



FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL | www.fotofest.org

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For Immediate Release:

FotoFest 2014 Biennial Continues Through April 27, 2014

VIEW FROM INSIDE

Contemporary Arab Video, Photography and Mixed Media Art



FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL
March 15 – April 27, 2014
Houston, Texas U.S.A.

www.fotofest.org



Artist Samer Mohdad (Lebanon) Leads a tour of his work
at Silver Street Studios during the FotoFest 2014 Biennial

HOUSTON, TEXAS - APRIL 15, 2014 - FotoFest's much acclaimed 2014 Biennial moves into the fifth week of programming this week with an Arab film series, poetry events, an Arab music performance, a bicycle tour to galleries, and special curator-led exhibition tours of its Arab exhibition, VIEW FROM INSIDE, Contemporary Arab Photography, Video and Mixed Media Art. The FotoFest 2014 Biennial continues through April 27, 2014.

FILM SERIES

The Arab Film series with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston features **four contemporary Arab films: *Ladder to Damascus* (Syria); *Wadjda* (Saudi Arabia); *The Attack* (Palestine); and the Oscar-nominated documentary, *The Square* (Egypt).** For more information on these films, including times and dates, visit: <http://www.mfah.org/films/series/52>

MUSIC AND POETRY

On **Wednesday, April 16**, there will be **live performances of Arab poetry and oud music at the Rothko Chapel** with Palestinian-American poet and current Guggenheim Fellow, **Fady Joudah**, and world-renowned **oud musician, Rahim AlHaj**. The performances are being held in collaboration with the Arab Cultural and Community Center (ACC) in Houston and the Rothko Chapel as part of FotoFest's programs to bring greater visibility to the richness and diversity of Arab culture. For more information: <http://bit.ly/RiYoSc>

FotoFest will host a **second poetry and music event on April 24**, where Houston poets Hayan Charara, Carolyn Adams, Amir Safi, and Outspoken Bean will respond directly to works from the *VIEW FROM INSIDE* Arab exhibitions. FotoFest is partnering with Make.Play.Speak for this event, which will bring together enthusiasts of visual, literary and musical arts.

TOURS

On **Saturday, April 19, FotoFest leads a bicycle art tour, the FotoFest Bike Scramble**, through the newly designated Washington Avenue Cultural Arts District and beyond, beginning with FotoFest's Biennial Exhibition and visiting seven of FotoFest's independent Participating Spaces. Information and registration is available at <http://www.fotofest.org/tours>.

FotoFest's widely praised exhibition of Arab art is open in four venues – Silver Street Studios, Winter Street Studios, Spring Street Studios and the Williams Tower Gallery. These exhibitions showcase **photography, videos, and multi media installation art by 49 leading Arab artists from 13 countries across the Middle East and North Africa**. It is a ground breaking presentation, the largest exhibition of contemporary Arab art in the United States in over a decade. Special, **free curatorial tours of the exhibition occur on two upcoming Saturday afternoons: April 19 and 26**. Information and locations may be found at <http://www.fotofest.org/tours>

ARAB BOOK – *View From Inside*

Advance U.S. copies of the unprecedented **340 page, full color book, *VIEW FROM INSIDE*, on the Arab exhibition, are available at FotoFest and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**. The book, **produced by FotoFest Artistic Director Wendy Watriss, with HvAD Design (NY) and Schilt Publishing (Amsterdam)**, has **over 200 full color reproductions, including work by all 49 participating artists along with essays by acclaimed Arab art curator-scholars: Karin Adrian von Roques** (2014 Biennial Lead Curator); **Dr. Claude Sui** (Chief Curator of Photography, Reiss-Engelhorn Museum); **Mona Khazindar** (Director General, Institute du Monde Arabe); and **Samer Mohdad** (2014 Biennial Exhibiting Artist and co-Founder of the Fondation Arabe pour L'Image, Beirut). The introduction is done by **FotoFest Senior Curator Wendy Watriss**. The essays examine the history of photography in the Middle East and North Africa, the evolution of the medium's usage in the region and the contemporary art in the Arab world. For more information on the book, call (713) 223-5522 ext. 18.

FotoFest has experienced very positive responses from the Arab communities locally and internationally not only for organizing a museum-quality presentation of this breadth, but also for FotoFest's academic and cultural programming **to foster greater understanding of the Arab world and generate new cultural exchange**. **FotoFest brought together 30 prominent Arab scholars, artists, publishers, writers and gallerists. Seventeen of the 49 exhibiting Arab artists traveled to Houston to participate** in forums, conferences, artist tours and the Biennial's opening festivities.

