

CONTEMPORARY ART FROM SAUDI ARABIA JUN 18 - OCT 2 2016



King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture

A Saudi Aramco initiative

STATION MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART HOUSTON, TX

CONTEMPORARY ART FROM SAUDI ARABIA

KINGDOM

JUN 18 - OCT 2 2016

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PARALLEL KINGDOM CONTEMPORARY ART FROM SAUDI ARABIA

June 18 - October 2 2016

ORGANISER

DATES

EXHIBITION

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture

A Saudi Aramco initiative

MUSEUM PARTNER Station Museum

of Contemporary Art 1502 Alabama St. Houston, TX 77004 ph: 713.529.6900

STATION

www.stationmuseum.com

PRODUCER

★ CULTURUNNERS

CONCEPT Stephen Stapleton CATALOGUE DESIGN Kuba Rudzinski

PARTNER Gharem Studio

> STUDIO GHAREM

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cover: Ajlan Gharem Paradise Has Many Gates 2015

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frontispiece: Telfaz 11

ABOUT STATION MUSEUM ABOUT CULTURUNNERS

ABOUT GHAREM STUDIO

Culturunners



Darth of Arabia - Arabian Envoy host guest of honor during Versailles Peace Treaty 2016 Print

The United States and The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have long been allies from the height of the Cold War to the expansion of the oil age, while often remaining divided in ideologies of governance and religion. An oil-driven global economy has fueled an uneasy symbiosis between the two nations allowing for mutual prosperity as well as resentment. Outside of stereotypical Hollywood portrayals, investigative journalism exposés and YouTube videos, very little is known in the United States about the people and culture of Saudi Arabia. This exhibition is a crossgenerational survey of contemporary art from the Saudi Arabian peninsula with a special focus on young artists, providing insights into Saudi culture through the creativity and visions of some of the most influential Saudi artists of the 21st century. Through this exhibition we seek to use the visual language and firsthand accounts of these artists to lay a new foundation for discourse and understanding of Saudi society, cultures and politics.

Station Museum Curators



SAUDI ARTISTS' TOUR

From June 2016, a group of Saudi artists will embark on a multi-city tour of the United States to generate people-to-people dialogue and better understanding across physical, cultural and ideological borders. The tour launches with this large-scale exhibition at the Station Museum in Houston, TX before traveling to Aspen, CO, San Francisco, CA, Bates College Museum of Art in Lewiston, ME and major cities across the United States,

The tour is spearheaded by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Cultures, Saudi's premier arts, culture and education institution, and was initiated by CULTURUNNERS, an international platform for traveling artists, and Gharem Studio, a Riyadh based collective dedicated to arts education in Saudi Arabia. Exhibitions and events are being produced in partnership with cultural institutions and universities across the US.

STATION

Houston, TX

Against the backdrop of the US Presidential elections, the tour is designed as a peer-to-peer platform for a new generation of Saudi artists. It will create opportunities for these artists to discuss common concerns with the American public and engage them in a positive alternative narrative from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at this crucial time.

KING ABDULAZIZ CENTER FOR WORLD CULTURE

King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture A Saudi Aramco initiative

"We at the Center are delighted to connect these young Saudi artists with US audiences at this important time. The tour aims to provide a peerto-peer platform for alternative discourse and cultural empathy between nations."

Dr Khalid Al-Yahya

Founder and Director of the Saudi artists' US Tour & Programs Director at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Cultures.

Saudi Aramco began construction on the Center in May 2008, when the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud, laid the symbolic cornerstone.

Our choice of site - near the famed Prosperity Well in Dhahran, where oil was first developed for commercial export - is not incidental. Where Saudi Arabia has long prospered from this natural resource, we seek to develop an additional source of wealth: a highly skilled and creative people who can propel the Kingdom to a bright and prosperous future for generations to come.

