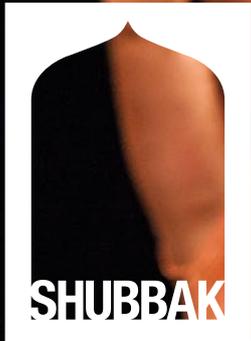




# SYRIAN ARTISTS CREATE

2015 - 2018

A partnership project between  
the British Council and Shubbak  
supporting Syrian artists  
experiencing displacement.



[SHUBBAK.CO.UK](http://SHUBBAK.CO.UK)

# SYRIAN ARTISTS CREATE



EYAD ALJAROD - THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

More than 5 million Syrians have left the country since 2011, with the vast majority initially arriving in the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. The British Council alongside other organisations recognised that inevitably among this number would be a significant number of artists and creatives who had contributed to shaping Syria's rich cultural life and were now often facing precarious existences. Alongside challenges of food, shelter, legal residences and earning a living, artists required space and time to create, maintain networks and contacts with peers to inform practice, and meet new audiences to witness their work.



WAEI ALKAK - MEN ZAMAN

The British Council in partnership with The Space launched a scheme to support displaced artists through offering opportunities to utilise digital technologies to create and disseminate their works. The first phase completed in summer 2015.

From autumn 2015 Shubbak developed the second phase of the project, which led to a new series of commissions and support for artists. We recognised that many artists were now moving to third countries beyond Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan and expanded the scheme geographically to work with Syrian artists wherever they may be based. We also expanded the scheme to embrace all art forms.

# OUR AIMS & PROCESS

By speaking to artists and organisations we understood how the ability and time to 'create art' was often suffering in times when artists already faced multiple challenges, including being displaced from their homes, legal insecurities, difficulties of staying touch with families and learning new languages. We developed three simple criteria, which would guide us when identifying and supporting artists. Each supported project should:

- Lead to the creation of a new piece of artistic work to a high standard.
- Equip the artist to operate better in their new circumstances.
- Enable the artist to reach a new audience.

We then drew on the expertise from a range of nominators, who identified artists across art forms and in a range of locations. Our nominators included Syrian curators and arts professionals, many of them themselves experiencing displacement, as well as European professionals with strong knowledge of the Syrian cultural sector.

Nominees included artists with established track records and successful careers in Syria as well as new and very young talent, who had only recently graduated or started their practice.

Key questions we asked nominators were if they had knowledge of projects that had been interrupted through displacement. How could our support enable artists not to 'abandon' work? What ideas were artists currently working on? And in addition: what new ideas have been triggered in new locations?

We then spoke to artists directly, finding out their aspirations and ideas and gradually arrived at our commissions. This was a slow and organic process. Our first commissions were offered in late 2015, our last commission not until late autumn 2018.

At time of commissioning, nine of the 19 selected artists were living in Europe (six in Berlin, three in Paris); nine in countries bordering Syria (five in Beirut, two in Gaziantep, one in Istanbul and one in Amman). One artist was not settled. By the end of the project, six further artists had moved to Europe. Many artists moved to new locations more than once during the period of the commissions.

We received significantly more nominations for male than for female artists. In the end we awarded 12 commissions to male artists and seven commissions to female artists.

## THE COMMISSIONS



ALINA AMER - EYE OF THE BATHTUB

In total we commissioned 19 artists to create new works ranging from theatre and dance performances to music albums, from paintings to films, from new writing to translation of poems. In addition there was a small number of projects which received seeding support, but which in the end could not be progressed to a full commission.

Our commissions provided direct funding to create new works, support for events and tours, participation in Shubbak 2017 and brokering new relationships and contacts. Each commission was tailored to meet the artist's need.

Funding was modest, ranging from £2,000 to £15,000. Most projects received between £4,000 and £5,000. Sometimes we were the only funders, at other times we contributed at a critical stage of a project's development to lever additional funds with multiple supporters.

