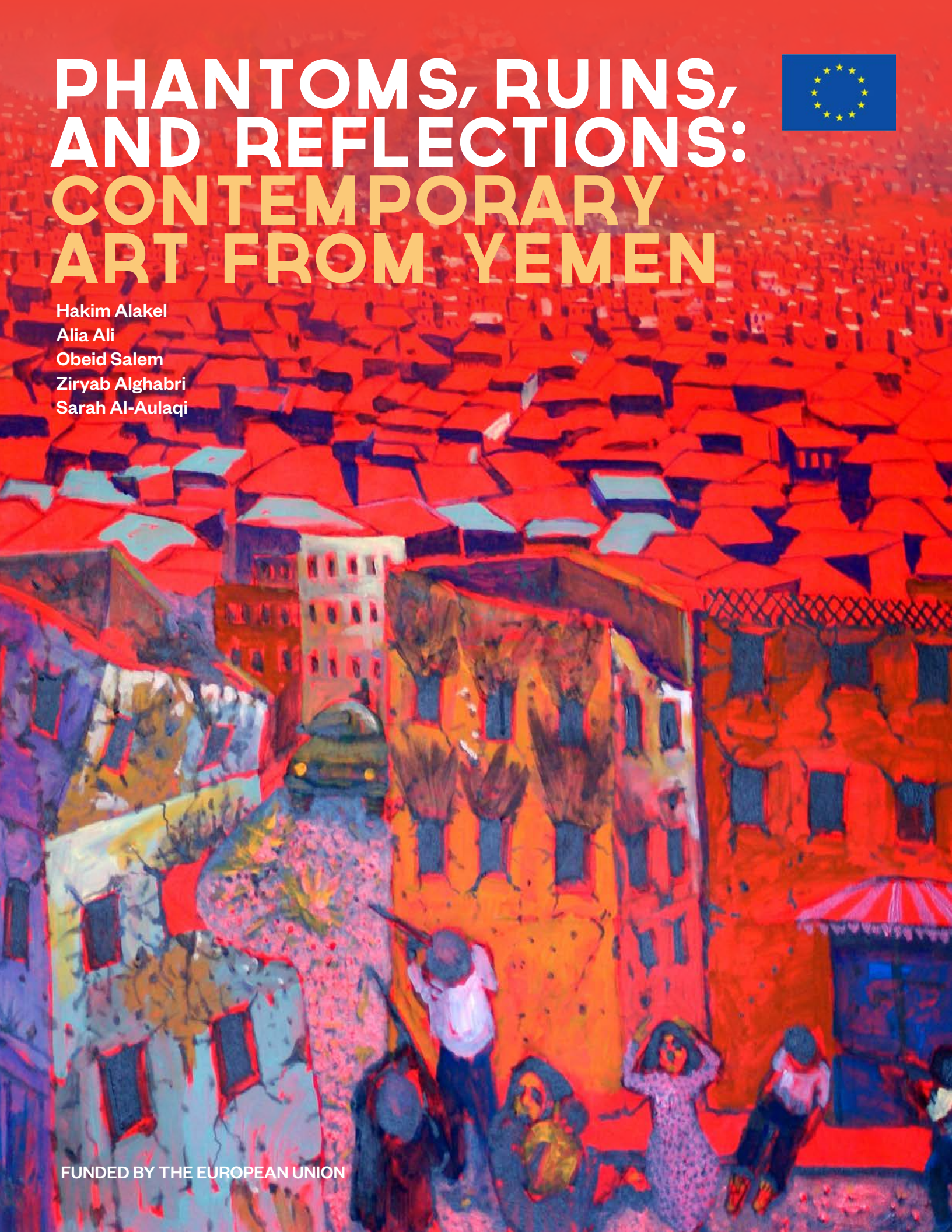


PHANTOMS, RUINS, AND REFLECTIONS: CONTEMPORARY ART FROM YEMEN



Hakim Alakel
Alia Ali
Obeid Salem
Ziryab Alghabri
Sarah Al-Aulaqi

FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION



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————— **PART ONE** —————

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT YEMEN

Phantoms, Ruins and Reflections is a virtual art exhibition part of a wider awareness raising campaign on the conflict in Yemen, developed by the European External Action Service.

The idea behind the communication campaign We need to talk about Yemen is simple: in the past five years, Yemen and Yemenis have seldom received the international attention they deserve. They have rarely had the chance of telling their own stories, of talking about their personal struggles, resilience or talents. For far too long, Yemen has been a crisis the world has not heard much about, a forgotten conflict. By launching this campaign, the European Union wants to try to address this imbalance. We want to talk about Yemen, and more importantly - listen to what Yemenis have to tell us.

With *Phantoms, Ruins, and Reflections: Contemporary Art from Yemen*, the European External Action Service gives a platform to five Yemeni artists. Their work takes us on a journey to their country as seen through different eyes, lenses and perspectives. Or, as Lisbon-based Yemeni curator Sama'a Al-Hamdani calls it, "the Yemeni looking glass". Al-Hamdani has put together an eclectic yet considered cast of established and emerging artists whose art artworks tell us stories of conflict, identity, intimacy, culture, nature and people. This

exhibition was only possible thanks to her creative direction and passion for the country's cultural heritage and art scene.

In this exhibition you will encounter different mediums and experiences.

War takes centre stage in **Hakim Alakel's** work. His *Electric Mourning* confronts the viewer with a vivid depiction of the horrors of war in the public space. He then brings us inside Yemenis' homes, to witness for ourselves the contrast with the impact of the war in the intimacy of the private sphere. **Alia Ali's** *Borderland* looks at Yemen and its heritage through the beauty of its textiles. Her futurist film "Mahjar" explores displacement and finding a place among the Yemeni diaspora. In *Pursuit of Healing*, **Sarah Al-Aulaqi** restores buildings that were scarred by the conflict. **Ziryab Alghabri** *Brother's Blood* photographs take us to Socotra, challenging perceptions and celebrating the island's Dragon Blood Trees. **Obeid Salem's** *The Standard* gives us a glimpse into scenes from Yemenis' everyday life.

