

Nottingham art gallery welcomes sci-fi exhibition

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By Mark Patterson



Larissa Sansour sets course for a political final frontier

There has been some science fiction at [New Art Exchange](#), but not much, so the new show there by the Jerusalem artist Larissa Sansour is breaking new ground for the Hyson Green gallery.

It's been said that science fiction isn't really about science, spaceships and all that stuff, but is rather concerned with exploring contemporary issues in unusual situations. If so, Sansour's [art](#) illustrates this point well.

Her "issue" is Palestine and the Palestinians' losing fight with Israel to retain its territory against Israeli incursions and settler colonisation.

Her vehicles for this include toy astronaut figures and several SF-inspired films including *A Space Exodus*, which nods to Stanley Kubrick's 1969 fantasy but replaces the male astronauts with a female Palestinian astronaut who travels to the far reaches of the universe to claim land for her nation.

In another film, *Nation Estate*, Sansour takes the issue of the Palestinians' diminishing claim on land to a ridiculous extreme by housing the entire nation in a skyscraper where each floor is dedicated to a Palestinian city.



A third film, *In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain*, takes the land claim issue in yet another direction by imagining a resistance group which buries elaborate porcelain so that it can prove the past existence of an entirely fictional civilisation following a looming apocalypse.

Thus, via archaeology and Sansour's striking CGI landscapes, the group aims to plant evidence for a fabricated culture which can retrospectively lay claim to territory.

This is, we understand, a sophisticated critique of Israeli claims on the ancient landscape of Palestine.

Sansour's little astronaut figures, all carrying the Palestinian colours on their spacesuits, also swarm across the exhibition, wry little warriors against the juggernaut of the Israeli narrative of history.

Sansour's exhibition, which begins on Thursday, is the only new show to open at Nottingham's larger galleries next week.



Then, after this brief blank period, some other new shows start. Nottingham Contemporary, for example, ushers in the new year with *Monuments Should Not Be Trusted*, which brings together work by 30 artists from the former nation of Yugoslavia. That opens on January 15.

[Nottingham Trent University's](#) Bonington Gallery begins 2016 with *Performing Drawology* in which eight artists will take turns to produce a "unique and unplanned artwork" on the gallery's blank walls.

The exhibition is being curated by humhyphenhum, a collaboration between NTU lecturer Deborah Harty and Phil Sawdon of Loughborough University.

"It's very experimental, and we have no way of being able to foresee what's going to happen," said Harty.

"Phil and I asked each artist to bring their drawing toolkit with them, but have left it completely open as to how it manifests in the gallery. It could be a major success or a complete disaster – that's the risk we're taking. We're not sure what's going to be left behind when it's all finished."

This event also opens on January 15.

Read more: <http://www.nottinghampost.com/Nottingham-art-gallery-welcomes-sci-fi-exhibition/story-28484483-detail/story.html#ixzz3x1hGS6jW>