Given the geographical spread of the artists and the projects we had to entrust the artists to 'get on' with their projects and could only offer personal support via email, Skype or calls. We did, however, meet with most artists at least once during their project and attended premieres and exhibitions whenever we could. We regularly brokered new relationships with other cultural partners through our extensive network of European arts organisations. Many artists commented how 'liberating' the light touch of our approach had been.

Our support ranged from 'buying time' to spend in the studio, to funding the hire of editing suites, from creation of promotional videos to research periods in archives, from buying recording equipment to travel support for tours and festivals.

## OUTCOMES & AUDIENCES



SOUDADE KAADAN - YOM ADAATOU ZOULI (THE DAY I LOST MY SHADOW)



TANJARAT DAGHET - NEW WORKS

We are pleased that 17 of projects have created new works which have now been experienced by a significant number of audiences. Two commissions will be completed in 2019.

### THE PORTFOLIO INCLUDES:

- ▶ FIVE FILMS
- ▶ FOUR THEATRE PRODUCTIONS
- ▶ FOUR EXHIBITIONS
- ▶ TWO NEW WRITINGS FICTION & POETRY
- ▶ ONE DANCE PRODUCTION
- ▶ THREE MUSIC COMPOSITIONS

These creations have been shown in over 60 locations over the course of these two years, and over 50 new partnerships were created. We estimate that a total live audience of over 40,000 have engaged with this work over the two years, including over 10,000 in the UK. Additionally online audiences of over 100,000 have engaged directly with this work.

A number of works were presented at Shubbak 2017. But most commissions premiered elsewhere, including in Beirut, Amman, Paris, Recklinghausen, and Copenhagen.

The work has been shown in prestigious venues like the Venice Film Festival, British Museum and Edinburgh Fringe, but also in small neighbourhood based venues like Artlab Berlin. Music has successfully been released on several music labels.

# THE ARTISTS' RESPONSES



IMAN HASBANI - HERE, THERE AND OTHER PLACES

YASER KASSAB - ALA HAFET ALHAYAT (ON THE EDGE OF LIFE)

We commissioned an independent evaluator to interview all artists on completion of the project. The interviews reported that all artists felt they had total creative freedom and the scheme significantly enhanced their self-esteem as artists. A number of artists spoke about how the commissions had avoided a perception of them as 'refugee artists', a perception frequently encountered and critiqued by artists.

Artists found the light but personal contact important and commented positively on Shubbak's deep understanding of their projects and their personal situations.

Artists articulated as particular benefits: freedom; extra time; lack of stress; acquiring new skills; reaching a wider and engaged audience; strategic partnerships; greater power to sell and publicise work.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### RASHA ABBAS SEVEN OF CUPS



**"I go back to the boat I'm living on while in London, and scroll through an album of images I've collected, examining faces of people from that era, with a cold heart and no judgement. I just want to touch the missing storylines of a relative of mine who lived through that period. I try to guess, staring into a photograph of one of his contemporaries, who was a killer and who was an ally."**

EXTRACT FROM RASHA'S BLOG KING OF CUPS

WRITER | BASED IN BERLIN

We supported Rasha Abbas for a residency at the British Library in June 2017, where she researched material of the period of the Arab Union for her planned historical novel. The artist spent a month in London with access to archives and collection material in the library.

Rasha presented the short resulting texts, in conversation with translator Elisabeth Jacquette, to a live audience of 140 people at the British Library during Shubbak 2017. She also wrote two blogs about her time in the UK.

The talk is available on the British Library's soundcloud page, [soundcloud.com/the-british-library](https://soundcloud.com/the-british-library), and her blogs can be read on [arablit.org](https://arablit.org).

Project Partnerships included the British Library.

