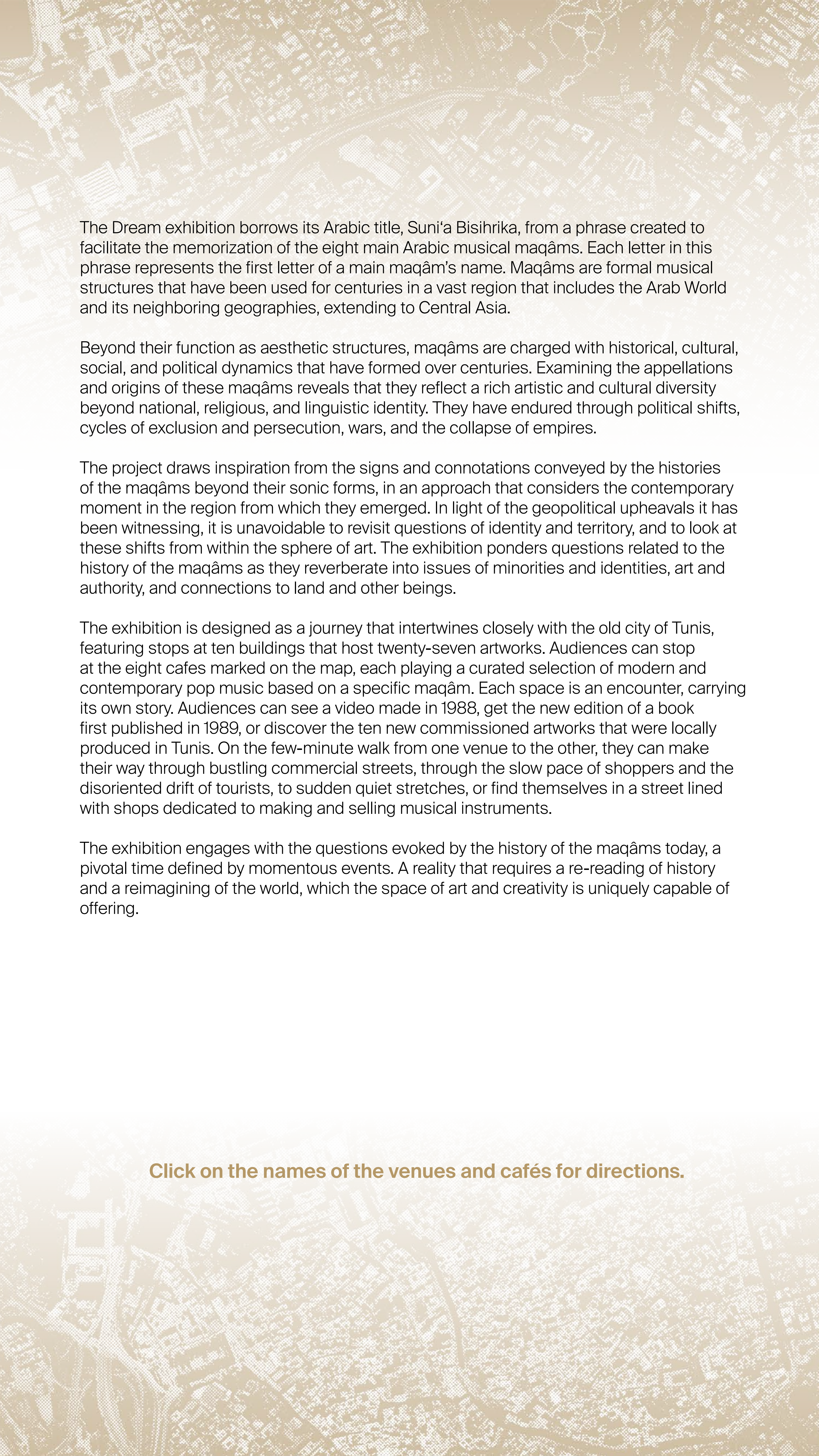


# صُنِعَ بِسِحْرِكَ

## الكوبليه الأول،

### تونس





The Dream exhibition borrows its Arabic title, Suni'a Bisihrika, from a phrase created to facilitate the memorization of the eight main Arabic musical maqâms. Each letter in this phrase represents the first letter of a main maqâm's name. Maqâms are formal musical structures that have been used for centuries in a vast region that includes the Arab World and its neighboring geographies, extending to Central Asia.

Beyond their function as aesthetic structures, maqâms are charged with historical, cultural, social, and political dynamics that have formed over centuries. Examining the appellations and origins of these maqâms reveals that they reflect a rich artistic and cultural diversity beyond national, religious, and linguistic identity. They have endured through political shifts, cycles of exclusion and persecution, wars, and the collapse of empires.

The project draws inspiration from the signs and connotations conveyed by the histories of the maqâms beyond their sonic forms, in an approach that considers the contemporary moment in the region from which they emerged. In light of the geopolitical upheavals it has been witnessing, it is unavoidable to revisit questions of identity and territory, and to look at these shifts from within the sphere of art. The exhibition ponders questions related to the history of the maqâms as they reverberate into issues of minorities and identities, art and authority, and connections to land and other beings.

The exhibition is designed as a journey that intertwines closely with the old city of Tunis, featuring stops at ten buildings that host twenty-seven artworks. Audiences can stop at the eight cafes marked on the map, each playing a curated selection of modern and contemporary pop music based on a specific maqâm. Each space is an encounter, carrying its own story. Audiences can see a video made in 1988, get the new edition of a book first published in 1989, or discover the ten new commissioned artworks that were locally produced in Tunis. On the few-minute walk from one venue to the other, they can make their way through bustling commercial streets, through the slow pace of shoppers and the disoriented drift of tourists, to sudden quiet stretches, or find themselves in a street lined with shops dedicated to making and selling musical instruments.

The exhibition engages with the questions evoked by the history of the maqâms today, a pivotal time defined by momentous events. A reality that requires a re-reading of history and a reimagining of the world, which the space of art and creativity is uniquely capable of offering.

**Click on the names of the venues and cafés for directions.**

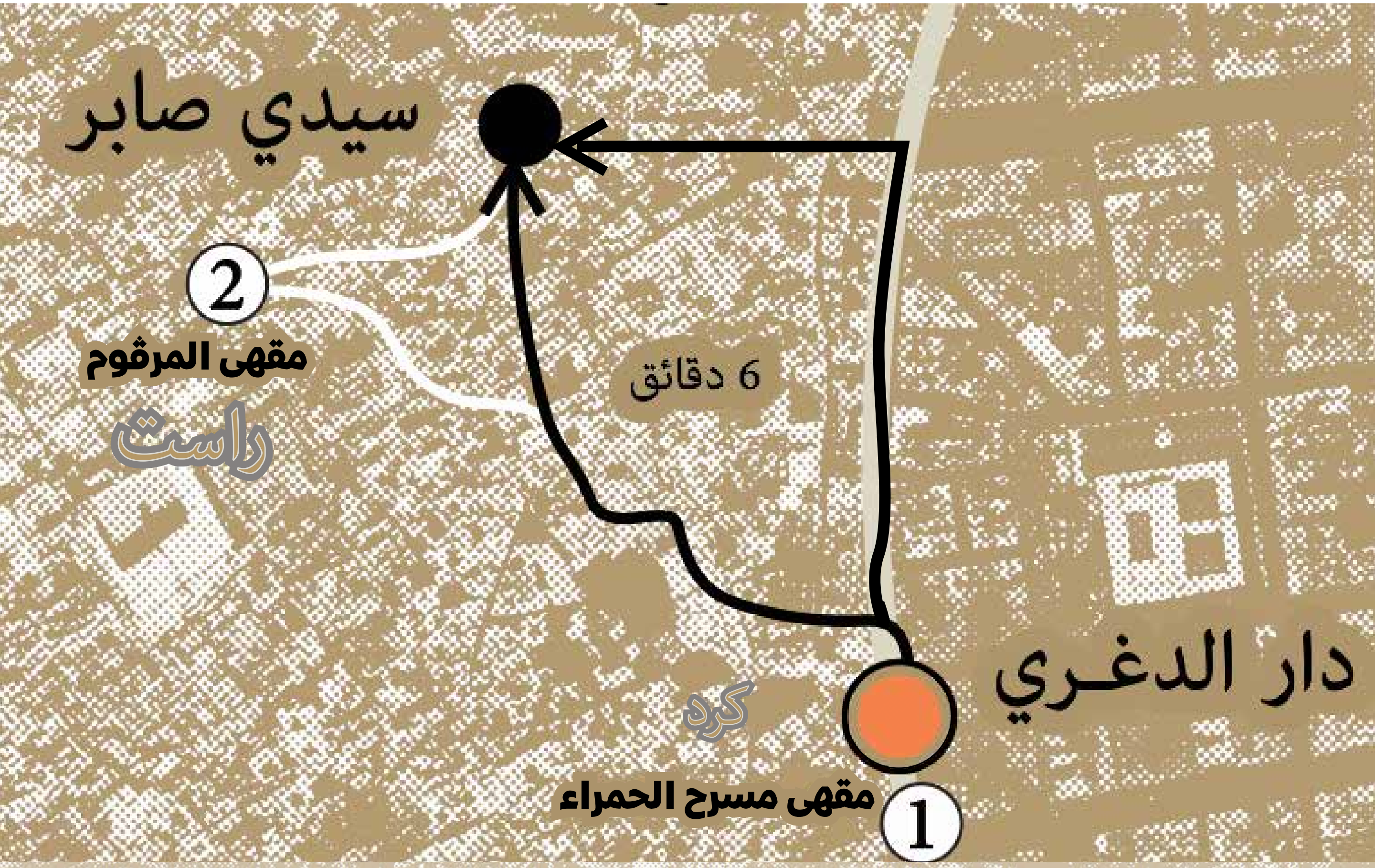
# Dar El Doghri

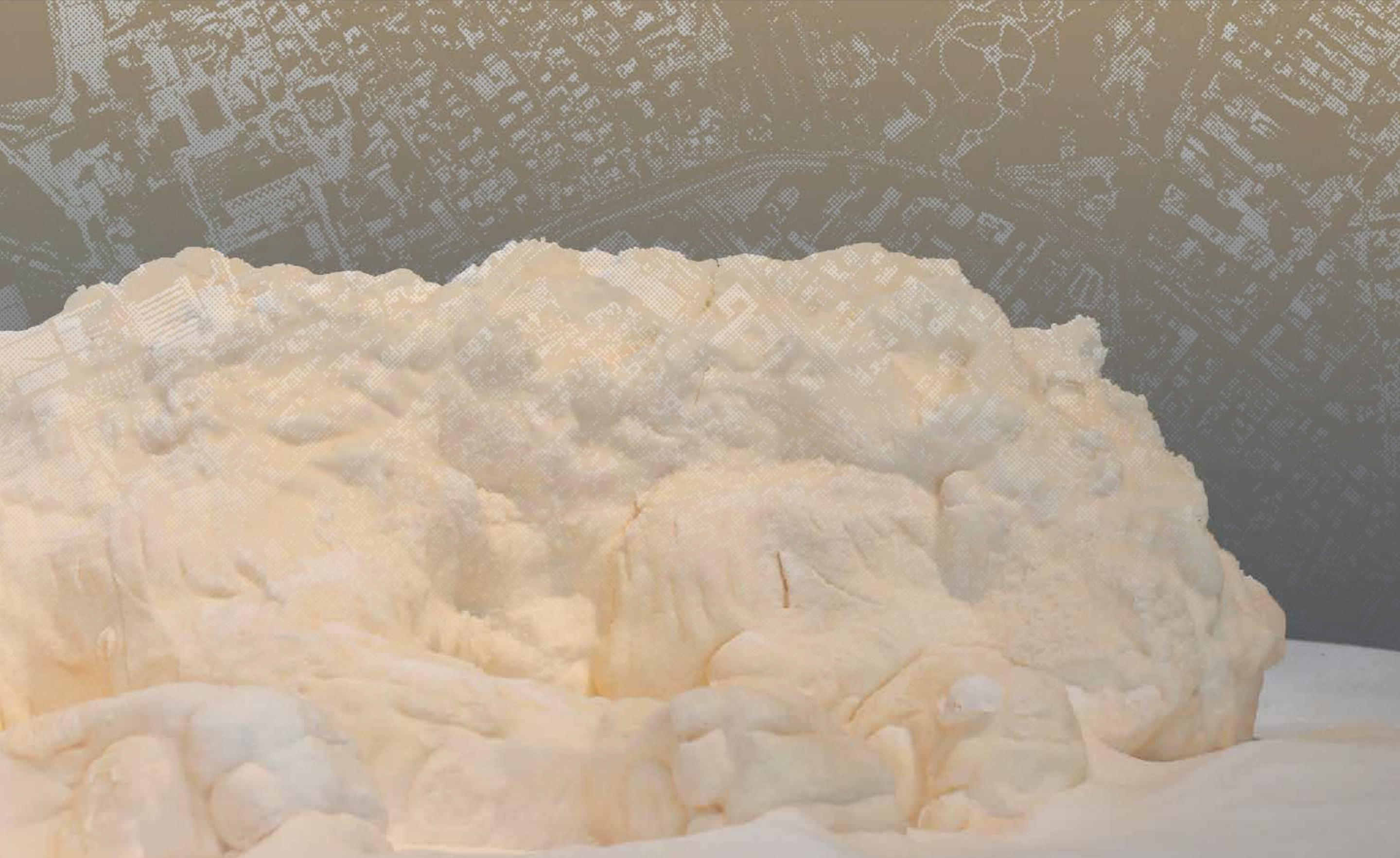
Driven by his belief in the importance of education and the arts for society, businessman Saïd Doghri built several schools in the early 20th century, as well as Cinema Al Hamra and the family residence adjacent to it. The construction of Cinema Al Hamra was completed in 1922, and following a few decades of intense activity, it was closed for fifteen years, before being converted into a theater in 1985. As Mr. Doghri chose to name the cinema in reference to Andalusia, many others did the same when naming theatres, cinemas and music halls across Arab capitals such as Beirut, Damascus, Cairo, and Baghdad.

