

To the press conference for the exhibition



## Common Grounds

**Abbas Akhavan, DAAR, Parastou Forouhar, Babak Golkar, Dor Guez,  
Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Hazem Harb, Susan Hefuna,  
Bouchra Khalili, Sophia Al Maria, Ahmed Mater, Nasser Al Salem**



On Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 11 a.m.

In the presence of Abbas Akhavan, Parastou Forouhar, Babak Golkar, Susan Hefuna, Ahmed Mater

Museum Villa Stuck, Prinzregentenstraße 60, 81675 München

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Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Evening opening: FRIDAY LATE on the first Friday of the month, 6 – 10 p.m., admission is free

Fig.: Ahmed Mater, Al Mansour District, 2012, courtesy of Althe Gallery, Jeddah, and the artist

**12 February – 17 May 2015**

An exhibition of the Museum Villa Stuck

Supported by the



Curator	Verena Hein
Project coordination	Nadja Henle
Assistance	Claudia Gebauer, Kateryna Kavunenko, Victoria Schmoll
Conservatorial supervision	Susanne Eid
Exhibition design	Christian Reinhardt, Tommy Jackson, Johannes Koch, Joseph Köttl, Rene Landspersky Christian Langenholt, Patrick Matthews, Ruth Münzner, Andrea Snigula, Nikolaus Steglich, Luca Steiner, Friederike Warneke

### **Catalogue**

By early March 2015, an exhibition catalogue edited by Michael Buhrs and Verena Hein will be published by Hatje Cantz Verlag. In addition to an introduction by Verena Hein, essays by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Achim Borchard-Hume, DAAR, Chris Dercon, Francisco-Fernando Granados, Nadja Henle, Omar Kholeif, Markus Miessen, Salwa Mikdadi, Nat Muller, Diana Nawi, and Venetia Porter offer a closer look at the artists and their works.

Graphic design: Heinz Hiltbrunner, 144 pp., numerous illustrations, in German and English.  
Available at the museum shop; publication date early March 2015; c. 30 EUR

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### **Museum Villa Stuck**

Director	Michael Buhrs
Central functions / planning	Roland Wenninger
Head of Franz von Stuck and Jugendstil Collections	Margot Th. Brandlhuber
Curator / head of exhibitions	Verena Hein
Head of art education	Anne Marr
FRÄNZCHEN program for children and youths	Johanna Berüter
Exhibition coordination	Nadja Henle, Sabine Schmid
Exhibition design	Christian Reinhardt
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**Common Grounds**  
12 February – 17 May 2015



**Press preview:**

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 11 a.m.,  
in the presence of Abbas Akhavan, Parastou  
Forouhar, Babak Golkar, Susan Hefuna, Ahmed Mater

**Exhibition opening:**

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 7 p.m.

**Artists' talk:**

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 9 p.m.  
with Abbas Akhavan, Parastou Forouhar, Babak Golkar, Susan Hefuna,  
Ahmed Mater, moderated by Chris Dercon, Director, Tate Modern, London ,  
and an introduction by Maya El Khalil, director of Athr Gallery, Jeddah

From 12 February until 17 May 2015 the Museum Villa Stuck presents the exhibition "Common Grounds." The rising cities of the Gulf region and arenas of conflict in the Middle East are captivating subjects of media coverage. Both in terms of their content and through their manipulative aesthetic, the often extreme images from these areas shape our western view of the region. Twelve artists counter this flood of images with more diverse artistic practices that reflect on social conditions. Some of these artists – Ahmed Mater, Hazem Harb, and Nasser Al Salem – are for the first time introduced to the German and Munich public.

The exhibition title refers to the concept of "grounding" in communication theory, which posits that communication partners share common knowledge, which allows for dialog to be successful. The artists' cross-media works put this knowledge to the test. Ultra-modern urban construction and mass demonstrations are subjects that point to global aspiration and tradition. There is a notable broadening of artistic image-making to reflect on overriding themes such as space itself and the characteristics and possibilities of public space. Conceptual works go beyond a documentary approach and reveal social structures oscillating between West and East, sensing a cultural continuity under the surface of new urban phenomena such as Dubai or Abu Dhabi. The change in this region can also be seen as a global realignment.

The collecting and archiving of objects, which gain in value due to personal selection and presentation, makes for a subjectively structured and at times also biographical narrative style, thereby reflecting and condensing collective historiography. The artists included in the exhibition conceive of themselves as scholarly and searching; in their works they collect, archive and research imagery that, as material appropriated from others, reveals stories which lie underneath the surface of known historiography. They have adopted a view from the outside, which allows them to subject their own experiences to scrutiny and to process such analytical reflections in artistic terms.

