On

ECHOES of INVISIBLE HEARTS

Narratives of Yemeni Displacement

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Narratives of Yemeni Displacement

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CURATED BY LILA NAZEMIAN

Habeeb Mohammed Abu–Futtaim

Eman Al–Awami

Arif Al Nomay

Yasmine Diaz

Ibi Ibrahim

Saba Jallas

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Diwan Al–Fan	8
Friedrich–Ebert–Stiftung (FES)	9
On Echoes of Invisible Hearts	10
Habeeb Mohammed Abu–Futtaim	16
Eman Al–Awami	22
Arif Al Nomay	28
Yasmine Diaz	34
Ibi Ibrahim	42
Saba Jallas	46
Artist Biographies	52

DIWAN AL–FAN

Diwan Al Fan is dedicated to supporting visual art, music and film from Yemen through local and international projects – including exhibitions, art residencies and music productions. Providing a global perspective on Yemeni art and culture, Diwan Al Fan encourages the development of projects that expand the discourse around contemporary art, music and film from Yemen. Diwan Al Fan was established in November 2017 by Ibi Ibrahim.

Diwan Al Fan would like to thank the Friedrich–Ebert–Foundation for their generous support in making this exhibition project a reality. The foundation has previously contributed to funding Diwan Al Fan artists–in–residence program in Berlin in November 2017 and facilitated the travel for the Yemeni artists from Yemen to Germany during challenging conditions.

Diwan Al Fan is the arts initiative of the newly established Sana'a based Romooz Foundation for the Arts and Cultural Development.

ديوان الفن
DIWAN ALFAN

FRIEDRICH–EBERT–STIFTUNG

The Friedrich–Ebert–Stiftung (FES) is the oldest political foundation in Germany. Its rich tradition in social democracy dates back to its foundation in 1925 and owes its mission to the political endowment of its namesake: Friedrich Ebert, the first democratically–elected German President.

Today, it remains loyal to Ebert's legacy and campaigns the core ideas and values of social democracy: freedom, justice and solidarity. In its work worldwide, FES maintains a close connection to social democracy and free trade unions. FES promotes the advancement of social democracy through:

- Political and educational work to strengthen civil society and the support of young talent
- Development of strategies on the core issues of just and sustainable economic, social and educational policies, fostering a public discourse on these issues
- International cooperation facilitated by a network of offices in more than 100 countries
- Maintaining the collective memory of social democracy with archives, libraries and more

FES IN YEMEN

In 1997 FES began to conduct activities in Yemen. The FES Yemen office was established only two years later, in the old city of Sana'a.

Today, the main working areas of FES Yemen include promoting gender and youth participation for an increased social and political participation, as well as democratisation processes. The project further aims at fostering socio–economic challenges by offering a platform for the development of new approaches to socially–just economic policies. Through trainings in the field of peace building and conflict transformation, FES Yemen supports civil–society initiatives in dealing with conflicts on a local level and maintaining social cohesion.

FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG

ON ECHOES OF INVISIBLE HEARTS

As the war in Yemen reached its three–year anniversary this March, there seems to be no end in sight to the violence taking place, yet coverage and understanding of this conflict and its severe social, humanitarian, and infrastructural consequences remains minimal. In a country seemingly perpetually plagued by instability, the most recent conflict began in 2015 and involves a range of local and international players. While U.S.–backed Saudi Arabia's role in instigating the war and Iran's support for their Houthis rivals is no secret, rarely does the media bring attention to the fact that the U.S., Canada and Europe annually sell arms and military equipment to the Saudis and their allies, which have in recent years, primarily been used in the war against Yemen and its innocent civilians. Beyond falling short on complexifying reports to include the ethically dubious role of Western powers in regional conflicts, media outlets especially fail to discuss the emotional toll this war has taken on everyday Yemenis, both inside and outside the country.

There is no doubt that the foundations of Yemen's society have been pushed to the brink of implosion. As of 2018, there are over 10,000 civilian deaths, over 3 million displaced and uprooted individuals, and over 17 million people who rely on humanitarian assistance. In addition to this, Yemen is facing the worst cholera outbreak in modern history and is on the verge of famine. Despite these dire conditions, Yemen is rarely mentioned in the Western media. Publicizing the urgency of Yemen's deteriorating state has been the focus of numerous local and international humanitarian organizations. While this needs to be more prevalent in daily mainstream news, addressing the crisis solely through the media may not be enough to engage and inform audiences around the world. Approaching Yemen and the experiences of its people through the realm of arts and culture, can also help bring the discussion into the everyday lives of Western citizens, in addition to introducing more critical and nuanced understandings of their governments' roles in worldwide hostilities. Once the ramifications of these conflicts take on a personal meaning and responsibility for international citizens, government representatives and administrations will hopefully be pressured to take more ethical and just steps with regards to the conflict in Yemen and beyond. One such example is the case of the German government who, in January 2018, announced that it would no longer sells arms to countries involved in the Yemen war. While this resolution raises several questions regarding past sales, among other caveats, it is nevertheless an exemplary step in the right direction for other governments to follow.

On Echoes of Invisible Hearts is an effort to engage with more personal accounts of the current conflict through the lens of six artists in Yemen and the diaspora. By diversifying the dominant narratives about Yemen and its peoples, the exhibition draws attention to the discrepancy existing between public and private knowledge of events unfolding in Yemen daily and the involvement of various geo–political forces. The featured works explore various themes connected to loss and estrangement due to instability over the past decade, and especially since the start of the latest war. The exhibition is furthermore a platform to put forth the artists' views regarding various personal and collective experiences, as Yemenis, but more importantly as displaced individuals. Being a displayed person does not only refer to its literal meaning, but also points to emotional and spiritual uprootedness. With the current immigrant and refugee crises that have dominated Western media and current–day political discourses, it is imperative to connect these issues to the various wars being fought in the Middle East, among other regions.