These names reflect a clear association of Andalusia with art in the popular imagination in the years following ththe fall of the Ottoman Empire. They may also express a longing for a flourishing artistic life reminiscent of Andalusia. In Tunisian popular imagination, the Andalusian reference may have carried a distinctive resonance, as the Amazigh civilization played a central role in its formation and thriving. The city of Kairouan was a key stop along the route to Andalusia from the East: celebrated singer and musician Ziryab, who fled Baghdad in the 9th century CE, stopped in Kairouan before eventually settling in Córdoba, where he founded the first school of Arabic music.

The next exhibition venue is the National Center for Music and Popular Arts located on Sidi Saber, 6 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop at Café El Margoum in the city center, an 8-minute walk away, to listen to songs in maqam Rast, before continuing from there to the National Center for Music and Popular Arts on Sidi Saber, just 2 minutes away on foot.





# Alla Abdunabi

## **I ENDURED FOR YOU**

### **2025**

Large-scale salt sculptures, dimensions variable.

The Barbary lions appear as salt sculptures, suspended between extinction and myth. Native to North Africa, these majestic animals were driven to extinction by 1950, casualties of successive imperial settlements and resource extraction. Ironically, their legacy lived on in heraldry as symbols of vigilant guardianship, forged by the very forces that destroyed them.

The postures of the lions in the installation reverse their inherited representations. Free from their enforced role as imperial guardians, they appear to reclaim life in stillness, returning as spectral forms.

Originally commissioned by 421 Arts Campus, Abu Dhabi for the Artistic Development Program 2024–2025, with additional support for its presentation at Dream City.



**Iman Issa**

**DAS SPIEL [THE GAME]  
2025**

Installation: 10 photographs, 42 x 62 cm, and texts.

**Edition reproduced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

Das Spiel (The Game) invites visitors to engage with Issa's photographic work by playing a game: For each of her photographs, they are confronted with multiple caption options, where only one is considered the "correct" choice. A wall text with a list of clues might be useful. While the game has definitive answers, the artist detected connections between the different possible ones.

Moreover, she perceived connections between other existing texts, images, and objects, and between historical and current events. One could say she started to perceive connections (real or imagined) everywhere.





## Alla Abdunabi

### **FOREIGN BODIES II**

### **2025**

Oil paint on wood panels, 50 x 25.4 cm.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

In Roman North Africa, Lions were tessellated into floors, appearing in the mosaic pavements of elite villas, particularly in sites such as Carthage, El Djem, and Sousse. These mosaics adorned dining rooms, baths, and atriums, fixing wild bodies into ordered, domestic space. Lions were featured in hunting scenes, arena spectacles, and mythological tableaux, often alongside figures like Dionysus and Orpheus.

Many of these mosaics are now housed in the Bardo Museum in Tunis and the Sousse Archaeological Museum. Foreign Bodies II recreates these forms and returns volume to the flattened image. The lions become vessels, interior spaces that hold rest, sleep, and vulnerability.



# Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

## **ISMYRNA**

### **2016**

HD video, 50 min.

Over twenty-five years ago, artists Joana and Khalil met poet and painter Etel Adnan, forming a strong friendship. Etel and Joana both trace their origins to the city of Smyrna (now Izmir), a once-Ottoman city marked by forced displacement. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, both of their families fled to Lebanon, where they transmitted to Etel and Joana memories shaped by the sorrow of loss and uprooting. Revisiting their constructed personal narratives, the artists confront the legacy of Smyrna and question the weight of inherited nostalgia. They explore shifting borders, layered identities, and the making of place—pondering, as Adnan once did, whether it’s “possible to live out of nostalgia, in an eternal present”.



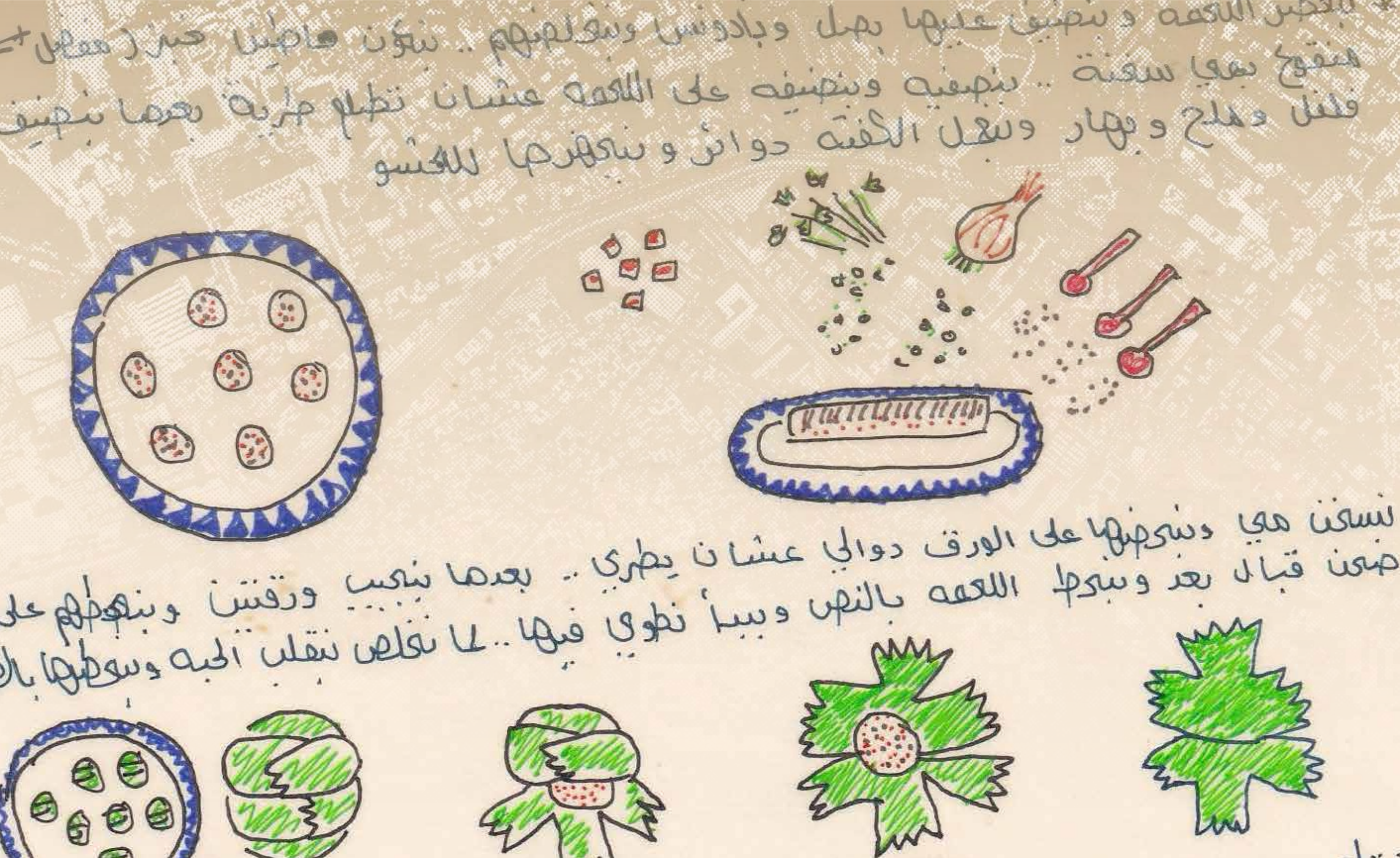
## Mona Hatoum

### **MEASURES OF DISTANCE**

#### **1988**

Standard definition video, 15 min 26 sec.

An autobiographical video work on displacement, disorientation, and the tremendous sense of loss as a result of the separation caused by the Lebanese war. Letters written by Hatoum's mother in Beirut to her daughter in London appear as text moving over still images of Hatoum's mother in the shower. Taped conversations between mother and daughter, in which her mother speaks candidly about sexuality, her feelings, and her husband's objections to Hatoum's intimate observation of her mother's naked body, are intercut with Hatoum's voice reading the letters.



Noor Abuarafeh

## IF I DON'T WHISPER, I WILL FORGET 2025

Publication: texts and illustrations, 140 pages, 20 x 13,5 cm.

Supported by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) and L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025.

A book of letters from the artist to her newborn, drawn from a diary written in 2021. What began as a documentation of her child's growth gradually expanded to include childhood memories and events occurring in Palestine and beyond, as well as documentation of Palestinian dishes learned from her mother. Part of a larger project on storytelling as memory transmission, it reflects on parenthood as a means of preserving heritage when historical material evidence is threatened under colonial power, and ponders the possibility of replacing objects with immaterial practices. The book incorporates illustrations, political reflections, and photographs of landscapes captured during walks with her son. This edition presents 60 letters, weaving personal, political, and culinary memory into a continuous act of creation and transmission.

