

Al Jaw

The Artistic Journal of the Arab World



October Newsletter

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AMIRA AL SHARIF

'I often ask myself if people who live in peaceful countries and regions could better identify with the beautiful pictures — seeing themselves in us, their lives in ours — rather than the bloody ones that commonly inundate the international media, from Syria at present to Vietnam in the past. As a photographer with over sixteen years of experience on the ground in Yemen, I have come to the realization that the logic of “blood is to war as beauty is to peace” is flawed, incomplete. And the reason my work tends to focus on the beauty of my suffering country is simple, relatable: like people everywhere, regardless of their context of war or peace, Yemenis appreciate love and life. We, too, wish to live our loves and our lives before that unavoidable moment called “death.”

Amira Al Sharif is an award-winning Paris-based Yemeni photographer and artist with two decades of visual storytelling experience. Her work spotlights intimate human stories that capture beauty, suffering, and the untold complexities in between.

OPEN CALL

**To all artists who wish to
contribute to Al Jaw, publish a text,
promote their artwork worldwide,
send us an email at contact@glob.art**



‘suspending it means cancelling it’

I need to evacuate my despair and anger.

This is probably why I found myself at the beginning of October, in a hypstery sensorial dancing meeting in Marseille. Its promised was to - finally - reach peace and happiness, thanks to the beats of a DJ set carefully prepared by Pierre, a local queer artist and founder of D.O.S.E.

Sorry to disappoint you: if it spontaneously resonates with drugs, D.O.S.E. is a substance-free workshop, & Pierre designed it as an immersive bubble in which Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin and Endorphin are naturally exchanged and consumed between the participants by dancing.

The only rule of this journey was to remain silent and keep moving.

At some point, I glimpsed to my sweaty reflection in the tinted mirror standing in the dilapidated room. I saw a lost shadow, indistinguishable from all others, dancing frenetically in the subdued light. My brain was on pause as I was letting myself go, swallowed by the music.

The rhythm started to materialise itself, taking the shape of bombs.

They were falling, exploding, shelling Beirut. For the first time in a while, I felt grounded, finally able to connect and interact with my surrounding, without saying a word.

One dialogue came back to my mind, the one of Mounia Akl in “Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano” by Cyril Aris. Mounia is a Lebanese director whose multi-awarded film ‘Costa Brava’ is at the heart of Cyril’s documentary. Cyril shot the hardships faced by Mounia’s crew, the list of which is endless: the explosions of Beirut’s port, the economic crisis, the Covid pandemic, the political turmoil, ...

With the movie’s funds blocked in Lebanese banks and the immediate call for evacuating Beirut in August 2020, Mounia’s crew called her to suspend the film. Her response was irrevocable.



suspending it
means canceling it.

FOREWORD

Cyril raises the curtain on Costa Brava's backstage. The incredulous spectator discovers the story behind the film, hallucinating on what could be described as a real science fiction. But whatever the obstacle was, Mounia kept on going. Even when her main actresses tested positive for Covid ; even when the economic crisis wiped off two-thirds of the value of the movie cash; even when Palestinian lead actor Saleh Bakri was arrested at the airport.

'How many bad news can you get in one day?'
- member from Mounia's crew -



World Premiere
57th Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
Photo Credit: KVIFF

'Costa Brava' got multiple awards and was selected in internationally recognised film festivals - the Toronto International Film Festival, NETPAC Award For Best Asian/Pacific Film, Seville European Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival 2021. Audience Award.

'Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano' appears to be on the same successful road, pushing through the concept of resilience.

'I believe that the accumulation of tragedies can give birth to something extraordinary'
- member from Mounia's crew -

After several months of absence, Al Jaw is back, and hopefully for good. The creativity of the Arab World has not stopped despite the bombardings and the bloodsheds, still boldly bustling and striving.

Words from director Maïa Tahiri

*All quotes are from Cyril Aris' documentary "Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano"

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Sard Visuals: AI takes photography to the next level

Omani artist Mujahid Jamal launched the artistic platform Sard Visuals in 2023, with the idea of mobilising the AI to push forward the Arab artistic journey . Far from being relentless to new technologies, he uses AI's potential to reshape the photographic landscape by establishing a collaboration between human creativity and machine intelligence.

