



REVIEWS
EXHIBITION REVIEW

Letters to Fritz and Paul

A solo exhibition by Inas Halabi

October 11 – November 24, 2017
Al Ma'mal Foundation, Jerusalem

Letters to Fritz and Paul is Inas Halabi's first solo show. It is a research-based project that explores the expeditions of the Swiss second cousins, lovers, and scientists, Fritz and Paul Sarasin, who ventured across the Dutch and British colonies of Celebes (Indonesia) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), respectively, between 1893 and 1907, as well as parts of Africa and the Middle East. The Sarasins brought back to Switzerland meticulous studies of indigenous peoples, flora, and landscapes, including photographs and objects that are stored today in the Ethnographic Museum of Basel, Switzerland.

Working with archival material from the museum, Halabi presents a body of works and research material that includes a video, objects, and images that question the relationship between colonialism and science, ethnographic objects and their collectors, and the



Letters to Fritz and Paul publication, Inas Halabi 2017.

settings in which these objects have been placed. By appropriating the language of the museum and altering its material, Halabi attempts to release the photographed natives from the hegemonic apparatus that leaves them trapped inside. Through subtle gestures of adding and erasing, the original archives are altered to transform the gaze of the viewer and raise critical questions about the role of the museum in colonialism today.

Halabi creates through this exhibition an alternative narrative to that of the ethnographic museum in Basel that

Drs. Fritz and Paul Sarasin with dead elephant, 1883 – 1886, Letters to Fritz and Paul, Inas Halabi 2017.



Meine Coolie, the Basel Mission in Sri Lanka (Ceylon) 1901-1920, Letters to Fritz and Paul, Inas Halabi 2017.

she visited in 2016, which became the starting point for her project. "*Letters to Fritz and Paul* is not really about Fritz and Paul Sarasin," she says, "nor is it about Switzerland. It is about my ongoing encounter with colonialism."

Inas Halabi was born in 1988 in Palestine and uses video, sculpture, and archival material to examine historical and political narratives of national identity, collective memory, myth-making, and hierarchies of power. Her process is fundamentally research-based, and she presents data and visual material, often with an interventionist component, in the

form of installation. Halabi is a graduate of Goldsmiths College, University of London (MFA) and the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem (BA). In 2016, Halabi was the recipient of the A.M. Qattan Foundation's Young Artist of the Year Award.

The exhibition opens daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except Saturdays and Sundays). It is part of the Jerusalem Nights program organized by Shafaq - the Jerusalem Arts Network, and is generously supported by the European Union and SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency).

Paul Sarasin posing in Central Celebes, Letters to Fritz and Paul, Inas Halabi 2017.