Publisher : Bao Books

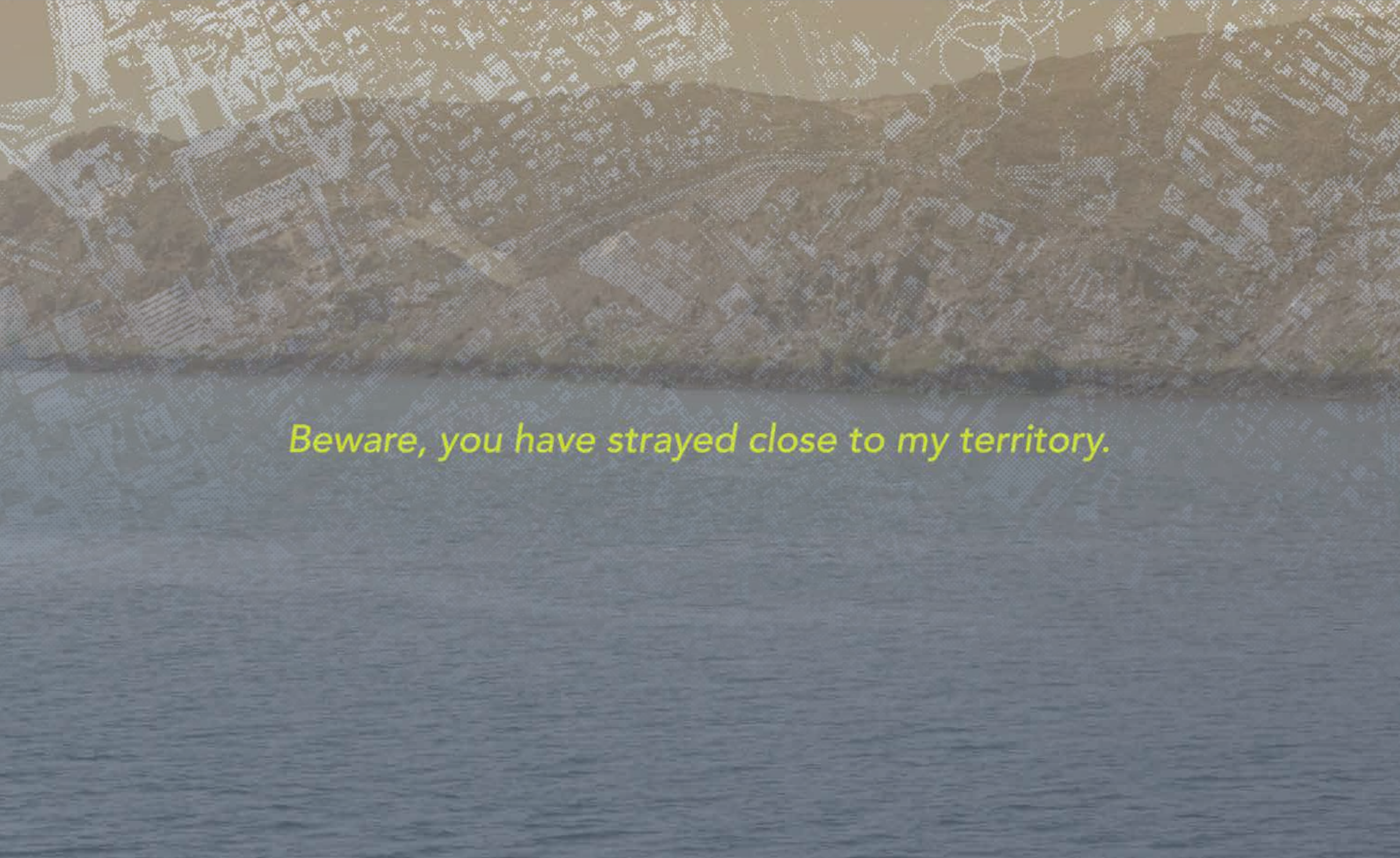
Graphic Design: Engy Ali

Editor: Dalia Taha

Proofreader: Leila Arman

Illustrations: Rahma Medhat

Original illustrations: Noor Abuarafeh



*Beware, you have strayed close to my territory.*

**Philip Rizk**

**LAND LISTENING / ΓΟΥΡΙ-Ν ΟΥΚΚΙΡ̣ΙΔ  
2025**

Video, 11 min.

The short film revisits the dispossession of the Nubian people resulting from the construction of the Aswan High Dam in 1964, which severed their close bond with the Nile and their ancestral land. Their stories are eroding under layers of modern infrastructure and displacement. Drawing on the cosmology in Nubian writer Haggag Oddoul's short story *The People of the River*, the poetic work explores a worldview rooted in deep, reciprocal relationships between humans, land, water, and all kinds of beings.





## Jumana Manna

### **A MAGICAL SUBSTANCE FLOWS INTO ME** **2016**

HD video, 66 min.

The film revisits Robert Lachmann's 1936-1937 radio program for the Palestine Broadcasting Service, where he showcased the musical traditions of diverse communities in and around Jerusalem—Samaritan, Bedouin, urban maqam, rural village songs, and Jewish migrant repertoires from North Africa, Kurdistan, and Yemen. Eighty years later, Manna surveys some of these same musical traditions, which have endured into the present. The film critiques the Eurocentrism of the Zionist settler-colonial project, which sought to erase Palestine and assimilate Arab Jews into its nationalist framework. Amid the ongoing genocidal assault on Gaza, presenting this work has become essential, as increasingly grotesque displays of Mizrahi loyalty to the settler-colony emerge — celebrating the very historical process of dispossession that stripped Arab Jews of their rootedness in the Arab and Islamic world and continues to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from their homeland.

Co-commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation and Chisenhale Gallery with Malmö Konsthall and the Biennale of Sydney.



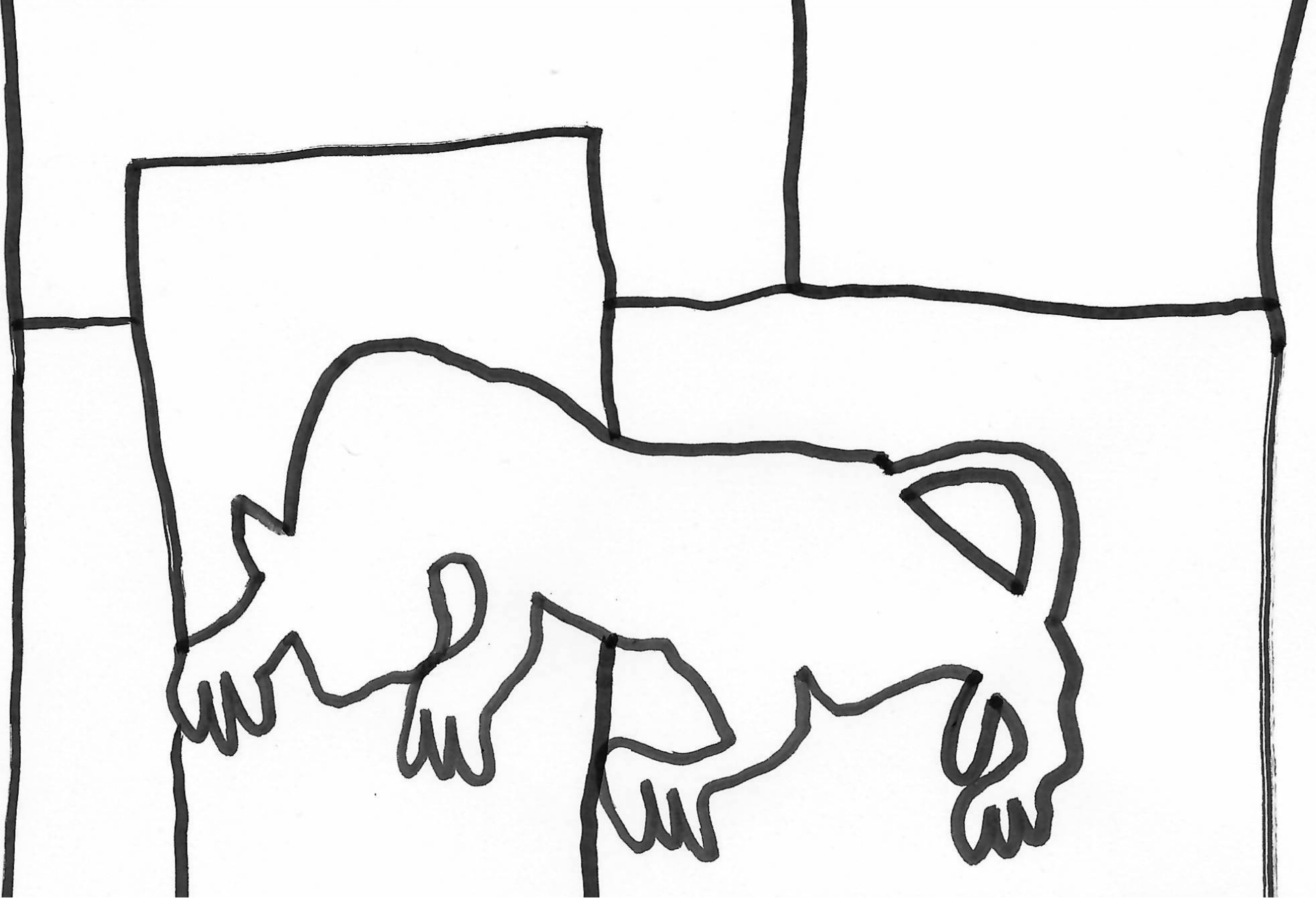
Jumana Manna

## **FORAGERS** **2022**

2K video, 64 min.

Foragers depicts the dramas around the practice of foraging for wild edible plants in Palestine with wry humor and a meditative pace. Shot in the Golan Heights, the Galilee, and Jerusalem, it employs fiction, documentary, and archival footage to portray the impact of Israeli ‘nature protection laws’ on these customs. The restrictions prohibit the collection of the artichoke-like ‘akkoub and za’atar (thyme), and have resulted in fines and trials for hundreds caught collecting these native plants. For Palestinians, these laws constitute a smokescreen to further their dispossession, while the occupation’s state representatives insist on their scientific expertise and protective duty. Despite the legal constraints and the nature preservation patrols, Palestinians continue to pick and consume these herbs.

Co-commissioned by BAMPFA The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, BAK basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht; and The Toronto Biennale 2022.



**Fredj Moussa**

**LAND OF BARBAR: THE LION  
2025**

Tapestry, salvaged textile fragments, 120 x 160 cm.

Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.

The tapestry echoes the scale of a cinema poster. Instead of a printed surface, it is a patchwork of salvaged textiles: remnants from a film's sculptures, made from second-hand fabrics imported from Europe and resold in Tunisian markets, altered by turmeric, iron, and time. Like the film's costumes and narrative, it is built from fragments, stories stitched together. At its center appears the Barbary lion, native to North Africa and driven to extinction by successive imperialist extractivist practices. It appears as a ghost of itself, and of its native land.



# Noor Abuarafeh

## **MEMORY OF THE SALT**

### **2025**

Video HD, 10 min 29 sec.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

The film centers on the mythologies surrounding salt and on its history, long intertwined with starvation. Salt has been used to preserve food through scarcity, and was vital during famines—natural or man-made—as in late Ottoman Palestine under British colonialism, and today in Gaza under Israeli genocide. Footage from the Dead Sea in Jericho, Palestine, is interwoven with archival fragments. A lullaby, inspired by Moroccan songs from what was known as The Year of Hunger/The Year of the Locust, draws from a regional literary tradition using promise to call the morning closer. Sung to children before sleep, these songs soothed their hunger while stones were boiled as a pledge of a future meal.

# Café Theatre Al Hamra

## Maqam Kurd

Maqam Kurd is one of the fundamental maqams in Arabic music, and it is considered among the simplest and clearest in terms of structure. It is based on a tonal sequence similar to the natural minor scale (mineur naturel) in Western music. It corresponds exactly to the ancient Greek Phrygian mode.