With this startling exhibition, we want to spark a conversation. And underline that Yemen is much more than a forgotten conflict, and that this conflict must come to an end.

Throughout the war, the European Union has worked with the United Nations to help reach a political solution to the conflict, lending its full support to the efforts of the UN Special Envoy. Since 2015, the EU has provided close to €1 billion in much-needed aid but also in support of agriculture, schools, hospitals, small and medium companies. The war in Yemen must end. Yemenis deserve an inclusive peace agreement,

and it is within reach. They deserve a better future.

I want to acknowledge the work of all our partners involved in the production of this exhibition and the whole campaign. Special thanks go to our European Union Delegation to Yemen and its staff.

I invite you to visit this digital show online at talkaboutyemen.eu. We hope you will come out of this exhibition inspired and moved to share the perspective of these extraordinary artists, and convinced to add your voice to why we need to #talkaboutYemen.

Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission



PHANTOMS, RUINS, AND REFLECTIONS: CONTEMPORARY ART FROM YEMEN

The exhibition, *Phantoms, Ruins, and Reflections: Contemporary Art from Yemen*, is a compilation of contemporary artworks featuring Yemeni artists across generations. Utilizing different mediums, the exhibit seeks to challenge what it means to create artwork in and from a state of conflict. The show features **Hakim Alakel, Alia Ali, Obeid Salem, Ziriyab Alghabri, and Sarah Al-Aulaqi.**

Yemen's collective memory serves as a ripe point of departure to address complex issues of identity, the global survival of humanism, and the personal toll of war. Throughout the exhibition, humanising concepts of love and war, inherited culture and occupation, extant and extinct bodies are juxtaposed to transcend the artists' work from the personal to the collective. For Yemen, the contemporary is still very much steeped in deep tradition and the artists included employ a range of references and materials that speak to their traditional Yemeni culture whilst addressing a contemporary culture at large.

The first exhibition in this series, *Electric Mourning*, is a solo presentation by artist **Hakim Alakel**, one of Yemen's most successful living artists. He is the only artist represented who is still currently residing in Yemen and this reality bears heavily on his work. His artworks, the only

known paintings depicting the conflict as it is being experienced, will be on display outside of Yemen for the first time. At the start of the war, Alakel suffered a considerable shock that resulted in a stroke, causing him to lose vision in his left eye and the ability to speak for a few days. After multiple eye-surgeries over eight months, Alakel was determined to document his reflections in a provocative set of paintings - his personal struggles and health issues have resulted in a body of work that depicts complex national sentiment of pain and seclusion.

The second exhibition features a group of artists, starting with rising talent Yemeni-Bosnian artist and activist **Alia Ali**. In her exhibition *Borderland*, Ali confronts traditional definitions of inherited culture and identity politics. Set to a dark background, her photography of traditional garment and heritage speaks directly to the artworks of Yemeni-Omani artist **Sarah Al-Aulaqi**, in *Pursuit of Healing*. Al-Aulaqi uses thread and fabric to commemorate edifices demolished by armed violence. To pay homage to the past, Al-Aulaqi adds folk methods of protection to what once was.

As a foil, Yemeni artist **Ziriyab Alghabri** does the opposite with his *Brother's Blood* collection. He commemorates the *Dragon Blood Tree* on the Yemeni island

of Socotra, or what is, and grapples with the foreign intrigue facing the island. Alghabri uses infrared photography for some of his collection to amplify the sense of mystery and extraterrestrial attributes assigned to the Yemeni island by outsiders. From the unfamiliar to the familiar, artist **Obeid Salem's** artworks are about the simplicity of human life and the enduring wonder of the natural world. His signature circle painting technique in *The Standard* is reminiscent of an innate human need for repetition and rituals.

While the exhibit begins with works

depicting war's horrors, it concludes with artwork that exemplifies the mundane and the ordinary found in the natural world. After all, life is a mirror, and dynamic art reflects the audience's perception at a minimum and challenges, alters, and expands it at a maximum. In this exhibit, everyone is welcome to see what the Yemeni looking glass can reveal about our connected humanity.

To understand the works of this exhibit further, see below the descriptions of each artist's gallery.

The exhibit was set to be on display on November 05, 2020 in Brussels at the Bog-Art Contemporary Gallery Space. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 closures, the exhibition was canceled and became virtual.



ELECTRIC MOURNING

Electric Mourning is a curated collection of Hakim Alakel's paintings throughout Yemen's war (February 2015-current date), unveiling the contrast of public and private experiences of living through a brutal and inhumane war.

In this collection, Alakel uses the communal public space to depict horrific scenes of fear and death. Unlike contemporary war paintings where the world is stripped of color, and a pallid version of reality is represented, Alakel's paintings depict electric, vivid colors provoking grief and trepidation. Instead of relying on monotone colors with sharp, cutting lines and lifeless faces, Alakel's scenes are bright, almost manic, with fluid brush strokes. It's almost as if the war amplified his senses to reveal a whole new array of colors. Alakel's use of electric blue, fluorescent pinks, and neon greens in his portrayals of the public space heightens our senses and jolts us into a sense of alertness - the shock of war.

The artist's depictions of the private sphere are almost contrary to the first set. Human angst is portrayed as an intimate and somewhat serene experience. In the private space, the anxiety of existence is actually "calm" despite the artist's use of red hues and vibrant blues. Alakel utilizes the bird's eye view in many of his paintings, enabling the audience to "peak in" as undetected voyeurs - witnessing genuine confidential experiences. Despite the destruction, his subjects represent life: florists, flowers, food markets, and fondness. Conversations and companionship are central in the individual experience of witnessing conflict, perhaps representing the remedy to it all.

If the ailment is war, then the antidote is in the calmness and intimacy granted in private life; and the absolute necessity of its continuation.



