

Press Release

# ***Kafala: Migrant Labor in the Arabian Peninsula***

Curated by **Clark Clark**

On view:

**September 9 - October 22, 2022**

**Tues. - Sat., 11am - 6pm**

Opening Reception and live on Instagram:

**Thurs., September 8, 6 - 8pm IG: @apexartnyc**

Location:

**291 Church Street, NYC, and 3D Online at [apexart.org/clark.php](http://apexart.org/clark.php)**

Featuring work by:

**Khalid Al Baih and Aparna Jayakumar - Todd Ayoung and Jelena Stojanović - Hanna Barczyk - Jonas Bendiksen - Clark Clark - Molly Crabapple - Noah Fischer - Mariam Ghani - Matt Greco and Gregory Sholette - Ryan Inzana - Pedro Lasch - Dread Scott - Jaret Vadera**

Nearly 7,000 migrant workers have died thus far in preparation for Qatar's 2022 FIFA World Cup. The pandemic has escalated the issue, leaving more workers stranded, unpaid and neglected. This is just one example of how the Kafala sponsorship system is creating a migrant worker crisis in the Gulf Cooperation Council nations. Predatory recruiters lure workers from impoverished nations into leaving their families, only to endure low wages, long shifts, inhumane living conditions, and abuse. Employers illegally confiscate workers' passports or trade their visas to the highest bidder. Workers cannot transfer jobs, obtain a license, rent an apartment, open a bank account, or leave the country without the sponsor's consent.

This exhibition surveys art and creative activism that bring attention to this exploitative system, and calls for its reform. Jonas Bendiksen's photographs document migrant workers' lives in the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar. Street portraits by Khalid Al Baih and Aparna Jayakuma showcase workers' sartorial choices on their only day off. Illustrations by Ryan Inzana and Hanna Barczyk bring attention to the trafficking of women, and drawings by Molly Crabapple reveal the plight of the construction workers in the Emirates. Posters and organized interventions designed by The Gulf Labor Artist Coalition advocate for the rights of the migrant workers constructing educational and cultural institutions in Abu Dhabi.

***Kafala: Migrant Labor in the Arabian Peninsula* is an apexart NYC Open Call exhibition. For the latest information on the exhibition and related events, visit [apexart.org/clark.php](http://apexart.org/clark.php) or contact [ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org](mailto:ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org).**

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**Clark Clark** is an interdisciplinary artist, activist, and an assistant professor of art and graphic design from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He earned an MFA from Brooklyn College and a BFA from Webster University. His latest creative work includes photographing stray cats in the Middle East and painting vibrant geometrical abstract murals.

apexart's program supporters past and present include the National Endowment for the Arts, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Fprogram supporters past and present include the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Spencer Brownstone, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, Epstein Teicher Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbott Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Fifth Floor Foundation, The Puffin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and administered by LMCC, funds from NYSCA Electronic Media/Film in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, as well as the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

**#Kafala**

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Molly Crabapple, *Slaves of Happiness Island*, 2014