

Delfina Foundation and Art Jameel collaborate to present *Plan for Feminist Greater Baghdad*, a solo exhibition by Ala Younis held simultaneously in London and Dubai. The exhibition includes a major new installation co-commissioned by the two organisations, *Plan (fem.) for Greater Baghdad (2018)*, that builds on Younis's 2015 work, *Plan for Greater Baghdad*, which was included in the Central Exhibition of the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale curated by Okwui Enwezor, and which will be shown alongside the new commission in the exhibition.



Ala Younis, *Plan for Greater Baghdad (2015)*. Installation view, 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale. Photo Alessandra Chemollo. Courtesy la Biennale di Venezia.

In the original work, *Plan for Greater Baghdad (2015)*, Younis looked at monuments, (by) architects, (for) governments, and the short state of empowerment they gained as politics shifted in Iraq. The project anchored itself within the history of a gymnasium in Baghdad that was designed by Le Corbusier and named after Saddam Hussein. Heavily based on archives, found material, and the stories of its male protagonists, the project explored issues relating to the protection of monuments for posterity, and the creation of plans for Baghdad as either an expression of power or as a necessity.

In the newly commissioned work, *Plan (fem.) for Greater Baghdad (2018)*, Younis brings to the fore the significant contributions made by female artists, architects and other influential characters to the development of Baghdad and its modern monuments. Typical of Younis's investigative practice, the work rearticulates archival material to bring about new narratives. In this case, the reading sees beyond the male dominance of the city's architecture and politics, to reveal the female influence on Baghdad's history.

Among the main female protagonists that inspired this research are **Balkis Sharara**, Rifat Chadirji's wife who in 1979 carried copies of his works into and out of Abu Ghraib allowing him to author three of

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his seminal books while in the prison; artist **Nuha al-Radi** whose diaries of 1990/91 describe the dynamics in the lives of Baghdad's people beyond the news coverage; an **unknown young woman** who stands out in the festivities of the gymnasium's 1990 new year concert; **Fahrelnissa Zeid** who was herself an artist (most recently the subject of a major exhibition at Tate Modern) and the wife of the Iraqi Ambassador in London when Le Corbusier received a telegram confirming the approval of his first design proposal for Baghdad; poet **Iman Mersal** who paid a solidarity visit to Baghdad under siege in 1993; **Zaha Hadid** whose architectural drawings influenced the imagination of architectural students in the 1990s; and others.

Through found materials, documents and oral histories, these stories are presented in the exhibition through a timeline punctuated with inkjet prints and drawings alongside digitally sculptured and 3D-printed models of different figures, which mirror the 2015 male edition of the work.

This exhibition marks the first time these two major works are shown together.

### Times, Dates, Locations

<u>Delfina Foundation</u>	<u>Project Space Art Jameel</u>
1 February to 24 March 2018	1 March to 14 April 2018
Mon – Fri, 10:00 – 18:00	Sun – Sat, 10:00 – 18:00
Sat, 12:00 – 18:00	(closed on Fridays)
Opening:	Opening:
Thurs 31/01, 19:00 – 21:00	Thurs 01/03, 19:00 – 21:00
29/31 Catherine Place, London SW1E 6DY	Warehouse 48 Alserkal Avenue, Dubai

### Social Media

<u>Delfina Foundation</u>	<u>Art Jameel</u>
Fb: Delfina Foundation	Fb: Art Jameel
Tw: @delfinafdn	Tw: @art_jameel
In: @delfinafdn	In: @art_jameel

#AlaYounis #FeministBaghdad

### Press Contacts

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### Credits

*Plan (fem.) for Greater Baghdad* (2018) is co-commissioned by Delfina Foundation and Art Jameel.

*Plan for Greater Baghdad* (2015) was produced with support from the Arab Fund for Arts & Culture and Sharjah Art Foundation.

The London exhibition received additional support from Rana Sadik & Samer Younis and Delfina Foundation's family of individual supporters.

## Notes to Editors

### Ala Younis

Ala Younis is a Kuwait-born, Jordan-based artist, writer and curator. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions, including solo shows at Darat al Funun, Jordan (2009); Delfina Foundation, London (2010); and MMAG Foundation, Jordan (2017). Selected group shows



Ala Younis at 56th Venice Biennale. Photo Isabella Balena. Courtesy la Biennale di Venezia.

include CCS Bard Galleries, New York (2017); Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2017); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016); Venice Biennale (2015); New Museum, New York (2012 and 2014); Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2012); Gwangju Biennale (2012); Istanbul Biennial (2011); Home Works 5, Beirut (2010); and Photo Cairo 4 (2008).

As a curator, Ala Younis organised the first Kuwaiti Pavilion at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale; the *Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence* interventions in Algeria, Kuwait and Ramallah; and other exhibitions and programmes in Egypt, France, Jordan, and UAE. She holds a B.Sc. in Architecture from University of Jordan, and a MRes in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths College. She is on the Advisory

Board of Berlinale's Forum Expanded, and co-founder of Kayfa ta, a non-profit publishing initiative that has published seven 'how to' books since its foundation in 2012.

### Delfina Foundation

Founded in 2007, Delfina Foundation (DF) is an independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships and public programming. DF has hosted over 300 artists, curators and writers in residence from around the world, partnering with institutions such as Tate Modern, V&A Museum, Frieze Art Fair Projects, Art Dubai and Chisenhale Gallery. The Board of Trustees, led by founder Delfina Entrecanales CBE, generously provides 40% of the Foundation's annual funding, which is complemented by individual supporters, foundations, public funding and partnerships.

Delfina Foundation's public programme of events and exhibitions fosters critical discourse on the contemporary arts in relation to everyday life. DF brings salient issues and common ideas together through recurring thematic programmes such as *The Politics of Food*, *The Public Domain*, *Performance as Process*, and *Collecting as Practice*, the first ever residency programme for collectors alongside artists. Younis's exhibition is part of *Collecting as Practice*, emphasising the role of artists in revisiting and revising historic material and archives.

### Art Jameel

Art Jameel supports artists and creative communities. Current initiatives include running heritage institutes and restoration programmes, plus a broad range of arts and educational initiatives for all ages. The organisation's programmes foster the role of the arts in building open, connected communities; at a time of flux and dramatic societal shifts, this role is understood as more crucial than ever.

Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art; locally, the organisation works with individuals and organisations to develop innovative programming that embraces both ancient and new technologies, and encourages entrepreneurship and the development of cultural networks.

Winter 2018 will mark the opening of the Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai, one of the first contemporary arts institutions in the city.

Art Jameel is positioned alongside Community Jameel, and complements its sister organisation's work in promoting positive social change, job creation and poverty alleviation across the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey.