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## The Third Annual Cities Exhibition "Between Ebal and Gerzim"



November 12, 2011 to December 10, 2011 - 12:00 to 16:00

It has been known as Nablus, Neapolis, the new city of Vespasian, or the Shechem of Abraham and Sara in the biblical land of Canaan. This city, flanked by its guardians Mount Gerzim and Mount Ebal, has witnessed its own destruction and resurrection twenty-two times. Nablus of the Abbasids and Ottomans is a Palestinian city that has stubbornly withstood wars and resisted occupation. Nablus, or Jabal al-Nar, is where the present and history coexist and where cultures intertwine, leaving their mark on architecture, art, cuisine, and social structure.

The Cities Exhibition, produced by the Birzeit University Museum, is a venue for artists to explore the rich history of Palestinian cities and its relationship with contemporary society, as well as the results of changes in social, economic, and spatial processes and practices. Palestinian society often seems to be suffering from a learned helplessness syndrome that results in people confining themselves to their own cities and showing unwillingness to connect and explore the richness of their own culture, history, and geography. This isolation has caused changes in Palestine's values system, a disconnection from the landscape, and the corrosion of heritage. Accordingly, the Cities Exhibition is an annual project that attempts to draw attention to the variety of relationships between people, places, and time, highlighting the cadence and uniqueness of each city and moving from the past to the present through the narrative of time. The purpose of this project is to go beyond the stereotypical representations of nostalgia and folklore. It juxtaposes past and contemporary art, not only to affirm the uniqueness of Palestinian cities, but also to challenge our ideas of memory, identity, and change.

The Third Annual Cities Exhibition takes Nablus as its site of investigation. The artistic interventions included in *Between Ebal and Gerzim*, the title of this exhibition, endeavour to respond to the city's contemporary challenges by reconnecting current social practices with the historicity of the city's geography and its collective memory. In this exhibition, art is not considered to be the reproduction of existing folkloric or contemporary aesthetics, as much as an intervention into the city's socio-political domains. It represents the challenge of bringing back the collective experience of public space in an effort to disclose knowledge and reconstruct the significance of that which has been marginalised. *Between Ebal and Gerzim* does not brand what is already known, nor does it replicate stereotypes of Nablus. Instead, it is an archive of knowledge on issues of change and transformation. It is also a way of bringing attention to the notion of pertinent contemporaneity in connection with social history.

This year's curatorial directions emphasise certain semantics and synonyms as a foundation for exploring Nablus. Words such as questioning, inquiring, revealing, amassing, problematizing, researching, defining, and defending have been basic tools for the artists to play with and forge their artistic concepts.

This exhibition comes as part of the museum program which is produced to bring the contemporary visual arts closer to the local community

which in turn stresses on the importance of unconfined artistic practice and interaction.

Introducing international visual artists for the first time this year has the added dimension of breaking the isolation that Nablus has been subjected to for decades now. Matters of loss and recovery are becoming so entrenched in today's polemics. Contemporary art is focusing more and more on these universal issues using a multi-disciplinary approach to the process of creation. Also new forms of artistic expression, such as media, installation art, video, photography, and art in public spaces can be easily disseminated and shared and will create more channels for exchange, dialogue, and critique. The event is produced by the Birzeit University Museum in partnership with Nablus Municipality and ArtSchool Palestine. It is sponsored by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) and co-sponsored by Riwaq, the Goethe Institute, the French Cultural Centre and the British Council.

The Exhibition was curated by Vera Tamari and Yazid Anani.

Location: First Phase of the project was held as interventions in the public spaces in the city of Nablus.

The second phase was implemented as indoor works at Birzeit University Museum.Main Gallery

**[At the Mill, I saw you at the Mill \(/mill-i-saw-you-mill-0?width=937&height=900\)](#)**  
**[Sliman Mansour \(/artists/sliman-mansour\)](#)**

News - A huge explosion was witnessed last night, just after midnight due to a fire in the building of the Old Mill located in Jafa Street in the city of Nablus. The fire burnt fiercely in the 5 stories building causing major damage to the interiors and the destruction of a major section of the Old Mill. The fire brigades of Nablus Municipality...

**[FULL VIEW \(/MILL-I-SAW-YOU-MILL-0?WIDTH=937&HEIGHT=900\)](#)**



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Palestine | Work in progress

