



awan
festival

1-30 March 2023

Produced by Arts Canteen

arab women
artists now

 Misha Warren

visual arts
performance
music
comedy
film
literature
workshops

awan.org.uk



awan
arab women
artists now

Laila Shawa

4 April 1940 - 24 October 2022



© Inzajeano Latif courtesy of The Estate of Laila Shawa

In memory of Laila Shawa, a pioneering Palestinian artist and one of the most respected artists of her generation. Arts Canteen and AWAN Festival wish to express appreciation for her unwavering support over the years, and to celebrate her legacy and contribution to Middle Eastern art.

A feminist, activist and artist, Laila was many wonderful and inspiring things to friends and strangers.

Rest in Peace.

Welcome to AWAN Festival 2023

Welcome to AWAN festival 2023 - Arab Women Artists Now.

We are the UK's only festival dedicated to supporting the incredible work of female artists from the Arab world and across the diaspora, presenting an all-too-rare opportunity for topical, cultural and artistic exchange.

Our programme embraces a wide-ranging mix of creative projects expressed through film, literature, music, comedy, lecture and debate – whereby we challenge historic stereotypes and celebrate the richness and diversity within our culture.

During this current era of anxiety and despair for many, we choose to celebrate the revolutionary women who are dismantling the systems in place, and offering uplifting shafts of hope and light.

We are pleased to have the continued support of Arts Council England and our partners: Rich Mix, Grand Junction, The Arab British Centre and the Royal Albert Hall.

However, the real thanks needs to go to all the artists and attendees who have supported – and continue to support – us through the years.

We hope to see you at all our events this month.

AWAN Team



www.awan.org.uk

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OPENING NIGHT
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£6 Thursday 2 March 2023, 7pm
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£10 Friday 3 March 2023, 8.30pm
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£5 Saturday 4 March 2023, 4pm
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£5 Saturday 4 March 2023, 8pm
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£5 Saturday 11 March 2023, 3.30pm
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FREE Saturday 11 March 2023, 5pm
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£5 Saturday 11 March 2023, 5.30pm
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FREE Saturday 18 March 2023, 1-3pm
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£8 Saturday 18 March 2023, 9pm
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£10 Thursday 23 March 2023, 6-8.30pm
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Neo Nahda
Film screening and in-person Q&A
with Director May Ziade

£4 Sunday 26 March 2023, 4pm
FINCH CAFÉ



visual arts

Hawazin Alotaibi

Selected artworks from

'Fingerprints of a Lover' and 'An Effort' residency

1-30 March 2023, 10am - 10pm  FREE

RICH MIX

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

London E1 6LA

020 7613 7498

richmix.org.uk



We are honoured to display a curated selection of Hawazin Alotaibi's exquisite paintings throughout the duration of AWAN festival from 1-30 March. Hawazin's work challenges the gender norms within the Arab world, and blurs the boundaries of expression (literally, and metaphorically) through experimentation.

Hawazin (B.1993, Wisconsin) is a London-based Saudi-American interdisciplinary artist and DJ. She earned her BA in Painting at the *University of the Arts London* and her MA in *Painting at the Royal College of Art*. She works primarily with painting, audio, photo, and video editing.

The work on display examines the notions of gender, masculinity, and self-representation on social media of the ever-changing cultural and political dynamics in the Arab world, specifically Gulf countries. Hawazin experiments with motion glitches and distorts her paintings with photographs she's taken or collected from social media or cultural and religious books. A radical voice of the generation.



Beirut: the Aftermath

OPENING NIGHT

Film screening and in-person Q&A with Director Fadia Ahmad

Thursday 2 March 2023 7pm  £6

RICH MIX

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

London E1 6LA

020 7613 7498

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film



Join us for the opening night of the AWAN Festival 2023 with a film screening of Beirut, The Aftermath, which will be followed by an in-person Q&A with the award-winning Director and photographer, Fadia Ahmad.

The film tells the tale a month after the August 4th blast, where an artist returns to Beirut to help rebuild what she can of her broken city. Retracing her usual itinerary of 10452 steps through the streets of Beirut, she seeks to portray the aftermath of the explosion that shook Lebanon to its core.

