

Press Release

Gaza hosts its First International Video Art Festival

On 19 June, Gaza will host its first ever international festival of video art showcasing the works of 40 productions from 25 countries.

The Windows of Gaza (WFG) for Contemporary Arts has organized this "festival to open Gaza to the outside world and give Gazans an opportunity to watch contemporary art", said Majed Shala, one of the organizers of the festival and founders of the WFG gallery.

"Everyone is thinking of breaking the siege by getting in materials and medicines. We thought we can do the same with art by bringing it to Gaza. Though this is not as important as food for ordinary people, we believe it is important at a conceptual level", said Basel El Maqousi, another founder of the gallery.

As it is impossible to physically bring in pieces of art the organizers decided that instead of receiving photographs of paintings to print and display video art would be the best way in which to retain the originality of a piece.

The videos use different techniques to reflect the artists' inspirations, themes and concepts including time, movement, and of course Palestine, the occupation, and the illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip.

"Though one of the main aims of the festival is to break the siege, we did not want to limit the videos to this concept. We tried to invite all sorts of themes. The fact that those themes are coming to Gaza contributes to enlarging the perspective of Gaza's artists and exposing people to such art", remarked Shareef Sarhan, one of the organizers of the exhibition.

The festival organizers invited artists from all around the world to submit their entries. After receiving nearly 80 from 30 countries, a committee of five selected the top forty that will be shown at different locations across the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

The festival will open on Saturday 19 June 2010 at 7:00 pm (Gaza Strip time) at the Windows from Gaza gallery, Victor Hugo St. Remal, Gaza City. A catalogue including photos stills and text extracts from the artists' work will accompany the festival.

This festival has received the generous support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Background:

The Windows from Gaza gallery was opened in June 2009 in Gaza City by five founding artists who have been working together since the 1990s when they first met at the YMCA. Majed Shala, Basel El Maqousi, Hazem Harb, Mohammed Joha, Sharif Sarhan and Sahdi Zaqzouq established themselves as the Windows from Gaza after an exhibition in Ramallah in 2003 by the same name.

Festival venues and dates:

- Bethelam, 22 June at the Dar al Kalima College
- Gaza City, 19 to 24 June at the Windows from Gaza Art Gallery
- Jabalia, 22 June, at the Sharek Youth Centre
- Jerusalem, 21 & 22 June at the Hoesh Gallery
- Rafah, 23 June at the Sharek Youth Centre
- Ramallah, 23 June at the International Palestinian Academy

Contact:

For more information and interviews in English or Arabic contact:

- Majed Shala majedshala@yahoo.com or + 972 (0) 599 411 250
- Shareef Sarhan shareef@artwfg.ps or +972 (0) 599 415 045
- Basel El Maqusi basel502@hotmail.com or +972 (0) 599 781227

Windows from Gaza www.artwfg.ps/

Facebook: "Windows" from Gaza for Contemporary Art

Venue Web: www.gfvart.ps

