Realism in Rawiya

PHOTOGRAPHIC
STORIES FROM
THE MIDDLE EAST

18 FEBRUARY TO 16 MAY 2015

Exhibition Guide

nɑe
new art exchange

impressionsgallery

Untitled, from the I Read I Write series, 2009 - 2012
© Laura Boushnak

Untitled, from the I Read I Write series, 2009 - 2012
© Laura Boushnak

Laura Boushnak

Laura Boushnak is a Palestinian photographer born in Kuwait. As an Arab woman, who was raised, educated and has worked in several Arab countries, she is committed to presenting projects that highlight the position of women in the Arab world.

I Read I Write (2009 - 2012) responds to the 2005 UN Arab Human Development Report which indicated that Arab countries collectively have one of the highest rates of female illiteracy in the world. The photographs in this series focus on the importance of education and the major barriers that many women face in accessing education, such as: poverty, cultural constraints, minimum public spending on education and outdated teaching methods.

Untitled, from The Missing: Lebanon series,
2010-ongoing © Dalia Khamissy

Untitled, from The Missing: Lebanon series,
2010-ongoing © Dalia Khamissy

Dalia Khamissy

Born in Beirut, Dalia Khamissy's work revolves around the social and socio-political stories in the Middle Eastern region, documenting mostly the aftermath of Lebanon's wars and issues concerning women's rights.

The Missing: Lebanon (2010 - ongoing) presents the reality of the parents who are demanding to know the fate of their loved ones that disappeared during the Lebanese civil war between 1975 and 1990. 17,000 people remain officially missing in Lebanon after being abducted or killed at the hands of different Lebanese militias and other groups involved in the conflict.

The series has a personal resonance for Dalia, who was seven years old when her father was kidnapped in 1981.Three days later he was set free. With hindsight, she understands that her father was luckier than the others who disappeared during the civil war.

Untitled, from the Picture an Arab Man series, 2009 - ongoing © Tamara Abdul-Hadi

Untitled, from the Picture an Arab Man series, 2009 - ongoing © Tamara Abdul-Hadi

Tamara Abdul Hadi

Tamara Abdul Hadi was born to Iraqi parents in the United Arab Emirates in 1980 and raised in Montreal, Canada. Her personal photography projects deal with issues of social injustice and gender stereotypes.

Picture an Arab Man (2009 - ongoing) attempts to break down stereotypes of how Arabs have been represented in the West, as well as in the East. By highlighting the sensual beauty of the subjects, Abdul Hadi challenges outdated notions of masculinity within the region. The series also attempts to break the global stereotypes imposed on the Arab male in a post 9/11 world, providing an alternative visual representation of that identity.

Untitled, from the Transition series, 2011
© Myriam Abdelaziz

Untitled, from the Egyptian Revolution series, 2011
© Myriam Abdelaziz

Myriam Abdelaziz

Myriam Abdelaziz is a French photographer of Egyptian origins. Originally from Cairo, Abdelaziz's understanding of the culture, politics and economic struggles of the people of Egypt, have allowed her to capture moments and detail within the Egyptian revolution through a local eye.

Transition (2012) documents the year following the Egyptian Revolution when the SCAF (Superior Council for the Armed Forces) took power, promising to lead Egypt into democracy and fair elections. The frustration felt by some of the Egyptian people over the lack of progress towards real democracy was made visible as graffiti on the streets of Cairo.

Egyptian Revolution (2011) presents the reality of the strong, successful, courageous and politically engaged Middle Eastern women who actively took part in the uprising. Aware that women from the Middle East are often portrayed within Western media reports as oppressed by men, Abdelaziz was keen to counteract this unbalanced representation of gender within the series.

Untitled, from the Survivor series, 2007 - 2012
© Laura Boushnak

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© Laura Boushnak

Laura Boushnak

Laura Boushnak is a Palestinian photographer born in Kuwait. As an Arab woman, who was raised, educated and has worked in several Arab countries, she is committed to presenting projects that highlight the position of women in the Arab world.

Survivor (2007 - 2012) focuses on young cluster bomb survivors trying to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. After fleeing their homes and seeking refuge during the war itself, Boushnak witnessed the added injustice of individuals losing their lives and limbs to the cluster munitions left behind after the conflict.

Untitled, from the Mothers of Martyrs series, 2011
© Newsha Tavakolian

Untitled, from the Listen series, 2011
© Newsha Tavakolian

Newsha Tavakolian

Newsha Tavakolian, born in Tehran, Iran, is a self-taught photographer whose practice focuses on women's experiences and identity. Tavakolian's shift from photojournalism to conceptual photography was partly forced by intense domestic political pressures on the media in Iran. She describes photography as: 'a way of breathing within the smothering world of censorship.'

