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مجلس القضاة

البريد

# THE WAIT

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**7 May 2019**

from 10:00 - 6:00 pm

**Address**

Arsenale Nord - Tesa 113

Shuttle boats from

9:30 am to 5:30 pm from the pier

in front of the Caserma Cornoldi,

Riva degli Schiavoni, 4142

# Curatorial Note by Amal Khalaf

## THE WAIT

Unable to draw their eyes away from the sea, the figures hold their gaze as if spellbound, refusing to look away from where sea and sky are hinged. As the horizon of the visible world closes in, thirty-three islands returning to the waves, they turn away never to look back.



Coastlines are the shifting terrains where land and water meet, always neither and always both. Coastlines are edges, ledges, legible lines, simultaneously writing and erasing. These in-between places are fraught with comings and goings. Echoing this movement, the works in *The Wait* move between the artists' fragmented perceptions of the disappearing sea.

Bahrain, meaning 'two seas' is an archipelago of thirty-three islands, but in the last few decades many islanders stopped depending on the sea as the primary space for travel, food, work and pleasure, becoming insulated from the water that surrounds them. The two seas, saltwater and freshwater, seem further away than ever as the coastline keeps changing. Like many small islands, Bahrain is presented with environmental challenges – land reclamation, development and marine pollution that put pressure on the once abundant, pearl rich coral reefs.

The title of the exhibition takes its cue from a print of the same name by Nasser Al Yousif, a leading figure

in Bahrain's art history. The linoleum print depicts figures looking out to sea, waiting, focused on the horizon and what lies beyond. We don't see the sea, but rather are faced with a group of figures perched on the threshold. If the threshold is that of separation, how do we re-engage with our relationship with the sea?

The artists in *The Wait* make offerings to the sea, becoming a kind of map that attends to the changing contours of the coast, and the imaginaries of island life.

An installation of aerial views of Bahrain's thirty-three islands are juxtaposed with delicate sketches produced with members of the public on a beach in Bahrain in Mariam Al Noaimi's *The Spectacle*. Here we see two mapping strategies, one that relies on data and satellites and the other that resists hegemonic stories and images of the islands as built environments, rupturing rigid cartographic narratives of Bahrain.

In *Formations: Hanīn and the Concorde*, Hasan Hujairi tells sonic stories of the sea through a soundtrack for the exhibition, a video and daily performances with Hashim Al Alawi and Ahmed Saeed. The artist juxtaposes a recording of the first known classical composition in the Western tradition from Bahrain entitled *Hanīn*, meaning longing or nostalgia in Arabic, by self-taught composer Majeed Marhoon (1945-2010) with archival video footage connecting maritime cultures of Bahrain and videos of the Concorde supersonic passenger airliner, operational in Bahrain between 1976 and 2003. Marhoon was a self-taught composer obsessed with Beethoven who wrote an opus and a music dictionary whilst serving a sentence on an island. The original recording of *Hanīn* is historically significant. It was recorded in 1979 by the Deutsche Radio-Sinfonieorchester Berlin. The original score had been spirited from Bahrain to Berlin via Sweden, only to be recorded and sent back to Bahrain in a limited number of pressed albums from

Berlin. This recording in particular was possibly one of the first objects through which people learned that there was a classical composer in Bahrain, and it is this particular recording that becomes the baseline of the soundtrack for *The Wait*. The synchronicity between Marhoon's music, historic notions of maritime cultures, and the sonic boom of the Concorde which was a storied source of trouble for folk musicians practicing in Bahrain, play an integral role in Hujairi's ambitious offering to the exhibition.

Bahraini Danish address the desire to have access to the sea in a time of increasingly privatised coastlines with *Private View*, a proposal for a pavilion intended to stand in high numbers along the shores of Bahrain. The pavilion grants people the privilege of a private view on the water. Entering from the shallow waters, you step onto the structure and the horizon presents itself anew, only to you. Here you can sit and drink tea and watch the sunset. Very few stretches on the Bahraini coastline are accessible to the public, and the virtue of being by or in the water is not for everyone. Despite being an island, the waters surrounding Bahrain can seem distant and inaccessible. The public stretches of shore, that can be considered beaches are usually in a badly maintained state and predominantly a male domain. In *Private View*, Bahraini-Danish proposes the luxury of watching a sunset alone or in good company, yet privately, the structure itself not always accessible. By stepping onto *Private View* the experience of the water is reduced to sky, water and light.

Ghada Khunji speaks to ancestral relationships to the sea through her photo montage from her *Farida* series. In an image portraying herself and her mother on a moonlit beach, we see grief and sadness transmuting into strength and beauty. Hala Kaiksow makes a dedication from the sea to the sky, in the form of a hand woven, indigo dyed textile installation. The young designers incredible slow-fashion practice sits

between fashion, design and sculpture and her work is a conscious attempt to retrieve artisanal practices and support the island's craft economy.