B Barrier Course California Course Californ



<u>Hide From</u> <u>Timeline #2</u> 2014 Video



SARAH ABU ABDULLAH

"Painting a wrecked car like icing a cake, as if beautifying the exterior would help fix the lack of functionality within the car. This wishful gesture was the only way I could get myself a car cold comfort for the current impossibility of my dream that I, as an independent person, can drive myself to work one day."

<u>Saudi Automobile</u> 2011 Video

detergent

/di'tə:d3(ə)nt/ +0

noun

noun: detergent; plural noun: detergents

- a water-soluble cleansing agent which combines with impurities and dirt to make them more soluble, and differs from soap in not forming a scum with the saits in hard water. "liquid detergents"
 - synonyms: cleaner, cleanser, More
- any additive with a similar action to a detergent, e.g. an oil-soluble substance which holds dirt in suspension in lubricating oil.

adjective

adjective: detergent

 relating to detergents or their action. "staining that resists detergent action" synonyms: cleaning, cleansing; technical surface-active "staining that resists detergent action"

Origin

LATIN			
de-			
away from	LATIN	LATIN	
LATIN	- detergere -	wiping away	early 17th century
tergere			

early 17th century (as an adjective): from Latin detergent- 'wiping away', from the verb detergere, from de- 'away from' + tergere 'to wipe'.

My Saudi Couple 2016 Print on plastic, two bottles on the spinning plynth



AHAAD ALAMOUDI

"These detergent bottles are products of my country, for my country. They are found in many households across the kingdom and I began seeing them as a current reflection of Saudi society. We have become detergents cleansing ourselves from what we perceive to be of low taste and standard. Everything from the slang that is used to the attire that is worn; there is a daily struggle in Saudi Arabia between locality and the contemporary. My Saudi Couple is a current reflection of Saudi society today."





<u>Elementary 240</u> 2015 Mixed Media

NJOUD ALANBARI

The mural depicts a string of conservative ideals that are echoed throughout the culture and celebrated by our society. Due to the commonality of these murals, the jarring message is overlooked and takes on the role of subliminal messaging. These ideals are absorbed and later repeated, as facts, this results in a continuous cycle. In *Elementary 240"* you see a society that feeds on itself and continues to recycle false ideals. The artwork attempts to examine the effect of an educational system that allows for these messages to exist, whether subliminal or supraliminal, and consider their effects on the principles of the individual throughout ones life.





Wijha 2:148 And everyone has a direction to which they should turn 2013 Old photo - Abdulghafar, Al Makkiyah Foundation Archive New photo - Abdulrahman Abdoh Digital Lenticualr Print



AHMAD ANGAWI

"Wijha 2:148" (2013) which means 'direction'. A large lenticular photograph that juxtaposes an old image of the Masjid Al-Harram from the 19th century with a new contemporary image of the site, depends on your 'direction/Wiha' you would see different image to compare and contrast the architectural and social fabric changes that are presently occurring. And to question which direction we turned away from.

(And every one has a direction to which he should turn..) Quran, Surat 2 Aya 148

"Who writes history? This is a question that Felemban shares in her latest series highlighting names of women who participated politically and socially during the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) era, but who are not portrayed as much in current school textbooks."

Nuseiba Bint Ka'a & The Battle of UN 2016 Altered page from school book Original: from S(HE) series

BASMAH FELEMBAN

لثأ : غزوة أحد :

ب الغزوة :

عزم مشركو قريش على أن يثأروا لما أصابهم في غزوة بمدر، وصمموا على أن يهاجموا المسلمين في عقر دارهم وذلك لاستعادة هيبتهم ومركزهم بين القبائل العربية. (إذًا أين ستكون غزوة أحد ؟ ولماذا سُميت بهذا الاسم ؟)



صورة لجبل أحد يظهر فيها جبل الرماة

لاعداد للغزوة :

