

Ayyam Gallery
12, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8
Al Quoz 1, Dubai
Tel: +971.4.3236242
Fax: +971.4.3236243

Gallery Hours:
Sun-Thu: 10.00am-6.00pm
Sat: 12.00pm-6.00pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Rula Halawani, *Untitled 1* from For My Father series, 2015, Archival print, 150 x 150 cm. Edition of 5

Rula Halawani

For My Father

18 January – 3 March 2016

Opening reception: Monday, 18 January from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (12, Alserkal Avenue) is pleased to present *For My Father*, the solo show of leading Palestinian artist Rula Halawani. Featuring a recent series of photographs, *For My Father* serves as Halawani's debut exhibition with the gallery since joining its roster of artists earlier this year.

Widely respected for her experimental approach to documentary photography, Halawani's latest body of work details the Israeli occupation of Palestine from the vantage point of fading recollection. Creating a photographic record in remembrance of her late father, Halawani revisits several sites throughout historic Palestine, specifically the scenery that shaped her childhood memories. In the ghostly images of the series, the rolling hills, seashore, and traditional neighbourhoods of the artist's youth are distorted through the lens of

her camera as she struggles to identify what was once familiar. Invading industry now defines the horizon. Abandoned homes are shown in a gradual process of deterioration, overgrown with weeds that sprout from crumbling facades. Once popular beaches now host solitary figures whose silhouettes are fogged at the edges as though slowly disappearing with the diminishing sand and sea.

In a letter to her father that accompanies the series, Halawani describes the transformed environments with disbelief and apparent melancholy, acknowledging the disappearance of the serene settings that were integral to her familial experiences. This somber mood is reflected in the artist's infrared photography as an opaque film that blankets each site in addition to intensified contrasts between ominous shadows and vivid areas of light.

The subjectivity of Halawani's attachment to each setting also surfaces in the various angles of the photographs and the few moments of clarity that manifest as minor sections of blurred scenes. Resulting from a specific photographic technique, this visual effect situates Halawani at a material distance, forcibly removed from her subject matter. With the formal innovation of the series the feelings of loss that she describes to her father mirror the transitory nature of life and the sense of alienation that is experienced by Palestinians as families continue to be internally and externally displaced.

About the Artist

As a native of occupied East Jerusalem, Rula Halawani began her artistic career by registering the difficulties of living under a protracted political conflict. Halawani's early works capture the many aspects of this reality, from the tedious moments of attempting to perform daily tasks under the restrictions of military occupation to the cyclical onset of violent siege that transforms Palestinian neighborhoods, towns, and cities into overnight war zones.

After several years of photographing the stark imagery that defines the everyday lives of Palestinians, Halawani increasingly focused on the spatial implications of the occupation by documenting its built environments and structures: the meticulous system of architecture that serves as one of its central mechanisms. Recently, she has turned her lens towards the traces of lives and history that can still be found in often overlooked details, whether in the material culture of Palestinian society or the transformed landscapes of her childhood.

Born in Jerusalem, Palestine in 1964, Rula Halawani holds a Bachelor of Art degree in Advanced Photography from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada (1989); and a Master of Art degree in Photographic Studies from the University of Westminster, London (2001). Halawani is based in Jerusalem, where, in addition to her artistic practice, she is the founding director of the Photography program at Birzeit University, where she also teaches. The program offers the first academic training of its kind in Palestine.

Halawani's selected solo exhibitions include Selma Feriani Gallery, UK (2013, 2010); Al Hoash Gallery, Palestine (2009); Botanique Museum, Brussels. Her works have been featured in group exhibitions such as She Who Tells a Story: Women Photographers from Iran and the Arab World, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburg, USA (2015); MART Museum, Italy (2014); FotoFest Biennial, USA (2014); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA; Mori Art Museum, Japan (2012); and BOZAR, Palace for Fine Arts, Belgium (2011).

Halawani's photographs are housed in the international collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou, France; Nadour Collection, Germany; Victoria & Albert Museum, UK; The Khalid Shoman Foundation, Jordan; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA, among others. Palestine, the artist's first monograph, was published by La Lettre Volee, Brussels in conjunction with her 2008 midcareer retrospective at the Botanique Museum.

Halawani recently received grants from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture and the Open Society Institute for two new photographic series that she completed in Palestine.

Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Dates: 18 January - 3 March 2016

Opening Reception: Monday, 18 January from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai (12, Alserkal Avenue), Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971 4 3236242

Email: dubai@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com

For press information and artwork images, please contact press@ayyamgallery.com or +971 4 3236242.