

APERTURE 27,000

Sama Alshaibi / Anisa Ashkar / Rana Bishara / Rula Halawani

15 January – 28 February 2009

After a packed season of events in 2008 championing Arab art in London, Le Violon Bleu prepares to open *APERTURE 27,000*, a group exhibition of Palestinian photography featuring four artists from Palestine and its Diaspora; Sama Alshaibi, Anisa Ashkar, Rana Bishara and Rula Halawani. Referring to the land mass of historic Palestine, 27,000 square kilometres, the exhibition title introduces the issues of displacement, loss and identity which are explored by the artists and their connection to occupied Palestine and Israel. This visceral collection of photography takes as its departure each artist's personal experience of a shifting homeland, but also resonates with the wider international concepts of ethnic migration and dislocation.

Sama Alshaibi

Sama was born in Basra, Iraq to Palestinian parents. She has since moved to the U.S and is Assistant Professor of Photography at the University of Arizona. A multi-media artist, Sama has exhibited widely, including exhibitions in South Africa, the Middle East, China and South America.

Sama's photography is inspired by her family's experience of repeated exile and relocation from Palestine and Iraq, and explores her own hyphenated identity in physical and psychological terms. Sama's haunting and evocative imagery frequently includes her own body as she confronts the viewer with bold outspoken objections on the conflict, nostalgia and struggle to create an identity based on inherited memories.

Anisa Ashkar

Anisa lives and works in Tel Aviv, she has been exhibiting her photographic work in Israel since the 1990's and has won a number of awards for excellence including the Young Artist Award from the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture in 2007.

Anisa's artistic preoccupation questions notions of her identity based on her experience of living as an Arab woman in the Jewish national state of Israel. In order to define herself Anisa has adopted a performative strategy of using her body and face as a canvas and exhibition space.

Using natural pigments, Anisa performs the daily routine of painting Arab calligraphy onto her face. In this way Anisa becomes a living painting/sculpture, projecting her Arab identity into her daily activities and interactions.

Rana Bishara

Rana is an installation artist and painter based in Israel. She has studied in the US and exhibited widely in the Middle East, North Africa and the US. She has contributed to a number of public collections and was part of the seminal exhibition of Palestinian art 'Made in Palestine' which toured the US in 2006.

Rana's artwork uses elements from her environment including olive trees, cactus, spices, henna and natural tar, which are mixed with ordinary painting material such as oils and ink. Her photography is highly conceptual and uses her personal experiences and childhood in Palestine to consider difficult issues such as war, poverty and democratic rights. Her work expresses a positive longing for peace and stability in the future.

Rula Halawani

Rula has been exhibiting her photography since 1992 and has exhibited internationally in Europe and the USA. Based in Jerusalem but travelling widely, Rula studied in Canada and the UK, and has given guest lectures at Tate and the *World Social Forum* in Brazil.

Le Violon Bleu is presenting a visceral wall installation of photographs from a new series by Rula named 'Intimacy' (2008). Made up of twelve images, this installation documents a series of anonymous Palestinian individuals passing through the Qalandia Israeli checkpoint on the West Bank. Rula's images expose the checkpoint as a routinised experience for many Palestinians. They capture aspects of body language and gesture that reveal inherent inequalities and questions of accepted identity. Rula's series of photographs invite the viewer to share an intimate moment which would not normally be observed in such close quarters. A view of a ringed hand, a searched bag or identity documents, brings us into relation with the hopes and fears of the 'checked' and we are asked to consider the plight of a person and a people.

Aperture 27,000 offers a glance at Palestinian experience through the eyes and lens of four richly talented and unique artists. Their individual experiences are mirrored by the personal reactions of shock, hope and international understanding that these photographs evoke.

Images from the exhibition...

SAMA ALSHAIBI



Abu Ammar, RIP, Archival Digital Print, 79 h. x 63 w. cm, Edition 4/10 (2004)



Abu Ammar, Four Years Later, Archival Digital Print, 81 h. x 61 w. cm Edition 2/8 (2008)

ANISA ASKAR



Me and Paul Klee Painting,
C Print, 80 h. x 120 w. cm,
Edition 3/10 (2004)



Tribute to Van Gogh, C Print,
100 h. x 100 w. cm, Edition 4/6
(2004)

RANA BISHARA



Ticktus Palestine, Digital Print,
90 h. x 60 w. cm, Edition 1/4
(2007)

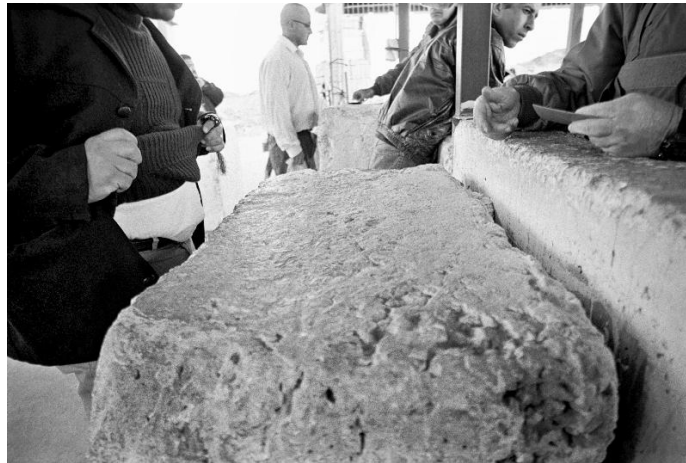


Homage to Palestine, Digital
Print, 90 h. x 60 w. cm, Edition
1/4 (1999)

RULA HALAWANI



Intimacy (Installation of twelve images), B&W Digital Print, 42 h. x 72 w. cm, Edition 1/4 (2004)



Le Violon Bleu will be exhibiting 'Aperture 27,000' from 15 January – 28 February 2009 at the gallery on 23 Maddox Street, London W1S 2QN. An exhibition catalogue will be available for this exhibition. For further information please contact the gallery on: +44 (0)207 493 6090 or email info@leviolonbleu.com. Opening Mon-Fri 10.30-6.30, Sat 11.30-5.30.