Please, mark your calendars and send us a copy of your review. For additional press information please call us at 089/455551-12 or 089/455551-32. Images for the press are available on our website at [www.villastuck.de/presse/](http://www.villastuck.de/presse/)

**Hazem Harb** (b. 1980) reflects in various media on the correlation of history and architecture. In installations he examines existing power structures and possible layers of interpretation. His wall piece "Till The End" (2014), which consists of six rectangular forms, visualizes both openness and hermetic closure. In the brightly colored, geometric-abstract large-scale works of the 2013 "Al Baseera" series (2013) Harb analyzes habits of seeing that oscillate between influences of western art and tradition.

**Susan Hefuna** (b. 1967) pursues an artistic interest in public spaces and their conditions. In the exhibition she shows the 16-part series "Red Buildings" (2012) as well as the 30-part series "Sharjah Ceilings" (2012). On several layers of transparent paper Susan Hefuna draws a web of lines that represents either streets in the public spaces of cities or interiors, whose structures the artist has studied intensively. The cubes of the 70-part installation "Afaf" (2014) were made from palm wood according to an ancient craft tradition of the Nile delta. As crates used to display wares these baskets connote the public space of Cairo. In four vitrines, the "Vitrines of Afaf" (2007), Hefuna displays memorabilia of four different women. They stand for the personal histories of women who are invisible in Egypt's society and public space.

The role of women in Egypt is also addressed in the video installations of **Sophia Al Maria** (b. 1979). Her first unfinished film, "Beretta," was to be about a woman taking revenge on her tormentors. The leading actress, Dina Sherbini, was arrested before the work was finished. "Class A" (2014) is a tribute to Dina Sherbini; in faceted shots we see the charismatic face of the actress as she is giving an interview. In auditions Al Maria tried to find a replacement. These scenes are assembled in her work "Class B."

**Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige** (both b. 1969) took the real story of a Beirut photographer as the starting point for their multi-part series "Wonder Beirut" (1997–2006). On various abstracted levels they trace the destruction inflicted on the Lebanese city by war. Hadjithomas and Joreige are preservers of images that shape the collective memory of Beirut. The pictures were taken by the photographer Abdalah Farrah and in 1968 published as postcards highlighting Beirut's modernity and international flair. After the civil war erupted, Farrah matched his negatives to the picture of reality. Along with the historical and sculptural process performed by Farrah, the approach of the latent image serves the artist duo to reveal hidden history. Latent images are images on a film that have not yet been developed: they are not visible and yet they are evidence of a time that has passed.

**Bouchra Khalili's** 2014 film "Garden Conversation" is poetic and complex. The conversation between the freedom fighters Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Abdelkarim Al Khattabi (1882–1963), the protagonist of the Rif war – played in the film by a man and a woman – takes the shape of a multi-layered structure that questions historical, geographic, linguistic, and visual premises. Khalili's search for individual histories that allow universally valid statements about our society is also the theme of her second work, "The Constellations" (2011). In this project six emigrants talk about their escape by marking their arduous journey on a map; places that are otherwise off the beaten track move into focus.

Legibility and understanding are also, in a nuanced way, what **Nasser Al Salem** (b. 1984) is about. His mirror piece titled "And Also In Your Own Selves, Do You Not See?" (2012) throws viewers back on themselves. With echoes of Minimal Art and the Middle Eastern tradition of mirror objects, Nasser Al Salem combines calligraphy with the formal idiom of modern western art. As a trained calligrapher and architect he is deeply bound up with the tradition of his home town of Mecca. In his sculpture "They Will Be Seen Competing in Constructing Lofty Buildings" (2014) he uses concrete building blocks to create Arabic writing that only becomes legible when seen from above. The concrete he uses as material adds another layer of meaning to the phrase.

**Ahmed Mater** (b. 1979) questions collective visual memory and its structure in impressive series of works. Mater grew up in Abha in southern Saudi-Arabia and lives and works as a physician in Jeddah. The transformation of the Holy City of Mecca is the subject of two series which are for the first time shown in Germany. The dissemination of images of the holy city and the great pilgrimage, the Hajj, serves Mater to examine social processes. The installation "View Masters and Slide Projectors" (1960–1980 / 1980–2000 / 2000–2020) shows pictures from three View-Masters, stereoscopic devices used for viewing slides, usually of tourist attractions. Bought as souvenirs during the Hajj, these images spread the city's myth. Mater displays the individual slides as photographic prints that offer a nostalgic view of the main sites of the city as well as images of the masses of pilgrims. The dynamic and rapid changes that Mecca is undergoing are go hand in hand with the loss of traditional sites. Mater captures these changed structures in the photographs of his series "The Desert of Pharan" (2012–2013).

concept involves a complex system of reference. “The Sick Man of Europe: The Painter” (2015) combines documentary tendencies and the visualization of personal history. The film’s protagonist is the painter D. Guez who shares the same surname and first name initial with the artist himself. The film replays a conversation between the two. The painter’s works are so-called scanograms, elaborately made copies of the original paintings. In showing these reproductions, Dor Guez is not so much interested in the subjects of the paintings themselves as in the traces of history.