# AMMAR AL-BEIK

## MUHAMMAD AL-ROUMI (WORKING TITLE) & OTHER WORKS



FILMMAKER & VISUAL ARTIST | BASED IN BERLIN

After Ammar Al-Beik's move from Dubai to Berlin, we supported him in continuing to develop new works for a range of projects. This included works for his major solo exhibition *One to Free* at Haus Am Waldsee in Berlin, and the research and development of a portrait film that seeks to tell a Syrian story through the tale of well renowned Syrian photographer & filmmaker Mohammad al Roumi.

The Haus am Waldsee re-opened after a period of refurbishment in January 2019. *One to Free* is scheduled to be shown later in the spring. The film requires further sound editing before release.

**"The erudite, Zen-like aesthetics of his new works are a refreshing turn for al-Beik, who as a visual artist is best known for his eccentric, busy and colorful photographs; nonetheless, their apparent examination of social and political nuances is true to his enduring conceptual oeuvre."**

**ART ASIA PACIFIC ON AMMAR AL-BEIK'S BOYA BOYA BOYA**

Project Partnerships include Haus am Waldsee.

# REEM AL GHAZZI

## IPHIGENIA (WORKING TITLE)

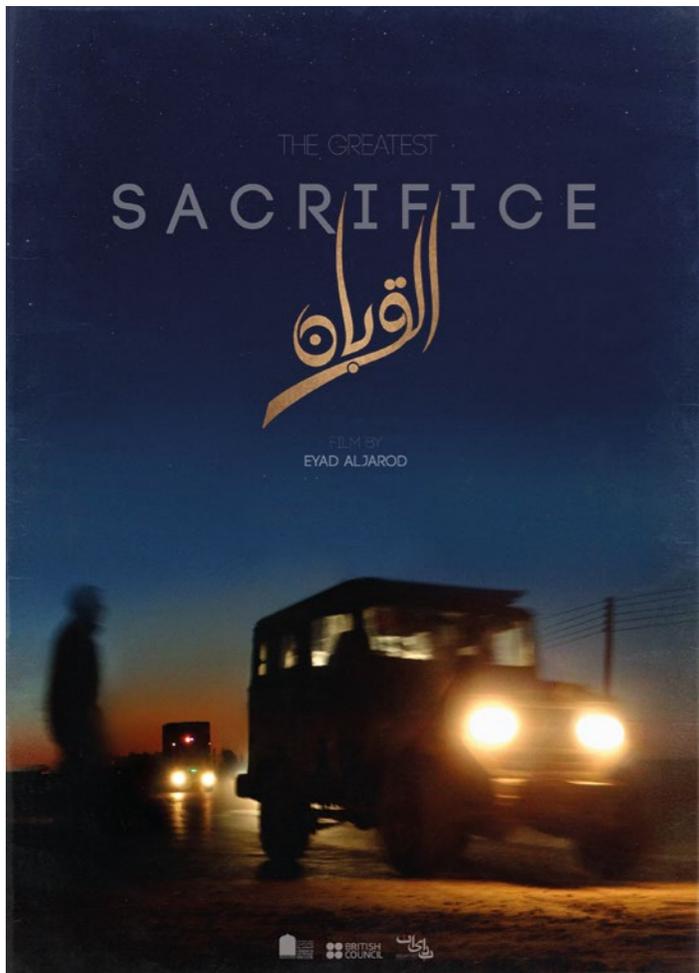


DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER  
CREATED IN BERLIN & WARSAW

We supported Reem al Ghazzi on the production of her documentary film *Iphigenia*. The film follows the story of nine young Syrian women who fled to Germany, and took part in the adaptation of Euripides' *Iphigenia* by playwright Mohammad Al-Attar and director Omar Abusaada.

The film, shot during rehearsals at the Volksbühne in Berlin, is yet to be released. Reem is currently completing the project during a residency at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

Project Partnerships include City Council of Warsaw, AFAC, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw; Volksbühne Theater.