حكيم العاقل

HAKIM
ALAKEL

Born in 1965, is a renowned Yemeni artist and art critic living in the capital Sana'a. Following a stroke and vision loss due to war-trauma, Alakel returned to his studio practice to create this collection of new paintings. Alakel remains one of the only artists in Yemen with the courage to depict the current war scenes he bears witness to. Alakel was mentored by pioneering Yemeni artist Hashem Ali, who used his studio as an art school for several young artists. Later, he enrolled in the Surikov Institute of Art in Moscow in 1987 to pursue a master's degree in mural paintings, art history, and theory. Today, Alakel is a patron of Yemeni art and culture. He contributed to many artistic and cultural projects and participated in many seminars. Previously, he served as Assistant Secretary-General of the Yemeni International Cultural Symposium, worked as the Director of the Training Center for Technical Design and Printing, and was the Editor-in-Chief for Tashkeel Magazine. He participated in many activities to support and encourage Yemeni involvement in fine arts. Since 2003 he has been an advisor to the Minister of Culture and Tourism, and in 2011, he worked as a national coordinator for the Yemeni strategic project on heritage. Alakel participated in over 80 Arab and international exhibitions, namely in Yemen, Russia, Italy, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Britain, Egypt, Morocco, France, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, China, Bahrain, and Qatar. His work has been featured and auctioned by Sotheby's.

Twitter: [AlakelHakim](#) Instagram: [Hakimalakel](#)



Death of a Family, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2015



The School. Acrylic on canvas, 120×120 cm - 2015



Aden, Acrylic on canvas, 140×100 cm - 2015



Sana'a, Acrylic on canvas, 140×100 cm - 2015



The Martyr, Acrylic on canvas, 120×80 cm - 2015



Taizz , Acrylic on canvas, 140×100 cm – 2015



The Horrors of Airstrikes, Acrylic on canvas, 200×120 cm – 2015



Noqum, Acrylic on canvas, 100x100 cm - 2020



Post Strike, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2020



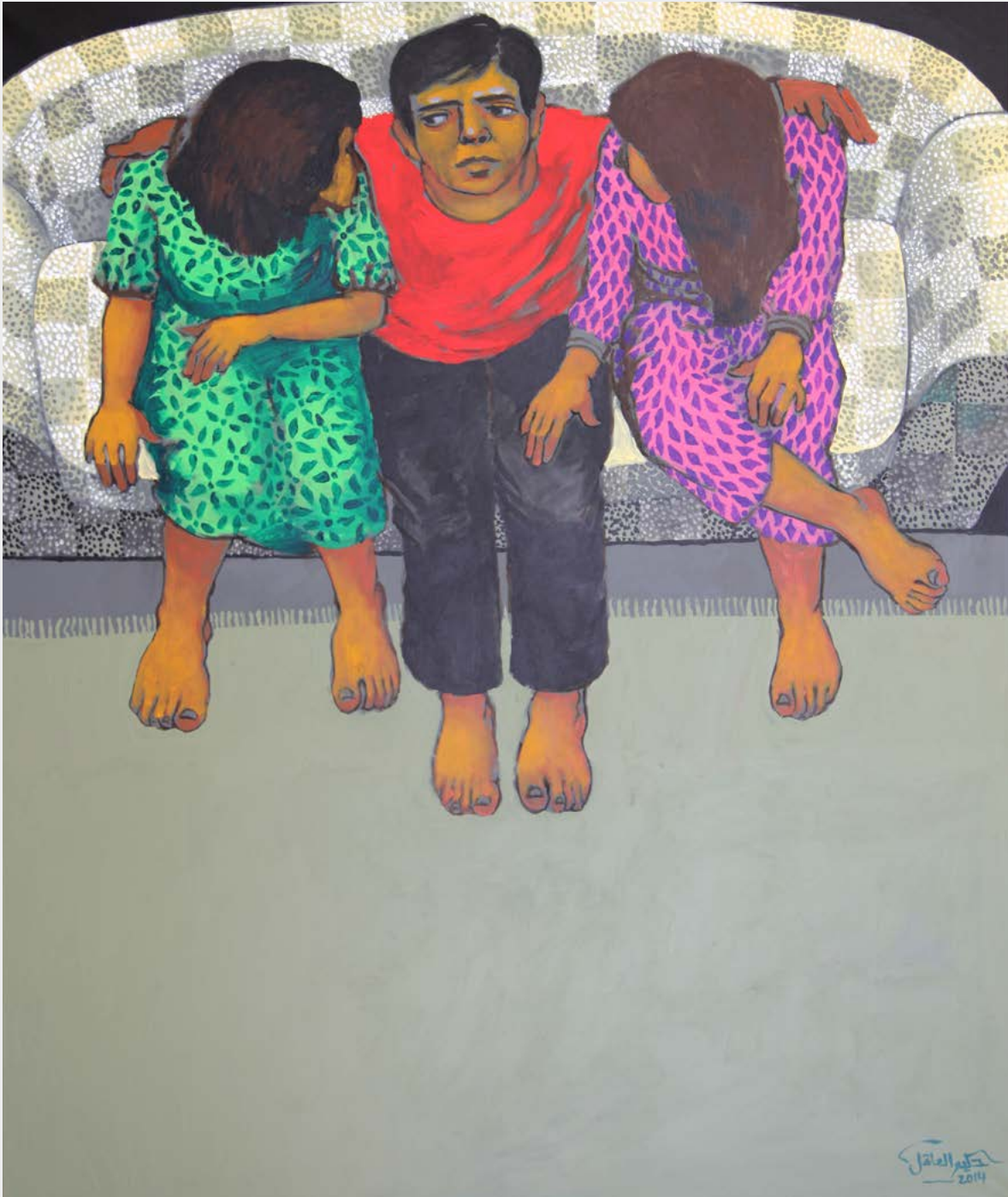
Strike, Acrylic on canvas, 90×60 cm – 2019



Dance, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2014



Gathering, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2014



Exchange, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2020



Bird's Eye Love 4, Acrylic on canvas, 150×150 cm – 2014



Bird's Eye Love, Acrylic on canvas, 150×150 cm – 2014



Disclosure, Acrylic on canvas, 120×100 cm – 2020



Consoling, Acrylic on canvas, 100×100 cm – 2014



Contemplation, Acrylic on canvas, 120×80 cm – 2014



Dialogue, Acrylic on canvas, 100x140 cm - 2014

PART TWO

BORDERLAND

Alia Ali's work focuses on traditional textiles and patterns to critique colonization, sexism, racism, and violence. The curator selected three pieces from Ali's collection Borderland (2017-present). This larger exhibit featured eleven global regions and focused on the barriers of conflicted notions surrounding gender, politics, media, and citizenship. As a photographer, Ali's work explores cultural binaries and challenges culturally sanctioned oppression.

