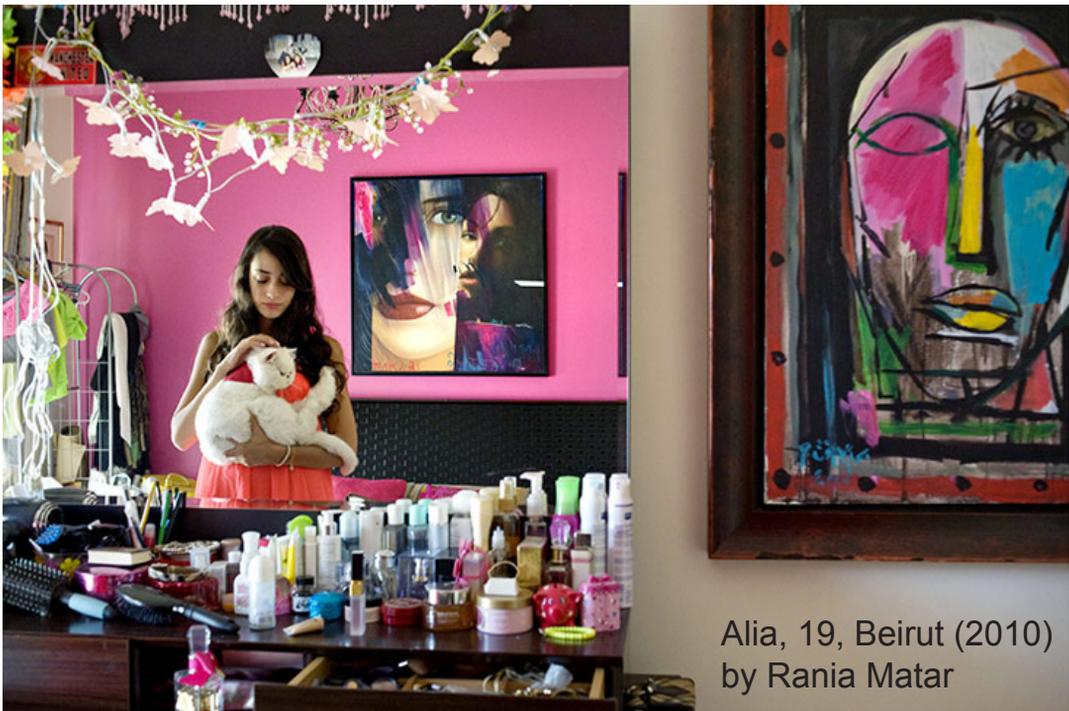


# London's Shubbak Festival: Penetrating flash of insight into Arab culture

ITM London



Alia, 19, Beirut (2010)  
by Rania Matar

This summer London's first ever celebration of contemporary culture from across the Arab world was organised by the Mayor of London and sponsored by HSBC. Shubbak: A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture, featured around one hundred artists in over seventy events in more than thirty key cultural venues throughout the city.



Henna Stop Sign  
(20102011-) by  
Mohamed Kanoo



Cairo-February 4  
(2011) by Thomas  
Hartwell

The festival featured a wide-ranging programme of events including visual arts, film, music, theatre, dance, literature, architecture, lectures and discussion, many of them free.

The highlights of the programme included three of the hottest new generation stars of the Middle East's music subcultures: Zeid Hamdan from Beirut, Tamer Abu Ghazaleh from Palestine, and

Maryam Saleh from Egypt.

One of London's leading centres for Arab contemporary arts, the Mosaid Rooms hosted *A Girl in her Room*, an exhibition of photo works by the highly acclaimed Lebanese/American artist, Rania Matar.

The opening of Brunel University's new Institute for Contemporary Middle Eastern Music, the first of its kind in the world featured a concert including works by composers from Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Turkey.

A free weekend of films, talks and workshops at the ICA was curated by Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha in a close collaboration between the two organisations. Speakers included curator Jack Persekian, artist Emily Jacir, film director, Ahmad Abdalla and Deena Chalabi, Head of Strategy at Mathaf.

The Penal Colony, Kafka's classic play presented by Young Vic Theatre was adapted by director Amir Nizar Zuabi and the Palestinian company ShiberHur and performed in Arabic with English surtitles.

The Bldoun Library in Residence

at the Serpentine Gallery opened, a travelling collection of 50 years of books, magazines, videos, music and ephemera from and about the Middle East, of interest to artists, researchers and art lovers.

Palestine/Lebanon/Syria: Poetry and Political Protest was presented by Poet in the City at City Hall, featuring the renowned Palestinian poet Najwan Darwish.

*A Night in Tahrir Square* was presented by the Barbican Centre featuring a line-up of artists who helped to create the soundtrack of Egypt's revolution including street music group El Tanbura, Azza Balba, oud virtuoso Mustafa Said and singer-songwriter, Ramy Essam.

Introducing the festival the Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "The Arab world is changing fast; in some ways beyond recognition. In London we want to look beyond the stereotypes and understand a region that is diverse and dynamic in arts, culture, ideas and belief. Shubbak provides a 'window' through which to see the extraordinary breadth and excitement of contemporary Arab arts in key London institutions,

building on a powerful sense of connection and respect. At a time of remarkable political and social change, and in a city which has welcomed many Arabs over the years, I hope this festival will make us think again about Arab culture today."

Zarir J Cama, Group General Manager, Group Management Office, HSBC Holdings plc concluded that: "Shubbak: A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture will provided real insight into the Middle East. Shubbak

was first event of the bank's 2011 and 2012 global Cultural Exchange programme, Arabian Journeys. Celebrating the rich and diverse culture of the region, the programme included research with the Economist Intelligence Unit, Arabia Offscreen - an international education project involving an expedition to Saudi Arabia. Following our previous spotlights on the emerging markets of China, India and Brazil, our Cultural Exchange programme reflects the value we place on appreciating and understanding



Eighteen (2010) by Natalie Avoub

Shifa'a, 14, Jerusalem (2009) by Rania Matar



different points of view when building successful working relationships.”

Presenting organisations included: Arab British Centre, Arab New Trends, Arts Canteen, Barbican Centre, The British Museum, Brunel Institute of Contemporary Middle-Eastern Music, Cadogan Hall, Café Oto, Dash Arts, Delfina Foundation, English Chamber Orchestra, Foyles Bookshop, Freeword, Gate Cinema, ICA, The Idler, iniva, Land in Focus, Leighton House Museum, LIFT, London

Review of Books, London Walks, MICA Gallery, The Mosaic Rooms, Museum of London, Musicstage Promotions, Nous, Poet in the City, The Prince's School of Traditional Arts, Resonance FM, Rich Mix, Royal Institute of British Architects, Sadler's Wells, Saqi Books, Scoop at MORE London, Selma Feriani Gallery, Serpentine Gallery, Six Pillars, SOAS, Sotheby's, Southbank Centre, Tate Modern, V&A, Young Vic, Westfield Shopping Centre and Zenith Foundation.