## EYAD ALJAROD THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

PHOTOGRAPHER & FILMMAKER  
BASED IN AMSTERDAM | CREATED IN GAZIANTEP, TURKEY

Our support enabled Eyad Aljarod to both complete his film *The Greatest Sacrifice*, and then submit it to film festivals. *The Greatest Sacrifice* follows the life of two friends Haaf and Daour in rural Saraqib across three years of the Syrian war.

Initially following Daour's road patrols, looking for anything that might be endangering his fellow citizens, the atmosphere takes on a more ominous tone when Daour and others like him arm themselves against Assad's government army.

The film premiered at IDFA in Amsterdam in October 2018 and is now ready for future festival distribution. The trailer reached an audience of over 6,000 people.

Project Partnerships included Bidayyat and IDFA.

## ABDULLAH AL KAFRI FOR THE ABSENT ONES



We supported Abdullah Al Kafri to complete his collaboration with the collective 'Parallel Crossings' (Moez Mrabet in Tunis, Jon Davis and Jonathan May in London) to stage the audio performance *For The Absent Ones*. Abdullah's text is a personal response to the tightening of borders and restrictions on travel for artists.

*For The Absent Ones* was performed at Shubbak 2017 in the British Museum and at Arcola Theatre before travelling to Hammamet International Festival in Tunisia, attracting a combined audience of nearly 600 people.

Abdullah's presence at Shubbak received strong media coverage, including a live interview on Radio 3 and coverage at Al Fanar Media.

PLAYWRIGHT | BASED IN BEIRUT

**"The artist cannot be present tonight. It is not that their feet do not allow them to move or that their feelings and desires do not long to do so. The problem is their identity. This word in English and Arabic implies countless meanings, but, here we will limit it to Syrian, and to the word artist. The artist cannot be present tonight so you will have to listen to their absence."**

EXTRACT FROM *FOR THE ABSENT ONES*

Our partnerships included Parallel Crossings, British Museum, Arcola Theatre and Hammamet International Festival.

# Wael Alkak

## Men Zaman



COMPOSER, MUSICIAN & MUSIC PRODUCER  
BASED IN PARIS

Following on from the success of his first album, *Neshama*, we supported Wael Alkak to create the follow-up album *Men Zaman*. Using recorded footage of traditional music of the Deraa region, and mixing it with electronics sounds, his music celebrates local (sha'abi) sounds with a determined international approach.

While working remotely with a range of dispersed musicians for the album tracks, Wael also adapted the material for frequent solo or duet concerts with his brother, Yazan Alkak, including an appearance at Shubbak 2017 and Womex 2018.

The album was covered in a range of media including Aramco World and an extended interview on alsharq.de. It is available online and has so far received over 25,000 listens on Soundcloud (organic plays). His live concerts have attracted a combined audience of 10,000.

**"This time, with *Men Zamān* I wanted to just focus on being a musician."**

INTERVIEW WITH WAEL ALKAK ON ALSHARQ.DE

Project Partners included: MARSM, Richmix, Cité Internationale Des Artes.

Image: Alan Scaviner.

# Mithkal Alzghair

## Transaction + UK Presentation of Displacement

CHOREOGRAPHER | BASED IN PARIS

Our support enabled Mithkal Alzghair to increase the number of performers for his new creation *Transaction* and tour to five venues across Europe. Performed by a cast suspended from the ceiling, *Transaction* is a powerful meditation of active and passive bodies in situations of conflict. We also supported the UK premiere of his previous solo and trio *Displacement* at Shubbak 2017.

*Transaction* was shown at Hackney Showroom and reached an audience of 1,000 people on tour. *Displacement* at Sadler's Wells, reached 400 people.

Mithkal achieved significant media coverage, including four-star reviews from The Stage and Evening Standard, as well as several features.

Project Partnerships included: Sadler's Wells; Les Bancs Publics (Marseille); Bozar (Brussels); Dancing on the Edge (The Netherlands); Globalize:Cologne International Platform for Dance & Theatre (Cologne); SEE Foundation/D-CAF Festival (Cairo), Hackney Showroom.