The characters of Ali's portraits are called cludes, who are wrapped in layers of fabric. The cludes are "undocumented" characters- their names are ambiguous, and their exact location a mystery. They are unidentifiable, except for the details displayed, such as color, symbolism, and texture, eventually and simultaneously drawing on a sense of connection and alienation. In this exhibit, the three artworks feature textiles from different regions of Yemen. Considering Yemen's war, the artist uses the work to question concepts of belonging and the binary notions of home/exile. The artist states, "textile is significant to all of us. We are born into it; we sleep in it, we eat on it, we define ourselves by it, we shield ourselves with it, and, eventually, we die in it. While it unites us, it simultaneously divides us, both physically and symbolically." Ali's work serves as a focal point that glues the exhibit of Phantoms, Ruins, and Reflections together by blurring boundaries and confronting the audience's prescribed affiliations. Ultimately, things are never what they seem to be.

عاليه علي

ALIA ALI

Alia Ali is a Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media artist. Having traveled to sixty-seven countries, lived in and between seven, and grown up among five languages, her most comfortable mode of communication is through photography, video, and installation. Her travels have led her to process the world through interactive experiences and the belief that the damage of translation and interpretation of written language has dis-served particular communities, resulting in the threat of their exclusion, rather than a means of understanding. Alia's work reflects on the politics of contested notions of linguistics, identity, borders, universality, colonization, mental/physical confinement, and the inherent dualism that exists in each of them.

Her work has been featured in the Financial Times, Le Monde, Vogue, and Hyperallergic. Alia has won numerous awards and has exhibited internationally at Galerie Peter Sillem in Frankfurt, Galerie Siniya 28 in Marrakech, Gulf Photo Plus in Dubai, PhotoLondon, 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, the Lianzhou Photo Festival in China, the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam in the Netherlands, the Katzen Museum of Art in Washington DC, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Benton Museum of Art at Pomona College. Alia also serves on the board of Clockshop in Los Angeles, California.

Alia Ali lives and works in Los Angeles and Marrakech, and is currently in residency at the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (RAiR) in Roswell, New Mexico.

W: alia-ali.com

Instagram: [studio.alia.ali](https://www.instagram.com/studio.alia.ali)



Yemenia, *BORDERLAND* Series, 2017, pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum dibond in black wooden frame, 107 cm x 71 cm



Yemenia 2, BORDERLAND Series, 2017, pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum dibond in black wooden frame, 107 cm x 71 cm,



Yemenia 5, *BORDERLAND* Series, 2017, pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum dibond in black wooden frame, 107 cm x 71 cm

THE STANDARD

Hadramout-born Artist, Obeid Salem, focuses on human life's simplicity and the enduring wonder of historical architecture. In his collection, The Standard, Salem's artwork is distinct in his technique of using concentric circles that originate at the center of the painting to depict what the artist describes as "ordinary life." His entire collection, which features two acrylic paintings and four ink on paper illustrations, utilize his signature circle-technique. The method, developed from freehand drawing, is reminiscent of an innate human need for repetition and rituals.

His acrylic pieces focus on people's conventional lives in Mukalla; neighborhood shops, and local people gathering on streets and cafes. Salem left the pieces unfinished to reflect the psychological state of the subjects he drew. The acrylic set completes a unique Hadrami scene; men gather at a coffee shop, and across the street an ice cream truck roars. Although the scenes depict a dreamlike setting, the artist points out that "the kids enjoy their day, while the grown-ups carry the burdens of life." Salem's treatment of the four illustrations utilizes the same circle technique but homogenizes traditional Yemeni dress and architecture based on region. The artwork features the Hadramout governorate, Mukalla city, Aden city, and Ta'izz city.



عبيد بابوييد

OBEID SALEM

Is a self-taught Hadrami artist based in Riyadh. His work is inspired by everyday life and the simplicity of human nature. His most recent artworks are edging on surrealism and reflect the psychological state of being. Salem does this masterfully while preserving a unique Hadrami/ Arab touch. In 2016, Salem developed a freehand circles technique that distinguished his work from other artists in the region. He used to randomly place the center of his circles on his paintings, but his process thoughtfully evolved. Over time, the center began to be placed over specific areas like the heart or the eyes in portraiture. Although Obeid excels in various mediums, he prefers to create artworks using acrylic paint and ink pens.

