

Farah Al Qasimi

Arrival

18 September - 23 November 2019

The Third Line is pleased to present *Arrival*, Farah Al Qasimi's third solo exhibition at the gallery. Using the language of horror cinema, Al Qasimi reveals a new body of work featuring jinn folklore across the UAE.



A's Reflection, 2019, Archival inkjet print, 107 x 74 cm

The show presents Al Qasimi's first feature-length film; a 40 minute horror-comedy titled *Um Al Naar (Mother of Fire)*. In it, a fictional Reality TV network has produced a segment on Um Al Naar, a Ras Al Khaimah-based Jinn. Um Al Naar narrates the region's changes from its occupation by Portuguese and British naval forces to its current adoption of a national identity based around tolerance and a drive to generate culture. She pays close attention to these changes in their day-to-day iterations: the gendered pastimes of the country's youth, waning trust in traditional forms of spirituality and medicine, and the loss of history in an urgent bid for novelty.

The photographs in the exhibition are moments pulled from the world she describes. She follows a baker with an Instagram business making buttercream roses, dance parties in which the only participants are men, and moves throughout homes looking at indicators of bodies and their personal style. Um Al Naar laments the formalities and social constructs of modern-day life, longing for a more fluid, interconnected world in which there is ample space for the paranormal, the unseen, and the absurd.

The film is peppered with found footage of various moments of release: exorcisms gone wrong, ecstatic dancing, and effervescent first-person storytelling. But as we lose our sense of collective release, Um Al Naar asks: 'how do we attain bodily transcendence in a modern world?'

In many horror films, the antagonist we fear the most is invisible; not a spooky ghost or monster, but a figment of our collective unconscious manifested as immaterial danger. Many of Al Qasimi's photographs contain a looming sense of dread or entrapment, even as the world they depict is full of color and cheer. A woman takes photographs in an aviary filled with live birds, their movement curtailed by a drop ceiling with fluorescent lights. A figure is reflected in a picture frame, her ghost trapped within its confines. *Um Al Naar* provides a space where these fears can be confronted—and where specters can move freely in bodily release.

About Farah Al Qasimi

Working primarily with photography, video and performance, Farah Al Qasimi examines post-colonial structures of power, gender and taste in the Gulf Arab states.

Farah studied photography and music at Yale University in 2012 and received her MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2017.

Selected exhibitions include *List Projects: Farah Al Qasimi*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA, USA (2019); *Artist's Rooms*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, (2019), *Conversation 7* (with Marcela Pardo Ariza), San Francisco Arts Commission (2018); *No to the Invasion: Break-downs and Side Effects*, CCS Bard Galleries, New York (2017); *More Good News*, Helena Anrather, New York (2017), and *Coming Up Roses*, The Third Line, Dubai (2016).

She has participated in residencies at the Delfina Foundation, London (2017); the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine (2017); and was recently awarded the New York NADA Artadia Prize and the Aaron Siskind Individual Photographer's Fellowship (2018).

Farah's work is housed in public collections including MACBA, Spain; Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Festival, Abu Dhabi, UAE; and Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE.

Farah lives and works between New York and Dubai. She is currently a critic at the Rhode Island School of Design.

About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Babak Golkar, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Jordan Nassar, Laleh Khorramian, Lamyra Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Nima Nabavi, Poursan Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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