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## Press Release

*“On the Other Side of the Law”*

Solo exhibition by Yazan Khalili

Opening Reception: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 6 – 9 PM

Exhibition continues until June 27, 2017

Lawrie Shabibi is pleased to present *“On the Other Side of the Law”*, Yazan Khalili’s first solo exhibition in Dubai. The artworks in this exhibition tread the fine line between law and justice in contexts of settler colonialism. Khalili seeks to examine how concepts of law and justice are practiced in contemporary politics and technology, and how challenging the legality of certain practices becomes an act of subversion and justice. *“On the Other Side of the Law”* presents works that delve into these themes, making visible the unseen divisions.

Khalili’s three channel video installation, *‘Robbery in Area A’* (2013-16) departs from a bank robbery that took place in Ramallah – a city that after the Oslo Accords agreement in 1993 became part of Area A. By dividing the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C, the peace agreement allowed for a new economy to emerge and establish itself on banking systems, loans, and neo-liberal structures. The video installation partly examines how geopolitics was exploited by the thieves to plan the successful robbery. These new conditions created a desire to act – to steal or resist – and Khalili’s work probes into how a bank robbery could be read as both.

*‘Apartheid Monochromes’* (2017) is a set of painted canvases that highlight the perversion of mandatory state-issued ID cards and their bearing on the everyday lives of Palestinians. Introduced by Israel in 1949 the ID cards are classified into different colours that depend on the identity of their holder – itself based on a complex set of rules around birthplace and/or residence. Hence the colour of an ID card very much determines the political, economic and social life of its holder; a low-tech means of dividing and monitoring enforced by the Israeli regime. The canvases reference Yves Klein’s monochromes and come in the various exact colours of the ID cards bringing into focus divisions of identity, race, borders and citizenship.

Whilst in *‘Apartheid Monochromes’* (2017) Khalili views ID cards as a widespread apparatus for the assignment of legal identity, in the video *‘Hiding our Faces like the Dancing Wind’* (2016), Khalili questions the use of technology and its tendency to typecast. In the video, he features a woman’s face captured by a camera screen, which appears to confuse the facial recognition system so that a sequence of ethnographic masks interrupts the frame. This work recalls colonial mechanisms of racial classifications and the construction of historical narratives.

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'*I, The Artwork*' (2016) is a contract between an artwork and the art world including its institutions, curators and most importantly its collectors. Concerned with the question of whether an artwork can dictate its own conditions of existence and exhibition. Khalili worked with a lawyer to draft a contract through which the artwork itself determines its "Deed of Ownership and Condition of Existence". With the phrase "I, The Artwork," Khalili vested the contract—exhibited as a photograph—with corporate personhood, assigning to it the moral rights usually held by an author.

In '*Regarding Distance*' (2010), a diptych of two photographs, Khalili comments on the power of the image to abolish distance. One photo depicts a picture of the Dome of the Rock that is most commonly hung throughout Palestine (in this instance it hangs in a classroom) so that the image of Jerusalem reduces the whole city to that of the golden dome. The other shows a remote view of its golden dome viewed from the only spot from where green ID card holders can see it with their bare eyes. Khalili confronts the reality of the situation for the post second-Intifada generation who grew up without the possibility of ever visiting the city whilst at the same time experiencing it through a copied image.

Finally, '*Copy of a Copy of a Copy*' (2017) comprises an installation of 1000 posters of 'Jamal Al Mahamel II' by Suleiman Mansour together with a photograph of a room of iconic Palestinian posters belonging to a local collector. This iconic painting (its title translates into the 'carrier of hardships') was first executed in 1973 and over the decades has been associated with notions of Palestinian identity. When prints of the painting went into circulation they soon became a fixture in many Palestinian homes, leading to the artist making more than one 'original' version of this work. Through these pieces Khalili explores authenticity and originality in relation to the art market and their commodification, the proliferation of images and the use and changing nature of the image as a conveyor of meaning.

The artist and Lawrie Shabibi would like to thank Sharjah Art Foundation for their support in this exhibition.

### **About the Artist**

Khalili was born in 1981, and received a degree in Architecture from Birzeit University, Birzeit, Palestine in 2003, graduating in 2010 with a MA from the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmith's College, University of London and an MFA from Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam in 2015.

Khalili's solo exhibitions are *Blindness of Love*, Present Future, Artissima, with Lawrie Shabibi, Turin, 2015; *On Love and Other Landscapes*, Mumbai Art Room, Mumbai, 2015; *The Aliens*, Transit Gallery, Mechelen, 2015; *Regarding Distance*, Edge Of Arabia Projects, London, 2014; *On Love and other Landscapes*, Imane Fares Gallery, Paris, 2013; *Landscape of Darkness*, Transit Gallery, Mechelen, 2011; *Margins*, The Delfina Foundation, London, 2008; and *Urban Impression*, French Cultural Center, Gaza, 2007.

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His select group exhibitions include *Why Not Ask Again? Maneuvers, Disputations & Stories*, 11th Shanghai Biennale, Power Station of Art Museum, Shanghai, China, 2016-17; *In Search of the Present*, Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Finland, 2016-17; *The Plough and Other Stars*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2016-17; *After the Last Sky*, Berlin, 2016; *But Still Tomorrow Builds into My Face*, Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai, 2016; *A Million Lines*, Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, Krakow, 2015; First Biennial of Photography by Contemporary Arab Artists, Institut du Monde Arabe & Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, 2015; *The Island*, Absolut Art Bar, Art Dubai, Dubai, 2015; *Eye on Palestine*, Brussels, Belgium, 2014; *Love Letter to Mars*, OCA, Oslo, 2014; Sharjah Biennial 11, Sharjah, 2013; *Deep Into That Darkness Peering*, KSCC, Ramallah, 2013; *HomeWorks 6*, Beirut, 2013; *#Cometogether*, Edge of Arabia, London, 2012; *KVS*, Brussels, 2012; *Beyond the Last Sky*, Sydney, 2012 and *Future of a Promise Pavilion*, 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2011.

Khalili's work is in several prominent collections including Videinsight Foundation, Turin, Italy; British Museum, London, UK; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE and the Imperial War Museum, London, UK.

### **About Lawrie Shabibi**

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organizes art historical exhibitions working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presented Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary arts community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has in the space of six years been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: [www.lawrieshabibi.com](http://www.lawrieshabibi.com)

### **Press Inquiries**

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