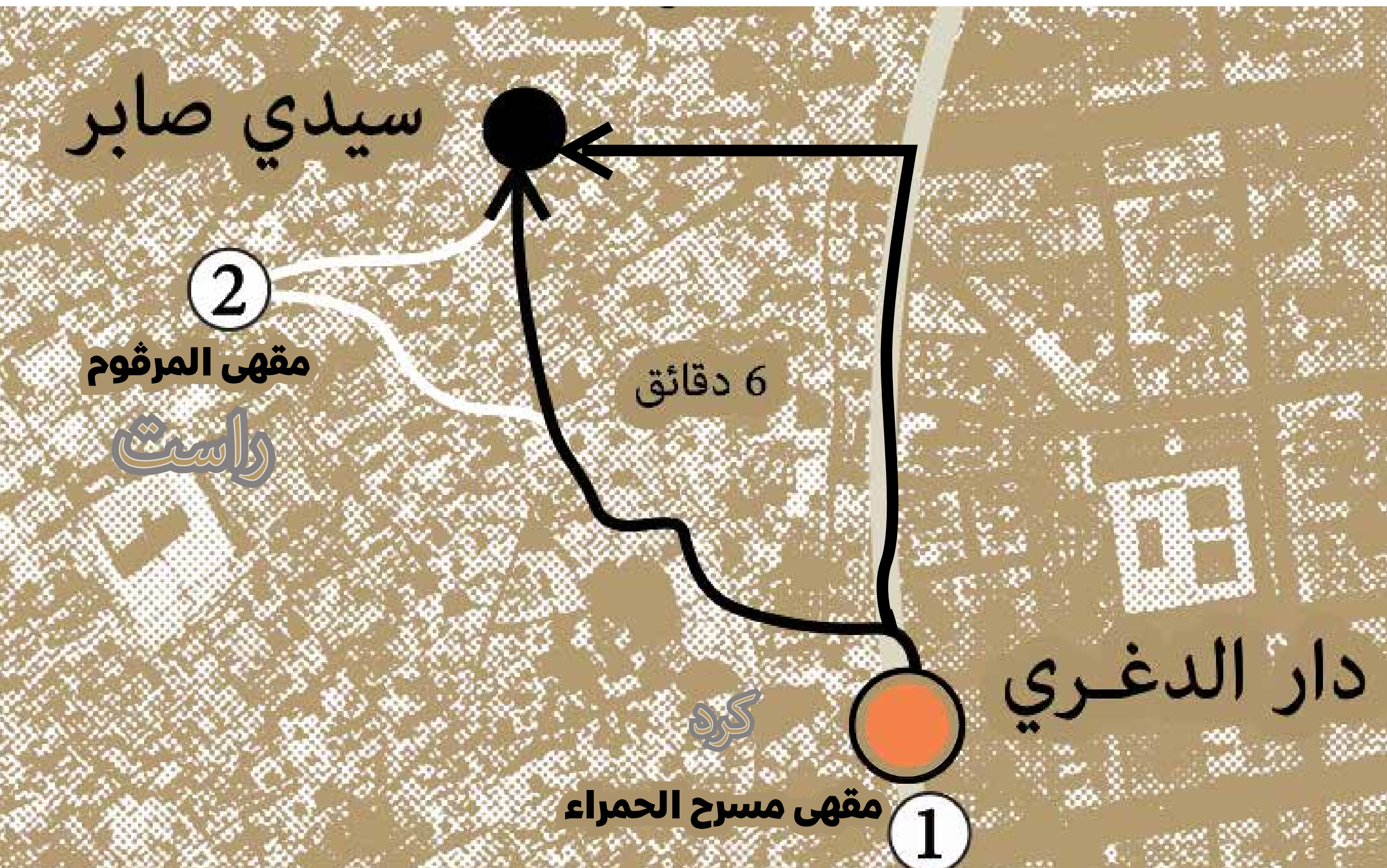
Maqam Kurd is characterized by a calm, simple, and sincere quality, often associated with a sense of innocence, purity, and transparency. It lacks the melodic complexity found in some other maqams. Its emotional tone and exceptional ability to convey feelings with spontaneity and simplicity give rise to a sense of inner peace and tranquility. Some theories suggest that the name of the maqam refers to its origins linked to the Kurdish people and their folk music. Other theories propose that the name emerged from the Ottoman court in the early 17th century, based on the distinctive tonal style of Kurdish musicians from Diyarbakir, Urfa, and Mardin who performed there.

Maqam Kurd or its equivalent is absent from the Tunisian *tubu'*. The majority of songs composed in maqam Kurd surfaced during the 1940s, performed by Jewish singers such as Louisa Tounsia and Dalila Talyana. Later on, Hédi Jouini incorporated the maqam into his repertoire, especially within Spanish and Latin-inspired styles.

## A Brief Definition of the Maqam

The Arabic maqam is a system of scales, habitual melodic phrases, modulation possibilities, ornamentation norms, and aesthetic conventions that together form a very rich artistic tradition. The maqam is the framework on which Arabic music was founded centuries ago. This framework is used both in composed and improvised music and can be performed as either vocal or instrumental music.

The Arabic word *maqam* means place or position and shares its root with the verb *aqama* (to dwell/to reside). Other words are used for maqam in the Arab world, such as *nagham* (melody) in Syria and *tab'* (character or nature) in Tunisia.



# Café El Margoum

## Maqam Rast

Maqam Rast is one of the most important and renowned maqams in Eastern music, often referred to as the “father of maqams” due to its significance and its profound influence on other maqams. The word *rast* is of Persian origin, meaning “straight” or “correct,” a name that reflects the stable and balanced character of this maqam.

Maqam Rast is distinguished by its equilibrium, and it is considered among the most widely used maqams in Arabic music. Its history extends back centuries, with many scholars suggesting that it originated in ancient Persia before being transmitted to the Arab world, where it evolved into an integral part of the Arab musical heritage. Great Arab musicians and composers have employed maqam Rast in the creation of numerous enduring works, both vocal and instrumental. It is also traditionally used in the recitation of the Qur’an and the call to prayer (*adhān*), endowing it with a particular spiritual resonance. Maqam Rast corresponds to the Tunisian *tab’ el-dhayl* (literary means tail), and to *el-muhayyar Iraq*. *El-muhayyar Iraq* does not belong to the *tubu’* of the *naubat el-maluf* (*Maluf suite*), but is found extensively in popular styles, dance music, as well as in numerous traditional and contemporary urban songs.

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The next exhibition venue is the National Center for Music and Popular Arts on Sidi Saber, just 2 minutes away on foot.

# The National Center for Music and Popular Arts on Sidi Saber

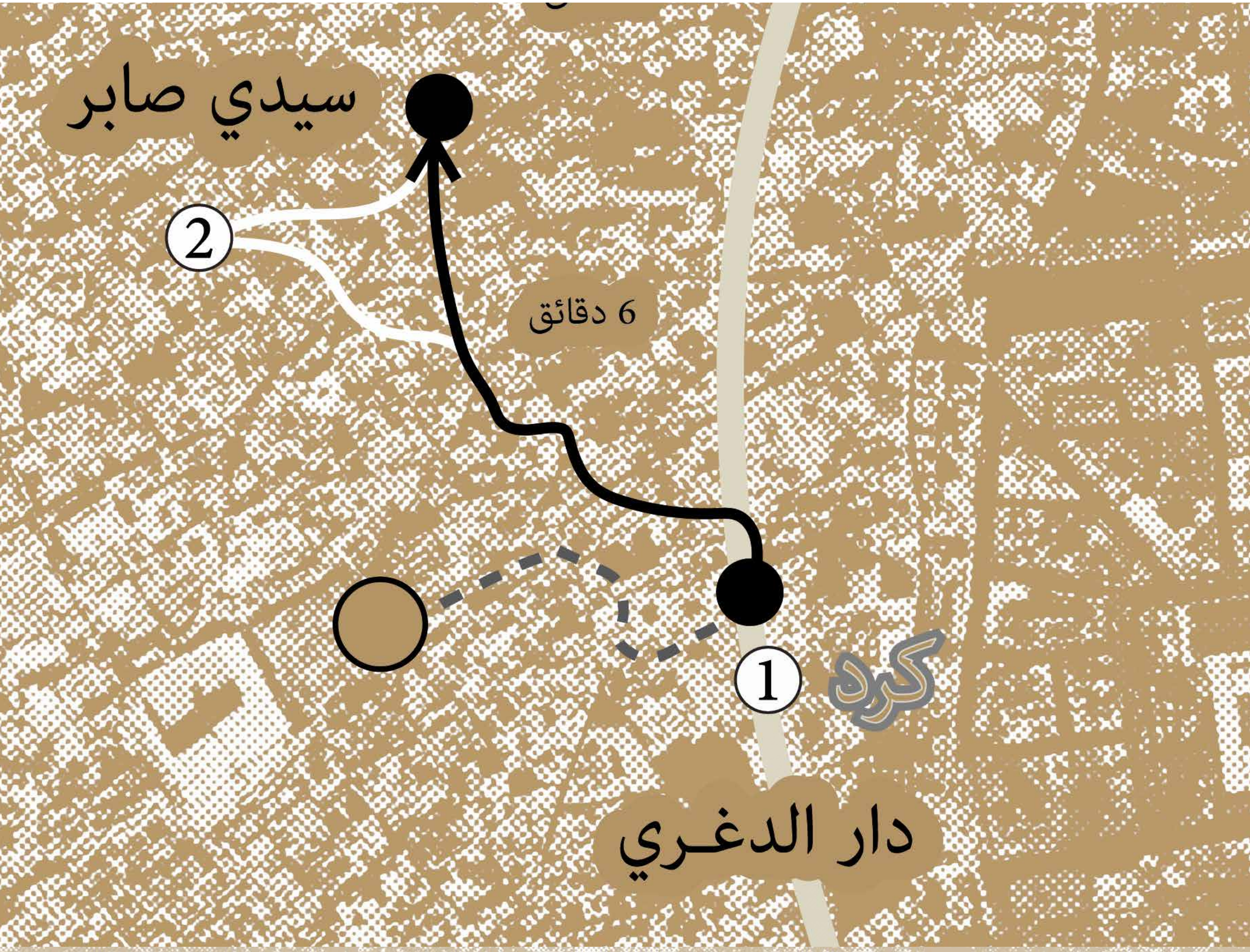
The establishment of a music school was first discussed after the Tunisian delegation returned from the First Cairo Congress of Arabic Music in 1932. The debate started among different sectors of society in Tunis in response to one of the congress’ recommendations to launch institutions to preserve traditional music in each Arab country.

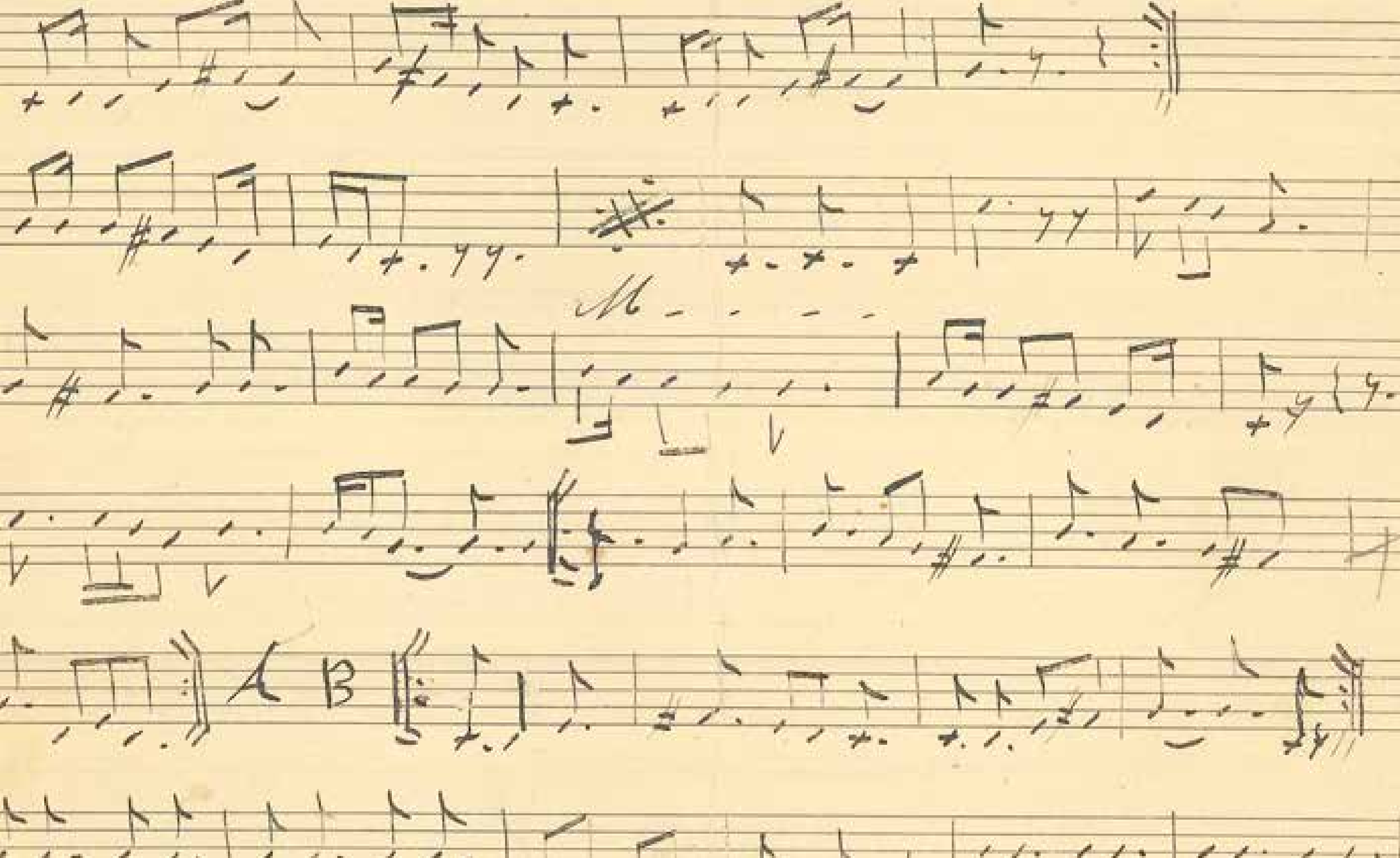
Two years later, in November 1934, following a meeting at the Khaldounia Library, the Rachidia association was founded. This association was devoted to preserving authentic Tunisian music and promoting it among younger generations.

