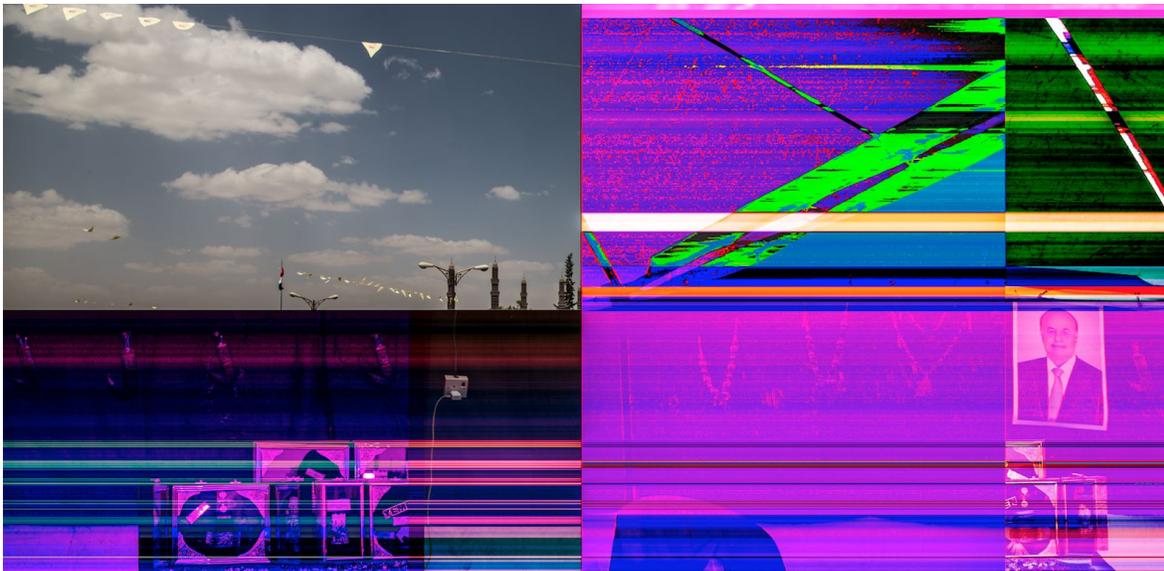


*On Echoes of Invisible Hearts:
Narratives of Yemeni Displacement*



Arif Alnomay, *File 7987 (Corrupted Files Series)*, 2014-2018, Lightbox, 23.6 x 35.4 in / 60 x 90 cm

September 26 - October 18, 2018
Curated by Lila Nazemian

Exhibition Opening and Reception:
September 26, 2018 | 6 - 8 pm
The Poetry Project
Fehrbelliner Str. 30,
10119 Berlin, Germany

Diwan Al Fan is pleased to announce *On Echoes of Invisible Hearts: Narratives of Yemeni Displacement*, a group show curated by Lila Nazemian running from September 26 to October 18, 2018 and featuring works by Yasmine Diaz, Ibi Ibrahim, Habeeb Abu-Futtaim, Saba Jalas, Eman al- Awami, and Arif Al Nomay. An illustrated catalogue by Yemeni designer Zulfa Ishak will accompany the exhibition.

By reflecting on the current instability in Yemen and the greater refugee crisis throughout the region, *On Echoes of Invisible Hearts* features artists in Yemen and the diaspora whose works explore themes of loss and estrangement. As the war reached its three-year anniversary this March, there seems to be no end in sight to the violence taking place, yet coverage and understanding of this conflict and its severe social, humanitarian, and infrastructural consequences remains minimal. Beyond falling short on complexifying reports to include the ethically dubious role of Western powers in regional conflicts, media outlets especially fail to discuss the emotional toll this war has taken on everyday Yemenis.