Directly addressing the shortcomings of mainstream American media in failing to give adequate attention to the current crisis in Yemen, Yasmine Diaz creates collages from newspaper clippings, headings and images from leading outlets such as the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Los Angeles Times. Having lived the majority of her life in the United States, Diaz's diasporic perspective is particularly prominent during the Trump presidency and the active Muslim Ban which includes Yemen within its banned countries. Countless Yemeni–Americans have been cut off from their loved ones while simultaneously becoming vilified in the country they call home. In her neon piece, Hanna Bint Ghamar, Diaz takes on a personal subject matter with larger social repercussions which affect many mothers from the Arab world. It is common for mothers to be referred to as "mother of (name of eldest son)" as opposed to their first names. Here, Diaz reverses the common patronymic tradition, changing it instead to a matronymic statement reading: "Hanna daughter of Ghamar." Stating a mother's first name aloud could be deemed as shameful, and many children abstain from mentioning their mother's name in public. Beyond this specific issue, this piece highlights the subject of familial honor which often rests on women's shoulders. Across many countries, women are seen as representing the foundations of cultural identity and customs; furthermore, the home and domestic spaces, which traditionally reflect women's realms, have been seen as havens of such societal codes. Because of this, in times of political and social instability, women have often come under harsher patriarchal scrutiny, with little prospects of progressive change.

Also weighing in from the diaspora, Habeeb Mohammad Abu–Futtaim's explorations question the fragility of national identities throughout the Middle East. In his video Undoing the Displacement of My Belief, the artist's hands are seen attempting to separate the hardened white center of a large green brick while a tumultuous sounding Muslim sermon can be heard in the background. Through his work, Abu–Futtaim reflects upon a still prominent yet age–old struggle within members of the Islamic faith; gauging the relationship between religion and politics.

[1] "Yemen." Mercy Corps, 2017, www.mercycorps.org/countries/yemen.

[2] "Germany Halts Weapons Exports to Parties in Yemen Conflict | DW | 19.01.2018." DW.COM, 18 Jan. 2018, www.dw.com/en/germany–halts–weapons–exports–to–parties–in–yemen–conflict/a–42229376.

In Yemen (as well as across the region), identity exists on the spectrum between nation and religion, and local communities who had previously lived side by side for generations are being divided across sectarian lines further exacerbated by foreign interventions. Such political realities however do not exist within a vacuum, but are instead linked to the failures and destabilizing nature of our globalized societies which include interventions by foreign governments in local affairs and conflicts, and the influx of Western weapons into the hands of both regional governments and insurgent groups.

Much of Abu–Futtaim's work deals with the colors and symbols present in flags of the region. In Salt Bricks, various bricks of salt, in the colors and geometric shapes associated with those found in regional flags, are seen broken apart and crumbling–a direct reference to the current state of affairs and the imploding sense of national identity that many in the Middle East feel. In Water Borders, a video of similarly colored and shaped salt bricks dissolving in water is projected down into a water– filled plexi box. While the bricks of salt are meant to symbolize the strength and resilience of nations, they are instead seen disintegrating into the liquid. By using salt and water as his mediums, Abu–Futtaim reflects upon multiple layers of association, ranging from the saline waters that surround the Middle Eastern landmass and the maritime routes that countless refugees use to flee the ongoing violence, in addition to its unique mummifying properties which seem to point to the outdated and collapsing political infrastructures in Yemen and the region as a whole due to war, corruption and globalization.

Ibi Ibrahim's work, Departure, directly address the feelings of loss and longing felt by countless Yemenis unable to return to their homeland since the start of the war. In this video piece, footage of bird migration is coupled with animations inspired by the urban landscape of Sana'a, and voices of currently displaced Yemeni women can be heard in the background discussion joyful memories of when they lived in Yemen. While conceiving this artwork, the artist announced an open call to Yemenis around the world asking for their most beloved personal photographs of Yemen before the war. The result is the accompanying installation that surrounds the video's projection, consisting of these gathered photographs. While visiting Yemen is virtually impossible for foreigners, Yemeni citizens also face extreme conditions in order to visit home or travel abroad. With the situation on the ground constantly changing, currently the airport in Aden, Yemen's temporary capital, is one of the only ways for Yemenis to board international flights. The arduous voyage on land to arrive at Aden passes through multiple territories controlled by different factions throughout the country, such as the Houthis and the coalition forces, but also ISIS loyalists and Al Qaeda affiliated groups operating in the current chaos. Few stop to wonder what regular Yemeni citizens living between the territories in conflict must endure to complete such ordinary activities that we in the West take for granted.

Using images found from the Internet of bombings from some of the harshest territorial clashes, Saba Jallas superimposes her own cartoon drawings within the contours of smoke from fallen bombs. Inspired by a group of Palestinian artists who similarly used pictures of bombings in Palestine to spread messages of resistance, Jallas' interventions are simple yet poetic, recalling the gentle naiveté and earnestness of children. Through varying depictions including women draped in the Yemeni flag, mothers sheltering young children in their arms, or figures of traditional Yemenis; the works obfuscate the infrastructural and psychological devastation in each photograph to reveal a dreamlike alternate of hope and security. Included for the first time in an arts exhibition, the works will be displayed on a screen in a rotating loop which will highlight the both the original and manipulated images.

While there are remote areas in eastern Yemen that are less affected by the war, those who live along the frontlines have seen their lives uprooted, many becoming Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Currently there are over two million IDPs in Yemen, most of which are in need of direct humanitarian assistance. Multiple foreign and local NGOs help these communities, and ensure that they are given basic protections and necessities. Photojournalist Eman Al–Awami has been photographing those most affected by the war for years. Often commissioned by various foreign humanitarian organizations, she is asked to produce photographs that will help raise funds for those organizations. While working for various groups, she began to doubt the ways in which she was commissioned to portray IDPs and other Yemeni citizens. As a reflective response to her own work, she created the photographic installation Between the Cracks. This project involves ethical questions with regards to the ways that Yemenis are portrayed and the general image of Yemen that is reinforced by some humanitarian groups.