Mothers of Martyrs (2006) Tavakolian presents a series of photographs of mothers holding portraits of the sons they lost in the Iran-Iraq war between 1980 and 1988. The double use of portraiture within the photographs serves to highlight the contrast between the generations, and the ever-increasing age gap between the two.

Listen (2011) is presented as a series of photographic portraits alongside a silent video piece made in collaboration with Iranian female professional singers.

In Iran, female singers can only sing collectively or as back-up singers for male vocalists, they are not allowed to perform solo, in public places or produce CDs.

Tavakolian says, 'In my own country I participate, I tell stories that are also my story. For me a women's voice represents a power that if you silence it, imbalances the society, and makes everything deform. My project Listen echoes the voices of silenced women. I have let Iranian female singers perform through my camera while the world has never heard them.'

Untitled, from the Fragile Monsters series, 2009
© Tanya Habjouqa

Untitled, from the Women of Gaza series, 2009
© Tanya Habjouqa

Untitled, from the Jerusalem in Heels series, 2006
© Tanya Habjouqa

Tanya Habjouqa

Tanya Habjouqa's documentary photography takes the viewer through the Middle East's conflict zones. She aims to capture glimmers of hope, dignity and laughter, with the intention of countering the region's association with division and war. Habjouqa explores both male and female identity within her work.

Ladies Who Rally (2012) Speeding their way through the male-dominated Palestinian streetcar racing scene, the Speed Sisters have been heralded as the Middle East's first all-female racing team. Habjouqa describes them as 'independent, determined and always on the move', and has captured the women as they have charted their own course through the pressures of social expectations, family dynamics, community politics and an ongoing military occupation.

Fragile Monsters: Arab Body Building (2009) presents an alternative view of the supersized contestants in the 17th annual Arab Body Building Championship held in Amman, revealing surprisingly tender, emotional, and insecure moments among the men.

Women of Gaza (2009) depicts women and their families walking the fine line between hope and resignation. Above all, this series tells a story of survival, and depicts the attempts of the people of Gaza to 'normalise' life in an abnormal situation.

Jerusalem in Heels: Transsexuals of the Holy Land (2006) portrays the drag queens of Jerusalem. These Palestinian and Israeli transsexuals defy politics and social convention. Habjouqa describes how the individuals she observed 'fall in love in a rambunctious display of heels and makeup, a colourful denial of the darker elements of Jerusalem society.'

Further information

Publication

An accompanying publication is available to buy from our shop at the special exhibition price of £5.00. The book contains a specially commissioned essay by Yasmina Reggad: 'Travelling in Imaginative Geographies'.

Books

The following books are also available to browse on our reading table:

Jeddah Diary, Oliver Arthur
Out of Beirut, Suzanne Cotter and Stephen Wright
The New Middle East: The world after the Arab Spring, Paul Danchar
Images of Women. The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950, Sarah Graham-Brown
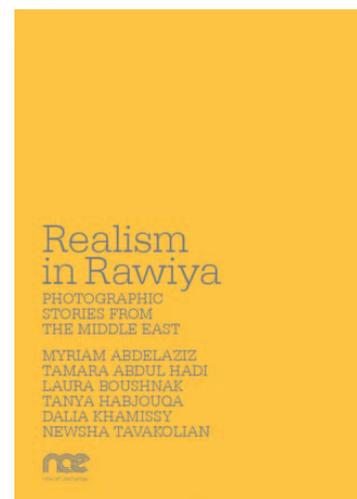Arab Photography Now, Rose Issa and Michket Krifa.
Arabic Graffiti, Don Karl aka Stone and Pascal Zoghbi
Orientalism, Edward Said
Women Photographers: The Other Observers 1900 to the Present. Val Williams

Events

Feed Your Mind
Thursday 5 March 12.30pm to 1.30pm. Free event, drop in.

Join us in your lunchbreak for an informal discussion session inspired by Realism in Rawiya.

Redeye Presents: Hothouse Bradford
Saturday 21 March 12.30pm to 4.30pm. Free event.

A must attend event for photographers at any level. Join us for a day of photographic activity with an opportunity to share your work, gain feedback, and browse a range of photobooks and portfolios

Book via www.redeye.org.uk

Time For Tea
Friday 24 April 11.30am to 1.30pm. Free event

Join us for free tea, cake and enjoy a friendly, social morning in our gallery overlooking City Park. At 12.30pm there will be an optional short talk about Realism in Rawiya.

Free event for over 55's. Drop in.

Bradford Literature Festival
Saturday 16 May 10.30am to 4.30pm

Bradford Literature Festival returns with a day of talks and discussions around this year's theme The Politics of Gender.

Find out more at
www.bradfordliteraturefestival.co.uk

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MYRIAM ABDELAZIZ
TAMARA ABDUL HADI
LAURA BOUSHNAK
TANYA HABJOUQA
DALIA KHAMISSY
NEWSHA TAVAKOLIAN

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