Scientific aspirations, the possibilities of public space, and the reuse of buildings are aspects of the way in which **DAAR** operates. The works of DAAR – Decolonising Architecture Art Residency (established in in Palestine in 2007 by Sandi Hilal, Alessandro Petti, and Eyal Weizmann) address social and political systems of control and separation in the Middle East, in Israel and the Palestinian territories. Presented within the exhibition is the project “Lawless Line,” which is about the 1967 partition of Palestine by means of lines drawn on the map. It shows the transformation of the line into an actual border and the legal and socio-political problems this involves.

**Babak Golkar** (b. 1979) also references spatial structures. For “Common Grounds” he developed a new work titled “Loos Opium Den – Center for Non-Strategic Reflections on Modernization” (2015), which addresses global trade. The historic trade route of the Silk Road, which connected East and West, is becoming a global web of economic, political and cultural goods through container ship traffic and overcoming tremendous logistic challenges. The container as an industrial product holds wares that know no limits. In Golkar’s concept the standard container becomes a site for the exchange ideas.

In the work of **Parastou Forouhar** (b. 1962) the ornamental becomes a sign of totalitarianism. The artist designed wallpaper with large-scale butterfly motifs (2015) for the Museum Villa Stuck, filling an entire wall of Franz von Stuck’s former painting studio with it. Upon closer inspection the beauty of the butterflies is superimposed with details of brutality. Forouhar assembles scenes of torture to create the butterfly images. What lies hidden underneath a pretty surface becomes a nightmare. The artist also incorporates her own personal history into her work. The violent death of her parents, Parvaneh and Dariush, in 1998 is a driving force behind this body of work.

**Abbas Akhavan** (b. 1979) visualizes public space through surrogates. His “Studies for a Hanging Garden” (2013–2014) show bronze casts of plants that only grow in the region between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Akhavan arranges the plants on white linen sheets in a way that evokes an archaeological study and that, in its aspiration to preserve, is at the same time an artistic statement. The plants selected by Akhavan are endangered in their natural habitat, not least because of the Iraq war.

## Artists' talk

Wednesday, 11 February 2015, 9 p.m., following the official opening of the exhibition

**Artist Panel** with Chris Dercon, Director, Tate Modern, London and the following artists: Abbas Akhavan, Parastou Forouhar, Babak Golkar, Susan Hefuna, and Ahmed Mater, with an introduction by Maya El Khalil, director of Athr Gallery, Jeddah

An event organized by the Museum Villa Stuck. Admission is free.

## Guided tours and FRIDAY LATE

EINBLICKE guided tours

Free tour, reduced admission

Curator-guided tour, each Wednesday at 5 p.m.

with Verena Hein, curator, 4 March and 13 March 2015

with Nadja Henle, project coordinator, 1 April and 29 April

Guided tours of Münchner Volkshochschule

7,-EUR, plus reduced admission

Sunday, every two weeks, 2 p.m.: 22 Feb. / 8 Mar. / 22 Mar. / 5 Apr. / 19 Apr. / 3 May 2015

## FRIDAY LATE

Every first Friday of the month the Museum Villa Stuck is open from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m. During the additional evening opening from 6 to 10 p.m. admission to the historical rooms and the temporary exhibitions is free for all visitors.

The museum café and the museum shop are likewise open until 10 p.m.

6 Mar. / 3 Apr. / 1 May 2015

FRÄNZCHEN program for children and youths

For information in the program for children and youths please refer to the FRÄNZCHEN flyer or visit our website at [www.villastuck.de](http://www.villastuck.de)

## Munich Film Museum

Tuesday, 10 March 2015, 9 p.m.

*Bab' Aziz – Le Prince qui contemplait son ame (Bab' Aziz – Der Tanz des Windes)* | Tunisia 2005 | Directed by Nacer Khemir | Written by Tonino Guerra | Camera: Mahmoud Kalari | Music by Armand Amar | With: Parviz Shahinkhou, Maryam Hamid, Nessim Khaloul, Mohamed Graïaa, Golshifteh Farahani | 98 min | Original version with German subtitles

Introduction by Verena Hein, Curator, Museum Villa Stuck, and Claudia Engelhardt, Deputy Director, Filmmuseum

Tuesday, 17 March 2015, 9 p.m.

*Persepolis* | France 2007 | Written and directed by Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi, based on the graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi | Music by Olivier Bernet | 96 min | Original version with German subtitles

Introduction by Parastou Forouhar, artist

Tuesday, 24 March 2015, 9 p.m.