Al–Awami's photographs consist of devastated landscapes, dilapidated hospitals with unconscious patients, destitute and overcrowded communities, impoverished refugee camps and bombed out buildings. Such distressing images have proven successful in raising funds from empathetic and horror–stricken Western donors. However, such financial gains come at the expense of Yemeni people's dignity; they are rarely consulted regarding how they are photographed or how they wish to be seen by the world. The installation consists of nearly 50 individual images, from throughout Yemen and since 2014 to the present, without any contextualizing specifications so as to further highlight the detachment and anonymity that such images possess in actual fundraising initiatives. As an alternative to these methods of representation, Al–Awami's simultaneously created Meanwhile in Yemen, a large–scale portraiture series of Yemeni entrepreneurs, community activists, and local success stories. Included in this exhibition are two portraits, Boutheina and Mohammad, which are exhibited with text describing each individual's journey.

As a university student in her final year, Boutheina was forced to halt her studies in Taiz once the war broke out. With the situation in her city and neighborhood beginning to

deteriorate, she joined a local community service group who took on the responsibility of cleaning the streets, disposing of trash, and keeping reports of incidents around their neighborhoods. She decided to move to Sana'a in order to flee the fighting taking place and was able to secure a job working with an NGO through the community service contacts that she made while in Taiz. She is a strong advocate for the pivotal role of NGOs in Yemen, especially with regards to providing basic life–saving necessities such as food, shelter and medicine. However her experience is a testament to the importance of organizing communities to participate in their own self–sustainability so as to find a sense of purpose throughout such destabilizing periods.

Al–Awami's second portrait is of Mohammad, a pharmacist turned community organizer from Hudaydah who suffered a tragic accident in 2007 which left him paralyzed. Following years of depression, Mohammad found solace in writing which he shared online through various social media platforms. He garnered a following of young literary students and writers, and soon began organizing local poetry and literature readings, which continued to develop into larger cultural events. With the advent of the war, Mohammad became an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) and was forced to relocate to Sana'a. As conditions for the growing numbers of IDPs from his region began to deteriorate and with not enough support from NGOs and the local government, Mohammad, along with others from the community, initiated events that commissioned IDPs to showcase the arts, music, cuisine and culture of their Tihama coastal region. These efforts created much needed dialogue between locals from Sana'a and the IDPs and furthermore gave a chance to those in need to work for an income. Mohammad's dedication to bettering the lives of those in need is an example to his community, and his inspiring story attests to the power of resilience in the face of countless hardships.

Addressing less specific stories and crises, Arif Al Nomay's Corrupted Files series is heavily symbolic in its poetic undertones concerning Yemen's current state as a whole. Consisting of a happenstance technical glitch, hundreds of photos taken at the 2014 Sana'a Summer Festival appear corrupted when opened on a computer. The new images have become compilations of multiple photographs, with some sections and colors left intact, while others are pixelated and indistinguishable. Individuals, objects and landscapes are visible despite the visual chaos of this joyous and lighthearted celebration. His works read as nostalgic memories, ironically depicting a festival celebrating the arts and culture of Yemen in a time when much the relics and architectural buildings of Old Sana'a have been severely damaged and continue to be under constant threat. Furthermore, Al Nomay has been living and working in Saudi Arabia for over a decade. Since the start of the war, it has been increasingly difficult for him to visit his wife and children who remain in his hometown of Ibb. His personal dilemma involving a split life between Saudi Arabia and Yemen is not uncommon, as countless Saudis have family in Yemen and vice versa.
The ongoing war is a devastating societal calamity separating families and communities, and affecting people's lives in all aspects imaginable.

The longer this conflict continues, the more individuals will be displaced, leading to further refugees and greater social and economic pressures upon asylum countries. No single actor can be fully blamed, but beyond the direct regional and local groups fighting for control, it is impossible to separate the devastation from the global arms industry which wields its power across the entire world. There is little transparency about the relationship between arms sales by Western governments and companies and other nations or groups around the world. Demanding accountability from local governments in the West is a necessary step towards engaging in an ethical discussion of weapons trade. Furthermore, international organizations, such as the United Nations, have limited influence in affecting genuine change. An example of the problematic aspects of certain proposed solutions can be seen in a recent fundraising conference for Yemen that took place in April 2018 at the U.N. headquarters in Geneva. While over 2 billion dollars in pledges were successfully secured, the majority of this funding derives from the very actors that are in the process of militarily attacking and destroying Yemen's existing infrastructures.[3] The top donors to Yemen are ironically Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, followed by their allies and top arms dealers, the United States and the United Kingdom. The compromised nature of these relationships attests to the futility of such humanitarian efforts.

There is an absolute disconnect between the everyday realities of people's lives in Yemen and the political powers that are the cause of its destabilization. Beyond the already minimal reports on the ravages that the war is causing, few personal accounts or exposés about the lives of Yemeni citizens are shared. On Echoes of Invisible Hearts is an attempt to reframe the larger political discourse within a local and personal context, through the works of the participating artists who explores themes of identity, memory, representation and displacement. By diversifying the dominant narratives about Yemen and its peoples, the exhibition draws attention to the discrepancies that exist between public and private knowledge these events. It is also an attempt to challenge viewers to reflect on their understanding of the conflict and to question the roles of various geo–political forces and the responsibilities of Western governments within the larger refugee crisis. The perspectives included here are but a drop in the ocean of reverberations caused by the current trauma and unrest.

