

# POSTMASTERS

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For immediate release:

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Opening reception Tuesday, July 7 6-8pm

## **"The Thousand and One Nights"**

(contemporary artists from Palestine)

curated by **Mary Evangelista with Michael Connor**

**TAYSIR BATNIJI  
HANNA FARAH-KUFER BIR'IM  
SHADI HABIB ALLAH  
SHURUQ HARB  
JUMANA MANNA  
SHARIF WAKED**

Gallery 2

**KENNETH TIN-KIN HUNG**

**"In G.O.D. We Trust"**

Postmasters Gallery is very pleased to announce "The Thousand and One Nights" - an exhibition of contemporary artists from Palestine curated by Mary Evangelista with Michael Connor.

In Gallery 2 we will present the most recent digital animation by Kenneth Tin Kin Hung titled "In G.O.D. We Trust." Both shows will be on view until August 8, 2008.

Opening reception is scheduled for Tuesday, July 7 between 6 and 8 pm.

"The Thousand and One Nights" brings together photographs, video, and paintings by six contemporary artists from Palestine whose works explore the political dimension of time. They reflect the conditions of conflict and occupation, but are not entirely defined by them.

In the book "The Thousand and One Nights," a young woman named Scheherazade – who had read "various books of histories, and the lives of preceding kings, and stories of past generations" – tells a series of stories to a cruel king to delay her impending execution. The king, enraptured by her unending tales, delays her execution night after night. Through the process of listening, the king's wrath is assuaged.

Like Scheherazade's tales, the works in this exhibition are political, but their messages are coded and delivered with tactical patience. Several of the works explore the way that conflicts play out across generations. Shadi Habib Allah's animation "On-going Tale" depicts an age-old conflict between man and beast that continues for generations, with neither side ever emerging triumphant. Sharif Waked's "Jericho First" draws on imagery from the 8th century, reflecting on the visual symbols of power and its persistence throughout human history.

Several of the artists explore their relationship with an older generation more explicitly. For his "Pères" series, Taysir Batniji photographs patriarchal portraits that hang in prominent positions in Gaza shops. The images are displayed out of respect and honor, but Batniji's re-photography highlights the power dynamic at play in them. Jumana Manna's work "Familiar" exemplifies a different relationship with the older generation. In this photograph and video project, the artist (an adult in her early twenties) is breastfed by her mother, an image that seems both nurturing and discomfiting at the same time.

"The Thousand and One Nights" was embraced by Europeans in the 17th and 18th century as the symbol of 'the Orient', the fantasy of a golden land to the East. This land was portrayed as exotic and faraway, but it was actually closely connected to the West in many ways. It was also not a single land, but many lands and people, a cultural landscape far more varied and complex than any one symbol could convey. Instead of encouraging an exchange between cultures, "The Thousand and One Nights" only created misconceptions and reinforced imagined barriers between West and East. This exhibition takes on this title in hopes of avoiding a similar fate.

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In Gallery 2 Postmasters will present "In G.O.D. We Trust" - a new digital video by Kenneth Tin-Kin Hung (G.O.D. is a stand-in for Global Obama Domination). Born in Hong Kong and now living in New York, Hung has been called "the John Heartfield of the digital era." His meticulously researched collages and animations composed entirely of imagery appropriated from the web deliver a biting political satire. "In G.O.D. We Trust" presents global and domestic challenges facing the new Obama administration with the savior president cast as different deities (Jesus Christ, Mohammad, Krishna, prophet Abraham, Yoruba Orisha Trickster God Elegua/Eshu, Buddha, and Guadalupe). In addition to the video, a large outdoors banner of "Buddha Siddhartha Obama" will hang on the gallery's façade.

Postmasters gallery located at 459 west 19<sup>th</sup> street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open Tuesdays through Saturdays 11-6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with questions and image requests

**Taysir Batniji** (born Gaza, lives and works Paris) works in photography and video art. He studied at l'École Nationale des Beaux Arts in Marseille, France. His past shows include Witte de With (solo), the 2007 Sharjah Biennial, the 2003 Havana Biennial and the 2009 Venice Biennale.

**Hanna Farah-Kufer Bir'im** (born Algish, lives and works Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Kufer Bir'im) is a photographer who trained in architecture at the WIZO College of Design in Haifa. The village of Kufer Bir'im, whose inhabitants were expelled in November 1948, plays an important role in Farah's work. He added the name of the village to his family name as a statement of his connection with this history.

**Shadi Habib Allah** (born Jerusalem, lives and works New York) is an artist who works in a range of media including video, painting, and sculpture. Habib Allah is showing as part of the 2009 Venice Biennale. He recently finished his first year in the MFA program at Columbia University.

**Shuruq Harb** (born Ramallah) received her MA in Photographic Studies from the University of Westminster, London in 2006. A finalist in the Hassan Hourani Young Artist of the Year Award in 2004, she had solo shows in Aarau, Switzerland and at Ramallah's Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre. She recently attended Photo Global, a one year program at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

**Jumana Manna** (lives and works Oslo) is a photographer and video artist who is currently pursuing a BA at the National Academy of the Arts in Oslo, Norway. She has shown at the 2007 LOOP Festival in Barcelona, the 2008 Jerusalem Show, and the Stenersen Museum in Oslo.

**Sharif Waked** (born Nazareth, lives and works in Haifa) works in a range of media including video and painting. He has shown widely at venues around the world including Tate Modern (London), Um el Fahm Gallery, the 2009 Sharjah Biennial, and at Artists Space, New York as part of the touring exhibition "The New Normal."

About the Organizers

**Mary Evangelista** has been a writer, critic and curator for many years. Her past exhibitions have included Art New Zealand, a touring exhibition of contemporary Maori and New Zealand artists, two exhibitions of contemporary Israeli art and "Designing the Nation's Capitol" at the New Orleans Museum of Art. She has worked for ARTnews, Saturday Review and Newsday. To organize "The Thousand and One Nights," Evangelista spent two years traveling through Palestine researching, meeting with artists and reviewing works.

**Michael Connor** is an independent writer and curator based in New York. He is currently developing a permanent exhibition that will open at the Australian Center for the Moving Image in September 2009. His touring exhibition, "The New Normal," premiered at Artists Space in 2008 and is currently touring through Independent Curators International. He was formerly Head of Exhibitions at the British Film Institute in London and Curator at FACT in Liverpool.