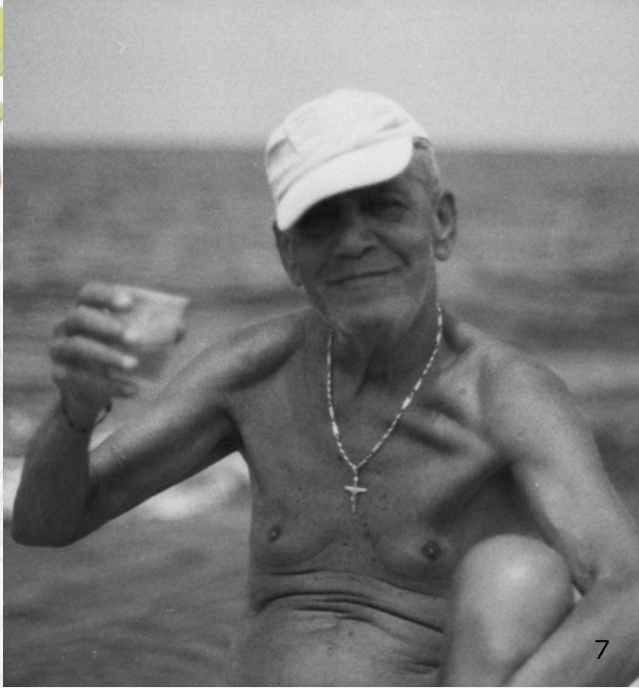
What does it mean concretely?

If Jamal continues to capture with his camera snapshots and key moments of contemporary Arab life, he integrates the AI in the following creative process by injecting in his photographs an intention which are usually visually translated through cultural symbols, unusual associations, surprising alliances which trigger the curiosity and the reflection of the audience, targeting stereotypes one could have on the Orient.



The collective TAWLA, founded by Abdo Shanan and Rehab Eldalil, focuses on creating books promoting photography from the SWANA region. In 2023, they launched "TarweedeH," a fanzine inspired by traditional Palestinian songs, used to help families communicate across occupier prisons, which were first developed during the British colonization and continued after the Nakba.

TAWLA & TARWEEDEH



"Tarweedeh" displays the work of Maen Hammad, Randa Shaath, Samar abu Elouf, Nidal Rohmi, Tanya Habjouqa, Samar Hazboun, Ameen Abo Kaseem, Lina Khalid & Nadia Bseiso.

TAWLA & TARWEEDEH

Photo 1 / Samar Hazboun is a Palestinian photographer known for her work that intersects human rights, identity, and the stories of marginalized communities. Her project Errant Doves focuses on the struggles of queer Palestinians during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing themes of isolation and resilience in a conservative society. Hazboun's broader body of work often explores trauma, gender, and the impact of conflict, with notable projects like Hush, which documents the lives of women in Palestine's first mental health hospital. Her photography bridges personal storytelling with activism for social change.

Photo 2 / Maen Hammad is a Palestinian-American photographer and filmmaker whose work captures stories of resistance, identity, and mobility within the context of Palestinian life under occupation. He is mostly known for his project "Haraka Baraka" (meaning "movement is a blessing") focusing on the subculture of skateboarding in the West Bank, showcasing it as a liberating practice in a physically and politically constrained environment. His images not only document the skateboarding culture but also depict the determination of young Palestinians to carve out a space for joy, expression, and mental resistance despite the weight of occupation.

Photo 3 / Lina Khalid is a Palestinian-Jordanian photographer and filmmaker born in Amman in 1991. Her photographic work explores the relationship between the body and its environment, focusing on how changes in surroundings affect bodily sensibilities. Using black-and-white analog film, Khalid expresses nostalgia for times she hasn't lived. She co-founded Darkroom Amman in 2018, a creative space where photographers can explore analog photography, specifically focusing on traditional film development techniques.

The 4th Edition of Les Rencontres de la Photographie de Marrakech, October 23 to 27

Organized by the Voix Plurielles association in partnership with Cultures Nomades Production, the annually meeting gathers 80 artists in the Cultural Capital of the Islamic World 2024, across iconic venues: Dar El Bacha, Complexe Culturel Mohammed VI des Habous, and the Place Jamaa El Fnaa.