Other leading artists and figures participating in these events included: **Dr. Ussama Makdisi** Professor of History and Arab American Educational Foundation Chair of Arab Studies, Rice University; **Salwa Mikdadi** Art Historian, Palestine/UAE; **Ali Khadra**, Canvas Magazine Publisher and Editor in Chief; **Omar Donia**, Contemporary Practices Magazine Publisher; **Dr. Melanie McAllister**, Associate Professor of American Studies, George Washington University ; and **Fady Joudah**, Palestinian American Poet and Physician. FotoFest's Arab programming also attracted **other prominent Arab art scholars** including **Nada Shabout**, President of the Association for Modern and Contemporary Art from the Arab World, Iran and Turkey (AMCA), and **curators from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Museum of Modern Art (MOMA)**, and the **Smithsonian's Museums of Asian Art**, the Freer and Sackler Galleries.

Audio and video recordings of **FotoFest's day-long Conference on Visual Art in the Arab World**, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and **FotoFest's Forum on Arabophobia** will be available on the FotoFest website. For more information call (713) 223 5522 ext 15.

In addition to the Conference and Forum, FotoFest presented four informal **curator-artist dialogues on contemporary Arab art, panels on collecting contemporary Arab art, workshops, student programs, the Meeting Place International Portfolio Review for artists, the International Fine Print Auction and artist-led tours** of the Arab exhibition. FotoFest also exhibited the non-Arab **DISCOVERIES OF THE MEETING PLACE** exhibition, in conjunction with the Meeting Place Portfolio Review. FotoFest will continue to offer its Biennial **curriculum on Arab art and culture** for students grades 3-12 **online and free of charge**. The curriculum uses works from the *VIEW FROM INSIDE* exhibitions to

teach students about writing, visual analysis and Arab cultures. Information on the Biennial Curriculum and the link are available by contacting ltp@fotofest.org.

FotoFest will be traveling the Arab exhibition to the Middle East and is exploring possibilities to exhibit it in other parts of the United States and Europe. The FotoFest 2014 Biennial has fostered important ties to Arab community and business groups in Houston and abroad, working closely with **ART JAMEEL - Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives; Edge of Arabia** (London); **Contemporary Practices Magazine; Athr Gallery** (Jeddah); **Ayyam Gallery** (Dubai/London); **Berloni Gallery** (London); **The Third Line** (Dubai); **The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Arts of the Islamic World Initiative; Rice University Humanities Research Center** (Houston); **Arab American Cultural and Community Center** (Houston); and the **Arab American Educational Foundation** (Houston).

Concurrent with FotoFest's own exhibitions of Contemporary Arab Video, Photography, and Mixed Media art, 125 independent venues, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Menil Collection, and the city's major commercial art galleries, are participating in the 2014 Biennial by mounting exhibitions of photography. A full list of Biennial Participating Spaces is available on the FotoFest website at <http://2014biennial.fotofest.org/participating-spaces.aspx>

MAJOR SPONSORS - FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL

The Brown Foundation Inc.; The Cullen Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; JP Morgan Chase Foundation; The City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Houston Endowment, Inc.; Doubletree Hotel by Hilton Houston Downtown; The Wortham Foundation; FotoFest Board of Directors; Judith and Gamble Baldwin; Mary Lawrence Porter; Texas Commission on the Arts; Sidley & Austin LLP; Salient Partners; Chris Olsen; HexaGroup; iLand Internet Solutions; The Deal Company; Brookfield Office Properties; Williams Tower Gallery

Special support for the FotoFest 2014 Biennial Catalogue and the FotoFest Book on contemporary Arab photo-related art is provided by The Eleanor and Frank Freed Foundation in Houston.

MAJOR SPONSORS - FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL ARAB PROGRAMS

ART JAMEEL - Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (Lead Sponsor); Middle East Trading Inc.; Ayyam Gallery (Dubai/London); Athr Gallery (Jeddah); The Levant Foundation (Houston); Edge of Arabia (London); The Crane Foundation (Houston); Tamer (SA'AID & The Community); Berloni Gallery (London); Nijad and Zeina Fares (Houston)

FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL ARAB ARTISTS (alphabetized by last name with country of origin)

