

Solo exhibition

Opening Thursday, 25 April 2024, 6 PM
Exhibition until 2 June 2024
City SALTS, Hauptstrasse 12, 4127 Birsfelden/Basel



Mohamed Harb – Gaza Fish

Solo exhibition by Mohamed Harb, with music by The Epichorus
A collaboration with Atelier Mondial – International Artist Exchange

The exhibition is empty because the artist cannot leave Gaza. Painter and filmmaker Mohamed Harb lives with his wife and four children in the Gaza Strip. In September 2023, he was invited by Atelier Mondial and SALTS for a residency in Basel, including this solo exhibition in Birsfelden. Meanwhile, his family home, like the entire Al-Rimal neighborhood, lies in ruins. The family is living homeless in a tent in Deir al-Balah. To leave the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing to Egypt costs \$5,000 per person. Money the family doesn't have. A friend is now trying to raise \$25,000 via the GoFundMe fundraising platform.

Realizing that Mohamed (and his art) cannot be present at the opening of his exhibition at City SALTS due to the war, we decided not to reschedule or exhibit the show in the artist's absence, but to leave the space empty. The exhibition awaits its artist, supporting Mohamed Harb and his family to be able to leave the Gaza Strip by inviting its visitors to donate.

Mohammed Harb (*1979 Gaza) is a painter, photographer, video artist, and documentary filmmaker with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Al-Najah University, Nablus (2001), and a degree from the School of Fine Arts in Marrakesh (2015). Harb, a member of the Palestinian Association of Fine Artists and director at the Palestinian Satellite Channel, has participated in various festivals in Europe and the Arab world as a filmmaker, receiving awards such as the 2018 Best Documentary Award at the Casablanca Film Festival, a nomination for the Robert Bosch International Prize for Best Documentary on Human Rights, or an invitation to participate in the Cannes International Film Festival in 2019. In 2022, he was the first Palestinian guest artist of Pro Helvetia, in 2024, he won the Al-Marmoom Prize at the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority Film Festival for the film "Gaza Fish."

In the exhibition of the same name at City SALTS, we *would*, when the artist can be in Basel sometime, present the film "Gaza Fish," depicting Gaza's first female fisherman, teenager Madeleine Kolab (2023). Alongside the film, we *would* showcase a series of recent paintings influenced by personal memories and everyday experiences in Gaza, as is typical of the artist's works. Characterized by vibrant colors, distorted shapes, and unique perspective choices, the paintings are rich in narrative symbolism that alludes to the history and current challenges of his homeland. Overall, Mohamed Harb creates powerful depictions of his reality, offering insight into the complexity of Palestinian identity and the hopes of the people surrounding him.

Invited by SALTS, the Brooklyn-based band "The Epichorus" presents their third album "Ten at Dreamland: Healing & Lineage" (2021). The band draws new music from diverse Middle Eastern music traditions and world music, founded by composer and oud player Zach Fredman, who led a progressive synagogue in the West Village for ten years before founding the Temenos Center for the Arts. They comprise members from Palestine, Lebanon, Israel, and Syria, along with guests such as Sudanese singer AlSarah, master kora player Yacouba Sissoko, poet James Stone Goodman, Arabic singer Zahra Zubaidi, or Grammy-nominated singer Priya Darshini. From the Album booklet: «We've been rolled up into a culture that made little room for intimacy, honesty, vulnerability, brokenness, being open and exposed, interconnectedness. All prerequisites of healing. These melodies long for healing. The song that plays for you now, wherever you are.»

The exhibition, a collaboration with Atelier Mondial – International Artist Exchange Program, is kindly supported by the Abteilung Kulturförderung BL.

Mohammed Harb (*1979 Gaza)

Education

2001 BA in Fine Art (Major in Decoration), An-Najah University, Nablus

2011–2015 Graduation from École Supérieure des Arts Visuels de Marrakech, specialised in the digital arts

Residencies/Festivals/Awards

2024 Al-Marmoom-Price, Film Festival Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, for «Gaza Fish»

2022 Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council's first palestinian guest artist, Lago Mio Lugano Residency

2021 Grant Abdul Mohsin Al Qattan Foundation

2021 Artistic Creativity Award, Best documentary film about Palestine, Ifrane International Film Festival, Morocco

2019 Panorama Film Festival / Tunisia

2019 Recipient of the Palestinian Cultural Fund Grant

2019 Waist International Film Festival for short films

2022 Palestinian film festival Montreux

2022 Palestine Film Festival C'est Exister, Geneva

2019 Cannes International Film Festival, Palestinian Pavilion

2019 Nomination Robert Bosch International Prize, Best documentary on human rights

2018 Second prize IFRAN International Documentary Film Festival, Morocco

2018 Best Documentary Award, Casablanca Film Festival

2015–2018 Best Palestine Film Award at the Arab Film Festival, Italy

2008/09 Bronze and silver awards at the Arab-European Festival, Germany

More Exhibitions/Festivals

The International Academy for the Arts, Ramallah; Independent Film Festival, Russian Cultural Centre, Cairo; Festival of the Arab-European photography, Germany; Transform, Ramallah; Self and City, Cairo; Sea Review Photos, Liguria, Italy; In the Scene, Video Art Festival, Jerusalem; In memory of Gaza Massacre, Hamburg, Germany; Third International Gallery of Alliance, Alexandria, Cairo; Art Now for the Video Art, Syria; First International Forum for Art, Meknas, Morocco; Festival of Video Art and Performance, Ramallah; Traces of War, CCF, Gaza; Instant Video Marseilles; Fass Festival (Creative Youth Forum), Morocco; First International Jerusalem Film Festival, Gaza; International Video Art Festival, Dubai – Paris; Many Cases for One Sea, Palestinian embassy, Cairo; Art Sawa, Dubai; Plastic Creations, Nablus; Features did not Compete, Gaza; Dialogue of Memory, Bethlehem; Qattan Foundation, Ramallah; Al Kahf Gallery, Bethlehem, Gaza; Network of Cultural Centres, Gaza; Gaugin Gallery, Cairo; French Cultural Centre, Gaza; Movenpick Hotel, Aqaba

He is a member of the Palestinian Association for Fine Artists

Since 2003: Director at the Palestinian Stallite Channel

Mohamed Harb worked as a filmmaker at the Ibn Zohr University in Morocco, as an artistic director of the Haifa Foundation for Media and Arts in Gaza, at the Institute of Media and Communication in several workshops in the film industry in countries such as Morocco and Jordan, he founded and managed the International Video Art Festival Gaza, supervised workshops for the production of short films and video art training, worked as a technical supervisor in the documentary filmmaking program for cinema graduates in Gaza.