Twitter: [Art_obeid](#)

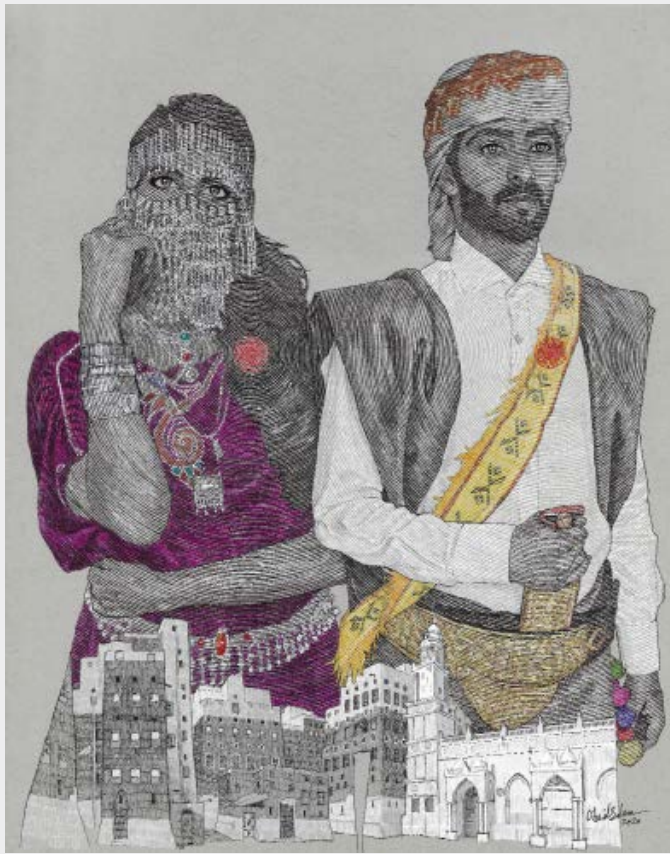
Instagram: [Art_obeid](#)



Unwind, Acrylic on Canvas, 60x80 cm



Daydream, Acrylic on Canvas, 60x80 cm



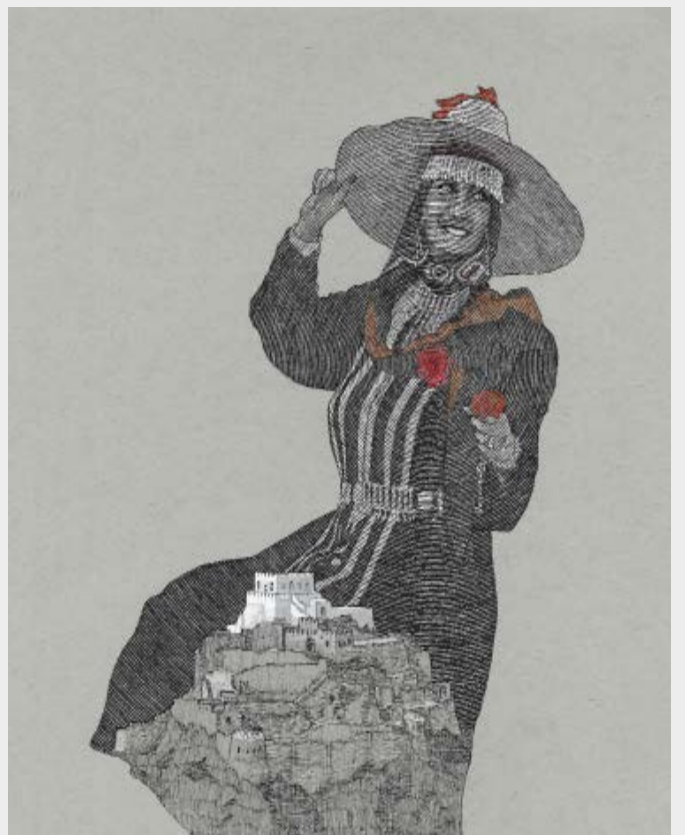
Hadramout, Ink on Paper, 27x36 cm



Aden, Ink on Paper, 27x36 cm



Mukalla, Ink on Paper, 27x36 cm



Ta'izz, Ink on Paper, 27x36 cm

BROTHER'S BLOOD

Legend has it that Abel and Cain, Adam's children - the first human offspring, fought on the Yemeni island of Socotra. When Cain attacked Abel, he bled, and from his blood grew an exceptional tree that we call the Dragon Blood's Tree (in Arabic, Dam Al Akhawain, or Brother's Blood). The immoral transgression against "a brother" was memorialized in the anatomy of a tree. To this day, if you pierce through the skin of the Dragon Blood Tree, red liquid, reminiscent of blood, spills out.

Artist Ziryab Al Ghabri visited the Island of Socotra in March 2020 and documented the metaphorical sacred nature of "brotherhood" in eight distinct images. In the first set, we witness the symbiotic relationship between the full moon and the dragon's blood tree as the moon attempts to compete with the Dragon Blood Tree's spotlight. The tree is planted firmly on the ground, and only when the moon is in the sky do they share the habitat in a harmonious balance. In the other set, Al-Ghabri uses infrared photography to amplify the local folktales' mystique and the regional intrigue attributed to the island's flora. His images capture and critique the "extraterrestrial" nature that is sensationalized by the media.



زرياب الغابري

ZIRYAB
ALGHABRI

Ziryab Alghabri started his career as an amateur graphic designer while in high school. He pursued his passion for graphic design at the Lebanese International University by studying graphic design and opening a photography and visual design studio, Gabreez Production, with his younger brother. In 2010, Alghabri won a filmmaking competition sponsored by the British Council that resulted in his training in filmmaking techniques in Egypt. The film he produced, *The Gift Maker*, won another award by the British Council and was screened at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 2010.

While learning film making techniques, Alghabri became infatuated with time-lapse techniques. Exploring that format, he directed the film *The Yemen Identity*, which received regional and international acclaim. The film, shot in 2012, features time-lapse shots from the city of Sana'a and the island of Socotra and resulted in him receiving an opportunity to learn and create *Awaken*, an iMax Feature Film produced by the Dubai Film Production Company where he works today. Alghabri continues to explore the latest film technologies and has become a specialist in infrared technology and motion control.

