

The Secret of Disappearance

Wafa Hourani

May 24 – June 23, 2016

Gallery One and Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center



Artist Wafa Hourani.

Wafa Hourani attempts to reshape the world through magic and illusions. This exhibition encompasses a selection of works that offer a glimpse of his artistic journey over the last 15 years and embodies elements of filmmaking, photography, architecture, and graphic design. His large sculptural series *Future Cities* comprises three future scenarios of Qalandiya Refugee Camp in 2047, 2067, and 2087 – all monumental anniversaries in the history of the Palestinian struggle for freedom. In his *Future Cities* series, Wafa revisits the utopian genre to produce architectural models of major cities as he envisions them 50 years from now,

including sociological, environmental, and behavioral parameters.

Similarly, *The Only and Lonely Mosque* is an architectural model of an imaginary mosque. Hundreds of photographs of mosques from all over the world were gathered, cut, and pasted to create a work that symbolizes unity among Muslims from many cultures and includes architecture and art. The void spaces this work contains symbolize both a spiritual emptiness within Political Islam and the stark loneliness from which Muslims are suffering these days.

Cinema Dunia is an installation that contains a real movie screening and small figures that are watching a video collage edited from the Palestinian Cinema Archive. Imaginary film posters hang as witnesses of a History of Palestinian Cinema that never happened. Small human figures in the streets, lights, and sounds, even film screenings offer a miniature futuristic projection of the now destroyed cinema building.

While Wafa Hourani depicts Palestinian cities and refugee camps in miniature, the characters living in those cities are of large scale. For instance, they have very long necks because, according to Hourani's fictive Darwinian theory, Palestinians will grow long necks in order to be able to look beyond the apartheid Wall.

London 2068 shows a large fantastical character sculpted in the form of a pregnant woman and representing Big Ben. Hourani claims that in 2068, due to the increased speed of the earth's rotation, time will shrink so that days will last only eleven hours. This will cause Big Ben to become inaccurate and obsolete – to the utter anger of the British who take pride in their monument of precision. Big Ben is replaced by the wire sculpture of a woman whose pregnancy is to show proof of the movement of time.

Palestine Martial Arts shows 13 rusty-metal wire sculptures that depict men and women of life-sized proportion who are standing while in the process of throwing stones. This is a posture familiar since the first Intifada of 1987 and constitutes a form of self-defense that has become known as Palestinian martial art, comparable to karate for the Japanese, kung fu for the Chinese, and capoeira for the Brazilians.

Wafa Hourani currently lives and works in Ramallah. His artwork has been shown in the Istanbul Biennial (2009), *Disorientation II*, Abu Dhabi (2009), Saatchi Gallery, London (2008), and the Thessaloniki Biennial (2007), and is exhibited in major international collections that include the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece; ADACH, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates; and the Nadour Collection (www.nadour.org).

