

THE MIDDLE EAST CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENTS
VOICES FROM THE INTERIOR: PALESTINIAN WOMEN ARTISTS



Raida Adon, still from *The Body Recalled*, 2012. 24:27

JERSEY CITY, NJ, September 18, 2013— Mana Contemporary's Middle East Center for the Arts (MECA) presents *Voices From the Interior: Palestinian Women Artists*, an ambitious and unprecedented showcase of video art by six Palestinian women living and working in Israel. The artists address the complex social, political and historic challenges faced by women living in the Middle East, exploring issues of identity, nationalism and gender. Opened in May of 2013, Mana Contemporary has extended the exhibition through December 28, 2013, due to tremendous response.

In collaboration with the Umm el-Fahem Gallery in Israel, the exhibition reveals the two-fold challenge that the artists face in their everyday lives. As women in a male-dominated society, the artists offer a feminist perspective 'from the interior.' Fiercely critical of conventional attitudes towards marriage, patriarchy, and gender within their society, they combine provocative representations of the female body with continually-recurring imagery of marriage ceremonies, laundry, other household chores, and girlhood dreams, both exposing and challenging the collective experience of Palestinian-Israeli women.

Ethnic and religious minorities in a Jewish state, the artists also expose the complex reality and everyday life struggles of a national subgroup underrepresented in historical and cultural narratives. Questions of nationalism, memory, and identity are prominent, particularly the presence (and absence) of the Palestinian community within Israel since 1948. Taken as a whole, the videos reveal a spectrum of otherness and displacement, joining the larger Palestinian conversation on cultural identity.

The exhibition features works by Nasrin Abu Baker, Iman Abu Hamid, Fatima Abu Romi, Raida Adon, Anisa Ashkar, and Manal Mahamid.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST CENTER OF ART

MECA is a nonprofit exhibition space at Mana Contemporary providing an equal-opportunity platform for artists, curators, scholars, and institutions—based in the Middle East and its Diasporas—to showcase new and influential works of art. MECA's core mission is to educate the greater public about the Middle East through a year-long program of exhibitions, educational initiatives, and institutional alliances, providing an exciting forum for cultural exchange. For more information about MECA, please visit www.themeca.org.