W: ziryalghabri.com

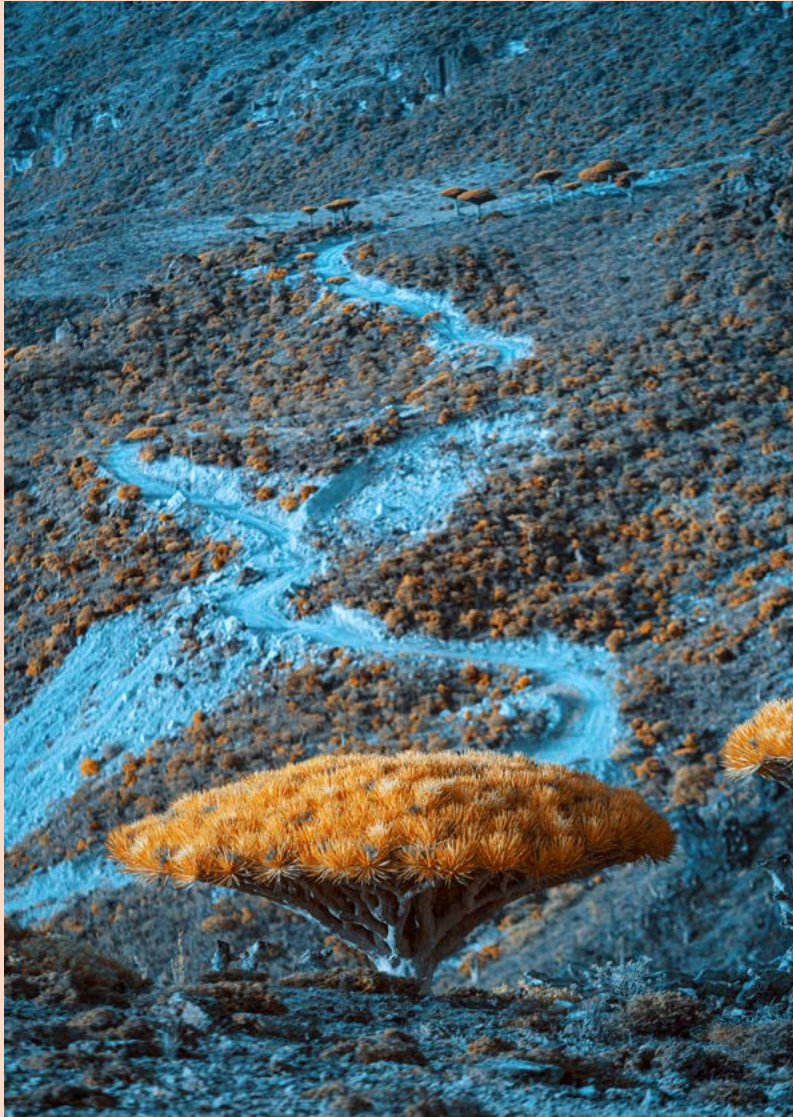
Instagram: [Ziryabalghabri](https://www.instagram.com/Ziryabalghabri).



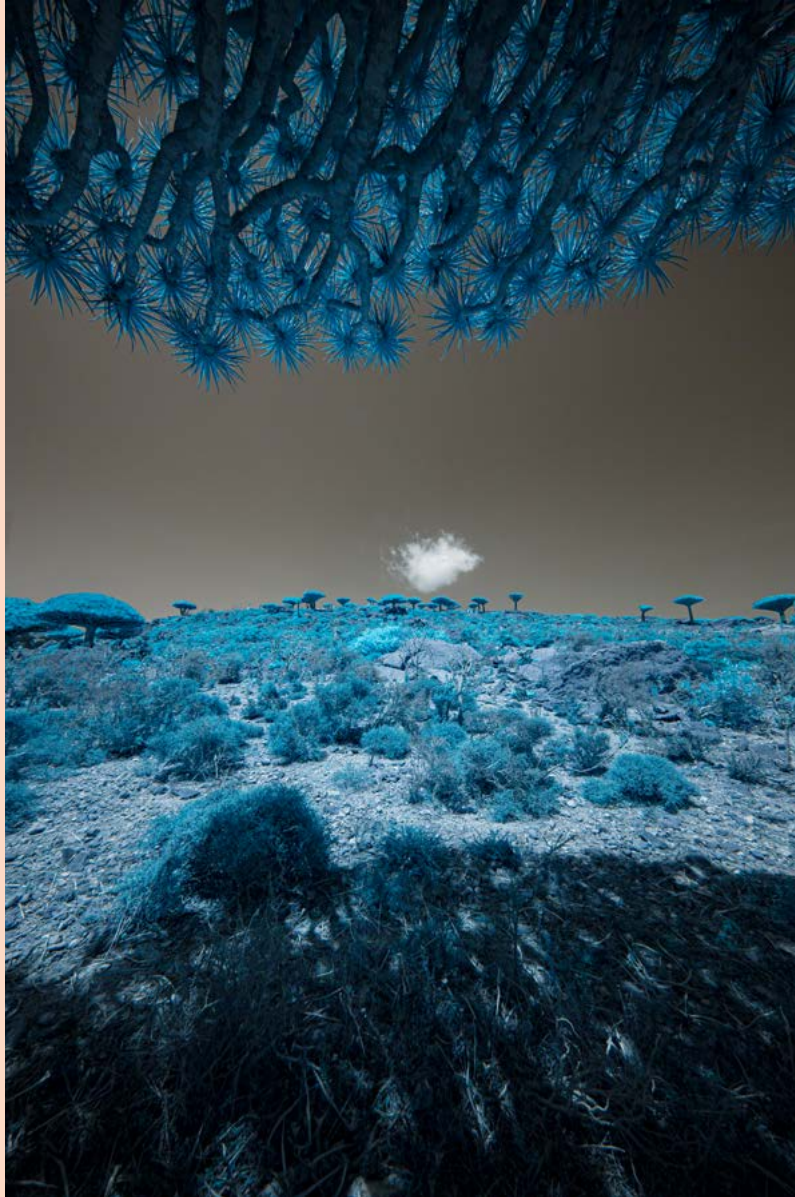
Brothers, 70x100 cm, March 2020



Phantoms, 70x100 cm , March 2020



Ethereal, 70x100 cm, March 2020



Transcendental, 70x100 cm, March 2020

This series features the dragon blood tree at night with a sky full of stars. It chronicles the journey of the full moon as it hovers over these plants.



