

Press Release
29 October 2012

Febrik: The Watchtower of Happiness and Other Landscapes of Occupation

26 November — 08 December 2012

Private view Monday 26 November 2012, 6.30-8.00pm

The Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London, SW5 0SW



On November 26 2012, The Mosaic Rooms will be transformed into *A Watchtower of Happiness and Other Landscapes of Occupation* – a new installation by Febrik.

This interactive work looks at the inventive, culturally specific and unique practices that demonstrators employed to occupy public spaces in three Arab cities during the recent uprisings, exploring their equally defiant but gentle, and serious but playful attitudes.

The installation analyses the role of the camera in narrating three particular perspectives: defiance (the discovery of a collective spirit in Tunisia), liberation (the comic drama as portrait in Egypt) and censorship (the unexpected photographer in Syria). The camera's continued use allowed for a multiplicity of representation, away from government and press control.

The Watchtower of Happiness uses these early moments of resistance and change to turn visitors into unintentional activists through their interactions with different vantage points, viewfinders and captured images in the installation.

The tower structure suggests systems of surveillance, from those seen at checkpoints, to illegal settlements or even at swimming pools. Here the form of the tower is stripped of everything except its physical advantage, offering a new spatial and social experience. Visitors will be able to climb the structure, take photographs of themselves in front of different backdrops, as well as other participatory elements. Visitors photographs will be shared online encouraging further interaction.

Other Landscapes of Occupation pop-up shop

This landscape will host a series of public activities – from selling objects and items by contemporary Middle Eastern designers such as Nedda El-Asmar, Zeri Crafts, Nada Debs, Silsal, Dia Batal and Mounaya; to gathering around the space to share stories over seasonal refreshments from our café; to watching others interact with the tower and activate its levels and vantage points; and to playing around with objects from this experience, including creating make-shift helmets from recycled materials. The exhibition is an ideal, early Christmas family outing!

Exhibition open 11am-6pm Monday – Saturday, entrance free.

Related events

Late opening at The Mosaic Rooms on Thursday December 6, until 9pm.

V&A Friday Late on 30th November 6.30-10pm.

The watchtower structure will move from The Mosaic Rooms to the Victoria & Albert Museum on the evening of November 30th. V&A, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL. Visit the V&A website for more.

Notes to Editors

- Febrik are available for interview via The Mosaic Rooms, please contact Rachael or Danielle on 020 7370 9990 or press@mosaicrooms.org
- Images are available on request as above
- Febrik was founded by Reem Charif, Mohamad Hafeda and Joumana Al Jabri
- Febrik is a not-for-profit collaborative platform for participatory art and design research projects with practicing architects, designers and artists active in the Middle East and the UK. Visit their website at <http://febrik.org/>
- Febrik's main area of concern lies in the dynamics and practices of public spaces in relation to social and urban change; specifically in relation to the rights of access to spaces of refuge of previously unrepresented groups such as children and women
- More information about the designers and objects to be sold in the pop up shop is available on request. The items will be displayed in our online shop from mid November. Check the website for further details
- For the full list of events in November & December at The Mosaic Rooms, check our press webpage
- The Mosaic Rooms, a leading independent arts space in west London, delivers a high quality, contemporary and progressive cultural programme from the Arab world and internationally. They are managed by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, a UK charity dedicated to the support of culture and education in Palestine and the Arab world. The Foundation's London office, headed by one of its trustees, Omar Al-Qattan, is responsible for the Mosaic Rooms' programme. The Rooms are part of the Culture and Arts Programme of the A.M. Qattan Foundation
- *The Watchtower of Happiness* is part of the Nour Festival of the Arts, coordinated by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and reflects the Council's commitment to bring the very best international contemporary arts and culture to the borough.