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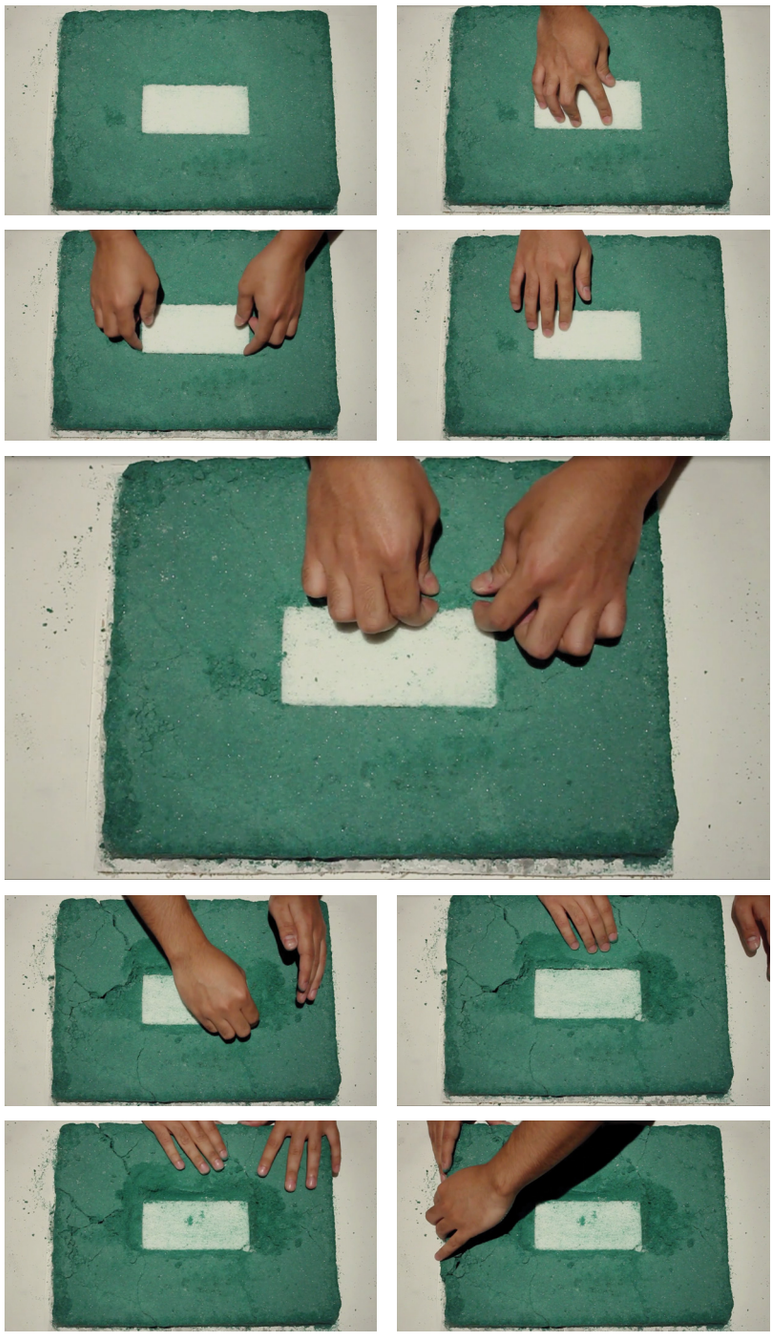
By Lila Nazemian

[3] "Donors Pledge $2 Billion to Scale Up Aid Delivery in Yemen [EN/AR]." ReliefWeb, 3 Apr. 2018, reliefweb.int/report/yemen/donors–pledge–2–billion–scale–aid–delivery–yemen–enar.

HABEEB MOHAMMED ABU–FUTTAIM

Central to Habeeb Mohammed Abu–Futtaim's practice is the reconsideration of constructed notions of identity and nation in a post–colonial Middle East. Flags and the symbols that constitute them have been the subject of various works such as Salt Bricks and Water Borders. In Salt Bricks, various bricks of salt, in the colors and geometric shapes associated with those found in regional flags, are seen broken apart and crumbling —a direct reference to the current state of affairs and the imploding sense of national identity that many in the Middle East feel. In Water Borders, a video of similarly colored and shaped salt bricks dissolving in water is projected down into a water–filled plexi box. While the bricks of salt are meant to symbolize the strength and resilience of nations, they are instead seen disintegrating into the liquid. By using salt and water as his mediums, Abu–Futtaim reflects upon multiple layers of association, ranging from the saline waters that surround the Middle Eastern landmass and the maritime routes that countless refugees use to flee the ongoing violence, in addition to its unique mummifying properties which seem to point to the outdated and collapsing political infractures in Yemen and the region as a whole due to war, corruption and globalization.