The Rachidia was active for a few decades, providing music education. When it ceased to do so for a few years, its absence was filled in 1972 with the creation of the Center for Music Education for Adults on Zargoun Street. This institution later became known as the National Center for Music and Popular Arts on Sidi Saber Street.

The next exhibition venue is the Middle School on Rue des Glacières, 7 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop at Cafétéria djo, a 6-minute walk away, to listen to songs in maqam Hijaz, before continuing from there to the middle school on Rue des Glacières, less than a minute away on foot.





# Mounir Salah

## TO HELL WITH ART 2025

Video, 14 min.

Co-commissioned and Co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.

Iraqi monologist Aziz Ali wielded his satirical songs as a weapon against injustice, placing him in direct conflict with authorities from the monarchy to successive regimes, and leading to his eventual isolation and silence. Yet, his works continued to echo across generations, summoned during revolutions and uprisings. The video positions Ali's life as a satirical narrator of a history that was never properly written. More than a biography, the work examines the fraught relationship between art and politics in Iraq, offering a wider reflection on censorship, resistance, and artistic integrity.

# Cafétéria djo on Rue des Glacières

## Maqam Hijaz

Maqam Hijaz is one of the distinctive Arab maqams, renowned for its powerful emotional character and its capacity to evoke profound feelings. It is often regarded as a “sorrowful” maqam, carrying a dramatic and expressive quality that can evoke melancholy, mystery, and longing to the listener. Maqam Hijaz is also among the oldest and most celebrated of the Eastern maqams. It was named after the region of the Hijaz (currently in Saudi Arabia) from which it originated. Notably, maqam Hijaz is frequently employed in the *adhan* (call to prayer), Qur’anic recitation, and religious chanting, where it is used to inspire reverence, contemplation, and spiritual ecstasy (*wajd*).

In Tunisia, *tab’ el-isba’ayn* corresponds to maqam Hijaz, albeit with a different musical inflection. It is one of the fundamental and widely practiced *tubu’* in the traditional urban repertoire (*el-Maluf*), where a complete suite is devoted to *el-isba’ayn*. It is worth noting that, among the Tunisian *tubu’* of Arab-Andalusian tradition, according to Shaykh A’mad el-Wafi as transmitted by the orientalist Baron d’Erlanger, there once existed a *tab’* called Hijazi, which was entirely identical to the Eastern maqam Hijaz in terms of its scale (sequence of pitches) and the musical example cited. This *tab’* has since disappeared, while *tab’ el-isba’ayn* has endured.

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## The Middle School on Rue des Glacières

This street was named Rue des Glacières (Ice Factories Street) after the large refrigeration plant established by a French industrialist at the beginning of the 20th century.

The architecture of the Middle School on Rue des Glacières combined modern school design with traditional Tunisian building elements such as the use of distinctive wall tiles.

The first modern school in Tunis, the Military School, was established in 1840, and offered courses in engineering, mathematics, and foreign languages alongside Arabic subjects. Later, the Sadiki School was founded in 1875, with a similar focus on scientific subjects and languages. After independence, the first law regulating education was issued in 1958, based on the key principle of compulsory and free education at all levels.

The next exhibition venue is the Church of the Sacred Heart in Bab El Khadra, 11 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop at Café Hssan on Bab El Khadra Street, a 5-minute walk away, to listen to songs in maqam Sikah, before continuing from there to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Bab El Khadra, 8 minutes away on foot.

المدرسة الإعدادية في  
نهج فبريكات الثلج

قهوة دجو

3

حجاز

سيدي صابر



**Ala Younis**

## **BATTLES IN A FUTURE ESTATE-HAIFA STREET 2025**

Walkthrough installation: 13 x 7,5 m, height variable.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

A walkthrough model of Haifa Street in Baghdad with stories, histories, dreams, and battles shown in its corners and backwalls. Built in the 1980s by international firms, its buildings embodied a distinctive architectural vision, with the street as a prototype for a possible regional architecture. Blocks were named after the nationality of their builders and allocated to specific groups—Dutch apartments for academics, German for Syrian dissidents, and others for government employees. The Saddam Arts Centre dominated the street, its imagery reinforcing perceptions of regime loyalty. The work cascades the story of the street across four decades into a single viewpoint— from the phases of planning and construction during the Iran-Iraq war, to 2006, when US military intelligence cameras captured the Battle of Haifa Street, showing soldiers moving through its high-rise apartments, until today, where real estate listings advertise these spaces in a recovering Baghdad.



## Walid Raad in collaboration with Suha Traboulsi

### **POSTSCRIPT TO THE ARABIC EDITION 2025**

Installation: variable materials and dimensions.

Fabricated by: Mounir Al-Wartani, Tarek bin Mahmoud, Marwan Darbal.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

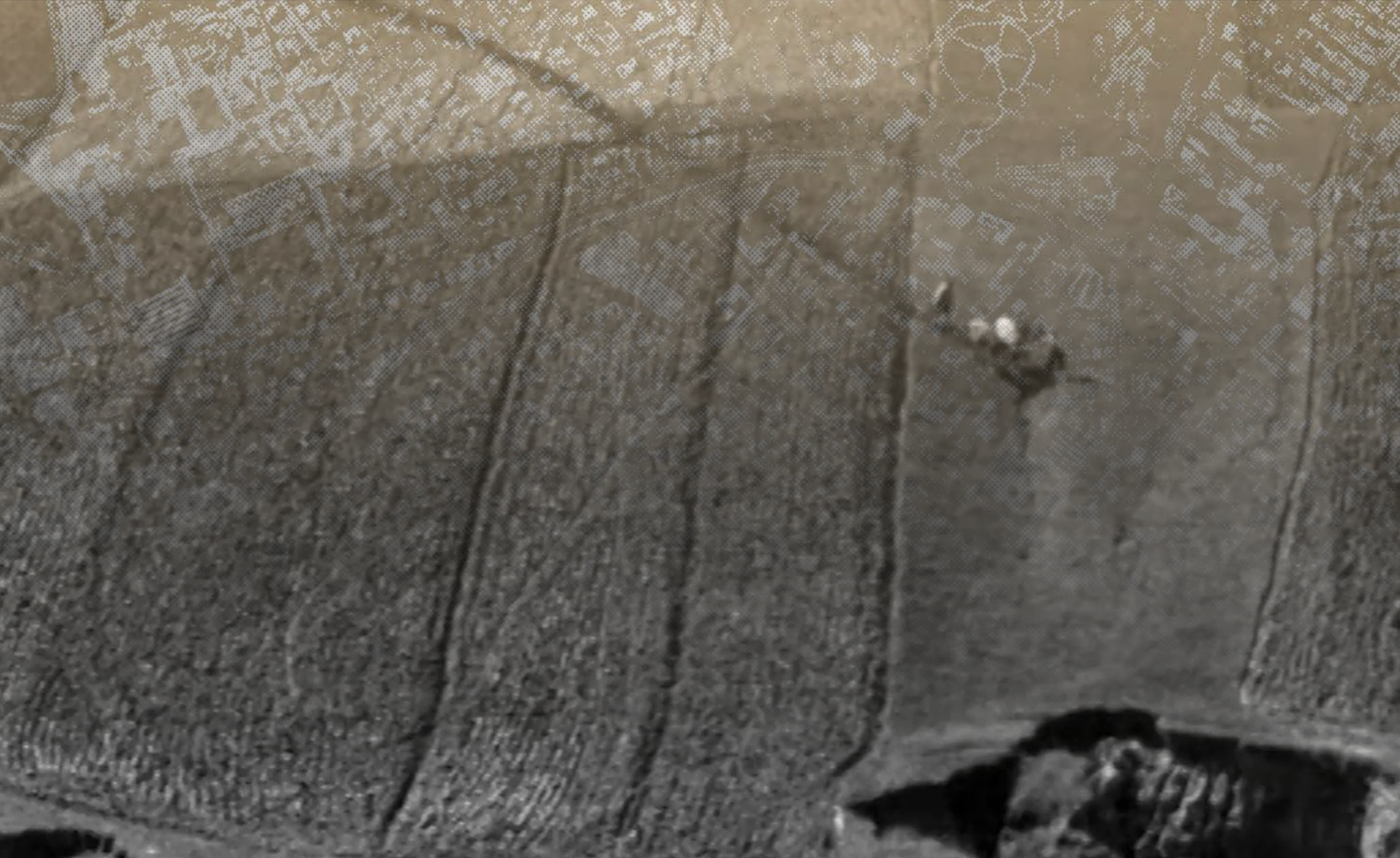
### **DRY RUN 2025**

Installation: 9 inkjet prints, 160 x 215 cm.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

In these works, Walid Raad joins forces with Palestinian artist Suha Traboulsi, drawing viewers back to her evocative six-week sojourn in Tunis during the 1980s.

Raad concentrates on a series of enigmatic paintings and an equally uncanny sketchbook—artistic relics that engrossed Traboulsi throughout that transformative summer, and now invite us to consider the narratives they withhold and the recollections they summon.



Philip Rizk

## **MAPPING LESSONS (the lessons)**

### **2020**

Video Installation: Projection on chalkboards.

The installation presents eight lessons in the form of video essays. Using shots from classic cinema, archival and mobile footage, they create a visual conversation between global revolutionary histories, moving across time and space. The lessons take us through the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire's collapse, the anti-colonial battles against the French and British in the 1920s and 1930s, the Syrian Revolution in 2011, 1936 Spain, a revisionist memory of the Russian Soviets, the Vietnamese resistance, and the Paris Commune, among others. Mapping Lessons reimagines political memory as a tool for imagining futures—asking how past revolutions can inform what we do next.



# Café Hssan

## Maqam Sikah

Maqam Sikah is one of the fundamental maqams in Arabic music and is considered among the most complex and diverse of the Eastern maqams. It is often referred to as the “mother of maqams” due to its distinctive structure, which begins on the Sikah degree: a tonal center located three-quarters of a whole tone above the preceding note. This starting point gives the maqam a warm and unique sound, setting it apart from other maqams and endowing it with a singular musical character. The name sikah is derived from the Persian word seh-gah, meaning “the third position,” referring to the placement of one of its intervals on the oud. Maqam Sikah is characterized by a special blend of melancholy and sweetness, which gives its melodies a distinctive charm. Psychologically, Sikah is associated with purity and intimacy. It evokes feelings of warmth, closeness, and inner calm, often conveying emotional comfort and affection. The Tunisian *tab' el-sika* (or sikah, el-saykah) corresponds to the maqam Sikah. It is one of the widely practiced *tubu'* across popular and Sufi musical styles.

