



FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL | www.fotofest.org

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For Immediate Release:

FotoFest 2014 Biennial Opens Saturday, March 15, 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



Sadik Alfraji (Iraq), *The House That My Father Built*, 2010.
Courtesy of the artist and Ayyam Gallery (Dubai/London)

HOUSTON, TEXAS - MARCH 13, 2014 - FotoFest, the International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Arts, launches a newly curated exhibition dedicated to Contemporary Arab Photography, Video and Mixed-media Art for its fifteenth Biennial. *VIEW FROM INSIDE*, highlights the works of 49 Arab artists from 13 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Exhibitions and programming continue for six weeks, through April 27, 2014, in Houston, Texas USA.

***VIEW FROM INSIDE* features artists living and working in Bahrain; Egypt; Iraq; Kuwait; Lebanon; Morocco; Oman; Palestine; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Syria; United Arab Emirates (UAE); and Yemen. Seventeen artists are women.**

***VIEW FROM INSIDE* is the largest collection of Contemporary Arab photography, video and installation work presented in the United States in over ten years. It is accompanied by a six-week program of films, conferences, tours, curatorial forums, fine print auction, collectors events, music and literature events, and children's educational activities that showcase the culture and history of the region and its peoples.**

“*VIEW FROM INSIDE* casts light on a region whose art and photography, until recently, have not attracted the broad international attention it deserves,” says Lead Curator Karin Adrian von Roques. “The aim of FotoFest 2014’s Arab Programs is to introduce the region’s complex and heterogeneous art scene, and to sensitize viewers to the wide dimensions of the works produced in the region.”

FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL ARAB ARTISTS (alphabetized by last name)

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

Thirteen of the artists are coming to Houston to participate in Biennial programs.

“This generation of artists grew up when satellite television, photo digital technologies, the internet and social media became widespread in the Arab world,” says **FotoFest Senior Curator Wendy Watriss**. “They use these global media in individually specific ways, **addressing personal experience, and the collective realities of living in the Arab world today. This is the view from inside.**”

Lead Curator Karin Adrian von Roques, is a German scholar and curator with over 20 years experience working with Arab artists, art institutions and collectors in the Middle East and in Europe. In 2009, she was commissioned by FotoFest, and FotoFest Co-founders and Creative Directors Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin, to organize the exhibitions with Ms. Watriss, for the 2014 Biennial.

This week, FotoFest and **Schilt Publishing, Amsterdam, will launch the hardcover book accompanying the VIEW FROM INSIDE exhibition with over 200 four-color images by Arab artists and four essays by leading scholars, with an introduction by Wendy Watriss.** The essays describe the emergence and evolution of photography in the Middle East and North Africa.

ARAB PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

FotoFest is working with prominent Arab cultural and art organizations, including: **Athr Gallery** (Jeddah); **ArteEast** (New York); **Edge of Arabia** (London); **Ayyam Gallery** (Dubai/London); **Contemporary Practices, Visual Arts from the Middle East; Arab Cultural and Community Center of Houston; Arab-American Educational Foundation** (Houston).

ARAB SPONSORS

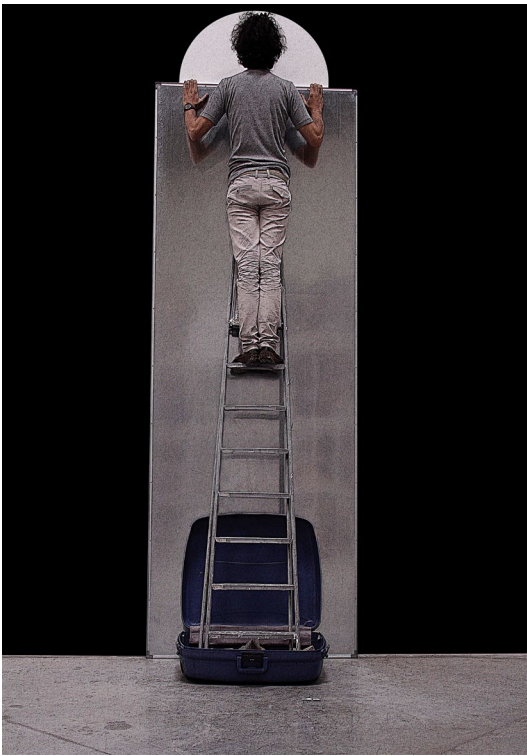
FotoFest has received significant funding from Arab organizations in the Middle East, Europe, and Houston: **ART JAMEEL - Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (Lead Sponsor); Middle East Trading Inc.; Ayyam Gallery; Athr Gallery; The Levant Foundation** (Houston); **Edge of Arabia; The Crane Foundation** (Houston); **Tamer (SA'ID & The Community - Jeddah); Berloni Gallery** (London); **Nijad and Zeina Fares** (Houston).

ADDITIONAL ARAB PROGRAMS

FotoFest is sponsoring a **day-long conference on Arab Art, Saturday, March 29, 2014 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH)**. This conference features lectures and roundtables with leading curators, participating Arab artists, and



Tammam Azzam (Syria), *I, The Syrian*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist and Ayyam Gallery (Dubai/London)



Hazem Harb (Palestine), *Me and the Other Half*(Series#3/3), 2012. Courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery (Jeddah)

scholars in the field. Topics include: the history of modern visual art in the Arab world; the history of photography in the Arab World; working as an artist between cultures, the challenges facing women artists and the role of the Arab artist in world change.