تزعم أبو سفيان قريشاً، فجهز يجيشا كبيراً قوامه ثلاثة آلاف مقاتل وتوجه به نحو المدينة حتى اقترب من جبل أحد،ولما رأى المتي. ﷺ ـ ذلك استشار أصحابه في الخروج لمقاتلة المشركين أو التحصن في المدينة، فألحَّ عليه بعض من فاتهم الجهاد في بدر من الشباب أن يخرجوا للقتال، فدخل النبي ـ ﷺ _بيته ولبس لباس الحرب وخرج بألف مقاتل، ثم انخذل المنافق عبدالله بن أبيَّ بثلث الجيش تقريباً (كم عدد الذين انخذل بهم ؟)



أحداث الغزوة :

سار النبي _ ﷺ _ حتى نزل الشعب (ما الشعب؟) من جبل أحد ، وجعل الجبل خلفه (لماذا؟)، فلما أصبح يوم من شوال من السنة الثالثة للهجرة، هيأ المسلمين للقتال فوضع خمسين رجلاً من الرماة على جبل (") يشرف على أرض الغزوة وأمرهم ألا يتركوا مراكزهم، وأن يرموا خيل المشركين بالنبال لثلا يأتو االمسلمين من الخلف. تهيأ المشركون للقتال وكان على ميمنة خيلهم خالد بن الوليد ،وعلى ميسرتها عكرمة بن أبي جهل. بدأت الغزوة بين المسلمين والمشركين (انظر مخطط غزوة أحد) ثم اشتد القتال بينهم، وكان عن أبلي بلاة حسباً من المسلمين التبي - عليمة ال حمزة بن عبد المطلب، وعلى بن أبي طالب، وأبو دُجَّانه، وسعد بن أبي ك وقاص، والزبير بن العوام، وطلحة بن عُبَّيْد الله رَضي الله عَنْهُم أجمعين، ومضى المسلمون يتقدمون، وأعداؤهم من المشركين يتراجعون،ولما رأى الرماة أنَّ المشركين قد انهزموا عزموا على ترك مواقعهم لأخذ ما يستطيعون أخذه من الغنائم، ولما ترك الرماة مراكزهم كرَّ فرسان المشركين على المسلمين ، وأحاطوا بهم من الخلف.

(١) جبل الرماة الذي يعرف حالياً بجبل عينين.



Hemisphere 2015 Rubber stamps and industrial lacquer paint on plywood board

ABDULNASSER GHAREM

"What is happening on the ground is camouflage. These theocratic countries are using people's values to tell them there will be a great future of Islam but in fact they are the victims. My motivation for the stamp painting series came from the realization that I myself was one of the victims."



<u>Camouflage</u> 2015 Rubber stamps and industrial lacquer paint on plywood board

Abdulnasser Gharem <u>Capitol Dome</u> 2012 Mixed Media Installation Photo: Edge of Arabia, London, 2012

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dik.



"The older generation has more beliefs than knowledge, and our generation has more knowledge than beliefs. So we're trying to find beliefs that can be harmonized with our knowledge."

Paradise Has Many Gates 2015 Print







NUGAMSHI

"I'm searching for a contemporary spirit within the Arabic language."

<u>Artist performance - Riyadh,</u> <u>Saudi Arabia</u> 2015

Overleaf: <u>Calligraphy Car</u> 2015 "I saw the whole world enormously dependent on oil to an extent where we breathe and drink it. However, what will happen when we run out of oil?"

D. At Star under





1993

12

COLORA OF AND AND A

<u>Shortcut</u> 2015 Acrylic and LED lights



RASHED AL SHASHAI

"Shortcut is an artwork derived from the alleged first drawing made in the sand by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The symbol urges human beings to pursue the straight and correct path away from the twisted and diabolical."



SHAWEESH

"My dream is to have my name be synonymous with the new generation of Saudi art."

<u>Captain America - US</u> government urged to take <u>a stance on refugees</u> 2016 Print



DHAFER AL SHEHRI

Top:

Worshipers kneeling during Eid prayer in and outdoor mosque on the first day of Eid Al-Fitr, which is a day of celebration for all Muslims worldwide after fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Bottom:

Worshipers in the position of prostration (sujood) during their performance of Eid prayer in an outdoor mosque on the first day of Eid Al-Fitr - a day of celebration for all Muslims worldwide after fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Overleaf:

View of a graveyard in one of the neighborhoods in the city of Riyadh, which shows a man visiting one of his deceased relatives during the last daylight hours. The graves appear even and very similar to each other due to the fact that there are no distinguishing features on any of the graves. Building on graves is forbidden in Islam; as a result, tombstones and elaborate memorials are not allowed as they might result in future idol worship.