A journey that once fulfilled the goal of self-discovery now gives both Beirut and the blast's survivors a voice. Raw testimonials and powerful scenes recount the day everything collapsed all while showing the resilience of a people who don't want to give up. Individuals from all walks of life finally open up after what seemed like a lifetime of silence.

After the screening and Q&A, there will be an opportunity to purchase one of Fadia's prints of the city and a signed copy of her book '*Beyrouth Beirut*'.



From Galilee to Beirut.

Live music by Samah Mustafa and Jana Saleh

Friday 3 March 2023, 8.30pm  £10

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London E1 6LA

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Samah Mustafa



Jana Saleh

Join us for an unmissable double bill with Palestinian singer-songwriter Samah Mustafa, featuring music from Beirut DJ Jana Saleh.

Samah Mustafa is an Arab Palestinian singer. Her musical journey was influenced by oriental classic singing and folk Arabic music, which she combined with modern music to develop her unique music style. Samah was also influenced by instrumental music and today she is a band leader; writing, composing and arranging ambient, folk and experimental music. Her sound is based on vocal and instrumental loops, musical images in vocal and lyrics. She was the main vocalist for various musical projects including *Arab Baroque Music Project*, *Jawa Tour*, *New Star Competition* and *Yabous Palestinian Festival*.

Jana Saleh is an active member of the Dj scene, with more than a decade of playing in clubs and parties in Lebanon, the Levant as well as Europe. Jana has a monthly residency on Radio Al Hara where she explores original material in 1hour sets. In addition, her DJ sets have been played on *NTS Radio* in England, *Radio Nova* in France, *Radio Veneno* in Brazil and *Roots Radio* in Turkey. Jana co-founded *Lazarus Arts and Culture* – a platform dedicated to promoting and programming music and artistic events from the Levant region.

The evening is presented by Arts Canteen in collaboration with Rich Mix.



SARD

literature

Libyan oral history, storytelling & memorialisation

Sarah Giaziri - Najla Elageli - Sanaa El Mansouri

Saturday 4 March 2023, 4pm  £5



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Benghazi University students gathering (1960)

We're honoured to announce Sard (meaning 'narrative' in Arabic) — a project seeking justice and rewriting history, initiated by *Sarah Giaziri, Najla Elageli and Sanaa El Mansouri*.

An important project archiving Libyan oral history as a means to revolt, Sard collects and preserves the experiences of individuals who have lived through periods of political and cultural significance in the country's recent past.

Their mission is to build trust and facilitate dialogue between different communities and contribute to a more inclusive and democratic society.

Below is more information on the panelists:

Najla Elageli is an architect and curator, who founded *@noonartsprojects* which brings contemporary *MENA* art to the world stage. Najlaa curated multiple projects globally, including *@shubbakfestival*, *@nourfestival*, *The Benetton Foundation* and *@casa_arabe*

Sana Elmansouri is an important Libyan journalist, broadcaster and producer. She was the first Libyan to present on national TV in Tamazight, and founded the Libyan political party *Libou* (which she later left). She has recently been nominated for multiple positions by the current *Presidential Council*.

Sarah Giaziri is a human rights solicitor, journalist and campaigner. She worked at the *@ffregister* and the *@rorypecktrust* which advocate for the safety and welfare of freelance journalists.

Aerial Emotions

Aerial hoop performance and Q&A by Danielle Adourian

Saturday 4 March 2023, 8pm **£5**

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35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

London E1 6LA

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richmix.org.uk



Dazzle your eyes and heal your heart with a spellbinding evening of aerial hoop. Twisting to the jazz sounds of Hijaz, Danielle Adourian will be pushing the boundaries of Armenian & Lebanese artistry.

Danielle draws inspiration from dance, burlesque and drag, and explores how expression through movement can be healing and emancipatory.

Combining strength and flexibility with elegance and emotion, this unique and transformative performance will be followed by a Q&A with the artist.



Habibti Nation X AWAN

Saturday 4 March 2023, 9.30pm  £10

RICH MIX

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

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psi.ko



LUMA



Bint7alal

A phenomenal line-up of rappers, sound artists and DJs playing a range of percussive club sounds in addition to your favourite party classics from the Arabic-speaking world.

