

PRESS RELEASE

LARISSA SANSOUR: AFTER

ON VIEW | SEP 18 - NOV 7, 2019

PREVIEW | SEP 18, 2019 | 7 PM

ARTIST TALK | SEP 19, 2019 | 11 AM

Lawrie Shabibi is delighted to present *AFTER*, Larissa Sansour's third solo exhibition at the gallery, featuring a new body of conceptual photographic works.

The exhibition is inspired by her acclaimed film *In Vitro*, commissioned for the Danish Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. Staged in the town of Bethlehem decades after an eco-disaster, the science-fiction film narrates the story of a subterranean orchard and its young successor who's fated to never see the town she is destined to replant.

Inherited trauma, exile and collective memory are central themes that transcend into the 15 photographs featured in *AFTER* - part reconstructed production stills, part captured during the filming process. Developed in black and white for its stark, filmic quality, the images are intense, at times controversial, yet also sentimental and timeless, inviting the viewer to fill in their own narrative.

An installation of carefully composed monochrome photographs that echo the two-channel viewpoint of *In Vitro* dominates the show. Some of the works juxtapose alternate views of deserted spaces and belongings – shattered remains of a past that filled the void as former dwellers fled in the face of a natural calamity.

In other instances, the two perspectives mirror or merge into one, emphasizing the intensity of the disaster and its centrality in defining the course of history, with the Bethlehem setting providing a narratively, politically and symbolically charged backdrop.

A number of nostalgic works are presented as standalone images or photographic sequences reminiscent of film negatives. The subject matter of these stills reference the childhood memories of an elder generation - the final generation of Bethlehem to have lived a life above ground; the poets and custodians of collective memory.

The exhibition also presents two photographic works, documenting scenes and aspects of *In Vitro*, captured during the production process.

Linking each of these works is Larissa Sansour's fascination with the interplay between fiction and reality and the ever-evolving merger of myth and history which are defining themes in her practice. In itself, *AFTER* is an epitome of historical narratives, personal and collective memory in the aftermath of an apocalypse.

NOTE TO EDITORS

IN VITRO, 2019

Commissioned by the Danish Arts Foundation for the 58th Venice Biennale, *In Vitro*, co-directed with Søren Lind, is a 2-channel Arabic-language sci-fi film filmed in black and white.

It is set in the aftermath of an eco-disaster. An abandoned nuclear reactor under the biblical town of Bethlehem has been converted into an enormous orchard. Using heirloom seeds collected in the final days before the apocalypse, a group of scientists are preparing to replant the soil above.

In the hospital wing of the underground compound, the orchard's ailing founder, played by Hiam Abbass, is on her deathbed, as the younger Alia, played by Maisa Abd Elhadi, comes to visit her. Alia is born underground as part of a comprehensive cloning program and has never seen the town she's destined to rebuild.

The talk between the two scientists soon evolves into an intimate dialogue about memory, exile and nostalgia. Central to their discussion is the intricate relationship between past, present and future, with the Bethlehem setting providing a narratively, politically and symbolically charged backdrop.

CREDITS

In Vitro, 2-Channel Film, 2019

Featuring:

Hiam Abbass

Maisa Abd Elhadi

Marah Abu Srouf

Producer: Ali Roche

Line Producer (Palestine): May Odeh

Director of Photography: Anna Valdez Hanks

Lighting Gaffer: Carolina Schmidholdstein

Editor: Sue Giovanni

Visual Effects Design: Henrik Bach Christensen

Original Music: Niklas Schak

Supervising Sound Editor: Tom Sedgwick

Sound Design: Ben Hurd

Colourist: Jason R. Moffat

Costume Designer: Anne Sofie Madsen

Costume Supervisor: Isabelle Cook

Makeup and Hair Designer: Susana Mota

1st Assistant Director (UK): Ruaidhri Ryan

1st Assistant Director (Palestine): Karam Ali

Production Manager (Palestine): Sophia Harb

DANISH PAVILION

58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia

May 11 - November 24, 2019

Larissa Sansour: Heirloom

danishpavilion.org

LARISSA SANSOUR

Larissa Sansour was born in 1973 in East Jerusalem. She studied Fine Art in Copenhagen, London and New York. Her work is interdisciplinary and uses film, photography, installation and sculpture.

Sansour has had several major solo shows internationally. Most recently she presented *Heirloom*, an exhibition curated by Nat Muller for the Danish Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. Previously, her *Sci-Fi Trilogy* has been shown at Dar El-Nimer for Arts and Culture. Her work *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* has been exhibited in Liverpool, Rome, Cardiff, Copenhagen, Nottingham, Dubai, Madrid and London, while her *Nation Estate* show has been presented in Rome, Jerusalem, Copenhagen, Wolverhampton, Turku and Paris.

Her works are part of notable collections including the Wolverhampton Gallery, UK; the Imperial War Museum, UK; Louis Vuitton Collection, France, the Carlsberg Foundation, Denmark; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark; N.B.K., Germany; Nadour, Germany; Salsali Private Museum, UAE and the Barjeel Foundation, UAE.

In 2016, she was awarded the Guanajuato International Film Festival (GIFF) Award for *In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain*, in the Best Experimental Short Film category. In 2015, her aforementioned sci-fi short film was nominated for the Muhr Short Competition organised by the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF). She is the beneficiary of a grant from Arab Fund for Art & Culture and financial support for *In The Future, They Ate From The Finest Porcelain*, from The Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (FLAMIN) a film she produced and co-directed with Soren Lind. She was invited as an artist in residence with the Moving Museum, Istanbul for three weeks in September 2014.

Larissa Sansour lives and works in London.

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 seven years been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

FOR GALLERY INFORMATION

lawrieshabibi.com

FOR IMAGES AND PRESS INFORMATION

Diana Stellman

diana@lawrieshabibi.com

+971(0) 4346 9906