

apexart

Open Sesame

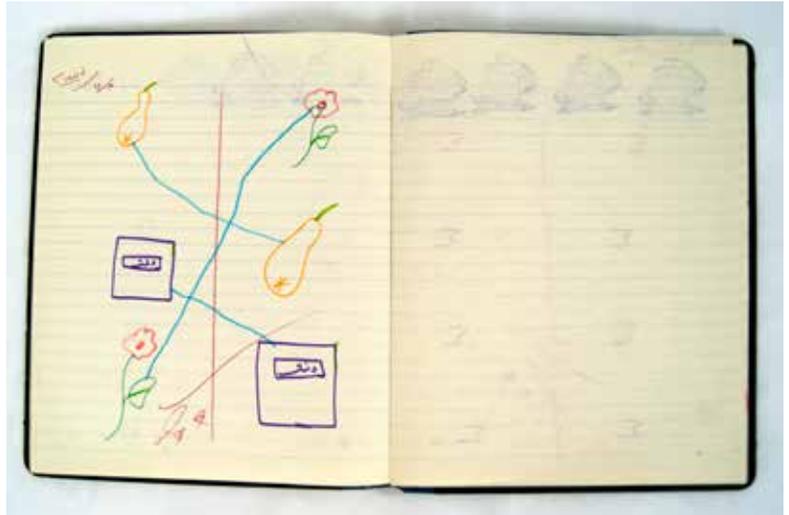
organized by
Ola El-Khalidi

Opening reception:
Wednesday, January 16: 6 - 8 pm

On view:
January 17 - March 2, 2013

Featuring work by:

Ganzeer
Jeanno Gaussi
Rheim AlKadhi
Makan Collective (Diala Khasawnih and Samah Hijawi)



Math book-Kindergarten, 1977

In the evening of August 2, 1990, a family of four, vacationing in Greece was driving through the mountains on the island of Crete. Someone turned on the radio and the news announced, "the lands of Kuwait are invaded." The father slapped himself and shouting incoherently turned the car around and went back to the hotel. He asked the hotel owner for a radio, started making phone calls and soon thereafter the family flew back to Athens and from there to Jordan. Kuwait was no longer their home.

The participating artists in *Open Sesame* take the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 as a starting point. Using material collected from people who left Kuwait twenty-two years ago and were interviewed for the purpose of this exhibition, the artists in the show work with personal mementos such as housewares, letters, and diaries along with the interviews themselves. In their reflection and reaction to this moment, the artists in *Open Sesame* bring in their own histories, circumstances, and geographies to the story. This exhibition presents a very personal narrative, oscillating between the fictional and the real with the aim of documenting a moment, or parts of a moment, that quickly escaped.

Entitled *Iftah Ya Simsim (Open Sesame)*, this exhibition takes its name from the command used to open the cave of treasures in the tale *Ali Baba and The Forty Thieves*, and from the title of the Arabic version of *Sesame Street*, which was launched in Kuwait in 1979 and took a long pause with the invasion.

Ola El-Khalidi works in the arts as an organizer, curator, and collaborator. Along with Samah Hijawi and Diala Khasawnih, she is a member of *Makan*, an art space, ever-redefined project and a collective based in Amman, San Francisco, and anywhere in between. She received an MA in curatorial practice from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco in 2012.

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