© Amira Al Sharif

Unmissable artist

Amira Al-Sharif is a documentary photographer born and raised in Yemen. She uses her lens to highlight the often-overlooked stories of her homeland, with a particular emphasis on how Yemeni women navigate their personal lives amid societal constraints. Her visual narratives bring to light the rich, nuanced experiences of her subjects, creating a deep emotional connection with her audience. Through her photography, she also challenges stereotypical perceptions of Yemeni culture, offering a more diverse and humanized portrayal of life in the region.



Kamil Bouzoubaa-Grivel, won Mustaqbal Award with his series of drawings using halftoning, a technique mobilising oil-based inks to create dense, glossy blacks.

A good talk on 24.10 at Cadi Ayyad University:
The Convergence between
Photography and Artificial Intelligence.

What to read this month

"Tout le bruit de Guéliz"

Ruben Barrouk

It is the author's debut novel, inspired by his Sephardic roots in Marrakech. The story revolves around an elderly woman disturbed by a mysterious noise in the Guéliz district. Concerned, her daughter and grandson travel from Paris to investigate, only to uncover deeper stories about exile, traditions, and the search for identity. Written as a modern fable, the novel juxtaposes the noise of today's world with a symbolic sound that harks back to a time when communities lived in harmony.

"30 secondes à Gaza"

Mohammad Sabaaneh

A graphic novel in black and white, illustrating the tragic daily reality in the Gaza Strip. Sabaaneh, a Palestinian cartoonist, uses a striking visual style to depict the impacts of Israeli occupation. His work consists of 30-second scenes inspired by videos shared on social media, aiming to raise international awareness of the situation in Palestine.

"Barbès Blues"

Hajer Ben Boubaker

Let's go beyond the clichés of Paris' Goutte d'Or neighborhood. Through a blend of life stories, testimonies, and archives, the author delves into the complex history of this area, shaped by social and cultural struggles, especially by North African communities during the decades marked by waves of immigrant laborers.



Abdellatif Laâbi
 Mohammed VI Museum
 © Maïa Tahiri

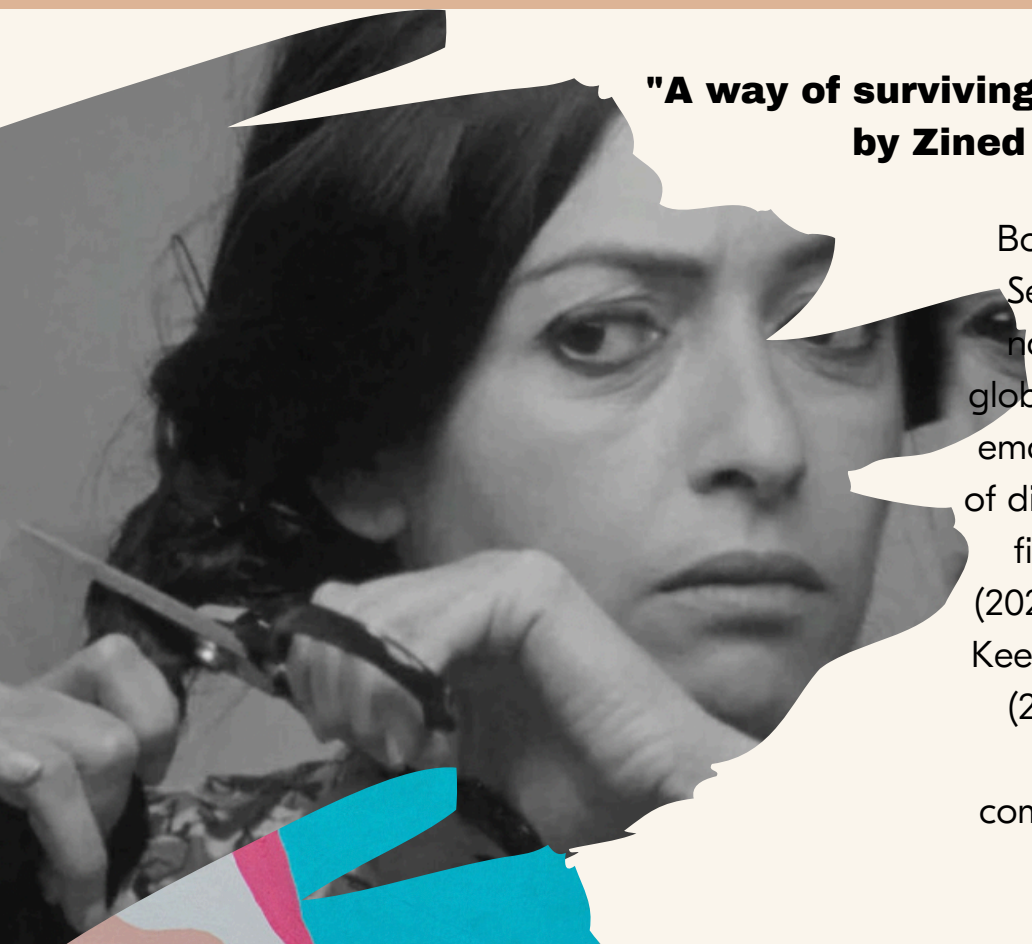
Je me dis
 qu'il faut être prévoyant
 Je ferai donc à temps
 mon humble valise
 Un ou deux livres
 mon numéro matricule
 le foulard jaune
 de la prophétesse de mes
 une fiole
 des senteurs de Fès
 un zeste d'orange amère
 un caillou
 ramassé à Jérusalem
 et ce que l'aimée
 à mon insu
 y aura glissé

