

# The Moon Is a Sun Returning as a Ghost

## Noor Abuarafeh Solo Show

Curated by Lara Khaldi

Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art

August 5, 2019 – October 2, 2019

This exhibition is the first solo show for Jerusalemite artist Noor Abuarafeh. The exhibition includes seven artworks that span the last five years of the artist's career. Two are newly created and presented for the first time in the exhibition.

Abuarafeh has been concerned with the construction of canons and histories – whether institutional, art historical, or discursive. For the last few years her work has focused on the deconstruction of contemporary institutionalization that has been taking place in Palestine since the Oslo Accords. Her work is critical yet affirmative. She creates intimate, small histories around those who were pushed to the outskirts of canons. This exhibition showcases old and newly produced works that question Palestinian art history and recent museumification through telling stories, giving voice to rumors, and pointing out what has been removed from memory. Her work takes various forms, including videos, novels, publications, and installations, as well as photographs.

The exhibition starts with the novel *"The Earth Doesn't Tell Its Secrets" – His Father Once Said*, which chronicles the obsession of the protagonist in rumors around the many creations of Palestine's first museum and subsequently other small museums in homes, cookie jars, and anecdotes about objects. Some of the objects and images from the novel will be presented on newly designed display plinths and shelves in a living-room-like environment, where visitors are enticed to read the novel. On the second floor, one finds *When They Get Out They Lose Their Magic*, a



video that addresses a disappeared collection of Palestinian artworks from the 1990s, installed in Al Ma'mal's archive and kitchen space. The project also includes a publication, *Paintings that Didn't Find Their Way Back*, which narrates the journey that these works went through until they settled at their last destination in London. In the adjacent corridor, the video installation *As If I Have Never Been in This Place before "On Sunday Seven pm"* is installed along with jars filled with dust from various Palestinian exhibition spaces. The installation explores – among other issues – questions about what happens to personal memories of trauma at the museum, namely at a Palestinian museum. Opposite this video installation is another artwork that takes the form of a publication: "Rumors Started Some Time Ago" is an investigative research journey into a photograph found at the Imperial War Museum in London, leading the artist to information about the different Palestinian museum



that was founded under the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate. The publication includes historical documents and chronicles the findings in a manner close to the process of inquiry itself, asking the reader to consider the story within today's context of archive and museum fever in Palestine.

In the main hall, two videos are presented alongside each other in one display structure. *Observational Desire on a Memory that Remains* and *The Magic of the Photograph that Remembers How to Forget*, are the result of another long inquiry which started from an archival photograph. Both videos attend to the formation of art-historical canons and their subsequent overshadowing of other artists and artistic practices. At the end of the hall, the video installation *Am I the Ageless Object at the Museum?* is screened along sculptural objects, forming a dreamlike museum of living and dead creatures (i.e., a zoo).

The exhibition addresses what is outside and beyond hegemonic narratives that pertain to art history and institutions. It is full of generative questions about form, representation, memory, and desire, among many other issues.