Full Moon Rising, Metallic Paper 70x50 cm, March 2020



Covert, March 2020 (Metallic Paper 70x50 cm)



Union, Metallic Paper 70x50 cm, March 2020



On the Prowl, Metallic Paper 70x50 cm, March 2020

PURSUIT OF HEALING

As a woman of Yemeni descent, Sarah Al-Aulaqi inherited some ancestral pain that influenced the Pursuit of Healing. Her concept originated from her pursuit of collecting old postcards from Yemen. She venerated historical sites and used her art to symbolically protect vandalized ruins either due to terrorism or armed conflict in Yemen.

In her first image, Al-Aulaqi embroidered the cupolas of the Ghayl BaWazeer Mosque in Hadramout in her piece Stratification. In her second work, Seedling, she selected Rada's Castle and Madrasa Amiriya (a traditional school and mosque). To remedy the past, she encompassed the first construction with frankincense, the dried sap of Boswellia trees believed to have healing abilities in Oman and Yemen. She also revealed a ray of light beaming out of the center of the domes for unrealized possibilities. In her other work, she strategically placed a few frankincense pieces and sprouting leaves around the recently restored 'Amiryia Mosque - a structure that can still be saved today. Al-Aulaqi's work is not just about optics; it's about archiving a remedial process to produce an amulet.



سارة العولقي

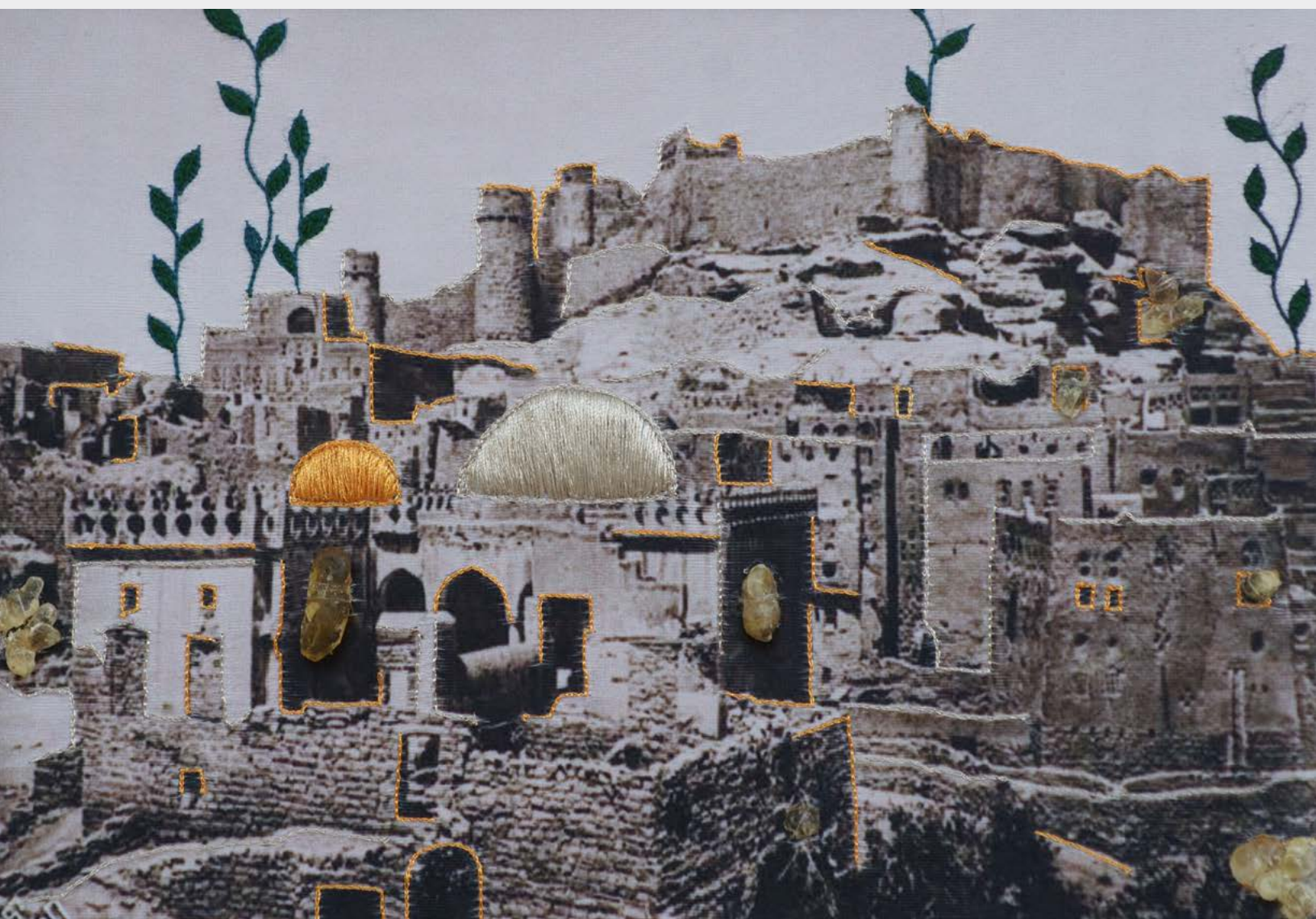
SARAH
AL-AULAQI

Sarah Al-Aulaqi is a Yemeni-Omani-Zanzibari multidisciplinary artist. Her recent artworks feature a mix of techniques focused around the use of hand embroidery and photography. Al-Aulaqi focuses on heritage and tradition in most of her artworks. Growing up with aesthete parents; Sarah found a comfortable place for her intersectional identities by exploring traditional motifs using a modern lens and innovative colors. Al-Aulaqi has a passion for symbols of spirituality and the process of metaphysical ascendance and descendance. She is the winner of the 2017 Stal Prize, an award for emerging artists, and the founder of Cure8 Art Gallery, a Muscat-based platform for local and international artists. She also supports and contribute to the Omani heritage Gallery.