"Un soir d'Alexandrie"

The latest novel by Alaa El Aswany, is set in late 1950s Alexandria, a city then known for its cosmopolitanism and cultural diversity. The story follows a group of friends who regularly meet at the Artinos restaurant bar on the corniche to discuss life and world affairs. These characters, united by their love for the city, become divided in the face of the political upheavals caused by Gamal Abdel Nasser's dictatorship, which gradually transforms Egypt's social and economic landscape.

"Bread on Uncle Milad's Table"

The debut novel by Libyan writer Mohammed Alnaas, is set in the intimate setting of Uncle Milad's bakery, which becomes a space for encounters and confessions. Through exchanges with various characters, Milad's internal contradictions gradually come to light. Alnaas builds a world where societal expectations and personal aspirations are subtly depicted through the recurring metaphor of Libyan bread, which runs throughout the novel. The novel sheds light on the complexity of human relationships and offers insight into patriarchal societies, an issue that resonates in both the East and the West.



**"A way of surviving, a way of life..."
by Zined Sedira**

Born in 1963 to Algerian parents, Sedira's work explores personal narratives to illuminate broader global anxieties surrounding cultural emancipation and the complexities of diaspora. Featuring four impactful films – *Dreams Have No Titles* (2022), *mise-en-scène* (2019), *Image Keepers* (2010), and *Mother Tongue* (2002) – the exhibition offers a poignant narrative on the complexities of migration, memory, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.