*Je veux voir (Lass es mich sehen)* | Lebanon 2008 | Written and directed by Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige | Camera: Julien Hirsch | Music by Scrambled Eggs | with Catherine Deneuve, Rabih Mroué | 75 min | Original version with English subtitles

Tuesday, 31 March 2015, 9 p.m.

*Microphone* | Egypt 2010 | Written and directed by Ahmad Abdalla | Camera: Tarek Hefny | Music by Bassam Nessim | with Khaled Abol Naga, Menna Shalabi, Yousra El Lozy, Hani Adel, Ahmad Magdy | 122 min | Original version with English subtitles

Tuesday, 7. April 2015, 21.00 Uhr

*Soullam ila Dimashk (Ladder to Damascus)* | Syria 2013 | Directed by Mohamed Malas | Written by Mohamed Malas, Samer Mohamad Ismail | Camera: Joude Gorani | Music by Toufic Farroukh, Charbel Haber | with Gianna Aanid, Izzat Abou Jabal, Hussein Al Shazli, Nohad Assi, Mustafa El Mustafa | 95 min | Original version with English subtitles

Tuesday, 14. April 2015, 21.00 Uhr

*Man Negahdar Jamali, western misazam (My name is Negahdar Jamali and I make Westerns)* | Iran 2012 | Written and directed by Kamran Heidari | Music by Ennio Morricone, Hamid Saeed | 65 min | Original version with English subtitles  
Introduction by Silvia Bauer

Tuesday, 21. April 2015, 21.00 Uhr

*The Iranian Film* | Marokko 2014 | Written and directed by Yassine El Idrissi | Camera: Yassine El Idrissi, Rachid Boughanem | with Yassine El Idrissi, Rachid Boughanem, Yassine Halabi, Houssine Bouhssine | 67 min | Original version with English subtitles

Filmmuseum München

St.-Jakobs-Platz 1

80331 München

<http://www.muenchner-stadtmuseum.de/sammlungen/filmmuseum.html>

### **Performance and Dance Program with JOINT ADVENTURES**

Saturday, 14 February 2015, 8.30 p.m.

*Ali Moini (IR) "My Paradoxical Knives"* | *Hafiz Dhaou / Aïcha M'Barek (TN) "Do you believe me?"*

Venue: Museum Villa Stuck

The exhibition will be open to the public until the start of the performance.

Thursday and Friday, 19 and 20 February 2015, both 8.30 p.m.

*Bouchra Ouizgen (MAR) "Madame Plaza"*

Venue: Schwere Reiter

Thursday and Friday, 19 and 20 March 2015, both 8.30 p.m.

*Sandra Iché (FR) "Wagons Libres"*

Venue: PLATFORM

Organized by JOINT ADVENTURES – Walter Heun as part of ACCESS TO DANCE in cooperation with the Museum Villa Stuck, Schwere Reiter Tanz, and PLATFORM. ACCESS TO DANCE is made possible by the cultural office of the city of Munich, the Bayerischer Landesverband für zeitgenössischen Tanz (BLZT) funded by the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Culture, Science and Art, as well as the Bezirk Oberbayern.

[www.jointadventures.net](http://www.jointadventures.net)

### **Cooperation with Literaturhaus München**

Thematically related events are planned for April/May. For information please refer to the daily press.

Stiftung Buch-, Medien-  
und Literaturhaus München

Salvatorplatz 1

80333 München

<http://www.literaturhaus-muenchen.de>

Cooperation with PLATFORM

## Babak Golkar at PLATFORM

The artist Babak Golkar has been invited to use the PLATFORM guest studio to develop his site-specific work for "Common Grounds." PLATFORM is a pilot project for cultural production and presentation of the city of Munich.

In March part of the program of supporting events will be realized in the PLATFORM hall in cooperation with Joint Adventures. Additional information in the dance section.

### Concert at the Museum Villa Stuck

Friday, 27 March 2015, 8 p.m.

Celebration of the Moment.

Loosely improvised music with Magda Mayas (piano), Tony Buck (percussion), and Mazen Kerbaj (trumpet plus).

Music created in the moment, music that cannot be repeated – a concert for "Common Grounds" put together by Colin Gilder. Mazen Kerbaj, among other things founder of the "Lebanese free improvisation scene," is one of the few who pushes the boundaries of trumpet playing. Magda Mayas, pianist and curator, explores structural, linear and fast-moving sound collages at and in the piano. Tony Buck is one of the best-know percussionists of the independent music scene.

An event organized by the Museum Villa Stuck.

Partners of the program of supporting events:

**film**  
museum  
münchen

**JOINT**  
**ADVENTURES**  
DANCE  
PERFORMANCE  
ART

Literaturhaus  
München

PLATFORM