

La Fontaine Contemporary Art Centre, Manama, Bahrain La Fontaine Contemporary Art Centre, Manama, Bahrain



Encounters in Bahrain | Photographing the Middle East Encounters, an exhibition by Syrian-American photographer Sueraya Shaheen at Bahrain's La Fontaine Art Centre, features portraits of some of the leading lights of the region's art world.

Shaheen's fascination with visual artists began as a child when she lived in an apartment on the city's famous High Street with her parents and other intellectuals in the 1960s. She remembers her parents surrounded by artists and writers, 'who would talk and listen to music and smoke cigarettes on the large balcony into the night', and her own bohemian world remained.

While completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C., her interest in artists and their process led her to photograph artists in their studios and by the time she graduated, she knew her focus. Finally, after doing portraits for a book on Texan artists, what she really wanted to do was return to her roots and use her visionary talents contributing to the Middle East's thriving art scene.

that has seen her travel throughout the region and beyond over the past four years, continually building her archive.

'You generally see art in white-walled galleries or catalogues and changing hands in the marketplace,' says Shaheen, 'but there are real people involved and I want to capture their humanness by photographing artists in their own environments, which so often reflect who they are.'

Her work has featured in *The Economist*, *The Washington Post*, *Vanity Fair*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *Hello* and *The Herald Tribune*, as well as several books. Among them are *Summer, Autumn, Winter... and Spring: Conversations with Artists from the Arab World* by Sam Bardaouil and Tim Fellrath. They say of Shaheen's portraits, '[T]hey are reflective of their artistic practice. As such, they are more than simple documents, but are artworks in their own right.'

Shaheen's beautiful, intimate portraits instill in the viewer a sense of genuine encounter, while collectively they offer a valuable snapshot of the Middle East's art scene and the future will represent a type of time capsule of the region's art scene now.

'Encounters' debuted at the Barbara Davis Gallery in Houston, Texas, as part of FotoFest 2014 and is appearing for the first time in the Middle East at La Fontaine Art Center. Meet eight of the 29 artists featured below. For the full picture, visit La Fontaine before June 30th 2015.

La Fontaine Art Center, Road No 646, Manama, Bahrain, +973 17 230 123

<https://www.timeoutbahrain.com/art/features/62968-sueraya-shaheen-exhibition-in-bahrain>

We find out more about artist Sueraya Shaheen who's behind La Fontaine's latest photography exhibition, 'Encounters'.

It's undeniable that the Middle East has a thriving arts scene and what's interesting about the newest exhibition at La Fontaine, 'Encounters', is it's less about the artists behind some of the most poignant works in the region today. The artist, Sueraya Shaheen, who is Syrian, born in Beirut, and currently works as a photojournalist in New York and Dubai, shot documentary-style portraits of players who are part of the current wave of the Middle Eastern art landscape. Quickly, this body of work gained recognition and has been displayed in the US and now Bahrain. We find out more about the enthusiastic, enigmatic and passionate lady behind the camera and what she does for a living.

Where does your inspiration for your art projects come from on a daily basis?

I get most of my inspiration from the process of something that's about to happen. Whether it's a performance and I'm backstage in rehearsals, or at an exhibition or during the installation, I find that the images with the most to say happen before and after the 'main event'. At least they are the most interesting to me.

I find inspiration in the different stages of something, as well as the movements and expressions of those involved. Regarding 'Encounters', this is a series that I work on together but for each image to be able to stand alone.

How did you choose which artists to portray through 'Encounters'?

Picking the artists came organically and one thing led to another. I happened to be somewhere, and so were they, so I asked. I'd be in someone's studio and the artist would mention another's name and I followed the lead. It's a journey for me of discovery, and connecting the dots, and really part of my travels around the region.

What are your thoughts on the art scene in the Gulf and Bahrain?

Bahrain is very fun for me because I'm always discovering. Just by hanging out at Digimax, which seems to be the spot where all the fine art photographers do the

every day. Renowned Bahrain-based photographer Camille Zakharia told me about it and in turn I met Melchior de Tinguy and Mai Al Moatez – we exchanged w the vibe there in Manama from my experience. There's a sense of an artist's community.

You were born in Beirut, lived in England, the US and Dubai. How have these experiences been reflected in your work? Can you compare the arts scenes? Dubai is like New York City for me. I purposely don't drive. I metro around and hail taxi cabs. The gallery scene is thriving and it's challenging. Every month the v changes within each arts district. In Bahrain, for me, everything I visit... it's more of an inspiring feeling I get. All the old houses that have been renovated to hous and everything is warm and inviting. There is more space around you, literally.

I really enjoy all my trips here and since I stay for such a short amount of time, there's always something new. I love going around Hooraa.

How has the exhibition experience in Bahrain gone for you so far?

I love being able to show this body of work in an unconventional white box gallery. Although all the walls are painted white, we were able to experiment and use a image which made it seem as though we're walking along the rooftops of Beirut!

La Fontaine owner Fatima Alireza is a visionary. She really was able to arrange the images proportionally within the ruggedness of the space. I wouldn't have ever prints but it worked, and now the portraits 'talk' to each other. Melissa van Maasdyk, the other curator, convinced me to write up stories about each portrait whic doing either. So, really, the two co-curated the show and it was a good lesson in letting go.

Where is art headed in the Middle East? What will it look like in ten years, do you think?

In ten years there will be more museums and more galleries if that paradigm still exists! But who knows? All eyes are on the Internet but even that's changing. By published, who knows what would have transpired? Things happen and change and one just has to keep their flow open and fluid.