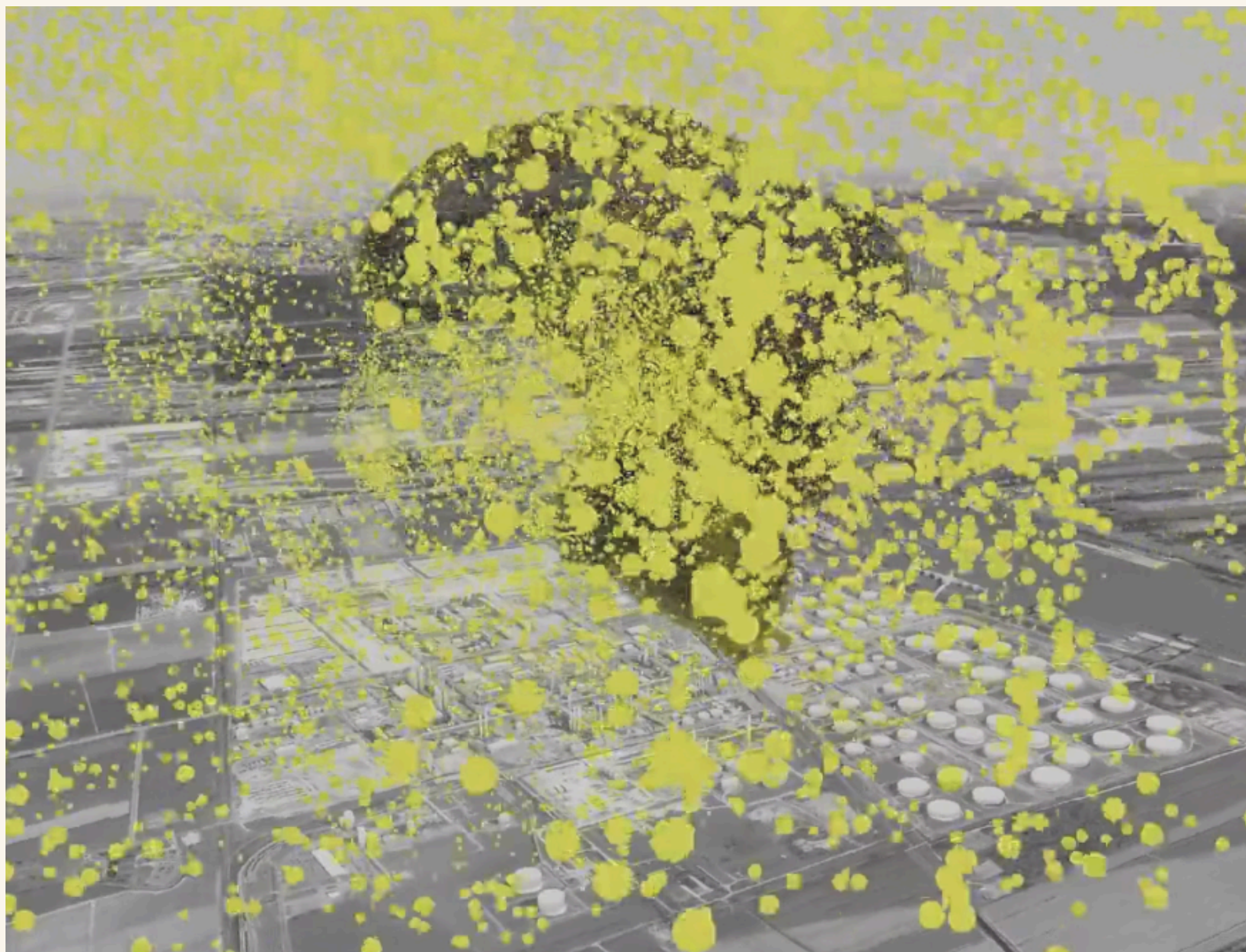
**"There are no mistakes.
Even the unfinished is whole;
even a mistake becomes art."**

Emirati artist Noor Al Suwaidi's exhibition in Aicon Contemporary, New York, titled 'Divine Chaos' is on view till Nov 2. It delves into the interplay between the tangible and intangible. Using colour and collage, she invites viewers into a world where reality and dreams seamlessly intertwine.

**"Returning, the new exhibition at the
Mucem in Marseille**

The event focuses on the issue of migration in the Mediterranean from the perspective of 'returning,' caught between uprooting and re-rooting, practical realities and imaginaries, national governance and individual aspirations. It involved five research teams from France, Italy, North Macedonia, Greece, Galilee, and the West Bank.



Doha: 'Everything is red and grey': forensic architecture

An other exploit of the Mathaf which has successfully put together an event showcasing a series of recent investigations produced by Forensic Architecture in collaboration with Palestinian civil society groups regarding the current Israeli genocidal military campaign in Gaza. Exhibited publicly for the first time, these projects foreground the voices and testimonies of 1948 survivors in the process of reconstructing lost lifeworlds, and testify to the Palestinian experience of an ongoing, and escalating, Nakba.

Forensic Architecture is a research agency based at Goldsmiths, University of London. It develops, employs, and disseminates new techniques and concepts for investigating state and corporate violence with a team of architects, software developers, filmmakers, investigative journalists, scientists, and lawyers.