<u>Grand Mosque, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia</u> 1 Shawwal 1434 AH 8 August 2013



Dhafer Al Shehri <u>*Riyadh, Saudi Arabia*</u> 15 Rabi' I 1435 AH 17 January 2014



TELFAZ 11

Telfaz11 is a Riyadh-based internet television network that has attracted top internet talent in the Middle east.

The number 11 in Telfaz11 is an homage to the year 2011, the year where great changes occurred in our region; changes that changed not only the way the world looks at Arabs, but also the way Arabs see themselves.

Telfaz11's mission is to make sure that society's perception of local creativity changes positively and that light is shed on local creatives through entertaining online programming.

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS: 9,315,000 YOUTUBE VIEWS: +140,000,000

<u>Logo from Telfaz 11's</u> <u>Khambalah</u> 2013





ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

SARAH ABU ABDALLAH

Sarah Abu Abdallah is an artist working primarily with video and film. She grew up in Qatif, Saudi Arabia and is currently pursuing her masters degree in Digital Media at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Her recent participations include: Arab Contemporary in the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, Migrating Forms in New York, the Serpentine Galleries 89plus Marathon in London, the 11th Sharjah Biennial in the UAE and Rhizoma in the 55th Venice Biennale. She contributed to ArteEast's recent Symposium, Arts and Culture in the Transformative Times, and the Moving Image panel on Video + Film at Palazzo Grassi in Venice.

AHAAD ALAMOUDI

Born in Jeddah Saudi Arabia Ahaad travels between England and Saudi Arabia. She has recently graduated from Dar Al Hekma University with a bachelor degree in Visual Communication and is currently undertaking a master's degree in Print at the Royal College of Art. Traveling between the two kingdoms, Ahaad's work addresses history and representation. Through her work Ahaad is trying to push the boundaries of the historical representation of Saudi Arabia; by studying the country's reforming ethnography and showcasing it in the work she produces.

NJOUD ALANBARI

Njoud Alanbari, born and raised in Rivadh, Saudi Arabia and graduated from Prince Sultan University, College of Architecture and Design. Njoud started working with Gharem Studio Inc in 2014 as a mixed media artist. She extracts inspiration and ideas through her work for the Saudi Commission for Heritage and Antiques, as well as through her work teaching art to disadvantaged children. Her work explores the threads that combine culture and community through crucial points of interaction such as the topic of education for women. As a Saudi female, she hopes to fulfil a message by merging heritage into the 21st century using culture and basic humanity as her primary source of inspiration.

AHMAD ANGAWI

Angawi is an artist/designer of Meccan roots, and is inspired by the rich diversity of the culture of Hejaz. His works revolve around the human condition while also paying homage to both culture, heritage and the environment. Influenced by his Father, Architect Dr. Sami

Rashed Al Shasha <u>Exit</u> 2015 Sign Angawi, he has adopted the concept of "Al Mizan", a belief in the fundamental principle of balance. For the artist, his constant pursuit of equilibrium in both design and its application is an attempt to bring balance to the human state of mind. During his travels across the Middle East, the artist has focused on local traditional artisans and craftsmen, and studies their time-honored roles and their relationship to today's mass-market productions. He strongly believes that industrial designers are the craftsmen of today.

Ahmad holds a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Design from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, and a Masters degree in Traditional Arts from the Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London, UK. Ahmad is a co-founder of Al-Hangar, an independent artists initiative that provides a platform for dialogue and cultural exchange by way of exhibitions, community-oriented projects and educational programs.

