

El Beit

6 February – 8 March 2018



Left: Hazem Harb, *Tebariya #01*, 2017, collage and transparent Plexiglas on fine art paper, 105 x 80cm

Right: Hazem Harb, *Tebariya #02*, 2017, collage on fine art paper, 105 x 80cm

Tabari Artspace is proud to present *El Beit*, a collective showing of contemporary and modernist Palestinian artists exploring themes of identity through painting, photography and sculpture. Featuring the work of three artists – **Hazem Harb**, **Mohammed Joha** and **Sliman Mansour** – the exhibition reflects on the collective experience of lost identity and displacement in Palestine. The show's title, which translates from Arabic as 'feel at home,' makes reference to these themes.

By facilitating a dialogue between two different generations of artists, *El Beit* casts a light on the ongoing impact of the Palestine-Israel conflict whilst providing an insight into various artistic practices and perspectives in Palestine today. Issues of modern Palestinian collective memory and its role in shaping national identity and historic legacy unite the artists, despite their distinct styles and points of reference.

Contemporary artist Hazem Harb shows a series of collage works inspired by the lake in the city of Tiberias. This lake has long been considered a sacred area that holds significance for Palestinians. The city was used as an important centre in Palestine for many decades until the 1936–1939 Arab revolt, which is a central theme in Harb's works. The collages are formed from a mixture of archive images of the lake as well as photographs the artist has taken himself.

In addition, Harb's installs an enlarged archive photograph depicting the interior of a home situated at Lake Tiberias, transforming a section of the gallery, into a domestic setting. Modernist artist Sliman Mansour's paintings *Girl in the Village* and *Father and Mother on their Wedding Day* are displayed atop this photograph. The former depicts a young woman standing in a thobe, a customary Palestinian dress, framed by an abstract landscape in the background which is evocative of Palestinian tradition

and sentimentality. *Father and Mother on their Wedding Day* depicts the artist's parents, enclosed in a frame of olive trees. Many Palestinians consider the olive tree to be a symbol of nationality and connection to the land. This installation situates both of the artists' works in direct dialogue within a familiar setting, allowing the artists to rebuild and re-imagine a homeland which is now inaccessible. The immersive environment created by Harb's and Mansour's works communicate a particular sense of displacement and nostalgia.

Septuagenarian artist Mansour, a major pioneer of modernist art in Palestine, has dedicated his career to visualising the Palestinian struggle throughout history and is the only one out of the three artists still residing in the state. With the start of the first Intifada in 1987, he founded the New Visions art movement. The movement's decision to boycott Israeli-imported art supplies and use natural, locally sourced materials, such as mud, henna and clay, gave rise to Mansour's featured series of *Ten Years in Mud* paintings, bringing a tangible dimension to his thematic exploration of land. The abstract works use the earth itself to depict the land and its people, the cracks from the drying process illustrating the passage of time.

Mohammed Joha exhibits 14 collage works on paper exploring the destruction of Palestinian homes throughout the conflict. Some of the houses featured are fictional and others are drawn from the artist's memories. Joha considers themes of childhood, loss of innocence, freedom, identity and revolution within this context.

Through showing Mansour's works alongside the younger expatriates Hazem Harb and Mohammed Joha, the exhibition seeks to accentuate the long-standing challenges of the people across decades of unrest. Mansour has been working with themes relating to Palestinian identity for much of his career and *El Beit* also showcases the younger generation of artists who have carried on demanding recognition for the displaced peoples of Palestine.



Sliman Mansour, *Father and Mother on their Wedding Day*, 1984, oil on canvas, 92 X 85, courtesy the artist

Notes to Editors

Sliman Mansour

b. 1947 in Birzeit, Palestine. Sliman Mansour graduated from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design with a BFA in 1970. Considered one of the most distinguished Palestinian artists, Mansour's work evokes the political struggle and daily hardships that characterise life in the region.

Mansour has been an active member of the Palestinian art scene, heading up the League of Palestinian Artists from 1986 to 1990. He co-founded the Al-Wasiti Art Center in East Jerusalem, serving as its director from 1995 to 1996. Mansour also played key roles in the establishment of the International Academy of Art Palestine in Ramallah and the University Art Center in East Jerusalem.

Solo exhibitions include *Terrains of Belonging*, Alhoush Gallery, Jerusalem (2011); *Sketches*, Almamal Gallery, Jerusalem (2007); *The Fabric of Memory*, Sharjah Museum, UAE (2003); *I Ismael*, Cairo Biennial, Egypt (1998); *Roots*, United Nations, USA (1992); and *Sliman Mansour*, Gallery 79, Palestine (1981).

