

# VIEW FROM INSIDE: FotoFest 2014 Biennial

FotoFest

**FotoFest 2014 Biennial: *VIEW FROM INSIDE***

Contemporary Arab photography, video and mixed-media art

March 15–April 27, 2014

Houston, Texas

U.S.A.

[www.fotofest.org](http://www.fotofest.org)

**FotoFest**, the International Biennial of Photography and Photo-Related Arts, **launches a newly curated exhibition dedicated to Contemporary Arab photography, video and mixed-media art** for its fifteenth Biennial. ***VIEW FROM INSIDE***, highlights the works of **49 Arab artists from 13 countries in the Middle East and North Africa**. Exhibitions and programming continue for **six weeks, through April 27 in Houston**.

***VIEW FROM INSIDE* features artists living and working in Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen**. Seventeen artists are

women.

***VIEW FROM INSIDE* is the largest collection of Contemporary Arab photography, video and installation work presented in the United States in over ten years.** It is accompanied by a six-week program of **films, conferences, tours, curatorial forums, fine print auction, collectors events, music and literature events, and children's educational activities** that showcase the culture and history of the region and its peoples.

***"VIEW FROM INSIDE casts light on a region whose art and photography, until recently, have not attracted the broad international attention it deserves," says Lead Curator Karin Adrian von Roques. "The aim of FotoFest 2014's Arab Programs is to introduce the region's complex and heterogeneous art scene, and to sensitize viewers to the wide dimensions of the works produced in the region."***

**FotoFest 2014 Biennial Arab artists** (alphabetized by last name)

**Ebtisam AbdulAziz, Khalil Abdul Wahid, Ammar Al Beik, Manal AlDowayan, Shadia Alem, Reem Al Faisal, Sadik Alfraji, Tarek Al-Ghossein, Boushra Almutawakel, Khalifa Al Obaidly, Jowhara AlSaud, Sama Alshaibi, Karima Al Shomely, Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad Bin Ahmad Al-Thani, Sami Al-Turki, Tammam Azzam, Lara Baladi, Hicham Benohoud, Ayman Yossri**

**Daydban, Shady El-Noshokaty, Ayman El Semary, Lalla Essaydi, Mounir Fatmi, Lamya Gargash, Abdunasser Gharem, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Khaled Hafez, Hassan Hajjaj, Rula Halawani, Nermine Hammam, Hazem Harb, Hazem Taha Hussein, Georges Fikry Ibrahim, Noel Jabbour, Ahmed Jadallah, Mohamed Kanoo, Mohammed Kazem, Huda Lutfi, Maha Malluh, Ahmed Mater, Hassan Meer, Samer Mohdad, Youssef Nabil, Ayman Ramadan, Steve Sabella, Faisal Samra, Wael Shawky, Camille Zakharia**

Thirteen of the artists are coming to Houston to participate in Biennial programs.

"This generation of artists grew up when satellite television, photo digital technologies, the internet and social media became widespread in the Arab world," says **FotoFest Senior Curator Wendy Watriss**. "They use these global media in individually specific ways, **addressing personal experience, and the collective realities of living in the Arab world today. This is the view from inside.**"

Lead Curator Karin Adrian von Roques is a German scholar and curator with over 20 years experience working with Arab artists, art institutions and collectors in the Middle East and in Europe. In 2009, she was commissioned by FotoFest, and FotoFest Co-founders and Creative Directors Wendy Watriss and Fred Baldwin to

organize the exhibitions with Ms. Watriss for the 2014 Biennial.

This week, FotoFest and **Schilt Publishing, Amsterdam**, will launch the hardcover book accompanying the ***VIEW FROM INSIDE*** exhibition with **over 200 four-color images by Arab artists and four essays by leading scholars, with an introduction by Wendy Watriss. The essays describe** the emergence and evolution of photography in the Middle East and North Africa.

### **Arab programming partners**

FotoFest is working with prominent Arab cultural and art organizations, including **Athr Gallery** (Jeddah); **ArteEast** (New York); **Edge of Arabia** (London); **Ayyam Gallery** (Dubai/London); **Contemporary Practices, Visual Arts from the Middle East; Arab Cultural and Community Center of Houston**; and **Arab-American Educational Foundation** (Houston).

FotoFest has received significant funding from Arab organizations in the Middle East and Houston: **Art Jameel, Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives; Middle East Trading Inc.; Tamer (SA'AID & The Community); Athr Gallery; Ayyam Gallery; The Levant Foundation; Edge of Arabia; the Crane Foundation; and Nijad and Zeina Fares.**

### **Additional Arab programs**

FotoFest is sponsoring a **day-long conference on Arab Art, Saturday, March 29 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH)**. This conference features lectures and roundtables with leading curators, participating Arab artists, and scholars in the field. Topics include the history of modern visual art in the Arab world; the history of photography in the Arab World; working as an artist between cultures, the challenges facing women artists and the role of the Arab artist in world change.

FotoFest co-hosts a **forum on the topic of "Arabophobia," Wednesday, April 2 with Rice University**. The forum features academics and artists responding to cultural stereotyping: **Dr. Melanire McAlister**, an expert on religious sectarianism; Palestinian-American physician and poet **Fady Joudah**; Egyptian multi-media artist **Khaled Hafez**; and **Dr. Ussama Makdisi**, history professor and the Arab American Education Foundation Chair of Arab Studies at Rice University.

Of 69 leading U.S. and international artists donating works to FotoFest's **Fine Print Auction—March 24, 2014**, eight are Arab artists from the *VIEW FROM INSIDE* exhibitions. Auction images can be seen on FotoFest's website. Panels about the **collecting of Arab art and the Middle East art market will be a part of FotoFest's 2014 VIP Collectors weekend** that adjoins the auction.

FotoFest and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Film

Department have organized **three weeks of Contemporary Arab Cinema**, which will include the **Oscar-nominated film, *The Square***, about the Egyptian revolution; and the acclaimed Saudi film ***Wadjda***.

**For more information or visuals:**

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