Ahmad has participated in many group exhibitions to include: #Cometogether, Edge of Arabia, London, UK [2012]; We Need To Talk, Edge of Arabia, Jeddah, KSA [2012]; Rhizoma, The 55th Venice Biennale, Edge of Arabia, Venice, Italy [2013]; A Line in the Sand, Art Space, Dubai, UAE [2013]; Connected: Art in Airports, Art Jameel, King Fahad International Airport, Dammam, KSA [2014] ; Al hangar, Besmallah, jeddah, KSA [2015] / Mangour: Loved and Beloved, 21,39 & Athr, Jeddah, KSA [2016] solo exhibition. / Al hangar, maboth al matar, 21,39, Jeddah, KSA [2016].

BASMAH FELEMBAN

Born in 1993, Basmah Felemban is a Saudi artist, the winner of the

Arab Woman Award [2014] and then became a judge of that same award [2015], and a founder of the Saudi Street Art blog, an initiative that aim to archive Saudi's street art and which recently contributed to the Inner Voices exhibition held at downtown Jeddah. Basmah's work depicts a journey to a constitution of the truth. Geometric principles form the basis of her work, through which she believes is a medium that all truths can be revealed. Still at an early stage in her career, Basmah has exhibited in many international exhibitions such as Venice Biennale, Art Dubai and Art Istanbul. She also is a regular speaker at conferences on Islamic Art and Street Art.

ABDULNASSER GHAREM

Abdulnasser Gharem is widely considered to be one of the most influential artists working in the Gulf today. Drawing on his previous experience as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Saudi Arabian army, Gharem's work reflects on themes of Islamic cultural identity and the need to remove itself from historical shackles to embrace modern day knowledge and thought. Gharem's use of different forms of arabesques and geometric patterns are merged together to encourage unity in the Islamic world and to prevent the creation of barriers which lead to political disparity and social disruption.

Abdulnasser Gharem was born in 1973 in the Saudi Arabian city of Khamis Mushait, where he continues to live and work. In 1992, Gharem graduated from the King Abdulaziz Academy before attending the Leader Institute in Riyadh. In 2003 he studied at the influential Al-Meftaha arts village in Abha, and in 2004, Gharem and the Al-Meftaha artists staged a group exhibition, *Shattah*, which challenged existing modes of art practice in Saudi Arabia. Since then Gharem has exhibited in Europe, the Gulf and the USA, including at The Martin-Gropius-Bau and at the Venice, Sharjah & Berlin Biennales.

AJLAN GHAREM

Born in 1985 in Khamis Mushayt in the South of Saudi Arabia, Ajlan Gharem moved to Abha to pursue an undergraduate degree in Mathematics at King Khalid University. Now a maths teacher in Alsahabah Public School in Riyadh, in the past he has worked as an event/project manager with Edge of Arabia. Ajlan is a co-founder of Gharem Studio, which supports artists from the Middle East.

NUGAMSHI

Nugamshi's research explores the evolution of traditional calligraphy and typography employing different techniques and unusual tools (broom or spray paint instead of brushes). Despite intentionally breaking with convention, Nugamshi remains true to that tradition of calligraphy while stirring dialogues within communities and looking for the spirit of Arabic letters. Born in Saudi Arabia in 1982, he has frequently performed live in the Middle East and in the United States.

RASHED AL SHASHAI

Born in Al Baha, Saudi Arabia in 1977, Rashed Al Shashai holds a Master of Visual Arts degree and is a prominent figure of the contemporary Saudi art scene. As a conceptual artist and arts educator, Al Shashai had an influential effect on a new generation of Saudi talent while also nurturing local artistic practices as a founding member of the Saudi Arabia Fine Arts society and the Art Education Society.

SHAWEESH

Shaweesh is a young Saudi artist based in Riyadh, part of a growing movement of young street artists in the country. As a self-taught artist, he has gained six years of experience creating digital art and graffiti on a daily basis and has participated in several exhibitions locally and internationally. These include Edge of Arabia's exhibition Come Together (2013) and Edition #1 (2013) in London, RHIZOMA (Generation in Waiting) at the Venice Biennale (2013), Art Space (2013) in Dubai.