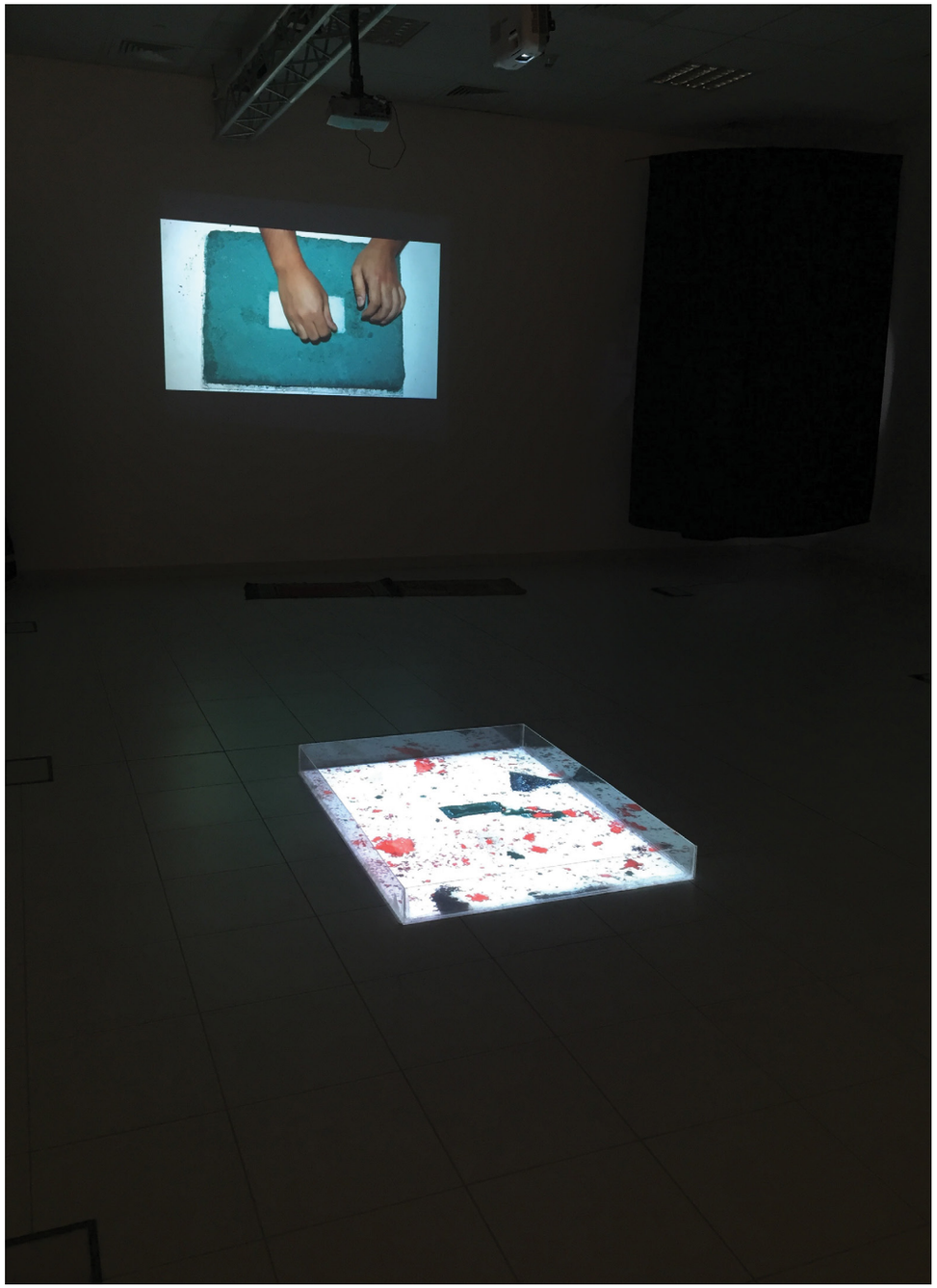
Following Page
Salt Bricks, 2016
Salt, Color Pigment
8 x 8 in / 20.32 x 20.32 cm (approximate)



In Habeeb Mohammed Abu–Futtaim's video *Undoing the Displacement of My Belief*, the artist's hands are seen attempting to separate the hardened white center of a large green brick while a tumultuous sounding Muslim sermon can be heard in the background. He again not only appropriates the shape and color of a regional flag, but he also references the particular shade of green that is associated with Islam. Through his work, Abu–Futtaim reflects upon a still prominent yet age–old struggle within members of the Islamic faith; gauging the relationship between religion and politics. In an era where religious fervor has driven some political groups to extremes for which they commit acts of terror in the name of religion, in addition to some nations violently imposing their religious doctrine on the entirety of believers, here, the artist performs the removal of the white, representing the political, from the green, the spiritual. Such political realities however do not exist within a vacuum, but are instead linked to the failures and destabilizing nature of our globalized societies which include interventions by foreign governments in local affairs and conflicts, and the influx of Western weapons into the hands of both regional governments and insurgent groups.

Previous Spread
Undoing the Displacement of My Belief, 2016
Video
6 min 10 secs

Following Page
Water Borders, 2016
Video projection on water
45 mins



EMAN AL–AWAMI

Eman Al–Awami's Between the Cracks in a small–scale photographic installation in which the artist re–examines her own photojournalistic work that had been commissioned by various humanitarian agencies to raise funds for their projects in Yemen. This piece involves ethical questions with regards to the ways that Yemenis are portrayed and the general image of Yemen that is reinforced by these humanitarian groups. Al–Awami's photographs consist of devastated landscapes, dilapidated hospitals with unconscious patients, destitute and overcrowded communities, impoverished refugee camps and bombed out buildings. Such distressing images have proven successful in raising funds from empathetic and horror–stricken Western donors. However, such financial gains come at the expense of Yemeni people's dignity; they are rarely consulted regarding how they are photographed or how they wish to be seen by the world. The installation consists of nearly 50 individual images, from throughout Yemen since xxxx year to the present, without any contextualizing specifications so as to further highlight the detachment and anonymity such images possess throughout actual fundraising initiatives.

Meanwhile in Yemen consists of a large–scale portairture series.

Following Page & Spread
Between the Cracks, 2018
Photographic Installation comprised of 50 digitally printed photographs
6 x 4 in / 15.24 x 10.16 cm (each)

Butheina (Meanwhile in Yemen series), 2018
Digital photograph
20 x 16 in / 50.8 x 40.64 cm

Mohammed (Meanwhile in Yemen series), 2018
Digital photograph
20 x 16 in / 50.8 x 40.64 cm