Embracing the entanglements of land and sea, the works in *The Wait* sit on this porous edge, waiting in the liminal space hovering between dry and wet, land and sea, and fresh and salt demarcating the struggle to articulate a tenuous threshold of home.





# Bahraini Danish

Bahraini—danish' is an establishment using cultural differences, both social and professional, as a means to create. Through dialogue and by vote, architects Batool Alshaikh, Maitham Almubarak, and Christian Vennerstrøm Jensen, work their way, furniture by furniture, towards finding a new common order. Having arrived in front of an opening between two realities, familiar things tend to appear differently in this new, unfolding landscape.

The establishment have been exploring local opportunities to create. Looking for artisans and materials available, new ideas always follow. Often creating objects which can simply be de-assembled, they always want to incorporate an architectural dimension, given their furniture is secretly a placeholder for their desire to make actual architecture. Their work has been presented around the Gulf and continues to make its way from A'ali and Copenhagen into the world. 'bahraini—danish' was established in Bahrain in 2016 and is named after the many historical encounters between Denmark and Bahrain especially in archaeology, architecture and dairy production.



# Ghada Khunji

Ghada Khunji is a graduate of the Parsons School of Design and the International Center of Photography's Documentary Program, both in New York. She started her career in the early nineties as a freelance photographer in the fashion industry in New York City, and spent two years as a research assistant for photo agencies, including Black Star and Magnum, followed by eight years as a printer and print manager for a high profile clientele including Annie Leibovitz and Steven Meisel.

Khunji's photographs are known for documenting both landscapes and people from all over the world and the inherent dignity of the human element. In her latest work she focuses the lens on herself by exploring her innermost feelings, thoughts and identity as a woman.

Khunji is the recipient of a significant number of awards, including the Lucie Discovery of the Year (2006), American Photo Magazine's Image of the Year Award (2007), as well as the Golden Lights Award for Travel. She has exhibited widely in the US and Europe , and in recent years, in London, Spain, and throughout the Middle East. As the recipient of the Julia Margaret Cameron Award (2012), where she won the first prize in the category of portraiture. One of her recent works was acquired by the Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI) in 2013.

Three years ago she participated in The Colombo Art Biennale which was held

in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Last year she participated in Art Abu Dhabi.

In 2018, she exhibited at Sotheby's in London as part of a group show inspired by Kahlil Gibran's, The Prophet. Simultaneously she was in an ongoing show, I AM, under the patronage of Queen Rania which debuted in Jordan, then London and then toured the U S for over a year. She also exhibited at The American University in Washington D.C. as part of a group show organized by Tribe photo magazine.



# Hala Kaiksow

Hala Kaiksow's journey as a designer begins with the human hand and its ability to imbue garments with a sense of soul. A 21st century artisan, her thoughtful approach to craft extends to custom hand woven fabrics, natural dying techniques and handmade buttons and fasteners. Inspired by the beauty found in everyday objects and a utilitarian approach to dressing, the designer deconstructs garb from the past and present to create clothing infused with feminine strength.

A trained artist and sculptor, her creative process is driven by experimentation and exploring the endless possibilities of garment construction. From her loom, she weaves materials such as raw linen, silk and hemp into otherworldly patterns and textures, further embellishing them with fragments of metal, wood, latex and mother of pearl to bring her vision to life. It is a reflection of Hala's artisanal approach to thoughtful luxury, one informed by her passion for transforming unexpected materials through age-old craft traditions.

Hala's work has been recognized internationally in a number of shows. In 2016 she was a part of the International Fashion Showcase in which she was selected to receive the designer award amongst her peers. More recently she has been shortlisted for the Jameel prize in it's fifth edition which showed in the prestigious Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Her work has also shown at the Grand Palais as a part of a group exhibition in Paris, September 2018.



# Hasan Hujairi

Hasan Hujairi is an artist, composer, and researcher from Manama, Bahrain. His works explore the intersection between histories on the verge of loss, the conditionalities of music and art pedagogy, and the historiographies of outsiders. Hujairi is an activist in the field of making available in the Arabic language technical texts on contemporary music and audio software. He holds a doctoral degree in music composition from Seoul National University (Seoul, South Korea) and a masters degree in Economic History from Hitotsubashi University (Tokyo, Japan).





# Mariam Al Noaimi

Mariam Alnoaimi is an artist and designer, she completed her Masters in Urban Design at the University of Colorado, and her Bachelors in Interior Design at the University of Bahrain. She is interested in the relationship between the human being and the place, how each is affecting the other and influences culture, identity, and environment. Her artwork include installation and videography that serve as a platform to explore, question, and create dialogue within oneself, as well as with others.