**"Stripped to the bone and divested of all unnecessary paraphernalia, it is deceptively powerful dance-theatre."**

THE STAGE

# RAFAT ALZAKOUT & MUDAR AL HAGGI

## YOUR LOVE IS FIRE

RAFAT ALZAKOUT IS A THEATRE & FILM DIRECTOR  
MUDAR AL HAGGI IS A PLAYWRIGHT | BASED IN GERMANY



**"The performance offers a convincing taster of a new play with great promise, made all the more powerful and significant by our society's attempts to silence refugee voices."**

THE SKINNY

We supported Rafat Alzakout and Mudar Al Haggi to produce the play *Your Love is Fire* with an all-Syrian cast. Performed in Arabic, the production brought together for the first time a creative team mainly split between Paris and Berlin, including Amal Omran, Mohamed Rasheed and Reem Ali.

*Your Love Is Fire* tells the story of a writer telling the story of individuals locked in paralysis as war rages around them, with the question of whether to leave or stay being permanently debated and discussed.

The play premiered at The Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen in May 2017 before travelling to Edinburgh for a three-week run at Summerhall for the Arab Arts Focus. It reached a live audience of over 1,500 people and was widely reviewed, including coverage from The Stage, The Skinny and Fest Magazine.

Project Partnerships included: Theater an der Ruhr, Mülheim, Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen, Edinburgh Fringe, Summerhall, Arab Art Focus.



# ALINA AMER

## EYE OF THE BATHTUB

VISUAL ARTIST | BASED IN BERLIN

Our support allowed Alina Amer to resume her painting practice while settling in Berlin, by contributing to the cost of affordable studio space, and her participation in a group exhibition in Iceland. Alina's paintings explore notions of hygiene and sanitation as a metaphor for personal and societal health.

A new group of large-scale oil paintings were first exhibited as part of an international group show *Born In The Slaughterhouse* at the Slátturhúsið Cultural Center, Iceland from June to September 2017. It attracted an audience of 3,000 people. The artists also had a short residency at the cultural centre.

Project Partnerships included the Slátturhúsið Cultural Center.



## NAWAR BULBUL

### LOVE BOAT

**DIRECTOR**  
**BASED IN AIX-EN-PROVENCE | CREATED IN AMMAN**

Nawar Bulbul is one of Syria's best known TV and film actors. We supported him to create and produce a theatre production with six Syrian refugees, including a child, in Jordan. They play an itinerant group of actors, fleeing from Syria and performing scenes from Aristophanes, Goethe, Cervantes and Goldoni as they traverse Europe in search for asylum. The devised text of *Love Boat* merges their personal stories with scenes of exile from world literature.

The play was presented at Institut Francais in Amman for five performances in March 2016 to a capacity audience of 500 people. An accompanying documentary film of the process has been shown at documentary film festivals in Germany. *Love Boat* was covered in local media and on Daily Mail online.

**"In *Love Boat* Bulbul borrows from the grand masters of European drama to send out his message."**

**MAIL ONLINE**

Project Partnerships included European Commission, EUNIC Jordan, Institut Francais, Amman.

Images: Agnes Montanari

## GOLAN HAJI

### A TREE WHOSE NAME I DON'T KNOW



**POET & TRANSLATOR | BASED IN PARIS**

**"Haji's poems inscribe recent Syrian history, underpinned by Kurdish mythology, imagery and folklore."**

**THE NATIONAL**

Project Partnerships included: British Library, Modern Poetry in Translation, A Midsummer Night's Press, Southbank Centre.

Our support gave Syrian-Kurdish Golan Haji the opportunity to complete *A Tree Whose Name I Don't Know*, a new series of poems in Arabic, and work with poet and translator Stephen Watts on their translations into English. The series featuring 33 poems, was published by Midsummer Night's Press in autumn 2017. Our support included the presence of Golan at the British Library for Shubbak 2017, where he read some of the material.