ARIF AL NOMAY

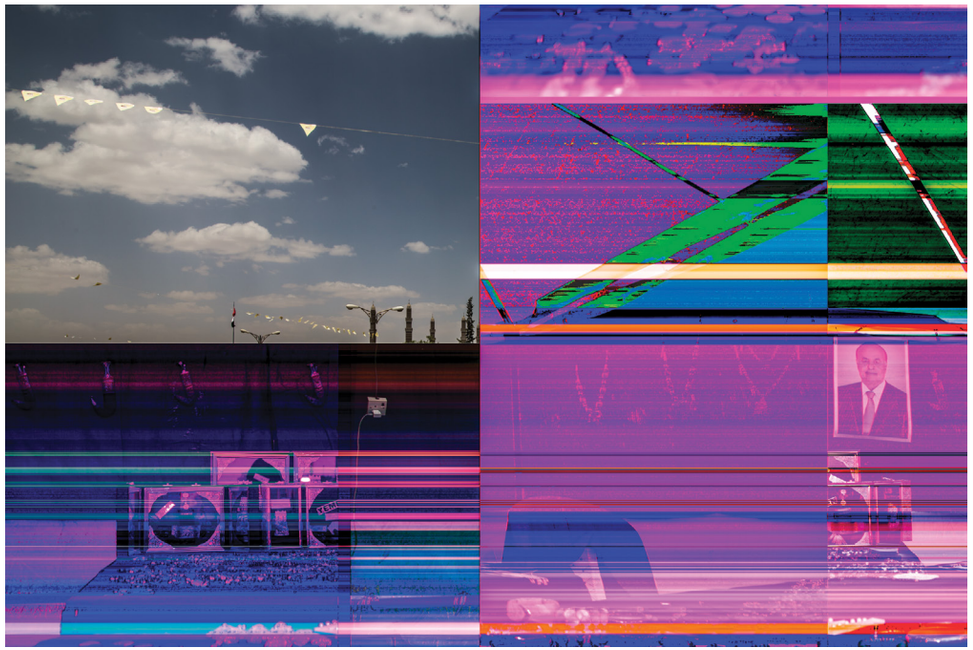
Arif Al Nomay's *Corrupted Files* series is heavily symbolic in its poetic undertones concerning Yemen's current state. Consisting of a happenstance technical glitch, hundreds of photos taken at the 2014 Sana'a Summer Festival appear corrupted when opened on a computer. The new images have become compilations of multiple photographs, with some sections and colors left intact, while others are pixelated and indistinguishable. The works are displayed for the first time as light boxes, which will heighten the contrast between the disjointed elements in each piece. Individuals, objects and landscapes are visible despite the visual chaos of this joyous and lighthearted celebration.

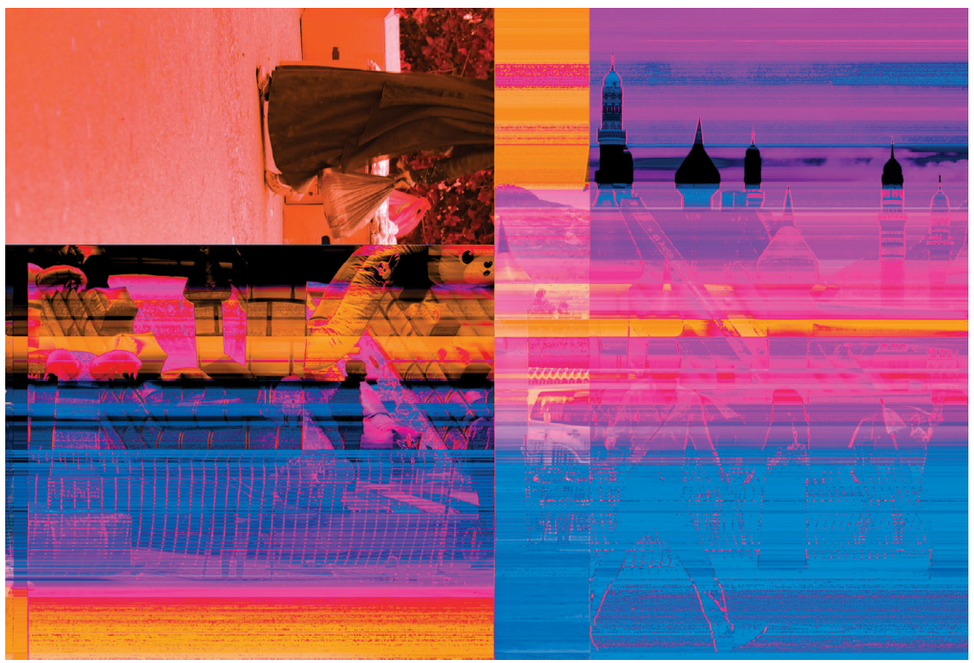
File 7987 is the fragmented combination of at least two photographs. One image depicts white tents from the festival, whereas another features specific stands where various products were sold. A backdrop of Sana'a's blue skies remains intact in the top left corner of the image, where the tips of Al Saleh Mosque's minarets, street lamps and a flagpole flying the Yemeni flag can also be distinguished. The remainder of the image is a pixelated and discolored amalgamation of others; a detail of a table where jambiya (traditional Yemeni dagger) box gifts and traditional jewelry are sold, amidst an indecipherable milieu hangs a clear photograph of the currently ousted President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, and finally, there is a completely digitized and indistinguishable segment in the top right.

File 7478 consists of at least three photographs, two of which the artist has identified. In the first image, three girls walk towards the festival bearing various goods to sell; the second image features a children's blow up castle. In the top left corner, the lower half of one girl's abaya and the bags she is holding is clear despite the discrepancy in color. Such hyper–saturated discolorations further obscure the untouched juxtaposition of the blow up castle's towers and the minarets of Al Saleh mosque. The ghostly outline of a man walking appears in the lower right corner of the image and gives evidence of a third unidentified photograph that has been added to the mix.

Following Page
File 7987 (Corrupted Files Series), 2014–2018
Lightbox
Size 7978: 23.6 x 35.4 in / 60 x 90 cm

Following Spread
File 7478 (Corrupted Files Series), 2014–2018
Lightbox
Size 7478: 23.6 x 40.9 in / 60 x 104 cm





YASMINE DIAZ

هنّاء بنت قَمّر / *Hanna bint (daughter of) Ghamar* is a matronymic reversal to the standard patronymic. Growing up, Diaz rarely heard people say her mother's name. In many cases, it would be deemed shameful to state a woman's first name out loud. Instead, she was referred to as 'wife of (insert husband's name)' or 'mother of (name of eldest son).' Diaz was often referred to as the daughter of her father.