## A Brief Definition of the Maqam

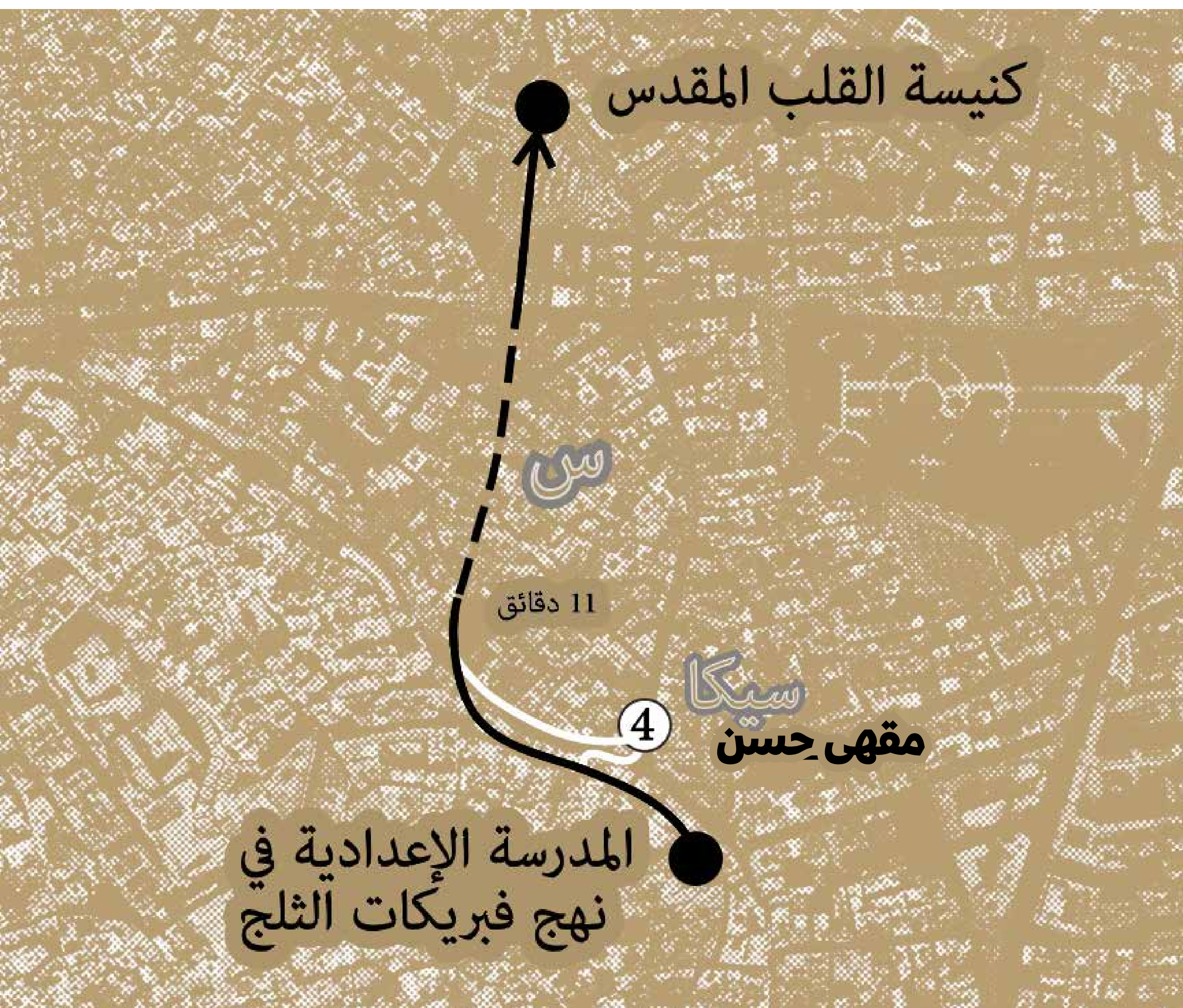
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## The Church of the Sacré Cœur

The old Sacré Cœur Church in Tunis, located near Bab El Khadra, is an abandoned Catholic church. It was built in 1899 after a former preacher and member of the Congregation of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart purchased the stables of the nearby old tram station. With funding from one of the Christian fathers, construction was completed in April 1899. That same year, the Sacré Cœur Parish of Tunis was established, serving the foreign Christian residents of the neighborhoods of Bab El Khadra, Halfaouine, and Bab Souika.

The next exhibition venue is El Makhzen Cultural Association in Bab Souika, 8 minutes away on foot.





**Sonia Kallel**

## **THE GROUNDING POINT 2025**

Installation: sculpture of woven wool, wires, and metal support, dimensions variable, books, documentation material, and video.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue / Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

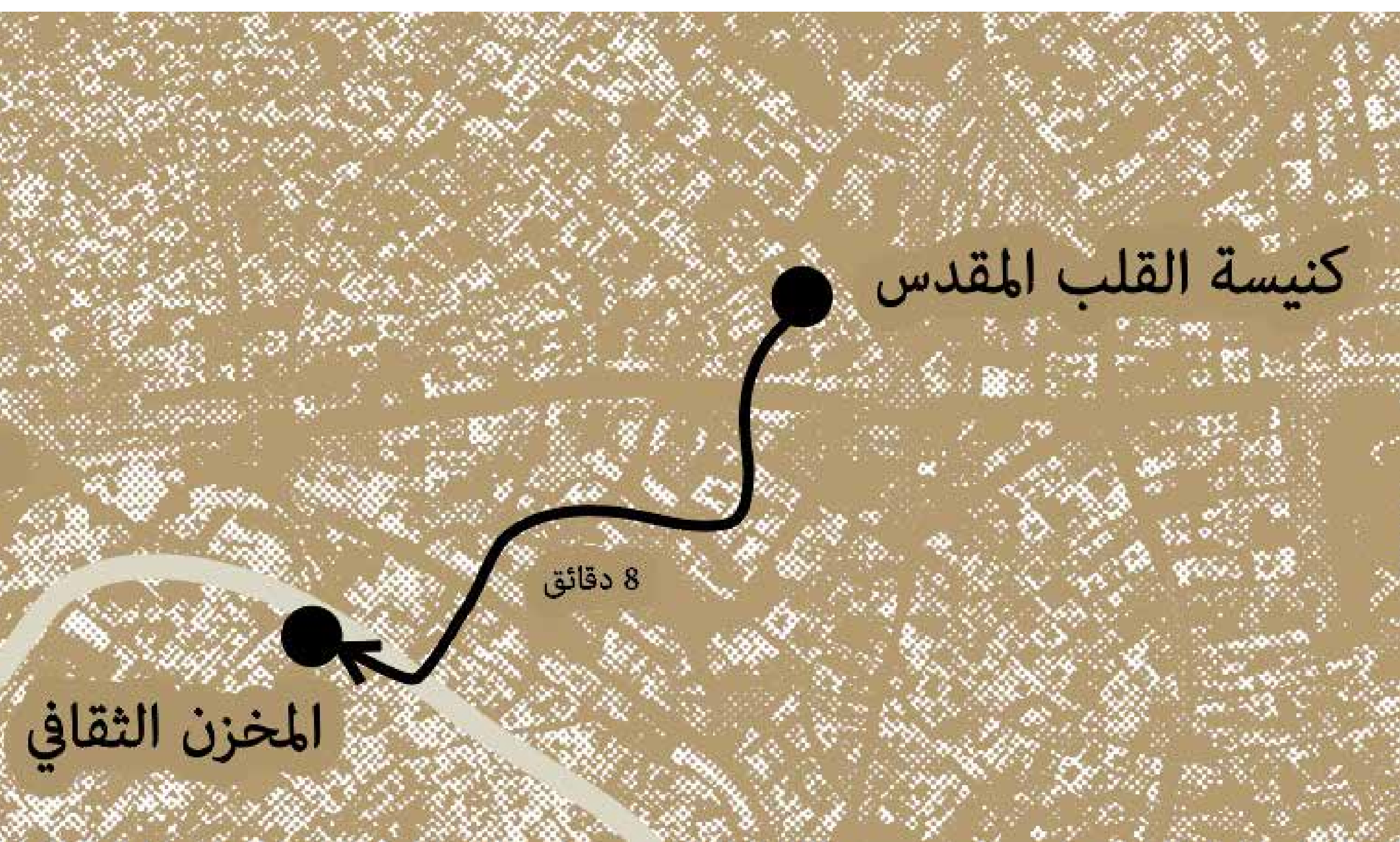
Created in close collaboration with the Mrazig community, the sculptural work follows the gesture of nomadic weaving, where displacement and rootedness intertwine. The Mrazig community anchored themselves in Douz, Tunisia, in the 12th century, yet have continued their ancestral tradition— like a held breath, as if always ready to depart. Through a prolonged and deep engagement with the Mrazig community, Kallel researched their history, learned their weaving technique, and worked with them for months, documenting every step along the way. Each thread of the large sculpture, taut and resistant, vibrates with questions about mysterious connections with the land, regardless of place or time.

# El Makhzen Cultural Association

Actor and director Mohamed Ali Ben Jemaa founded the El Makhzen cultural association in 2005, after transforming a warehouse in the Bab Souika neighborhood into a cultural and artistic space. The association aims to nurture young talent through diverse artistic and cultural projects with a social and developmental focus. The old Medina of Tunis hosts many associations established by artists and cultural practitioners. El Makhzen holds particular significance due to its location in Bab Souika, a neighborhood with a rich musical history. It was once a hub for musicians and home to several important music halls and cafés such as Salle Cordoba, Café Taht El Sour, and Café El Abbassia, which gained wide renown in the 1920s.

Bab Souika was also known during the month of Ramadan for its numerous celebrations and processions, and for its nightlife venues or cafés chantants, including Salle El Fath and others. In the 1980s, many musicians and instrument makers moved to the Bab Lakouas area, where one can still find musical instrument shops along Bab Saadoun Street. Bab Saadoun Street leads to the next exhibition venue, the Bab Lakouas Public Library, 11 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop at Café Taht El Sour and Café El Abbassia, less than a minute away on foot, to listen to songs in the Bayati and 'Ajam maqams, before continuing from there to the Bab Lakouas Public Library, 10 minutes away on foot.





## Sajjad Abbas

### **I CAN SEE YOU**

### **2013**

Video, color, sound, 5 min 3 sec.

The video follows the communal effort to produce and install the urban intervention in the center of Baghdad: a giant white fabric with a print of Abbas's eye, alongside large Arabic letters reading Akder Ashoufak (I Can See You), spray-painted atop a building. Positioned to overlook the Green Zone, once a government hub, later a fortified American base, and finally the seat of Iraq's interim government, the work inverts power dynamics: citizens now monitor the politicians inside the zone. Though it was swiftly removed by authorities, the piece calls attention to residents trapped in a city ransacked and partitioned by violence and military occupation.

# Café Taht El Sour

## Maqam Bayati

The current Café Taht El Sour carries the name of an earlier café that was located nearby in the neighborhood of Bab Souika. The original café had a rich artistic and political history as it was the meeting place for a group of writers, artists, intellectuals, and bohemians. It was known as Taht El Sour (Under the Wall) due to its location beside the Bab Souika city wall. The group became famous as the “*jama’at taht el sour*” (The Taht El Sour group), referring to the café where they socialized, composed poetry, and offered satirical commentary on political and social realities. Their poems and articles were published in humorous newspapers, later adapted into theatrical performances or sung poetry.

Maqam Bayati (also called Bayat) is among the oldest and most renowned maqams in Arabic music, considered a cornerstone of Eastern musical and vocal heritage. It is particularly significant in Qur’anic recitation, religious chanting, popular *mawwals* (ballads), and *tarab*.

The name Bayati may refer to the village of Bayat in Iraq or to the Bayat tribe, present across Turkey, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, and Syria. Bayati is celebrated as a maqam of joy and tarab, embodying spiritual depth and emotional intimacy. It is also a flexible and expressive maqam, capable of communicating moods ranging from calm and melancholic to lively and celebratory, offering composers abundant opportunities for musical creativity. In Tunisia, *tab’ el-Husayn* corresponds to the maqam Bayati. It is one of the fundamental and widely practiced *tubu’* in the traditional urban repertoire (*el- Maluf*), where a complete suite exists for *el-Husayn*. It is also commonly employed in popular musical styles and in religious music, including *dhikr*, *ibtihalat*, and Sufi chants.

## A Brief Definition of the Maqam

The Arabic maqam is a system of scales, habitual melodic phrases, modulation possibilities, ornamentation norms, and aesthetic conventions that together form a very rich artistic tradition. The maqam is the framework on which Arabic music was founded centuries ago. This framework is used both in composed and improvised music and can be performed as either vocal or instrumental music.

The Arabic word *maqam* means place or position and shares its root with the verb *aqama* (to dwell/to reside). Other words are used for maqam in the Arab world, such as *nagham* (melody) in Syria and *tab’* (character or nature) in Tunisia.

# Café El Abbassia

## Maqam ‘Ajam

The Bab Souika neighborhood was known for its active involvement in the national struggle during the colonial period and witnessed numerous popular demonstrations. Café El Abbassia was among the most famous cafés in the Tunisian capital, serving as a hub for Tunisian intellectuals and a meeting place for writers, artists, and thinkers.

Linguistically, the word *ajam* refers to something or someone of non-Arab origin, while *el-a‘jamī* means “foreigner”. Maqam ‘Ajam was not widely used and remained rare until it was adopted by musical innovators, particularly those seeking to create works arranged in an orchestral style, due to the correspondence of its scale with the Western major scale (le mode majeur).

Maqam ‘Ajam is associated with feelings of happiness, comfort, and grandeur. Composers rely on it to express joy, optimism, and delight. As it can also express strength and power, it is frequently used in the composition of patriotic and inspirational songs, as it energizes listeners and creates a celebratory atmosphere.

