

Press Release

18. august 2016

Alexandra Sophia Handal *Memory Flows like the Tide at Dusk*

Opening

Friday 2 September 5 p.m.

Speeches by Museum Director Birgitte Kirkhoff Eriksen
& Curator Alia Rayyan
Food, wine & beer

Exhibition Period

3 September – 22 December 2016



In the 90's Alexandra Sophia Handal met a Palestinian refugee in New York, who showed her a real estate advertisement featuring his own family's expropriated home in West Jerusalem - repackaged and marketed as "Arab-style" to a Jewish Israeli population. On the surface the advertisement looked ordinary but upon a closer look it became evident that the traumatic Palestinian history was seemingly wiped away by the Israeli marketing rhetoric. Houses that many Palestinian refugees still hold the keys to but never have been able to return to.

This encounter made a strong impact on Handal and led her to conduct historical research with 28 Palestinian refugees and exiles from West Jerusalem, exploring the social and cultural life in the city before their mass exodus. Handal's extensive fieldwork conducted over the course of 9 years is deeply rooted in individual experiences that reveal the story of a city divided by physical zones and mental borders. This material served to create a wide variety of works including a web intervention, films and works-on-paper, making use of painting, drawing, printmaking and photography. *Memory Flows like the Tide at Dusk* brings together for the first time this body of work in its entirety at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The landmark work in the exhibition, *Dream Homes Property Consultants (DHPC)*, is a real estate agency website that appears to feature houses in West Jerusalem to an exclusively Israeli Jewish clientele. Yet, a few clicks into the site another reality unfolds, separating it from a typical agency. Palestinian stories and memories of displacement and dispossession emerge through a multi-faceted visual language. *DHPC* is an assemblage of individual stories that provide a collective portrait of loss, forming an archive. It makes visible the Palestinian history of Jerusalem that is facing erasure by Israel since 1948 when the city became divided into an eastern and western part.

In this body of work, Handal combines personal memories and experiences with a poetic approach, creating new knowledge of what seems so easily forgotten in the context of this enduring conflict.

Since 2004, Handal works between Palestine and Europe, spending the first ten years in London, subsequently moving momentarily to Amsterdam before setting-up her atelier in Berlin. Originally from Bethlehem, Palestine, Handal spent her childhood in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, her adolescence in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and was educated in the US and UK.

Memory Flows like the Tide at Dusk is curated by Alia Rayyan, Director of Al Hoash, an exhibition space for Palestinian art in East Jerusalem.

A richly illustrated catalogue will be published accompanying the exhibition featuring a conversation between Alexandra Sophia Handal and curator Alia Rayyan, and texts by cultural anthropologist Chiara De Cesari and media historian William Uricchio.

Link to Dream Homes Property Consultants (DHPC):
<http://www.dreamhomespropertyconsultants.com/>

The exhibition is part of Images 16 and realised in cooperation with the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (CKU). Supported by the Danish Arts Foundation.

Images 16 presents contemporary visual art from Africa, Asia and the Middle East focusing on global challenges and the role of the artist in society. More than 30 exhibitions and events in 16 cities in Denmark have been realised in cooperation between 25 cultural institutions, the municipality of Holbæk, 16 international curators and the Centre for Culture & Development (CKU).

CKU



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(Image: Alexandra Sophia Handal, *No Parking without Permission, Jerusalem, Shamaa'a*, 03.03.09, 17:05, 2009. Giclée Print on Hahnemühle Etching Paper, 40.6 X 30.5 cm, Edition of 5)