DHAFER AL SHEHRI

Winner of numerous international photography prizes, young Saudi street photographer Dhafer Al Sheri (b.1979, lives and works in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia). Dhafer's keen eye for composition and social commentary, and in particular his depiction of traditional subjects in modern contexts, are the trademarks of his work, which bears witness to the transition of Saudi society from the old to the new.

TELFAZ 11

Telfaz11 is the first Arabic online video network based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, aimed at supporting creative culture in the region. It strives to help its society realize its creative potential through a dedicated online viewing platform. Telfaz11's online content has over 140 million views and over 1 million subscribers on YouTube. <u>Oil Revolution</u> Andrei Molodkin's monument to the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 Courtesy of the Station Museum of Contemporary Art Photo: Michael Stravato



ABOUT STATION MUSEUM

STATION MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Station Museum of Contemporary Art is an exhibition forum for local, national, and international artists, with an emphasis on fine arts that reflects the cultural diversity of Houston's communities. The museum has held comprehensive exhibitions from Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, Congo, South Africa, Czech Republic, Austria, Palestine, Iraq, India, Afghanistan, and Russia. As an institution that supports local and Texan art, the Station has organized significant solo exhibitions by Mel Chin, James Drake, Dick Wray, Jesse Lott, George Smith, and group exhibitions that bring Texanw artists together with national and international artists.

The Station Museum upholds the rights of freedom of speech and freedom of expression. The museum is an activist institution supporting civil society issues as well as artists who engage in social, political, aesthetic, economic, and/or spiritual content and expressions. The Station also presents film-screenings, musical events, lectures, and fundraisers for serious social causes; together, they inspire a dialogue that encourages the public to become actively aware of the lives of others.

The Station Museum of Contemporary Art organizes exhibitions that question our society's morality and ethics. It embraces the idea that art plays a critical role in society as an agent of creativity and civil discourse and as a resource that deepens and broadens public awareness of the cultural, political, economic, and personal dimensions of art.

James Harithas Director



ABOUT CULTURUNNERS

CULTURUNNERS is an independent production studio which empowers and mobilizes artists across international borders. Through curatorial, media and educational production, CULTURUNNERS prioritizes direct encounters and storytelling, trusting in the power of art to inspire empathy and uncover counter narratives across the world.

CULTURUNNERS' first major project is a multiyear grassroots artists' road trip criss-crossing between the Middle East and the United States. In September of 2014, CULTURUNNERS set out in a 34ft 1999 Gulf Stream RV from The Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas on a mission to connect artists and communities between the two regions. To date, CULTURUNNERS has traveled over 15,000 miles, teaming up with over 50 artists in 25 states across America; along the way, CULTURUNNERS has produced events at Louisiana State University, the Middle East Institute, the United Nations Headquarters in New York, The Armory Show, Columbia University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, San Diego Art Institute, New Mexico State University, The Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institute, The National Civil Rights Museum and now at The Station Museum in Houston, Texas.

www.culturunners.com







ABOUT GHAREM STUDIO

GHAREM

Gharem Studio is a non-profit arts organisation dedicated to encouraging individual thought and self-expression with artists across the Muslim world. Founded in 2010, the studio offers residencies within a purpose built studio in Riyadh, as well as art education, career guidance, resources, equipment, promotion and opportunities for exhibitions both in the Middle East and the rest of the world. To date, the studio has staged exhibitions at the US ambassador's residence in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, as well as working closely with the British Council on a series of workshops with Professor David Rayson, Head of Painting at the Royal College of Art, London.

Artist Abdulnasser Gharem moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2013 in an attempt to broaden his professional resources, and established Gharem Studio in the process. Due to the lack of proper studios for artists in the city of Riyadh, Gharem Studio began as a working space for artist Abdulnasser Gharem. The space attracted fellow artists, photographers and creative minds, who proved to be the first wave of a new Saudi art initiative.

next spread: Abdulnasser Gharem <u>Ricochet</u> 2015