Featuring:

LUMA – an Iraqi-British DJ and radio host from SE London. She runs *Habibti Nation*, a collective and radio show on Balamii championing underground electronic music by femxle and non-binary artists from the South West Asia (Middle East) and North African region.

Bint7alal – a Palestinian rapper and producer now based in London. You've never heard anything like her before – smooth flows and dreamlike sounds digitalise her voice through auto-tune with electronic flare.

psi.ko – a London-based, Iraqi rap artist who's become the voice of a new generation. Her politically charged lyrics, intellectual wordplay and passionate energy will leave you feeling ready to combat the world.

Please note: this is an 18+ event.

The evening is presented by Arts Canteen in collaboration with Rich Mix.

ASWAT (Cabaret Night)

Thursday 9 March 2023, 8pm **£10-12**

GRAND JUNCTION

Rowington Close
London W2 5TF
020 7266 8258
grandjunction.org.uk



Sunkissed Child



Amal Khalidi



Sana El Wakili



Tasneim Zyada



Chifaa Khelfaoui



Heba Alhayek

Join us for an evening of cabaret with a Middle Eastern and North African twist, featuring music, spoken word, and poetry from the ASWAT ('voices' in Arabic) of inspiring female Arab artists!

Sunkissed Child (Yasmina) originally from Lebanon, shares pieces of her life through various music genres, influenced by *Neo-soul, R&B, Hip-Hop* and *Middle Eastern* cultures.

Amal Khalidi is a multi-disciplinary, poet, musician, and storyteller. As a London born North African, their work attempts to understand their identity and the absolute silliness of the everyday.

Tasneim Zyada is a British-Palestinian spoken word artist and published poet. Her work explores the themes of identity, displacement, mental health and faith, with words that move the audience.

Sana El Wakili is a multidisciplinary artist based in London with North African heritage. Sana's poetry, writing and acting is influenced by spoken word and contemporary circus, music, visual art, as well as lived experience.

Chifaa Khelfaoui is a London-based Palestinian author. Her first book, *Sambac Beneath Unlikely Skies*, won the *2022 Palestine Book Awards* and was chosen as a *2021 Book of the Year* by *The White Review*, *Middle East Eye* and *The New Arab*.

Heba Alhayek is a spoken word artist, actor and writer, taking inspiration from hip-hop and conscious rap. She uses poetry to express her thoughts and emotions on the complications of life – particularly those faced by Arab women.



Wholeness: Homage to Maya Deren

Film screening and in-person Q&A with Director Sarah Al-Sarraj

Saturday 11 March 2023, 5pm

FREE

film



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Escape into a dreamlike state during our free 'Wholeness' screening, a short experimental animation film by director Sarah Al-Sarraj, who will also be joining us for an in-person Q&A.

Sarah's film is a study on the limits of subjectivity and the need to transgress them to recognise the natural world's sentience and reject the nature/culture and human/environment binaries created to dehumanise indigenous people.

Inspired aesthetically by the surreal dreamscapes of Maya Deren, an important figure in the 1940s avant-garde scene in New York, it is a homage to her exploration of dreams and subjectivity.

Sarah Al-Sarraj (she/they) is a predominantly visual artist working with painting, comic, writing and moving image. Her practice cultivates a visual language that aims to disrupt hegemonic power structures and hierarchies of knowledge production. Dreams, desire, altered states and secrets often feature.

Her practice is currently focused on conceptualising ideas around the natural world drawing from indigenous, queer, eco-anarchist, and Sufi metaphysical thought. Last year she completed *Wysing's AMPlify* residency and *Open School East's Associates Programme*. She was recently awarded a grant from the *Arts Council* to develop an animation practice.



Our River... Our Sky

Film screening and in-person Q&A with Director Maysoon Pachachi

Saturday 11 March 2023, 5.30pm  £5

film



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Director Maysoon Pachachi tells the story of Sara, a single mother and novelist, shocked into silence, at a time of extreme sectarian violence and nightly curfews in Baghdad. She and her neighbours invite us into their everyday lives, as their world fragments and they attempt to renew a fragile sense of hope for a better future.