In 1998, he was awarded the Grand Nile Prize at the 7th Cairo Biennial and the Palestinian Prize for Visual Arts.

Hazem Harb

b. 1980 in Gaza, Palestine. Hazem Harb currently lives between Rome, Italy and Dubai, UAE. Harb completed his MFA at The European Institute of Design, Rome, Italy in 2009. Some of Harb's solo shows include: *The Invisible Landscape & Concrete Futures* curated by Lara Khaldi, Salsali Private Museum, Dubai (2015); *Al Baseera*, Athr Gallery, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2014); *I can imagine you without your home*, Etemad Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2012); *Is this your first time in Gaza?*, The Mosaic Rooms, A. M. Qattan Foundation, London, UK (2010); *Burned Bodies*, video installation, Città dell'Altra Economia Rome, Italy (2008).

He has also participated in numerous international group exhibitions, some of which are: *Made by War*, National Ethnographic and Pre-historical Museum Luigi Pigorini, Rome, Italy (2007); *All that is Unknown*, Al-Ma'mal Art Foundation for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem (2011); *A Patch On My Evil Eye*, The Arab British Centre, London, UK (2010); *A View From Inside*, FotoFest Houston Biennial, USA (2014); and *Sphere 6*, Galleria Continua's Le Moulin, France (2013 and 2014). In 2015, he participated in *Common Grounds*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany, and *Politics & The Production of Space: The Written City*, curated by Michel Dewilde, Brugge City Hall, Belgium.

Harb was awarded a residency at The Delfina Foundation, London, Cite des Arts, Paris, and Satellite, Dubai. In 2008, he was shortlisted for the A. M. Qattan Young Artist of The Year award. His work is in the collections of The British Museum, Sharjah Art Foundation, Centre Pompidou, The Oriental Museum - Durham University, Salsali Private Museum and Al Qattan Foundation, among others.

Mohammed Joha

b. 1978 in Gaza, Palestine. Mohammed Joha graduated with a BA in art education at Al-Aqsa University, Gaza, in 2003.

Currently based in Italy, Mohammed Joha has worked around the world, including Paris, where he was resident in the "Cité Internationale des Arts" in 2005 and 2008, and Darat Al-Funun in Amman, Jordan, during a workshop residency with the Khalid Shoman Foundation in 2003.

Solo exhibitions include *INSIDE X OUT*, Artspace Hamra Gallery, Lebanon (2016); *Joha_ The Journey* at Rich Mix Gallery, UK (2016); *The Jasmine and Bread Revolution*, Courtyard Gallery, UAE (2012); *Dream in Black and White*, The Mosaic Rooms, UK (2011); *All That Is Unknown*, Al Ma'mal Foundation For Contemporary Arts, Jerusalem (2011); and *The Shade and the Shade of the Other* at the Horti Lamiani Bettivo Gallery, Italy (2007).

Joha won the A. M. Qattan Foundation's Hassan Al Hourani Young Artist Award in 2004.

About Tabari Artspace

Tabari Artspace, formerly Artspace Dubai, has been a pioneer in establishing a contemporary art scene in Dubai since it was founded in 2003 by collector and art consultant, Maliha Tabari. A strong passion for the arts led Maliha to become an expert in contemporary art in the Middle East, building her own personal collection and advising on the establishment of others.

The gallery represents and champions a range of established artists and is dedicated to the global promotion of modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art. As an internationally-facing commercial art gallery, Tabari Artspace continues to support artists from the region, working across a varied range of media, including: Mohamed Abla, Lulwah Al-Homoud, Adel El Siwi, Hussein Madi, Zakaria Ramhani and Khaled Zaki as well as working in close collaboration with the family and estate of The Alfred Basbous Foundation.

Tabari Artspace offers both local and international audiences the opportunity to discover artists from this region through participation in international art fairs, and facilitating relationships with significant private collections and museums, including LACMA, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and Barjeel Art Foundation.

Title: *El Beit*
Address: Tabari Artspace, The Gate Village Building, Level 2, DIFC
Dubai, UAE 506759
Telephone: + 971 4 323 0820
Website: www.tabariartspace.com
Dates: 6 February 2018 – 8 March
Private View: 6 February, 7 - 10pm
Opening Hours: Sunday – Thursday, 9am – 9pm

Press contact:

Carlotta Dennis-Lovaglio or Saskia Deliss at Pelham Communications
+44 (0)20 89693959

carlotta@pelhamcommunications.com or saskia@pelhamcommunications.com