# Nasser Al Yousif

Nasser Al Yousif is considered a leading figure in the development of modern art in Bahrain. Recognized for his rhythmic compositions, executed in boldly colored paintings and starkly contrasted black and white linoleum prints, Al Yousif depicted the folkloric traditions and daily life of his homeland: landscapes, villages, cities, ceremonies, popular cafes, and the fishing boats and pearl diving along the coast of Bahrain. In 1991, Al Yousif began to lose his vision, becoming completely blind a little over a year later. Yet this extraordinary artist continued to work, even in the intricate process of etching. With only his figures as his guide, Al Yousif cut shapes from paper, transferred them to linoleum, and used them as templates to carve around them with a special tools. Since the late 1950s, the work of Al Yousif has been featured in international solo and group exhibitions. Recognized by numerous awards in Bahrain, his work is held in collections and Museums throughout the Arab world.



# Amal Khalaf

Khalaf is a curator, artist and researcher currently Projects Curator at the Serpentine Galleries, London where she has been working on the Edgware Road Project since its inception in 2009. Here and in other contexts she has commissioned and developed residencies, exhibitions, workshops and collaborative research projects that address the role of art operating within pedagogy and struggles of migration, policing and housing rights. She is a founding member of artist collective GCC, the Commissioning Editor of Projects for Ibraaz, as well as a trustee for the Crossway Foundation and not/no.w.here. In 2016 she co-directed the 10th edition of the Global Art Forum, Art Dubai. Amal's work has been presented at the University of Pennsylvania; Goldsmiths College, London; MoMA PS1, NY; New Museum, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Musee D'Art Moderne, Paris; The Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Serralves, Porto; amongst others in educational and cultural contexts.

# Tasneem Al Shurougi

Tasneem Al Shurougi is a founding member of the team that launched Art Bahrain Across Borders in 2015. The Art History and Visual Culture graduate's keen focus and unique personal flair play a vital role in the success of ArtBAB since its onset. Hardworking and consistent, Al Shurougi aided in the establishment of the Artist Programme in 2016, continuing to assist in art curation process at every gallery throughout the last four years. Last year, she co-curated BAB Pavilion alongside Art Select founder, Kaneka Subberwal.

This past November, she curated Accumulation: Legacy and Memory at Bahrain Art Week in London at the Alon ZakaimFine Art gallery alongside Amal Khalaf.

At ArtBAB 2019, she strived to step up the annual Art Fair's pavilion to a new level of local impact. With an extensive selection process comprising a committee of globally renowned experts, she co-curated to create ArtBAB's largest emerging-artist pavilion to date, with the purpose of pushing younger artists closer to the world of fine arts establishment.

# Kaneka Subberwal

Art Consultant, collector, curator and keen watcher of contemporary art trends, Kaneka is self-taught in art and she is also much-respected internationally for her quick eye for talent and fine art and sought-after as a speaker in art show platforms around the world.

Kaneka launched Art Select in Bahrain in 2008, as a first step to realizing her vision of making Bahrain a focal point for art in the West Asian region and establish a forward-thinking platform to promote the growth of art.

She set up Bahrain's first Art Lounge then expanded to art consultation to include artists, collectors, families, and corporate offices within the ambit of the arts. She organized a number of art shows across the country with the present flagship ArtBABart fair being a culmination that has undeniably widened the reach of Bahraini artists and increased the commercial value of Bahraini art by a stunning 195% from the time ArtBAB started in 2015 till 2018.

She is also a mentor for emerging artists and has established the ArtBAB International Artists Programme that takes Bahraini artists to different art zones around the world for exhibitions, interaction with their contemporaries there and exposure to world art trends and discussion that will add even more layers to their interpretation of their creativity. Kaneka's portfolio of organizing art exhibitions is impressive by any standards, 60 and counting.

She began in 2005 with shows in Dubai, London, Oman and Doha and the outreach of the expositions was such that she was able to bring in many new buyers and collectors within the ambit of the arts. As an art investment expert, she not only learned to wear different hats but also carry them with great responsibility and aplomb.



Art Select was founded in 2008 as an art advisory, consulting and creating artist platforms, art events and investor art portfolios.

Art Select was founded on collector and consultant Kaneka Subberwal's passion for contemporary art, her knowledge of modern art and her unerring instinct for picking trends. Today it is a respected organisation with a global presence and a fine team of art managers, art event co-ordinators and logistics managers who run prestigious exhibitions and fairs around the world.

Art Select's flagship enterprise is ArtBAB the annual art fair of Bahrain held annually Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa Wife of His Majesty the King and President of the Supreme Council for Women.



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Art Bahrain Across Borders, is Bahrain's foremost international art fair with the mission to attract leading international galleries to the Kingdom, so powering the expansion of the art market whilst facilitating the development of local Bahraini artists.

The ambitious project, now in its fourth edition, aims to solidify Bahrain's position as a regional arts and education hub whilst stimulating investment and economic activity in the arts and cultural sector.



# Acknowledgment

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