Instagram: [S.alaulaqi](https://www.instagram.com/S.alaulaqi)



Stratification, 42x30 cm, 2020



Seedling, 42x30 cm, 2020

PART THREE

FILMS

AN INSIDERS LOOK AT HAKIM ALAKEL'S GALLERY

4 minutes and 30 seconds, 2020

An interview with Artist Hakim Alakel on his collection, Electric Mourning, featuring the artist's studio in Sana'a and his personal reflections on Yemen's war and the current art exhibit.

ABDULRAHMAN ALWARD

Is a Yemeni filmmaker and screenwriter. He began his media journey on the YouTube platform by creating content. He graduated from Sana'a University with a communications degree from the department of radio and television in 2018. After his graduation, he began to work in the film making industry and made his first short documentary When Will You Come Back?, part of the Comra Film documentary camp. In 2019, he won the Yemeni YouTuber Award from the Yemen-Kuwait Bank for the best content creator. He has written and directed several commercials and is now working as a filmmaker and content maker.

Instagram: [Aralward](#)



FILM TWO
MAHJAR مهاجر
BY ALIA ALI

Color, sound, video (loop)

14 minutes, 2020

As a Yemeni-U.S. citizen, Alia Ali's video, **Mahjar** (2020), probes the systematic erasure and cultural preservation in the context of both the crisis in Yemen and its diaspora. Through still and moving images, found footage, collected sounds from Earth and Mars, and documents, this video activates a futuristic narrative, reflecting on the past, rooted in the present, and imagining radical horizons for existence in the future. The point of departure is the Queen of Sheba, Bilquis, whose throne is believed, by Yemenis, to have been situated in Ma'rib, Yemen. Many Yemenis believe that King Solomon gifted the "Red Star" to Queen Belquis. In 1997, when NASA sent the Sojourner Pathfinder to explore Mars, three Yemenis tried to sue NASA for invading land that they inherited 3,000 years ago. With this narrative, coupled with Etel Adnan's epic work, *The Arab Apocalypse*, Alia reflects on what it means to no longer be able to imagine a future on a horizontal axis but rather on vertical ones—drawing from the physical to the metaphysical, earthly to cosmic, real to the surreal, linear to non-linear. In the video, our gaze is drawn to various sites of meaning, microscopically, from magnified documents to dancing pixels, and macroscopically, from intricate webs of global databanks to galactic skies. The double existence of the literal and the poetic are not competing; from their (con)fusion emerge acute cosmic temporalities.

FILM THREE

YEMENI ARTISTS

HOW ARE THEY NOW

YouTube breakout star, Mazen Alsaqqaf, created a short video questioning the state of Art in Yemen today and investigating young talents' well-being from different parts of Yemen. In his film, How are they now?, Alsaqqaf shows that many Yemeni talents do not get any opportunities that other artists worldwide receive to flourish. Hindered by war and isolation, all that Mazen can do is to call the artists and check-in. In this film, pianist Abrar Al-Hanani (Ta'izz), flutist Marseel Nay (Ta'izz), singer Hajar Nooman (Ta'izz), graffiti artist Wassem Alward (Sana'a), singer Ibrahim Fadl (Hadramout), cinematographer Mohamed Samy (Aden), actor Bakkar Saleh (Hadramout), filmmaker Maria Alnahari (Ibb), writer Hamza Al-Qadhi (Hajjah), and director Abdulrahman Alward (Ibb) made an appearance.

MAZEN ALSAQQAF

is a Yemeni content creator who published his first video on Facebook in 2016. Due to widespread acknowledgment, he started his own YouTube channel to critique current events in Yemen sarcastically. He rose to fame in 2018 after winning a local competition dubbed "YouTuber of Yemen." In 2019, he participated in "Sadeem," a reality show for content creators in the Arab World. He launched the hashtag #working_is_not_shameful (Ar.), which gained him a vast following from throughout the Arab World. He won two awards from the show and began representing Yemeni content creators in international conferences. Today, he has his own YouTube show on Sadeem Studios platform.

Instagram: [MazenIra](#)



ABOUT THE CURATOR

SAMA'A AL-HAMDANI

Is the Director of the Yemen Cultural Institute for Heritage and the Arts (YCIHA), a non-profit based in Washington, DC, dedicated to Yemeni arts and heritage. Over the past six years, Al-Hamdani directed events to bridge the cultural gap between Yemenis and the Western world. She recently launched Sanadakah, an online platform that supports Yemeni artists by promoting select artworks for sale. Besides, Al-Hamdani is an independent political analyst and peace activist. Previously, she was a non-resident fellow at the Middle East Institute (MEI), a visiting fellow at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS) at Georgetown University, and a fellow at the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies (SCSS). From 2011 to 2015, she wrote the blog Yemeniaty.com, with the slogan of "Yemen Simplified," which helped explain Yemen's socio-political developments during the Arab Spring and the subsequent civil and regional wars. She holds a bachelors with a major in religion and peace studies and a minor in women's studies from George Washington University.

W: yciha.org

Instagram: [Samaa.alhamdani](https://www.instagram.com/Samaa.alhamdani)

CATALOGUE DESIGNER AND PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATOR

PAUL TULLER

Is an illustrator, art director, and activist based in Brooklyn, New York. He primarily works as a figurative based illustrator with clients such as HBO, Netflix, GQ, Oxford Press, and as a style illustrator for The Wall Street Journal. As a designer and art director, Paul has focused most of his work on activism and humanitarian initiatives, working with Harvard Humanitarian, Doctors Without Borders, and The United Nations. He has also created T-shirts to raise awareness and funding for LGBTQ+ issues internationally. Paul's shirts "Chechnya LGBTQ+ We Exist," and "CuraGay" for Brazil have been written about in Italian Vogue and NBC News.

W: paul-tuller

Instagram: [paul.tuller](https://www.instagram.com/paul.tuller)