In Tunis, maqam ‘Ajam is considered to belong to the family of *tab‘ el- Husayn*. According to Shaykh Ahmad el-Wafi, whose account was transmitted by Baron d’Erlanger, both *tab‘ el-‘Ajam* and *el-‘Ajam ‘ushairan* once existed within the Tunisian system of maqams but have since disappeared. Today, most musicians consider *tab‘ el-Mazmum* to correspond to maqam ‘Ajam, though with differences in musical inflection and tonal center.

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# The Bab Lakouas Public Library

The Bab Lakouas Public Library is administered by the Tunisian Ministry of Culture and is part of a network of public libraries across Tunisia that aim to provide citizens with free and accessible knowledge. The library's name refers to one of the gates of the old city of Tunis. It stands on El Zawiya El Bakria street, also known as the Zawiya of the "Seven Sleepers." The neighborhood used to be home to many musicians, and the location of the One Thousand and One Nights Hotel, where, in the 1950s, concerts by Saliha and Fethia Khairi were held. The next exhibition venue is the SAFAHAT Association, 3 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop along the way at Layelli Zamen Café, facing the library, to listen to songs in maqam Nahawand, before continuing from there to SAFAHAT Association, 3 minutes away on foot.

المكتبة العمومية  
باب الأقواس

مقهى ليالي زمان

7

نهاوند

11 دقائق

مقهى تحت السور

عجم

6

5

بياتي

مقهى العباسية

المخزن الثقافي



Saif Fradj

## THE ROAD TO BEB BHAR 2025

Intervention in a public library.

**Commissioned and produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025.**

The project reimagines the Mediterranean as a contested zone of rebellion, where historical pirate utopias and contemporary struggles for autonomy collide. From the 16th century, barbaric corsairs – Muslims, renegades, and anarchical coalitions have appropriated the seas as a site of unlawful freedom. These groups were described as the original anarchists, creating an autonomous space with alternative laws outside the empire. The work traces a lineage from 16th-century barbaric corsairs, renegades, and anarchical coalitions to contemporary fugitive networks, where the sea is proposed as a space to disappear, to resist, and exist ungoverned.

# Café Layelli Zaman

## Maqam Nahawand

Maqam Nahawand is named after the city of Nahawand, located in Hamadan province in Iran, a mountainous region distinguished for its natural beauty. Maqam Nahawand is one of the most noble Arabic maqams and is deeply emotional, evoking feelings of nostalgia and contemplation. It is characterized by its delicate and profound emotional quality, sometimes leaning toward quiet sorrow or romantic melancholy. In Tunisia, maqam Nahawand corresponds to *tab' el-Muhayyar Sikah*. This *tab'* is considered a maqam of popular music, used especially in sentimental pop songs. In modern Tunisian music, maqam Nahawand has become more widely adopted.

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# SAFAHAT Association

SAFAHAT is a cultural association that places books at the center of its activities. It aims to foster a love of reading and strengthen critical thinking. The association organizes diverse programs and initiatives targeting various age groups and sectors, to create a reading and creative community that believes in the power of the word and the impact of knowledge. The association is located on Bab Lakouas Street, named after one of the gates of the old city of Tunis. This gate once stood between Bab Souika and Bab Saadoun, not far from the Halfaouine neighborhood and the Bakriya Zawiya. According to Ibn Abi Dinar in his book *Al-Mu'nis*, the gate disappeared along with the old city wall of Tunis.

The next exhibition venue is Eskifa Arts, 16 minutes away on foot.

المكتبة العمومية  
باب الأقواس

3 دقائق

جمعية  
صفحات



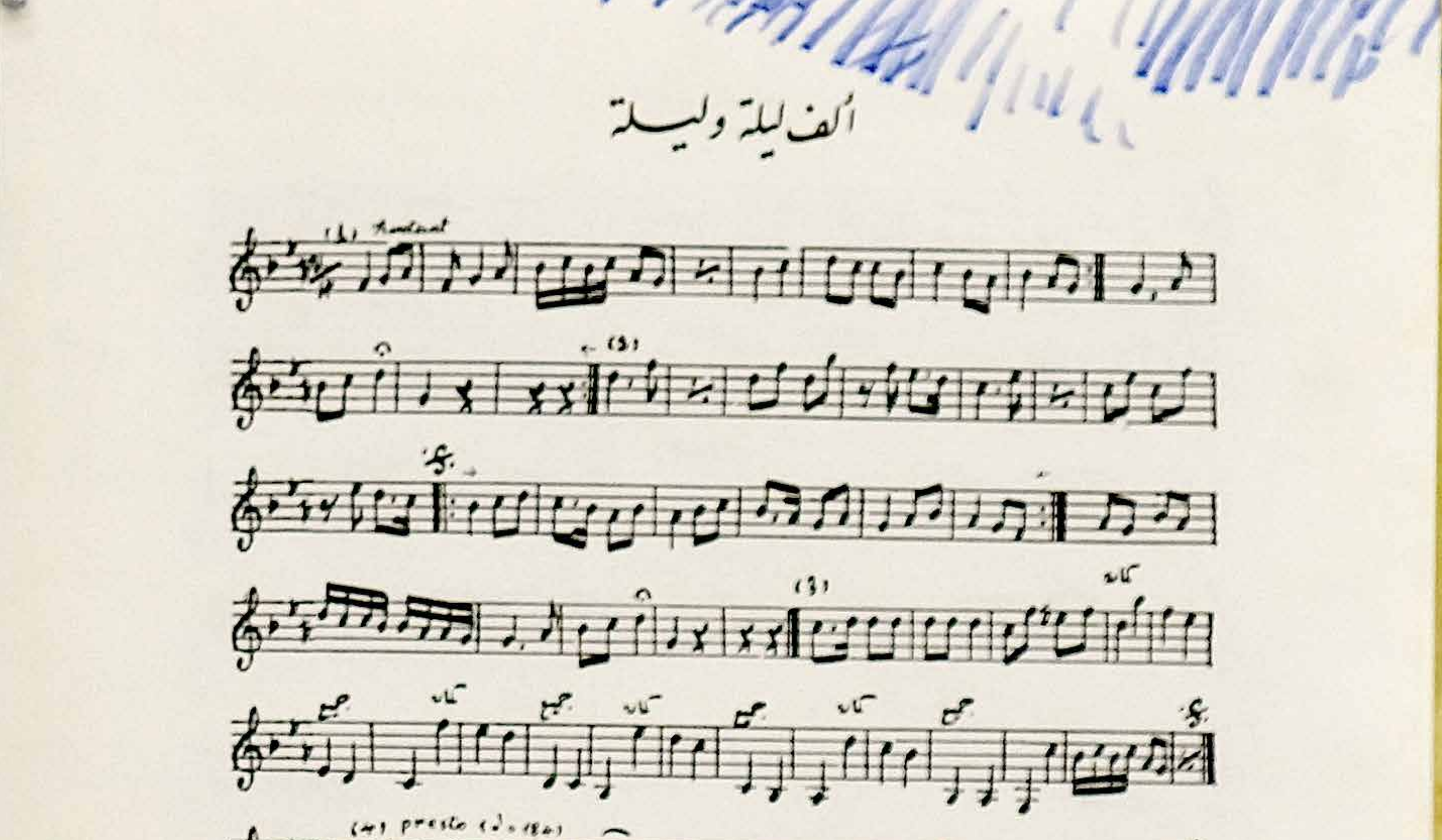
## Etel Adnan

### **PLAGE ROSE**

Billboard, 2025: tarpaulin and metal..  
Based on the original drawing Plage Rose, 2020,  
Crayon on paper, 21,3 x 30,2 cm.

From her fifties onward, Adnan started creating small drawings specifically meant to become larger works: either weaved tapestries or murals. Because of her “bad back”, by her own account, she was never able to produce large-scale artworks – a process further hindered by the production costs and storage space needed for such works. It was in Tunisia, where she met a master weaver, that she commissioned her first 2 tapestries, based on her drawings. We are paying homage to Adnan’s desire by producing a large-scale print of Plage Rose, a work manifesting a suspended moment of joy and peace in an otherwise conflicted world.

Courtesy the estate of the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut/Hamburg.



Ali Eyal

**6X9 DOESN'T FIT EVERYTHING AND.  
2021/2025**

Photograph printed on textile, 193 x 108 cm.

**LOOK AT WHAT'S LEFT INSIDE THE BAG.  
2021/2025**

Installation: materials and dimensions variable.

Ali Eyal's practice moves between personal history and transitory memory. His work, mainly drawing, expands into installations, photography, text, and video.

The two works use fragments of personal objects and emotionally significant traces of family memories such as a letter left inside a book, a music score, or a note on the back of a photograph that cannot be seen. Images embedded within images refract the fragmentary experience of great catastrophes such as the U.S.- led sanctions and invasion of Iraq.



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## Iman Mersal & Kayfa ta

### **ARCHIVES AND CRIMES**

Howdunnit 1

English edition. Translated by Robin Moger.

78 pages, 12 x 16 cm, paperback.

Publication by Kayfa ta - originally co-published with Archive Books in 2022.

**New Edition 2025, produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

Iman Mersal's Archives & Crimes is one of the two publications that inaugurated Kayfa ta's Howdunnit series, which bridges archival research and crime literature and probes how these investigative modes intersect and diverge. To enter a collective archive is to carry an anonymous corpse on your shoulders. You are not investigating how this corpse met its death so much as feeling impelled, somehow, to fill in the gaps that render it anonymous. Whether or not you are hoping to tell the story and share it with others, you might be able to give this corpse a name and lend a meaning to its life.

# سفر الرؤيا العربي



Etel Adnan

## THE ARAB APOCALYPSE

Publication.

First published in French in 1980.

**New edition produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

The Arab Apocalypse is Etel Adnan's searing book-length poem, originally composed in French. Conceived on the eve of the Lebanese Civil War, the work fuses text and drawings in fifty-nine poems, each corresponding to a day of the 1976 siege and massacre at the Palestinian refugee camp of Tall Al Zaatar. Haunted by the blazing symbol of the sun, Adnan crafts a visionary, repetitive, and expressionist cycle, part testimony, part hermetic allegory, where the polyphonic voices of the vanquished resonate. The poem adopts and subverts biblical apocalyptic tradition and questions its political and religious foundations. At once a chronicle of catastrophe and a timeless "Book of Revelations".

# Eskifa Arts

Eskifa Arts is a space dedicated to supporting cultural heritage and practices by embracing contemporary artistic projects and organizing exhibitions and workshops. The space is located beneath the former headquarters of the Rachidia Institute of Tunisian Music (commonly known as the Rachidia School), founded in 1934 and dedicated to preserving traditional Tunisian music. The institute was named after Muhammad al-Rachid Bey (1710–1759), the third leader of the Husainid Dynasty and the ruler of Tunisia from 1756 until his death. He was also a poet with a passion for Tunisian music and skilled at playing several musical instruments.

The next exhibition venue is Tourbet Sidi Bou Khrissane, 8 minutes away on foot.

If you wish, you can stop along the way at Café Mrabet to listen to songs in maqam Saba, before continuing from there to Tourbet Sidi Bou Khrissane, 5 minutes away on foot.





# Haythem Zakaria

## **INTERSTICES OPUS III**

### **2024**

4K video, stereo, 23 min 5 sec.

The Atlas Mountains, a mythical massif deeply rooted in the Berber cultures of the Maghreb, have given rise to generations of stories and representations. In both Tunisia and Morocco, each community has shaped its own imaginary of the mountains. Despite their differences, these narratives share recurring motifs: figures of elevation, trial, refuge, or transmission. From this common fabric emerge the contours of an archetype.

Opus III seeks to map these symbolic lines through field research and the development of a multimedia corpus combining oral testimonies, archives, audiovisual recordings and topographical surveys. The resulting work aims to give rise to a sensitive and fragmentary representation of the Atlas Mountains, conceived as a ritual, cosmological and imaginary space.

# Café Mrabet

## Maqam Saba

Café Mrabet is believed to have opened in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the early twentieth century, it hosted a traditional ensemble of some of the most skilled performers of *el-Maluf*, including the rababa player Mu'ammad Ghanim and the oud player and composer Khamis el-Tarnan, both of whom participated in the Cairo Congress of Arab Music in 1932 as part of the Tunisian delegation. The café served as a cultural center, where, thanks to its patrons who were artists and music enthusiasts, it contributed to the preservation of the Andalusian vocal heritage before the establishment of the Rachidi Institute.