Doha, Qatar
From Nov 2 to Feb 22

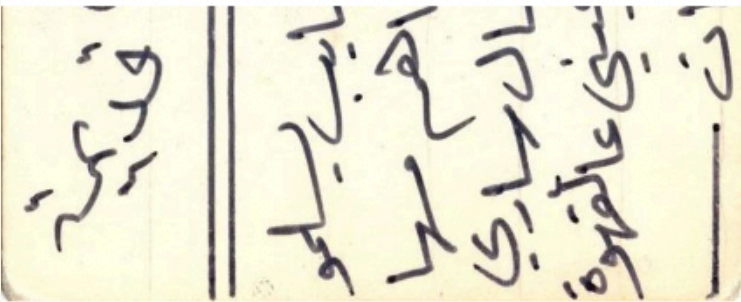


<https://mathaf.org.qa/en/calendar/everything-is-red-and-grey/>

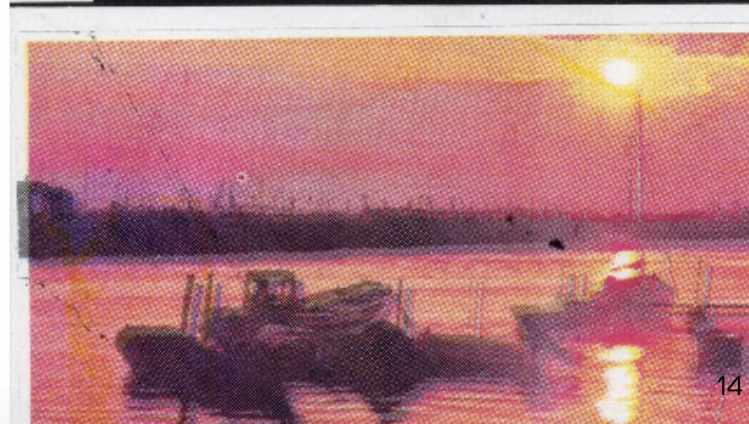
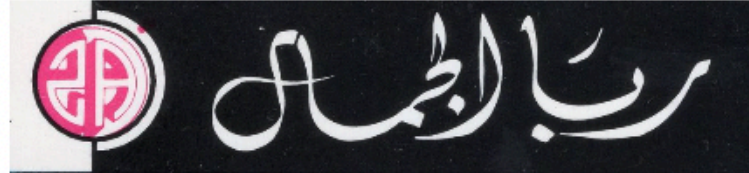
SYRIAN CASSETTE ARCHIVES



أرشيف الشرائط السورية



“When you play these wedding tracks for a crowd in London, people jump off the roof, the music has that much energy. It’s so raw and so real and you feel that it’s thousands of years of accumulation of festivities being unleashed on people. I see the importance of sharing this onwards and onwards and onwards.” - Mark Gergis



Syrian Cassettes Archives

Launched in 2020 by musicians and producers Yamed Mekdad and Mark Gergis, Syrian Cassette Archives is a project dedicated to preserving, documenting, and promoting Syria's musical heritage.

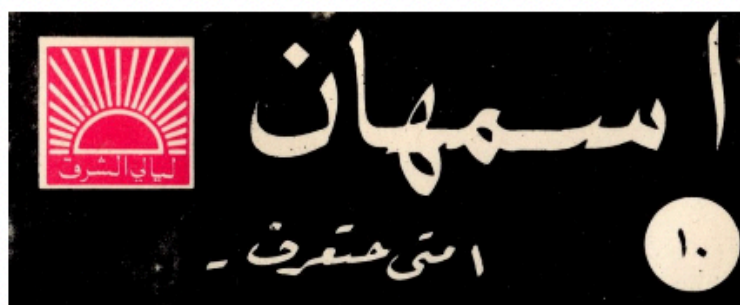
The initiative continues its work with the rediscovery of zajal, a traditional musical genre from the southern Syrian mountains, typically performed at weddings. Zajal, where two performers sing about love, faces the risk of being forgotten or erased from Syria's cultural legacy. In recent months, Syrian Cassette Archives uncovered exclusive zajal recordings on cassettes dating from the 1970s to the 2000s.

Gergis began collecting cassettes from flea markets and music stores during his travels in Syria in the 1990s and 2000s. Since the project's inception, their collection has grown from 600 to 2,000 tapes. These cassettes help outline a critical era in Arab music history.

The project has also benefited from grants, including from the British Council, allowing for a more permanent role in archiving.

Mekdad and Gergis collaborate with researchers to track down and interview musicians recorded on the cassettes and have held technical workshops in Amman.

Importantly, they have established new digitization studios in Aleppo and Damascus, both in professional studios and private homes, to further preserve these musical treasures.