Although this piece is personally specific to Diaz, it also speaks to the burden of honor and shame placed disproportionately upon Yemeni women and girls from a very young age. The responsibility of upholding family honor finds its way into many aspects of their lives. Girls from rural communities are often married off at a young age as a necessary means to preserve her honor or to relieve the family of economic burden. Child marriage and forced marriage were already issues in Yemen prior to the war and occur now more frequently as a result of the conflict. It has been called 'the forgotten war' and issues that predominantly affect women and girls are even further overlooked. The taboo of shame and honor, specifically when associated with a woman's sexuality, are rarely spoken of out loud, not unlike a woman's name.

Following Page & Spread
هنّاء بنت قَمّر / *Hanna bint (daughter of) Ghamar*, 2018
Pink Neon Tubes
9 x 36 in / 22.86 x 91.44 cm

هَنَاء بِنت قَمَّر

A Yemeni–American, Yasmine Diaz has lived most her life in the United States, a country that bears undeniable responsibility in the escalating crisis in Yemen and throughout the Middle East. Sourcing content from top U.S. news outlets, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, and the Los Angeles Times, Diaz focuses on the disproportionate distribution of information about one the most dire issues of our time. In these works, Diaz examines the censored and limited U.S. media coverage of the conflict in Yemen. Salon, an online U.S. media site, recently reported that MSNBC, a major U.S. news network, did not mention the war in Yemen a single time during the same one year period that it aired 455 segments on Stormy Daniels, an alleged mistress of U.S. President Donald Trump. This absurd discrepancy comes as no surprise in the current age of clickbait–driven media cycles, where news of another war in the Middle East is not as appealing to American viewers as the countless brazen affairs of their President. Perhaps most influential is the problematic relationship between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, whose direct support of Yemeni government forces have resulted in a blockade preventing aid and commercial goods from reaching civilians as well the destruction of infrastructure worsening the humanitarian catastrophe.

Following page
Averting is Easy, 2018
Mixed media collage and glitter on watercolor paper
30 x 22 in / 76.2 x 55.88 cm

Following page
August 10, 2018, 2018
Mixed media collage and glitter on
watercolor paper
30 x 22 in / 76.2 x 55.88 cm

IBI IBRAHIM

"If I had a chance to return to Yemen for one moment ... How long is that moment?"

The video *Departure* is a short film recounting the struggle of Yemenis who have been stranded and displaced outside of their homeland as a result of the ongoing war. Through the usage of bird migration footage as well as animated footage of Yemen, the film aims to display the current status of Yemeni citizens who are displaced and in a constant state of waiting: those who wait to leave, and those who wait to return.

The piece is accompanied by voice conversations of Yemeni women who have been uprooted since the war erupted. Like thousands of other Yemenis, they found themselves suddenly unable to return to their homes, displaced from their loved ones and faced with the obstacles of the unknown. The installation of images surrounding the video projection consist of thousands of personal photographs that Yemenis from all over the world sent to the artist, recalling their beloved home before the war.

The video piece is a collaborative work between Ibi Ibrahim and Hosam Omran.

Following Page & Spread
Departure, 2017
Video and Installation
8 minutes and 55 seconds
Installation dimensions variable

