

Aissa Deebi & Bashir Makhoul

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Otherwise Occupied

29 May–30 June 2013

Venice Biennale 2013

55th International Art Exhibition

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Al Hoash, a Palestinian art organization based in Jerusalem, is delighted to announce the initiation of work on *Otherwise Occupied* for the 55th Venice Biennale, 2013. The exhibition is curated by **Bruce Ferguson** with **Rawan Sharaf** and features two Palestinian artists: **Bashir Makhoul** and **Aissa Deebi**.

Palestine has been occupied for so long it is no longer a spatio-temporal entity but a construction of the imaginary: a national designation that includes a far-flung diaspora, a huge population of refugees, as well as members of an indeterminate territorial authority under occupation and even a large number of Israeli citizens. There exist simultaneously no Palestinian state and many Palestinian states. It is the quintessence of Benedict Anderson's classic formulation of nationhood as 'imagined communities.'

Both artists, Makhoul and Deebi, were originally born inside the 1948 borders, in the margins of another state in their homeland and outside the occupied West Bank and the centres of contemporary Palestinian culture, and have immigrated to live elsewhere. In order to get closer to Palestine, to engage in new ways of thinking or imagining the nation, it is perhaps necessary to live at a distance from it.

It is vital that the idea of Palestine is not defined by the occupation. Art is capable of occupying cultural spaces that are otherwise inaccessible or invisible, such as the interstices between intersecting disciplines, producing new kinds of cultural space or forms of knowledge and offering ways of thinking *otherwise*. Thus, *Otherwise Occupied* examines scenarios that imagine the nation outside and beyond the conflict. *Otherwise Occupied* is therefore a means of artistic and critical thinking through the de-territorialization of Palestine.

About Al Hoash

Al Hoash is a Jerusalem based nonprofit Palestinian organization that seeks the development and elevation of the status of visual arts as a substantial and critical tool for communication, innovation, pleasure, free expression and national pride. Our work is based on the belief that the visual arts play a vital role in promoting the welfare, development and independent creative spirit of all people.

Al Hoash's mission is to provide and sustain a knowledge-based platform for Palestinians to express, explore, realize and strengthen their national and cultural identity through visual practice. Visual culture can be utilized to analyze, research and explore the formation and transformation of our collective and individual memory in the process of producing identity.

We contribute to knowledge production and dissemination through programmes that are research based, critically driven, community linked, educational and collaborative.

Curators: Bruce Ferguson with Rawan Sharaf



حوش الفن الفلسطيني
Palestinian Art Court - al Hoash