Ebtisam AbdulAziz (UAE)	Lara Baladi (Egypt)	Georges Fikry Ibrahim (Egypt)
Khalil Abdul Wahid (UAE)	Hicham Benohoud (Morocco)	Noel Jabbour (Palestine)
Ammar Al Beik (Syria)	Ayman Yossri Daydban (Saudi Arabia)	Ahmed Jadallah (Palestine)
Manal Al Dowayan (Saudi Arabia)	Shady El-Noshokaty (Egypt)	Mohamed Kanoo (Bahrain)
Shadia Alem (Saudi Arabia)	Ayman El Semary (Egypt)	Mohammed Kazem (UAE)
Reem Al Faisal (Saudi Arabia)	Lalla Essaydi (Morocco)	Huda Lutfi (Egypt)
Sadik Alfraji (Iraq)	Mounir Fatmi (Morocco)	Maha Malluh (Saudi Arabia)
Tarek Al-Ghossein (Palestine/Kuwait)	Lamy Gargash (UAE)	Ahmed Mater (Saudi Arabia)
Boushra Almutawakel (Yemen)	Abdulnasser Gharem (Saudi Arabia)	Hassan Meer (Oman)
Khalifa Al Obaidly (Qatar)	Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige (Lebanon)	Samer Mohdad (Lebanon)
Jowhara AlSaud (Saudi Arabia)	Khaled Hafez (Egypt)	Youssef Nabil (Egypt)
Sama Alshaibi (Iraq)	Hassan Hajjaj (Morocco)	Ayman Ramadan (Egypt)
Karima Al Shomely (UAE)	Rula Halawani (Palestine)	Steve Sabella (Palestine)
Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad Bin Ahmad Al-Thani (Qatar)	Nermine Hammam (Egypt)	Faisal Samra (Saudi Arabia)
Sami Al-Turki (Saudi Arabia)	Hazem Harb (Palestine)	Wael Shawky (Egypt)
Tammam Azzam (Syria)	Hazem Taha Hussein (Egypt)	Camille Zakharia (Lebanon)

FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1983, FotoFest International was established to promote international awareness of museum-quality photo-based art from around the world. FotoFest is a non-profit photographic arts and education organization based in Houston, Texas. The first FotoFest Biennial was held in 1986. It is the first and longest running photographic arts festival in the United States. It is considered as one of the leading international photography Biennials in the world.

As an international platform for serious photographic arts exhibitions, the FotoFest Biennial has become known as a showcase for the discovery and presentation of important new work and new talent from around the world. The Biennial takes place citywide in Houston with participation from the leading art museums, art galleries, non-profit art spaces, universities and civic spaces. The 2014 Arab exhibitions will take place in FotoFest's headquarters gallery and three to four additional FotoFest art spaces. The Biennial has an audience of 275,000 people from 34 countries. This audience includes a select group of 150 museum curators, gallerists, publishers, editors, photography collectors, directors of non-profit art spaces and international festivals from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Canada and the United States.

KARIN ADRIAN VON ROQUES

For the past twenty years, Karin Adrian von Roques' professional focus has been modern and contemporary art from the Middle East. Upon finishing her studies of Islamic Art in Bonn, Germany, she became interested in modern and contemporary art from Arab countries and pioneered academic exploration and exposure of outstanding artists in this field. She began a series of strategic programs to bring concepts central to the works of contemporary Arab artists to the attention of a broader public by means of museum and gallery exhibitions. Aware that contemporary art from Islamic countries takes place within a wider socio-political context and dialogue, Ms. von Roques has organized and participated in seminars, interviews, publications and auctions throughout the world to generate intercultural dialogue on the subject of Arab culture.

Ms. von Roques has been an art advisor and art historian to numerous museums and has worked as a special consultant for Islamic exhibitions such as *From Bagdad to Isafahan — Islamic Manuscripts and Miniatures*, Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, 1994-95. In 1997 she became the Founding Director of the Hesse Museum in Lugano, Switzerland focusing on programs about ethics and intercultural dialogue. She has curated more than twenty international museum and gallery exhibitions, among them: *Written Cosmos — Arabic Calligraphy and Literature throughout the Centuries*, Museum of Applied Arts, Frankfurt, Germany, 2004; *Languages of the Desert — Contemporary Arab Art from the Gulf States*, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Kunstmuseum) Bonn, Germany, 2005 (traveled to the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France, 2006; the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 2007; and Galleria Metropolitana, Barcelona, Spain, 2006); *The Present Out of the Past Millennia — Contemporary Art from Egypt*, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (Kunstmuseum) Bonn, 2007; and *The Art of Writing — Contemporary Calligraphy from Three Cultures*, Art Forum, Kurhauskolonnaden, Wiesbaden, May 2011.

WENDY WATRISS

Wendy Watriss is a Co-founder of FotoFest and has served as Artistic Director and Senior Curator since 1991. She has developed over 60 international exhibits for FotoFest, including path-breaking exhibits on Photography from China 1934-2008; *AMERICAN VOICES - Latino photographers in the U.S.*, Photography from Latin America 1865-1994; photography from Central Europe; contemporary Mexican photography; the visual history of Kurdistan with Susan Meiselas; contemporary Korean photography; early 20th century and contemporary Russian photography; multi-media/new technology installations; and subjects such as the Global Water Crisis, The Global Environment, Guantanamo; Artists Responding to Violence; and Contemporary U.S. Photography. In 2009, she was the invited curator for international exhibitions of the Guangzhou 2009 Photo Biennial at the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China. From 1970-1991, Wendy Watriss worked as an award-winning international photojournalist and independent documentary photographer. She won the World Press Photo Award for Feature Stories and the Oskar Barnack Award - Leica in 1982; Interpress Photo in 1983; and Mid America Arts/National Endowment for the Arts in 1985.