Dedicated to the youth of Iraq, *Maysoon Pachachi's* film offers a glance at the realities of ordinary life in Baghdad, a stark contrast to past Western media portrayals of the 2006 US-led invasion. A raw and powerful display of humanity, Pachachi's film explores identity and nationalism, and what it means to belong.

Through the chaos and destruction, the residents never let their ambitions and desires for the future fade. Yet, they can't help but contemplate leaving Iraq, and are forced to ask a painful question – who does Baghdad really belong to?

AWAN TALKS

Join us for an afternoon of inspiration, creativity, and connection with three inspiring talks at Rich Mix from phenomenal female artists.

RICH MIX
35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.
London E1 6LA
020 7613 7498
richmix.org.uk

literature

Palestinian Literature NOW

Speakers: Nora Parr, Selma Dabbagh, Heba Alhayek

Saturday 11 March 2023, 12.30pm **£5**



Join three inspiring Arab women for a conversation about Palestinian literature; Nora E.H. Parr, author and expert of Palestinian literature will be joined by Palestinian authors Selma Dabbagh and Heba Alhayek.

The three panelists will discuss the unique genre of Palestinian fiction through the themes of artistic trends, revolutionary innovation, the evolution of symbols, and the importance surrounding the death of the hero poet.



Ahla Fawda

Speaker: Imane Assaf

Saturday 11 March 2023, 2pm  £5

literature



Ahla Fawda is a humanitarian and environmental NGO which provides support to disadvantaged communities through sustainable projects.

Founder Iman Assaf will join us to discuss the organisations important initiatives, as well as showcasing a selection of unique recycled artisan products made by the artists which will be available for sale.



Breaking Barriers and Creating Careers

Speakers: Heba El Kayal, Cristina O'Hanlon and guests

Saturday 11 March 2023, 3.30pm  £5

literature



© Heba El Kayal 2021. All rights reserved. Courtesy of Heba El Kayal.

Join us for a conversation between practising artists and cultural practitioners on the many paths taken and the obstacles they faced on their journey.

From female perspectives, we will hear how barriers have been broken, what issues we need to rally behind, and the hopeful future we can cultivate for Arab women in the arts.



ARABS ARE NOT FUNNY

Ella Al Shamahi / Celya Ab / Farah Sharp / Janine Harouni / Nadz

Thursday 16 March 2023, 9.30pm  £18.50

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Kensington Gore, South Kensington,
London SW7 2AP
020 7589 8212
royalalberthall.com

arabs
are
not
funny[®]



Join us at the *Elgar Rooms* for a special edition of our acclaimed comedy night with five female Arab comedians, as part of the Arab Woman Artist Now (AWAN) Festival 2023.

LINE UP

Farah Sharp (MC) English-Egyptian comedian based in London. She has performed around the UK as well as in Sydney, Australia. Her stand-up is a mix of quirky opinions and anecdotes, often based around her upbringing or relationships and what she has (or hasn't!) learnt from them.

Ella Al-Shamahi Yemeni British, Ella is a *National Geographic* explorer, TV presenter on the *BBC & Channel 4*, and *Neanderthal* specialist fossil hunting in caves in unstable and hostile territories... she also happens to be a stand-up comic.

NADZ Palestinian and Irish comedienne Nadz brings hilarious real-life experiences to the stage, following performances across the UK and Los Angeles.

Celya AB Originally from Paris, France and of Algerian origins, Celya has been making a huge impression on the UK comedy scene. With her sharp writing and likeable stage presence Celya is destined for the top. She has written for the *News Quiz* on *BBC Radio 4* and *Comedy Central*, and recently appeared on *BBC 2's Funny Festival Live*.

Janine Harouni An award-winning comedian who's 'ready for her Netflix special' (★★★★★ *The Times*). Her critically-acclaimed debut Edinburgh hour '*Stand Up with Janine Harouni (Please Remain Seated)*' was nominated for the prestigious '*Best Newcomer*' award at the *Edinburgh Fringe* and recommended by the critics at *The New York Times*.



