight of IDF soldiers, and since 2011 his *Live and Work in Palestine* series has stamped passports of visiting tourists with seemingly official “State of Palestine” entry stamps. Jarrar resides in Ramallah.

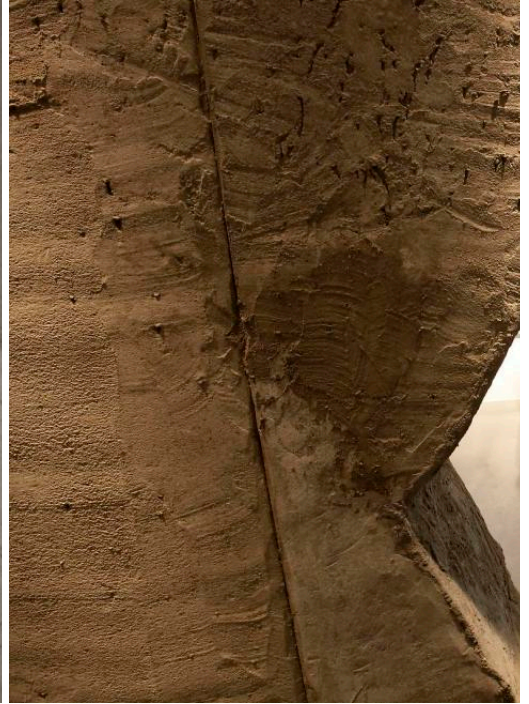
Football Shoes (2013).



Olive Tree Stump (2013). Also carved out of separation barrier concrete and olive oil.

Ping Pong Racket & Ball (2013). Concrete from separation barrier.

Whole in the Wall (2013)

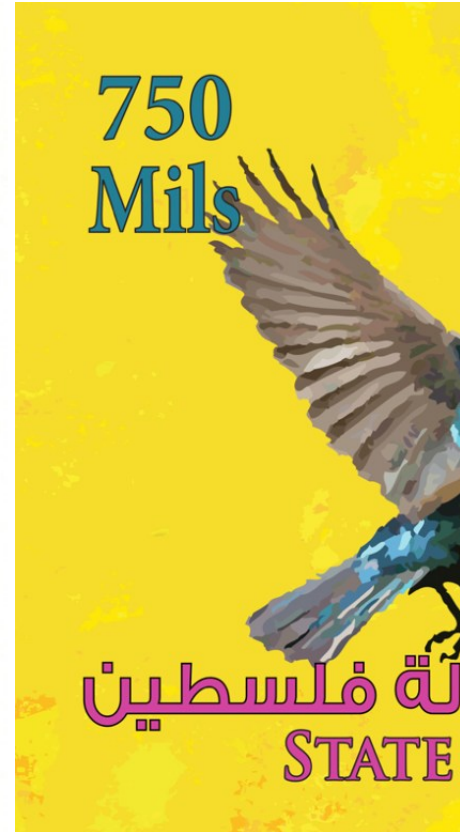


State of Palestine



Jarra made use of Germany's Deutsche Post AG "individual stamp" service to produce "State of

Palestine” stamps that can actually be used to mail letters:



Laila Shawa

Laila Shawa, born in Gaza in 1940, defies easy categorization: Her work spans sculpture, photography,

painting, and lithography. Shawa departed for Italy in the 1960s to study plastic arts before returning to Gaza in 1965 and taking up a teaching post until 1967. Her work is animated by her Palestinian identity; often conveying a reportage angle in its focus on injustice in her homeland. She currently resides in London.

Her series *Disposable Bodies*, which was part of the larger collection *The Other Side of Paradise* (2011), was in response to reports that Palestinian female suicide bombers had been marked by society as alleged transgressors and were undertaking suicide missions in order to re-frame themselves as “martyrs” and restore family honor.



In The Other Side of Paradise, I explore the motivations behind the shahida—the Arabic term for “female suicide bomber”—a question that few people would likely choose to consider. The core of the shahida model revolves around a troubling confusion of eroticization and weaponization. In this installation, I sought to assign to each aspirant an identity and wholeness that would otherwise be denied her in the