



## Exhibition examines state of “refugeeness”, a condition meant to be temporary, but has become permanent for many populations

### Press Release

February 23, 2018

The [NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery](#) has announced the opening of its spring show, *Permanent Temporariness*, to the public on Saturday, February 24.

*Permanent Temporariness* is guest-curated by NYUAD faculty Salwa Mikdadi, who is among the foremost historians of modern art from the Arab world. It is co-curated by Bana Kattan, NYUAD Art Gallery Curator, who recently co-curated the exhibition *Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents* (NYUAD) and *But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community 1988-2008* (NYUAD).

The exhibition will feature seven installations, three of which are beyond the gallery walls. It reactivates five of the artists’ signature installations to date, including *The Concrete Tent*, *Common Assembly*, *Ramallah Syndrome*, *The Book of Exile*, and *The Tree School*.

Two of the artworks were developed specifically for this show, from the artists’ current research projects. *Living Room* is a performance piece arising out of Hilal’s work with a

Syrian refugee couple who became active hosts in their refugee camp living room in Boden, Sweden. In her hosting performance, Hilal activates our awareness of what they call “the right to host.” *Refugee Heritage* is a series of lightbox-mounted photographs taken by UNESCO photographer Luca Capuano at one of the world’s oldest refugee camps, Dheisheh camp in Bethlehem. Over the last two years, Hilal and Petti led a series of discussions in both refugee camps and elsewhere, on the implications of inscribing refugee history and heritage on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The nomination dossier was published in 2016 in [e-flux](#).

In *Permanent Temporariness*, Hilal and Petti present conceptual speculations that examine the state of impermanence and ‘refugeeness’ beyond victimhood and beyond charitable gestures. They offer the audience new ways of engaging with this critical and timely topic. I am delighted to be working with them again, having presented their work at the Venice Biennial almost a decade ago.

*Salwa Mikdadi, Co-curator and NYU Abu Dhabi faculty*

**Bana Kattan, Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery** commented: “*Permanent Temporariness* embodies our vision at the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, which is to organise exhibitions that connect with important topics, globally. Also, this is our first exhibition that sees performances and artworks installed beyond the Gallery walls, with the NYU Abu Dhabi campus providing a unique backdrop.”

[arts](#)

## About NYU Abu Dhabi

NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and science campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly-selective liberal arts, engineering and science curriculum with a world center for advanced research and scholarship enabling its students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world and advance cooperation and progress on humanity’s shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi’s high-achieving students have come from 115 nations and speak over 115 languages. Together, NYU’s campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai form the backbone of a unique global university, giving faculty and students opportunities to experience varied learning environments and immersion in other cultures at one or more of the numerous study-abroad sites NYU maintains on six continents.