What else are you working on at the moment and what projects do you have in the pipeline?

I am photo editing and working with a small group on a new magazine devoted to photography and new media. I love photography so I'm pretty much game to ge level. I also do portraits on commission so my whole life revolves around photography.

'Encounters' by Sueraya Shaheen is on until June 15. La Fontaine Centre for Contemporary Art, Hooraa (1723 0123). Visit www.suerayashaheen.net.

By Time Out Bahrain staff
Time Out Bahrain, 30 April 2015

(1,640 views) Filed under **Manama Bahrain**



about :

SUERAYA SHAHEEN was born in Beirut to Syrian parents. She left Lebanon in 1975 at the outbreak of civil war. Educated in Switzerland, she lived in London...

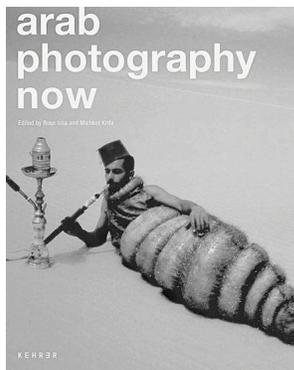


Barbara Davis Gallery

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

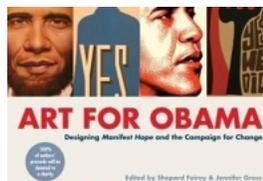
Sueraya Shaheen encounters
in conjunction with FotoF
March 21, 2014 - April 19,

Barbara Davis Gallery



Arab Photography Now

Rose Issa Projects This timely and unique publication is the first of its kind, showcasing the work of 30 leading contemporary artists from across the Middle...



ART FOR OBAMA

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ARTISTS PORTRAITS

Based in Dubai from 2010-2014, Sueraya Shaheen travelled around the region photographing Artists- in their Studios, on Location, at Art Fairs, Galleries & Museums...



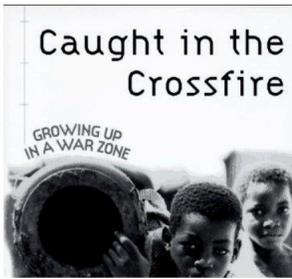
ARTISTS PORTRAIT

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Behind-the-Scene:

WEDDINGS The approach cinematography ... black-the-scenes photograph from the movie industry



encounters

A solo exhibition of artists portraits from the Arab World
www.barbaradavisgallery.com/upcoming-exhibitions.com in conjunction with FotoFest 2014 Biennial,...



... in the 1960s, international museums like MOMI were acquiring the works of Iranian artists such as Parviz Tanavoli from Lieச்சுరు...

MAGAZINE WORK

HARPERS BAZAAR – ART ARABIA Portraits of the Curators for the IRANMODERN exhibition at ASIA SOCIETY, NYC



SHUTTERS



TEDx Dubai

Sueraya Shaheen participated in French street artist, J.R.'s INSIDE/OUT project, displaying large black & white portraits along Emaar Boulevard at the Pavillion...



DANCE

Portraits of the Dana Tai Soon Burghess Dance Company https://dtsbcd.org Images of Juan Carlos Rincones performance & photoalbum commission by Thomas Pheasant



Installation

Giuseppe Caccavale, "Muri scialbati a carbone", Faggionato Fine Art, London, UK James Clar, Scope Artfair, Miami, USA Saeed Khalifa, Emerging Artist Award,...



Modern Portraits

Modern, Editorial, Enviromental, Portraits . Shot on location . Natural light . No studios . Black & White & Colour collage combinations



Children's Portraiture



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Encounters in Bahrain | Photographing the Middle East's Artists Encounters, an exhibition by Syrian-American photographer Suheraya Shaheen at Bahrain's La ...

Manama Bahrain



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... a workshop on how the Arab

On Representation : a workshop



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Texas Artists Today

Texas Artists Today Catherine Ansporn, Marchand, 2010 Artist portraits & collages featured in the Limited Edition Tome This lively, lavishly illustrated...



Design

Francois de Menil OneTwo Townhouses, Houston, Texas " A passion for modern art infuses much of FDM:Arch's work. Few projects made such a literal reference t...



Many Hats Institute



Mounir Fatmi : MIXOLOGY

CD IMAGES SHOT ON LOCATION AT THE ARTISTS STUDIO, PARIS



Sloan Fine Art Gallery, NYC

"+ 2" Summer Group Show with Julia Marchand Exhibition: June 20 through July 18 Reception: Saturday, June 20th, 4 to 6pm Let's face it. It's been a tough ye...



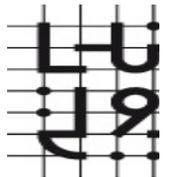
Curator's Office: M Frontiers

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Documentary Film:

IT GIRLS It Girls is a feat film directed by Robin M cinematography by Sue aired on the Women's E



minRASY Projects : International

Commissioned by minR Shaheen travelled to Ra the interventions at the Cultural Center during t

ARTS & CULTURE - Photographer Saeed Khalifa



Dubai-based photogra Shaheen gives us a gln of artists from around t taking photographs of studios and homes.

Oasis Magazine interv Shaheen on her love fo and photography...

Tell us about Suheraya Shaheen? I was born in Beirut, and both my p to travel and have spent time in c ing on various projects- My came now, living in the art world fo bars, bistros, museums and trade t take an Art & Business course at Ss fine to Dubai on my way to Lebanon roots and plant some more, but I e years without returning to the State be here in both a developing count miss NYC, there is Manhattan-like line, the various neighborhoods and the metro everywhere! Plus it's as

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OASIS MAGAZINE

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