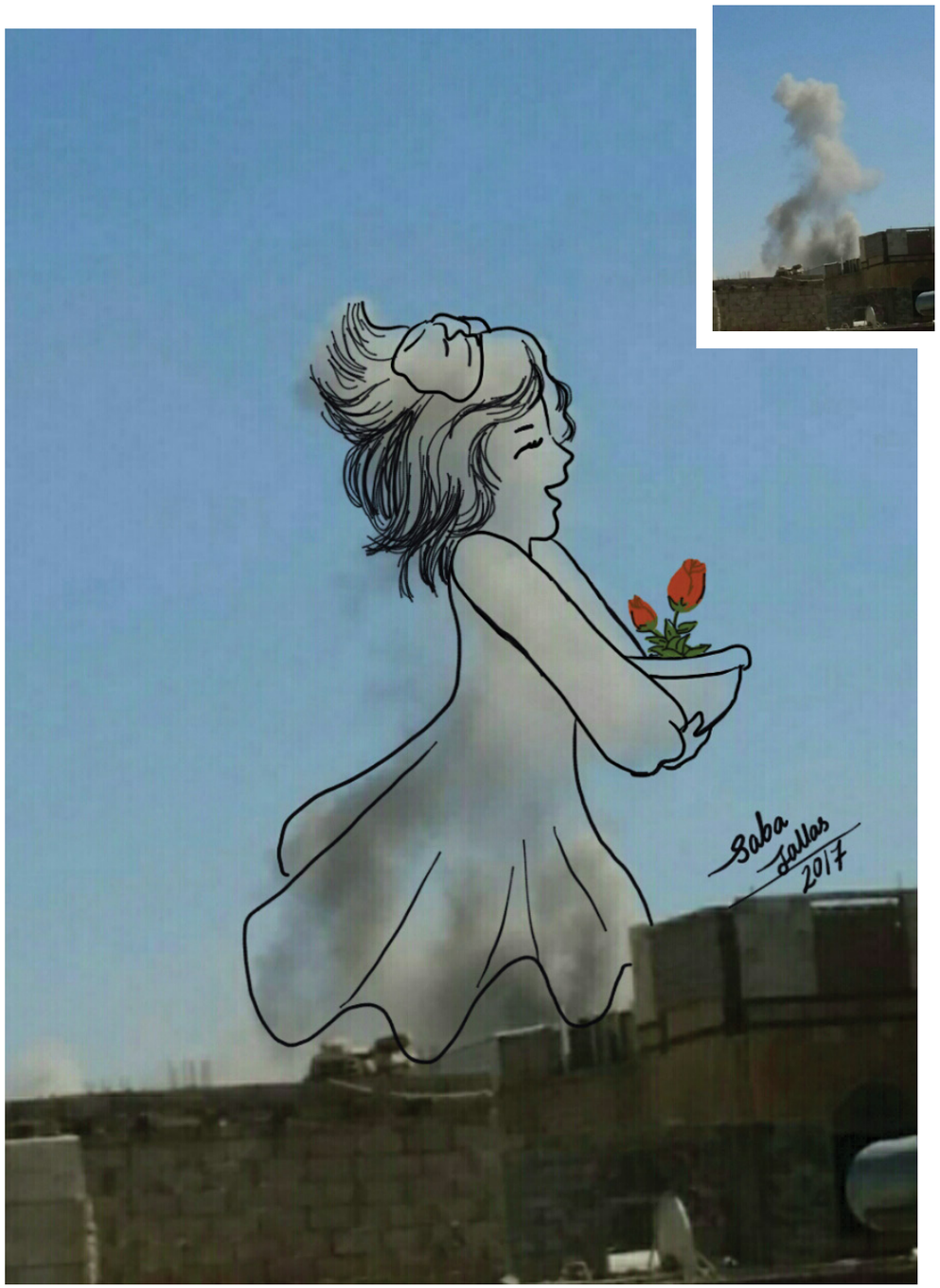
Yemen is a place of belonging

SABA JALLAS

In her series entitled *Smoke Drawings*, Saba Jallas gathers photographs taken with mobile phones in the aftermath of bombings around Yemen and superimposes her own cartoon drawings within the contours of the smoke. Inspired by a group of Palestinian artists who similarly used pictures on bombings in Palestine to spread messages of resistance, Jallas' interventions are simple yet poetic, recalling the gentle naiveté and earnestness of children. Through varying depictions including women draped in the Yemeni flag, mothers sheltering young children in their arms, or figures of traditional Yemenis; the works obfuscate the infrastructural and psychological devastation in each photograph to reveal a dreamlike alternate of hope and security. Included for the first time in an arts exhibition, the works will be displayed on a screen in a rotating loop which will highlight the both the original and manipulated images.

Following Page & Spreads
Untitled (Smoke Drawings), 2015–2018
Digital photograph
Sizes variable

Saba Zallas


Saba Zallas 2017

Saba Fallas

Saba Fallas

HABEEB MOHAMMED ABU–FUTTAIM is an artist, curator and arts administrator currently based in Doha. He graduated with a degree in Fine Arts and Art History from the Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar (VCU–Q) in 2015 and is currently completing a Master's in Museum and Gallery Practice from the University of College London (UCL). He has previously worked as an Assistant Curator at the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Museum, Doha, and currently works at the AlBahie Auction House. He has exhibited globally including in the UAE, Qatar and Bolivia, and his work is part of the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.

EMAN AL–AWAMI Eman Al–Awami is a photographer and photojournalist currently based in Sana'a, Yemen. Raised between Yemen and Egypt, she graduated with a degree in Languages from Sana'a University. She began her professional photography career in 2009 and has since worked with international organizations documenting humanitarian crises in her country. Al–Awami has concurrently pursued a fine arts practice and has exhibited her work in Yemen, most notably at the National Museum in Sana'a, and in Lebanon, at Beriut's Dar Alnmer.

ARIF AL NOMAY was born in Ibb, Yemen in 1970 and is currently based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. A self–taught artist, he is also a freelance photographer and documentary filmmaker. His practice explores the narratives, aesthetics, culture, and politics of Yemen. He has exhibited his work throughout Saudi Arabia and the UAE, most notably at Pharan Studio and Hafez Gallery, both in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In 2017, he was the recipient of the annual Photography LIVE contest in Dubai, UAE.

YASMINE DIAZ Yasmine Diaz was born and raised in Chicago to parents who immigrated from the highlands of Yafa, Yemen. Currently based in Los Angeles, her work navigates overlapping tensions around religion, gender, and third–culture identity using personal archives, found imagery and mixed media on paper. Diaz is a former fellow and current organizer of at land's edge fellowship program and most recently, the summer artist–in–residence at the Women's Center for Creative Work in Los Angeles. She has exhibited and performed at spaces including the Brava Theater, San Francisco; the Pieter Space, Los Angeles; the Albuquerque Museum of Art, Albuquerque; The Main Museum, Los Angeles; The Wing, Washington D.C.; and the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

IBI IBRAHIM is a visual artist, musician, filmmaker and arts administrator living between Sana'a and Berlin. He was born in the United States and raised throughout the Middle East, in Yemen, Libya, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates. His artwork has been exhibited widely throughout the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Ibrahim's work is part of the Barjeel Art Foundation and the Colorado College. Ibrahim is the founding Editor–in–Chief of Al Madaniya Magazine; Yemen's first online magazine in Art, Culture and Civil Society initiatives. He is also the founder and director of Diwan Al Fan; aninitiative that aims to promote contemporary Yemeni art, music, and cinema through exhibitions, festivals and artist–in–residence programs.

SABA JALLAS was born in Sana'a, Yemen, where she is also currently based. In 2007, she graduated with a degree in French Literature from Sana'a University. She began creating drawings on images of smoke from bombing in Yemen in 2015 so as to spread depictions of caring and unity in times of violent struggles.

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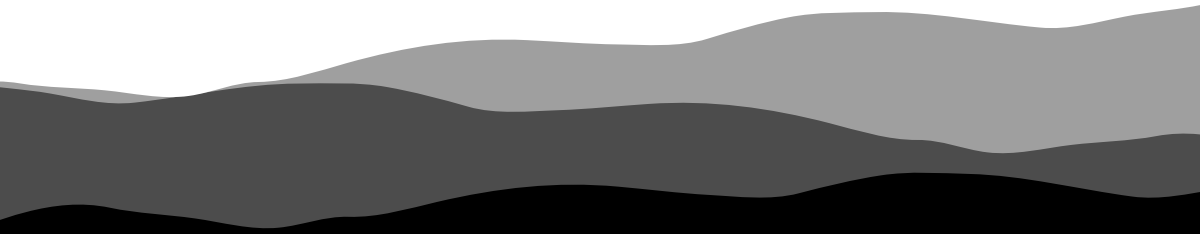

ديوان الفن
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