FotoFest co-hosts a **forum on the topic of “Arabophobia,” Wednesday, April 2, 2014, with Rice University.** The forum features academics and artists responding to cultural stereotyping: **Dr. Melanire McAlister**, an expert on religious sectarianism; Palestinian-American physician and poet **Fady Joudah**; Egyptian multi-media artist **Khaled Hafez**; and **Dr. Ussama Makdisi**, history professor and the Arab American Education Foundation Chair of Arab Studies at Rice University.

Of 69 leading U.S. and International artists donating works to FotoFest’s **Fine Print Auction - Monday, March 24, 2014**, eight are Arab artists from the VIEW FROM INSIDE exhibitions. Auction images can be seen on FotoFest’s website. **Panels about the collecting of Arab art and the Middle East art market will be a part of FotoFest’s 2014 VIP Collectors weekend** that adjoins the auction.

FotoFest and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Film Department have organized **three weeks of Contemporary Arab Cinema**, which will include the **Oscar-nominated film, *The Square***, about the Egyptian revolution; and the acclaimed Saudi film, ***Wadjda***.

Four Artist-Curator Dialogues will feature conversations between exhibiting Arab artists and prominent U.S. curators and scholars. Arab artists will present **artist books at special book signings** in conjunction with FotoFest’s portfolio review.

Arab artists will participate in FotoFest’s **International Meeting Place Portfolio Review for Artists**, and will lead exhibition tours. FotoFest will organize tours, with artists or curators, for groups and individuals. In April, FotoFest is organizing a two-weekend-long **Arab Film Program with the MFAH**, featuring films and documentaries from Arab filmmakers.

Finally, FotoFest is creating a **curriculum for grades 3-12** to accompany these exhibitions. Working with FotoFest’s year-round education program, **Literacy Through Photography**, this project-centered curriculum reinforces writing and visual analysis while imparting information about Arab cultures. The curriculum aligns with education requirements for all grade levels; it will be available online, free of charge. Interactive tours for students will complement the curriculum.

MEDIA PARTNERS: *Art in America; Contemporary Practices, Visual Arts from the Middle East; European Photography;* and **Houston Public Media.**

OTHER BIENNIAL PROGRAMS

FotoFest’s own contemporary Arab exhibitions are accompanied by over 111 independent venues, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Menil Collection, and the city’s major commercial art galleries, who are mounting independent exhibitions of photography. A full list of Biennial **Participating Spaces** is available on the FotoFest website at: **www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/spaces**.

Free exhibition tours, led with prominent Arab experts, artists and curators, are scheduled for every Saturday during the Biennial. **Public poetry readings and music performances** will take place in April, including: a performance with pianist **Michael Zuraw**, Artistic Director of the Houston-based chamber music ensemble **Aperio**, at the Rothko Chapel; and FotoFest’s popular **Bike Scramble bicycle tour**.

FotoFest’s pioneering **Meeting Place Portfolio Review for Artists, the largest and most international event of its kind**, is bringing together **500 international artists and over 200 leading curators, gallery directors, publishers, and**

collectors for three weeks of one-on-one meetings. The Meeting Place takes place **March 15 – April 2, 2014**. Information is available at: www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/portfolioreview

Presented in conjunction with the Meeting Place is FotoFest's **Discoveries of the Meeting Place**. The popular exhibition is a showcase for some of the best work discovered at the previous Biennial portfolio review. It is a launching pad for the careers of many emerging artists. www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/exhibitions/discoveries

As part of the Meeting Place, FotoFest sponsors **four public Evenings with the Artist Open Portfolio Nights**. These evenings are accompanied by the **Artist-Curator Dialogues, Book Signings** and other programs. www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/portfolioreview/evenings-with-the-artists.htm

In coordination with the Portfolio Review, FotoFest is organizing **Workshops for artists and the interested public**. Workshops will focus on hand-made art books and collecting photography. www.fotofest.org/2014biennial/workshops

Exhibition tours and other programs are available throughout the six weeks of the Biennial. Details on additional programming will be announced as they become available and may be found online at: www.fotofest.org/2014biennial

MAJOR SPONSORS - FOTOFEST 2014 BIENNIAL

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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

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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.

Among Ms. Von Roques' writings and publications are: *The Situation of Contemporary Arab Art*, catalogue essay for the exhibition *Languages of the Desert*, Dumont Verlag Cologne, 2005; *The Present Out of the Past Millennia — Contemporary Art from Egypt*, catalogue essay for the exhibition of the same title, Wienand Verlag Cologne, 2007; and *Perfect Harmony — The Calligraphy of Khaled Al Saai*, catalogue essay for the retrospective of Khaled Al Saais work at Centre Culturel Francais de Damas, Syria, 2009.

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.



Youssef Nabil (Egypt), *Self-portrait, Essaouira*, 2011
Courtesy of the Artist and Nathalie Obadia Gallery (Paris / Brussels)