Donia Ismaïl, journalist and founder of the Arabengers project, has launched a French-language podcast on Slate which tackles everyday racism. It invites various cultural figures, such as Nadège Beausson-Diagne and Anas Daif, to engage in discussions about the normalization of this socially-constructed phenomenon.

"On home and belonging, and everything in between." This Sowt podcast, in Arabic, questions identity in the Arab world. Each episode focuses on a story. A favorite one is about Mustafa, a Druze Palestinian born with Israeli nationality. When it comes time for military service in the Israeli army, Mustafa finds himself at the crossroads of different allegiances, and beliefs.



"Je vous parle de Beyrouth" by L'Orient-le-Jour reports live on the Israeli attacks currently being carried out on Lebanon. The multilingual podcast gives a platform to the victims of the ongoing massacre happening in full view of the world. By humanizing the victims, the show challenges the Western narrative of a "war" causing "collateral damage" in Lebanon, restoring the voice, existence, and humanity of the Lebanese people.



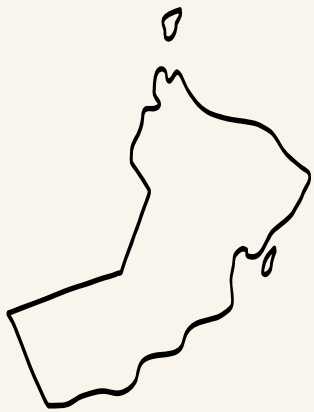


Jaou Tunis runs until Nov 9 in Tunis. It features 9 exhibitions, using art as a tool of resistance against cultural erasure. Notable participating artists include Gabrielle Goliath and Taous Dahmani, who explore patriarchal violence and popular uprisings within the SWANA region.

This edition has garnered international attention, with the involvement of EU Palestinian French parliamentarian Hassan and her interactive installation "Fragments of a refuge", which delves into the resilience of oppressed people, with the Palestinian cause at heart.



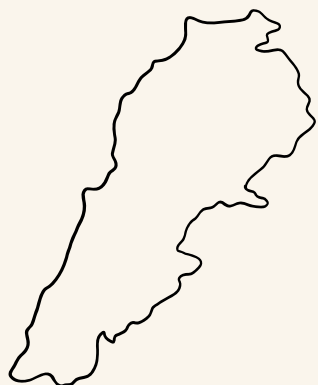
The 43rd edition of the Sharjah International Book Fair will take place from Nov 6 to 17 at the Expo Centre Sharjah, under the theme of literary and cultural diversity. As one of the largest book fairs in the Arab world, it will welcome notable guests such as Egyptian thriller novelist Ahmed Mourad, Lebanese poet Chawki Bazih, Moroccan author Youssef Fadel, as well as Syrian novelist Khaled Khalifa. Publishers from Palestine, Lebanon, and Sudan are exempted from registration fees, in response to the challenges posed by the conflicts in Gaza and Sudan.



The 1st edition of the Dhofar International Theatre Festival takes place from Octo 2 to Oct 9 in the Sultanate of Oman. This event brings together 35 theatrical troupes from 50 countries, showcasing a variety of performances in several categories. It includes grand theatre, children's theatre, monodrama, community theatre, and outdoor performances.



At the closing ceremony of the Oran Arab Film Festival, the Saudi film "Mandoob" by Ali Khaltami claimed the top prize. The Silver and Bronze awards went to Yemeni director Amr Gamal for "The Burdened" and Iraqi filmmaker Sahim Oran Kalifa for "Baghdad Messi". In the acting categories, Mouna Hawa was recognized as Best Actress for "Inchallah a boy" by Amjad Al Rasheed, while Algerian actor Samir El Hakim received the Best Actor award for "Terre de vengeance", by Anis Djaad.



The Lebanese Film Festival returns in Paris, from Oct 13 to 20. Sarah Hajjar, the president of the event, declares: "Rather than letting war silence us, we continue to mobilize in support of the Lebanese people and Lebanese creativity." This edition will showcase 40 films, including 25 short films and several premieres. Danielle Arbid is the patron of this year's edition, which has other collaborative events - Cyril Aris' documentary "Dancing on the Edge of a Volcano" and theater play "Parlons, il est temps" by Philippe Aractingi.

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Among our Readers



اللوفر أبوظبي
LOUVRE ABU DHABI



MUCEM