Individual poems and extracts have been published by Modern Poetry in Translation and five poems have been translated into Croatian and published in an anthology in Zagreb.

Golan has presented the collection at numerous festivals across Europe, including at the Southbank Centre International Poetry Festival in October 2017, reaching a live audience of 1,000 people and 5,000 online.

The collection received strong media interest including several features on Arablit, interview in Oyetimes and The National.



# IMAN HASBANI

## HERE, THERE AND OTHER PLACES

VISUAL, PERFORMANCE & ACTIVISM ARTIST  
BASED IN BERLIN

We supported Iman Hasbani to create *Here, There and Other Places*, an immersive spatial site-specific installation for ArtLab Berlin. An inflatable tent-like structure across two rooms, which visitors could crawl into and listen to sound recordings of refugee women in Berlin. The work was developed through a series of workshops with the artist.

*Here, There and Other Places* reached an audience of 500 people over three weeks in the award-winning project space in February and March 2017. The installation featured on the online news site Abwab.eu.

Project Partnerships included ArtLab Berlin.



# NIDAL HASSAN

## ON THE WAY HOME

FILM DIRECTOR | BASED IN BERLIN

We supported Nidal Hassan to complete *On The Way Home*, his feature length documentary set in his home town. Drawn from over 250 hours of footage and shot across five years, the film follows the lives of a tightly-knit impoverished Alawi community in the coastal town Tartus.

The completion of the film was interrupted by Nidal's move to Beirut and subsequently to Berlin, where the artist continued to edit the film. Nidal has completed the film with English subtitles and is currently in the process of applying to film festivals.

Project Partnerships included Dubai Film Festival, Screen Institute Beirut, AFAC.

# SULAFI HIJAZI

## ANIMATED IMAGES

VISUAL AND ANIMATION ARTIST & TV PRODUCER | BASED IN BERLIN



We supported Sulafa Hijazi to create a series of lenticular prints, exploring the interaction between the digital world and the physical world. The artist combined her interest in graphics and animation to experiment with images, which shifted in response to the viewer's movements, in two series, *Animated Images 002* and *Modern Man*.

The works were first exhibited in Projectrum Vera in Copenhagen, before travelling to Rich Mix in London for an extended exhibition for Shubbak 2017, curated by Louisa Macmillan. The exhibitions achieved a combined audience of 15,000 people and 30,000 views online.

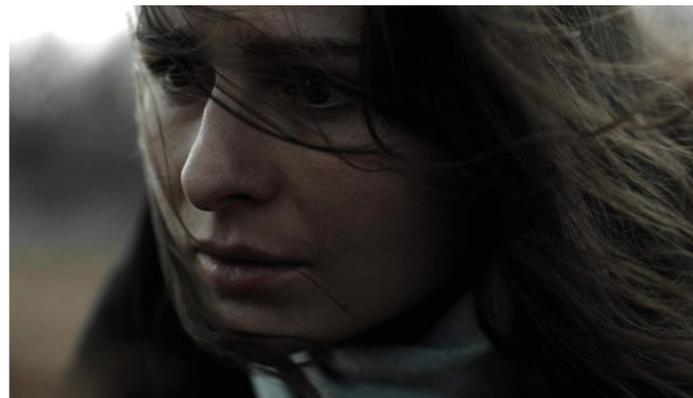
The series received good critical acclaim including Art Asia Pacific, Cartoniana, Roumann and media interviews with Al Araby TV and AlGhad TV.

**"In the works of *Animated Images 002*, the sophistication of imagery and ideas in Hijazi's work noticeably begins to match that of its methods. Whether considered in the context of Middle Eastern art or not, hers is a valuable contribution."**  
ART ASIA PACIFIC

Project Partnerships included Projektrum Vera and Rich Mix.