In an effort to engage with more personal accounts, the exhibition will act as a platform to put forth the artists' takes regarding various personal and collective experiences, as Yemenis, but more importantly as



displaced individuals. Being displaced does not merely refer to a literal meaning, but also points to emotional and spiritual uprootedness. The show is conceived to be presented in Berlin so as to further connect to the greater refugee and immigrant experiences that have been at the forefront of current-day political discourses.

Sourcing content from top U.S. news outlets, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, and the Los Angeles Times, first generation Yemeni-American Yasmine Diaz focuses on the disproportionate distribution of information about one of the most dire issues of our time. In these works, Diaz examines the censored and limited U.S. media coverage of the conflict in Yemen.

Departure by Sana'a and Berlin-based Ibi Ibrahim features a video and photo installation comprised of pictures sent to the artist by displaced and stranded Yemenis reflecting their constant state of instability and longing for home. Qatar-based artist Habeeb Abu-Futtaim's video installation *Water Borders* depicts dissolving colored salt bricks, molded in the shapes found in Arab flags, floating in water as a reference to the regional politics at play and to the fate of thousands of refugees who were forced to flee their homes by sea. In his video *Undoing the Displacement of my Belief* shows the artist struggling to remove the white center of a green rectangular mold. Through his work, Abu-Futtaim reflects upon a still prominent yet age-old struggle within members of the Islamic faith; gauging the relationship between religion and politics.

In her series *Smoke Drawings*, Sana'a-based Saba Jallas gathers photographs taken with mobile phones in the aftermath of bombings around Yemen and superimposes her own cartoon drawings within the contours of the smoke. Through her various interventions, the works obfuscate the infrastructural and psychological devastation in each photograph to reveal a dreamlike alternate of hope and security. Eman al-Awami's project re-examines her own photographs taken on behalf of humanitarian agencies to raise project funds, but that at times portray Yemenis in humiliating states. She then began conscientiously photographing locals in Sana'a who are engaged in various entrepreneurial activities, so as to inspire new fundraising avenues for local and specific initiatives.

The *Corrupted Files* project by Riyadh-based Arif Al Nomay consists of digital image files of the 2014 Sana'a Summer Festival that were inadvertently corrupted on the artist's computer. These new images are essentially compilations of multiple photographs, with some sections and color left intact, while others are pixelated. Displayed for the first time here as light boxes, landscapes, individuals, and objects are visible despite the visual chaos of this joyous and lighthearted celebration.

Working in diverse mediums, the artists exhibiting explore themes of identity, memory, representation and displacement, all within the current context of war and instability. By diversifying the dominant narratives about Yemen and its peoples, the exhibition draws attention to the discrepancies that exist between public and private knowledge of events unfolding in Yemen daily. *On Echoes of Invisible Hearts* challenges viewers to reflect on their understanding of the conflict and to question the roles of various geo-political forces and the responsibilities of Western governments within the larger refugee crisis.

On Echoes of Invisible Hearts is made possible with the generous support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

Press Contact: diwanalfanair@gmail.com | instagram: @diwanalfan

About Diwan Al Fan: Diwan Al Fan is dedicated to supporting visual art, music and film from Yemen through local and international projects - including exhibitions, art residencies and music productions.



Providing a global perspective on Yemeni art and culture, Diwan Al Fan encourages the development of projects that expand the discourse around contemporary art, music and film from Yemen. Diwan Al Fan was established in November 2017 by Ibi Ibrahim and is the arts initiative of the newly established Sana'a based Romooz Foundation for the Arts and Cultural Development.

About the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Yemen: In 1997 FES began to conduct activities in Yemen. The FES Yemen office was established only two years later, in the old city of Sana'a. Today, the main working areas of FES Yemen include promoting gender and youth participation for an increased social and political participation, as well as democratisation processes. The project further aims at fostering socio-economic challenges by offering a platform for the development of new approaches to socially-just economic policies. Through trainings in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation, FES Yemen supports civil-society initiatives in dealing with conflicts on a local level and maintaining social cohesion.