Maqam Saba is distinguished by a specific melodic structure based on a scale that includes a lowered fourth degree, giving it a sense of sorrow and nostalgia. It is known for its distinct psychological character, deeply affecting the listener, unlike many other maqams that are more lively or joyous. The maqam evokes feelings of longing, yearning, and quiet sorrow. It is commonly used to express deep emotional states and inner melancholy, whether in love poetry, elegies, or reflective *muwashshahat* (classical Andalusian strophic songs). Maqam Saba was included within the twenty-four Andalusian *tubu'* that flourished in Arab-Andalusian music at its height. According to Shaykh Ahmad el-Wafi, as cited by Baron d'Erlanger, the scale of *tab' el-Husayn Saba* corresponds to that of maqam Saba.

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# Tourbet Sidi Bou Khrissane

Tourbet Sidi Bou Khrissane was built alongside the northeastern walls of the old city of Tunis to serve as the burial site for the princes of the Banu Khourassan, who ruled in the 11th and 12th centuries CE. This location was once part of a wider belt of cemeteries that gradually disappeared as the city expanded over the centuries. The exact identity of “Sidi Bou Khrissane” remains unknown; it is clear that he was not originally called “Sidi Bou Khrissane,” nor was he a saint (*wali*). The name and sacred status likely emerged over centuries of oral tradition, myth-making, and veneration of historical figures, possibly connected to one of the princes of the Banu Khourassane. The only remaining tomb today in the Sidi Bou Khrissane cemetery dates back to the Ottoman era: that of Hajj Shaaban Dey, who died in 1672 after serving as Dey (the ruling governor under the Ottoman Empire) for three years. His burial in the Sidi Bou Khrissane cemetery suggests that this site was reserved for members of the elite or ruling upper-class families across the ages, while the rest of the population buried their dead outside the city walls.

Tunis became a province of the Ottoman Empire in 1574 under a succession of administrative systems. The Ottomans exercised their authority through a governor first called the Dey and later the Bey. One of these Beys went on to establish a monarchy known as the Husainid dynasty, which held power until the abolition of the monarchy and the declaration of Tunisia as a republic in 1957.

The next exhibition venue is Dribet Dar Al Hussein, 2 minutes away on foot.





## Ayman Zedani

# TO THE WATER HUNTERS

### 2025

Installation: 6-channel audio, speakers, textile, wax, pottery, dimensions variable.  
Contributors: Nidhal Yahyaoui, Ons Boussi, Hayet Ghrissi, Graines de Bonheur – Hana & Chaima, Aziz Bouchnak, Mohamed Amine Hamouda, Sabra Chraifa.

**Co-commissioned and co-produced by L'Art Rue/Dream City 2025 and Art Jameel.**

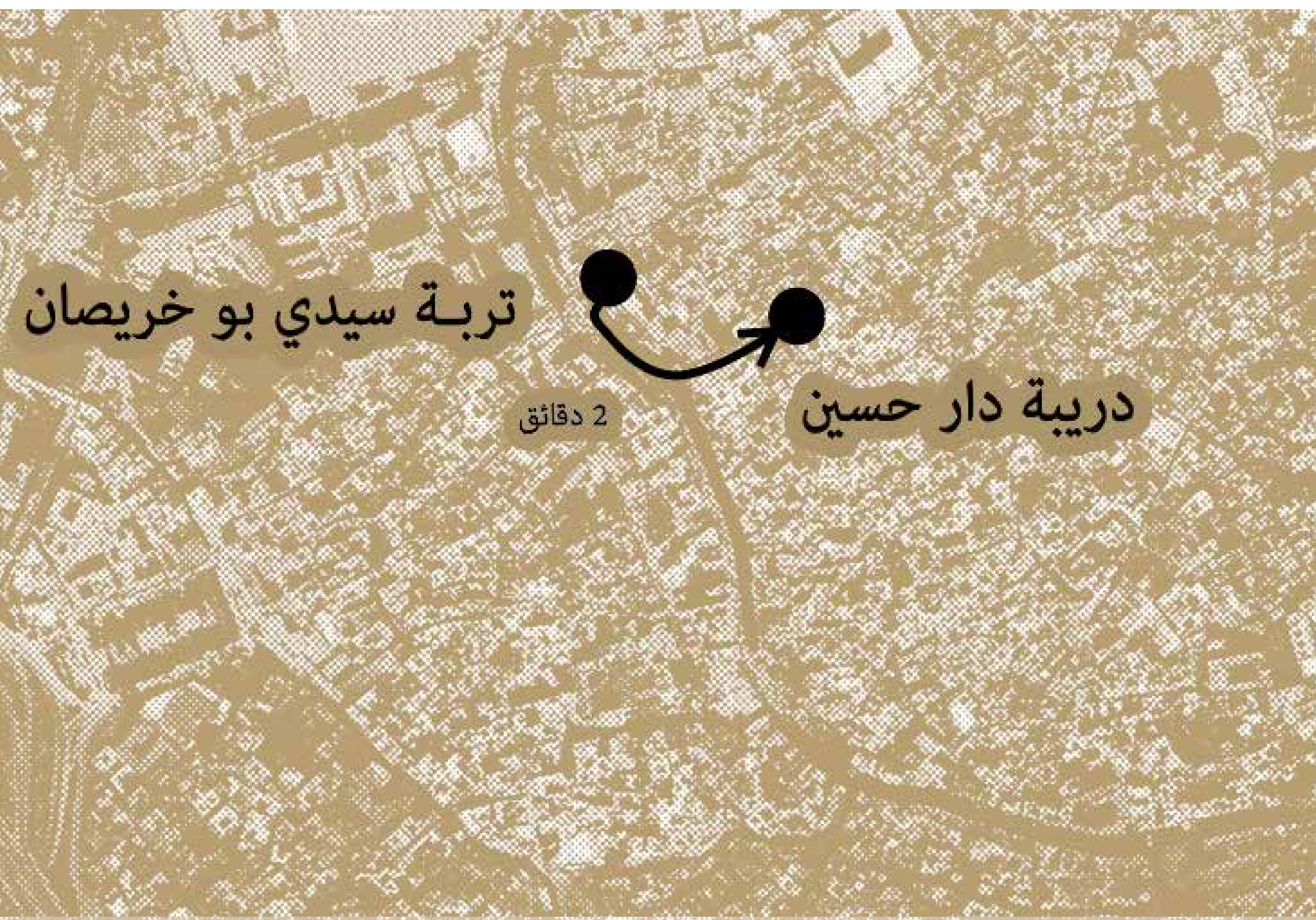
Zedani has dedicated years of artistic research into traditional ecological knowledge and ancient land practices across the Arabian Peninsula.

There, he encountered Tarq, a traditional mountain singing practice tied to daily life, used in working the land, harvesting crops, and shepherding animals, and in moments of celebration and grief. Unexpectedly, he discovered that the same tradition exists in Tunisia, revealing shared heritage and cultural overlaps. Zedani collaborated with local Tarq singers, potters, beekeepers, and botanists to create a sensory ecosystem at Tourbet Sidi Bou Khrissane. Centered on sound, the project investigates farming, water harvesting, and the relation between human and non-human experiences.

# Dribet Dar Al Hussein

Dribet Dar Al Hussein's entrance lies along a vaulted passageway, and is an annex of Dar Al Hussein, considered the most prominent palace of the old city. It was built in the 18th century on the ruins of the palace of the Banu Khourassan. In the 19th century, the palace became the seat of the first municipal council of the city of Tunis and was named after Commander Hussein, who served as the head of the municipality. It was also known as Dar al-'Ashara ("House of Ten") in reference to the number of council members. Later, the palace became the headquarters of the French forces stationed in Tunis, when General Forgemol decided to reside in the former municipal offices with his general staff after entering Tunis at the head of the occupation forces in 1882. One year after independence in 1956, it became home to the National Institute of Archaeology and Arts, which in 1992 became the National Heritage Institute.

This is the final exhibition venue. The Information and Ticket Center is at Dar Bach Hamba, 6 minutes away on foot.





## Alia Farid

### **CHIBAYISH (2022)**

UHD video, color, sound; 20 mins 17 sec.

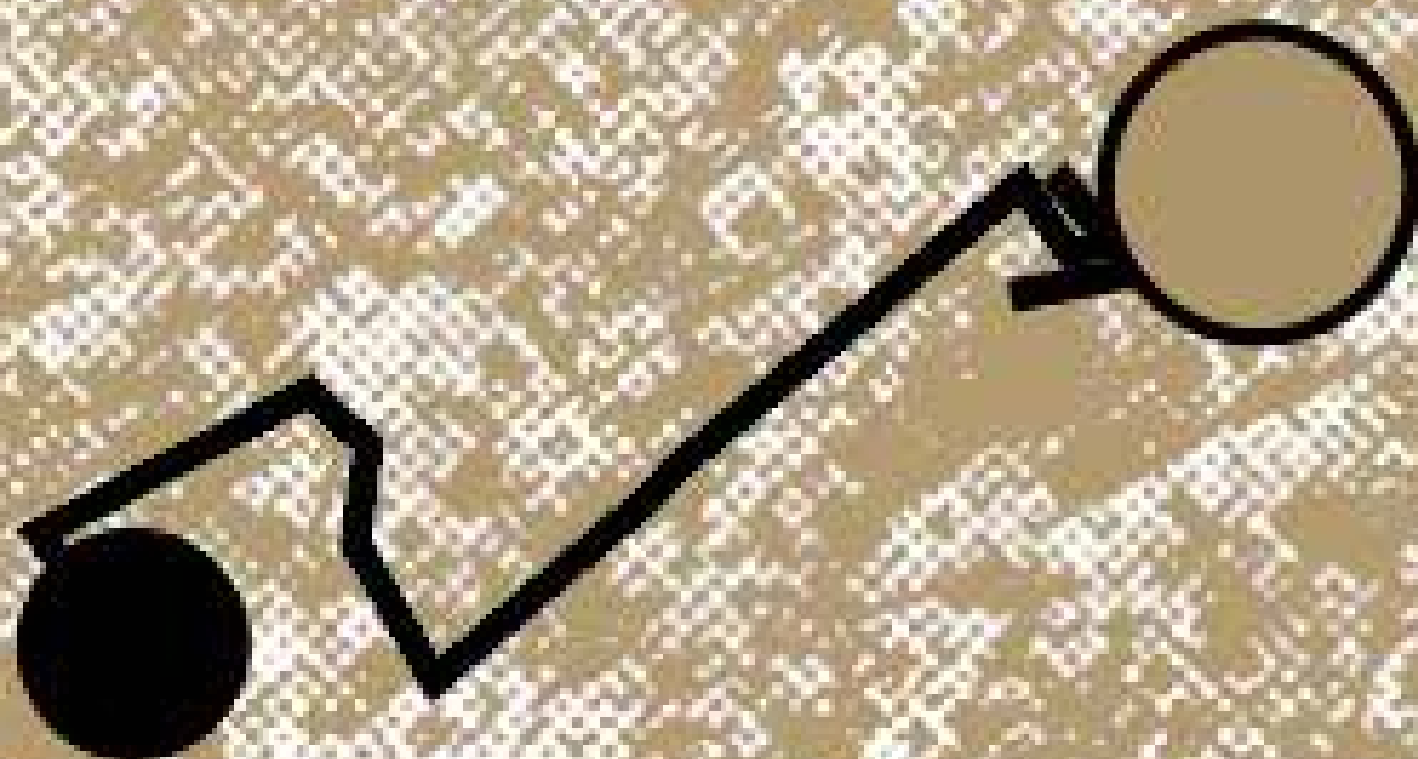
Filmed in the southern marshlands of Iraq with Riad Bahrani and Jassim and Qassim Mohammed.

Chibayish (2022) is set in the marshlands of southern Iraq, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet in a landscape that is being gradually overtaken by oil infrastructure and industrial waste. The film follows Farid's interactions with young residents as they care and call out to their water buffaloes, name community members, and navigate their threatened environment. It blends beautifully shot documentary footage with CGI animation, and a carefully designed soundscape that combines the calls of the young men and the buffaloes' responses to them, the sounds of water and Iraqi songs. The work vividly conveys mysterious connections that bind these inhabitants to the manifold manifestations of the living land.

Commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art on the occasion of Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet As It is Kept.

Courtesy the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut / Hamburg.

دار باش\_حامبة



دریة دار حسین