# SOUDADE KAADAN

## YOM ADAATOU ZOULI (THE DAY I LOST MY SHADOW)



FILM DIRECTOR | BASED IN BEIRUT

**"The film is at its best in conjuring the fear of a society careening toward catastrophe, trying to live normal lives at the start of the war even while bombs are falling within earshot."**

VARIETY

We supported Soudade Kaadan on the post-production of her first feature film *The Day I Lost My Shadow*. The film follows the story of Sana, who lives with her 8 years old son in Damascus, on a winter day's journey through the surrounding countryside to find a gas canister to heat her home. Using elements of magic realism the film shows her search in a landscape scarred by the effects of war.

*The Day I Lost My Shadow* premiered as the first Syrian film selected for the official competition for Venice Film Festival, where it won the Lion of the Future Award for Debut Film. The film has since been presented at prestigious international festivals including Toronto International Film Festival and London Film Festival.

The film featured widely in international media, including reviews and interviews in Variety, The National, Hollywood Reporter, Asharq Alaswat, Le Monde Diplomatique, Cinemascope and Cineuropa.

Project Partnerships included Doha Film Institute; AFAC; Arab Human Rights Fund; SANAD; Asian Cinema Fund; Prince Claus Foundation; Carthage Film Festival; World Cinema Support.

# YASER KASSAB

## ALA HAFET ALHAYAT (ON THE EDGE OF LIFE)



"It is one of those rare films that does not move but places itself in a waiting mood full of sadness, memories and longing for a better life. A very much welcomed essayistic lyrical addition to the many war-filled documentaries from the country."

### FILMKOMMENTAREN

Project Partnerships include Bidayyat, AFAC, Alkawred Al Thaqafi, Carthage Film Festival, Cinema Du Reel.

### FILM DIRECTOR | BASED IN SWEDEN

We contributed to the cost of post-production to enable Yaser Kassab's *On The Edge of Life* to be entered to major film festivals. The film deals with Yaser and his partner Rima's exile in a remote and empty location in Turkey, while trying to process the news of his young brother's death in Aleppo.

*On The Edge of Life* premiered at Cinema Du Reel at the Pompidou Centre on 26/27 March 2017 where it won the Joris Ivens/ CNAP Award. Since then it has been widely shown including at; Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, Festival dei Popoli, Florence; as well as festivals in Ecuador, Sweden, Albania and Lebanon. It was nominated for the Best Film award at Karama 8's Arab Network for Human Right Film Festivals (ANHAR).

The film was featured on Aljazeera and Filmkommentaren, and has reached an audience of over 2,000 people.

# KHALED KURBEH

## APHORISMS

### MUSICIAN & COMPOSER | BASED IN BERLIN



Our support helped Khaled Kurbeh to produce a new album, *Aphorisms*, and play his first UK live concert as part of the opening of the BBC Arabic Documentary Film Festival.

Drawing from jazz and traditional material and composed over two years, the record brings together a range of musicians from Syria, Germany and Africa. Blurring the line between written and improvised music, it has been described as fusing ambient, minimal and world styles.

Khaled and oud player Raman Khalaf played in London in March 2017, followed by a number of concerts in various constellations in Germany, including Potsdamer Tanztage, Loop and Piano Day 2017. His concerts have reached a live audience of 5,000 people with an online audience of 30,000.

The LP achieved a 5-star review from UK Vibe, as well as reviews from The Wire, The Quietus, Le Disquaires de Paris and others.

"Throughout the record light moments of hope, represented by Khalaf's oud and Kurbeh's jazz-flecked piano, give way to Tom Berkmann's ominous basslines of doom. Penultimate number, 'Shamal', is a respite-offering, groove-laden jam of hand-claps and rousing vocals."

UK VIBE

Project Partnerships included MARSM, BBC Arabic Documentary Music Festival.



## AMAL OMRAN

### THREE ROOMS

LEADING ACTOR & THEATRE ARTIST | BASED IN PARIS

We supported Amal Omran to create and tour *Three Rooms*, co-authored with Syrian actor Hatem Hadawe, based in Turkey and theatre maker Kathryn Hamilton. Created through a commission from five European partners, our funding supported an additional rehearsal period in London prior to the premiere performances at Shubbak 2017.