Cockney Stacking Doll

Fatiha El-Ghorri

Friday 17 March 2023, 7pm  £10

RICH MIX

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

London E1 6LA

020 7613 7498

richmix.org.uk

comedy



The hilarious Fatiha El Ghorri is bringing her Work In Progress to Rich Mix! Fatiha is a British-Moroccan writer, actor, and regular on the UK comedy circuit.

Her observational stand-up and wonderful witticism take you on a whirlwind journey that pulls apart Muslim stereotypes and challenges people's views on Islam, Muslims, and Muslim women. She tackles some tough subjects like Islamophobia and dating by sharing her own experiences which are funny, thought-provoking and honest!

When she is not doing stand up you may see Fatiha on your tv screens, where she has made TV appearances on shows including *The Jonathan Ross Show* and *Russell Howard Comedy Hour*.



Nezouh

Film screening and in-person Q&A with Director Soudade Kaadan

Saturday 18 March 2023, 9pm  £8

film

RICH MIX

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London E1 6LA

020 7613 7498

richmix.org.uk



14-year-old Zeina and her family are the last to have stayed in their besieged hometown of Damascus in Syria.

A missile rips a giant hole in their home, exposing them to the outside world. When a rope is mysteriously lowered into the hole, Zeina gets her first taste of freedom, and an unimaginable world of possibility opens up for her.

As the violence outside escalates, the family is pressured to evacuate, but Mutaz, her father is adamant that they stay, refusing to flee to the uncertain life of a refugee. Faced with a life or death dilemma, Zeina and Hala, her mother, must make the choice whether to stay or leave.

The evening is presented by Arts Canteen in collaboration with Rich Mix.



Iraq In Focus

literature



Saturday 18 March 2023, 1-3pm

FREE

RICH MIX

35-47 Bethnal Green Rd.

London E1 6LA

020 7613 7498

richmix.org.uk



Join us to celebrate the remarkable apprenticeship programme between five UK-based Arab creatives and emerging female artists from Baghdad.

This year-long project, initiated by Arts Canteen and The Station (Baghdad), aims to empower Iraqi artists to take their practice to a new level. During this event, the artists will display the new work they've created, share their stories, and you will have the opportunity to connect live.

The project paired 5 Iraqi and 5 British artists together to create a mentorship programme which helped develop the skills of emerging Iraqi female artists and create new exciting work from a range of artistic practices including photography, music, animation, design and digital art.

The artists include:

(UK)

- Alaa Alsraji
- Sally Souraya
- Farida Eltigi
- DJ Luma
- Lara Kobeissi

(Iraq)

- Yusur Mokdad
- Niga Salam
- Mena Hadad
- Yusur Mokdad
- Raz Kamaran



Music Industry 101

Sarah El Miniawy

Thursday 23 March 2023, 6-8.30pm  £10

THE ARAB BRITISH CENTRE

1 Gough Square,
London EC4A 3DE
020 7832 1310
arabbritishcentre.org.uk

workshop




Johan Bergmark

Demystify the music industry in this 2-hour session led by Sarah El Miniawy, founder of *Simsara Music*, *tarkeeza.com* and most recently *Simsara Records*. We will start by identifying the entities and specialisations found in any given music industry, before we dissect the remit of each of them and the complex web of relationships between them.

This workshop will equip you with the essential knowledge and much needed clarity to become more intentional and confident in your work in today's fast paced and ever changing music business.



Neo Nahda

Film screening and in-person Q&A with Director May Ziade

film

Sunday 26 March 2023, 4pm

£4



FINCH CAFÉ

12 Sidworth Street
London, E8 3SD
07944 371211
finchcafe.co.uk



Neo Nahda recounts the story of Mona, a young Arab woman who finds old photographs of women cross-dressing in the 1920s, becomes obsessed with them, and goes on a feverish journey of uncovering lost histories and her own identity.

The film deals with #queer and feminist histories of the Middle East, the process of research, browsing and discovering lost archives, and how archives can be a portal for the imagination and the realm of inner projections, they can produce meaning beyond historical truths. It is supported by the *BFI Network*.

SUPPORTERS



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ENGLAND**



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RICH MIX

GRAND • JUNCTION



ANNA ARTHUR PR



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