Using skype and live performances with performers spread across three countries, *Three Rooms* examines both personal loss and the wider question of the missing in Syria.

The play was created for intimate spaces and was shown at Arcola Theatre for two nights before touring to another six venues internationally, reaching an overall live audience of 600 people.

**"It uses Skype to overcome the obstacles of border crises and visa lock outs that faced refugee artists"**  
GRAPEVINE BIRMINGHAM

Project Partnerships included Les Bancs Publics (Marseille); Bozar (Brussels); Dancing on the Edge (The Netherlands); Globalize:Cologne international platform for dance & theatre (Cologne); SEE Foundation/D-CAF Festival (Cairo), Arcola Theatre, CUNY, Prelude Festival (New York), Be Festival (Birmingham).



## TANJARAT DAGHET

### NEW WORKS

MUSICIANS | BASED IN BEIRUT

Our supported allowed the band Tanjarat Daghét (Pressure Cooker) to develop new music, as well as marketing material and videos towards their new LP, *-4 Underground*. Formed in Damascus in 2008, Khaled Omran (Bass & Lead Vocals), Dani Shukri (Drums), Tarek Ziad Khuluki (Electric Guitar, Vocals & Electronics), created new tracks over several months and built up their live concert circuit in Beirut and Lebanon.

In 2017 the band played concerts with some new material on an almost monthly basis, including festivals like Nehna Wel Amr Wel Jiran and venues like Metro Al Medina and Mezyan, reaching a combined audience of 5,000 people.

Their videos quickly gained traction on YouTube, with the new video for *-4 Underground* reaching 1,300 views in a short period.

**"From the first second the first chord was struck and until the very end of the show, the band had each and every person in the crowd enthralled."**

**METAL- BELL REVIEW OF CONCERT IN METRO AL MEDINA**

Project Partnerships included the music producers Let's Play Records.



**"[A] triumphant celebration of Arab contemporary culture"**

**THE MAJALLA**

Shubbak is London's largest biennial festival of contemporary Arab culture. Now in its fifth edition, Shubbak connects London audiences and communities with current Arab culture through ambitious festival programmes of premieres and commissions of visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance, literature and debate. We work with arts institutions and partners in London, across the UK and internationally.

Report written by Daniel Gorman (Executive Director) & Eckhard Thiemann (Artistic Director).

With many thanks to the artists, Louisa Macmillan, Reem Akl, Haneen Tartir and others who contributed to the compilation of the report.

Shubbak is a National Portfolio organisation of Arts Council England and Shubbak 2019 principal festival partners are: Arts Council England, A. M. Qattan Foundation, Bagri Foundation and British Council. Shubbak is a registered charity number 1150374.

**SHUBBAK.CO.UK**  
SHUBBAKFESTIVAL

## THE BRITISH COUNCIL



EVYAD ALJAROD - THE GREATEST SACRIFICE



SOUDADE KAADAN - YOM ADAATOU ZOULI (THE DAY I LOST MY SHADOW)

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society.

Operating in Syria since 1947, the British Council is committed to fostering the exchange of knowledge and ideas for the mutual benefit of the people of the UK and Syria. As a result of the conflict, the British Council closed its Syria office in 2012. Despite having no physical presence in the country, we continue to work with a diverse range of Syrians in Syria as well as those displaced by the conflict. Through our arts programming, we work with Syrian, UK and international partners to create space for reflection and exploration of UK and Syrian values, identity and culture. We do this by showcasing the best of Syrian and UK art, developing the next generation of artists and creative leaders, and supporting deeper exchange and collaboration between our two countries.

[SYRIA.BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG](http://SYRIA.BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG)  
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Cover image: Mithkal Alzghair - Displacement, Tanz im August, Dajana Lothert 2016.  
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ENGLAND**

