

Zena el Khalil : Biography 2017

Zena el Khalil believes in the positive impact that art can have on the world. Born year of the Dragon, is a visual artist, writer and Nāda yoga instructor based in Beirut. Her work includes mixed media paintings, installations and performance that focus on creating a culture of peace through love, compassion, forgiveness and empathy. She holds a Masters of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in NYC, a Bachelor of Graphic Design from the American University of Beirut and a 200 RYT teaching certificate from the Yoga Alliance.

El Khalil exhibits internationally, including New York, San Francisco, Miami, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Dubai. She has also held solo exhibitions in Lagos, London, Munich, Turin and Beirut.

Zena also conducts a yearly performance entitled, *The Pink Bride of Peace*, where she participates in the Beirut International Marathon wearing a pink wedding dress. She uses this opportunity to pair up with local NGOs to raise awareness on issues in Lebanon pertaining to women's rights, and to spread love, peace and positivity in a region that is volatile and unstable. The performance started in 2003 and continues to this day. Zena has also created two other performance-based projects that aim to spread peace on a national scale throughout Lebanon, including *Reading for Peace* and *Healing Lebanon*.

Zena is also the founder of xanadu*, a non-profit art collective, began in New York City as a direct response to the 9-11 attacks; el Khalil set up this platform as a gallery space, to help Arab artists during a time of extreme xenophobia in NYC. In 2006 in Beirut, she curated the first all young women art exhibition entitled "Shu Tabkha, Ya Mara? (What's Cooking, Woman?) in partnership with the International Museum of Women's program Imagining Ourselves, of which she was part of their Global Advisory Committee. She also co-curated "Nafas Beirut", an exhibit that opened one month after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006, featuring works made during the attacks. She was later instrumental in producing the first four editions of a magazine dedicated solely to comics and illustration in the Middle East, Samandal Comics Magazine. Through xanadu*, El Khalil also created a publishing house to support and publish poets and writers based in the Middle East.

Though her new project, the Ātman Institute, Zena is curating cultural workshops and concerts pertaining to Nāda Yoga, the yoga of sound and vibrations.

During the 2006 invasion of Lebanon, Zena was one of the first largely followed Middle Eastern bloggers; her writings published in the international press, including the BBC, CNN, and Der Spiegel. The entire Guardian G2 supplement in July was dedicated to her blog, Beirut Update. Her writing was also included in the anthology, *Lebanon, Lebanon*, published by Saqi Books and *Beirut Noir*, published by Akashic Books.

In May 2008, el Khalil was invited by the Nobel Peace Center to participate in a conference on freedom of expression over the internet.

Zena's novel, *Beirut, I Love You*, published in 2008 is translated in several languages including Italian, Spanish, Swedish, and Portuguese.

El Khalil is regularly invited to lecture about her work. Some events include, *The Guardian Hay Festival: Segovia*, Spain; *the Edinburgh International Book Festival*, UK; *the Hay-On-Wye Festival of Literature*, Wales, UK; the University of Westminster, London UK; the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), UK; The Leighton House, UK; the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University.

El Khalil work and projects have been covered by The New York Times, El Pais, The Guardian, The Financial Times, LA Times, Spiegel Online, La Stampa, Repubblica, Time Out Magazine, and the Frankfurter

Allgemeine, to name a few. She has also held several radio interviews with the BBC and has been featured on Al Jazeera's arts program, "Artsworld".

In 2012, Zena was selected to be a TED Fellow, and has since given a few TED and TEDx talks.

In 2016, Zena became a certified instructor of Nāda Yoga through the Heart of Sound program. This is the first program in the world of its kind, dedicated solely to the yoga of sacred sound and subtle vibrations, certified by the Yoga Alliance. She is from the first class of graduates.

She lives in Beirut and her daily mantra is Gandhi's "be the change you wish to see in the world."

Zena el Khalil : CV

Born: April 27, 1976 || website: www.zenaelkhalil.com || contact: dude@zenaelkhalil.com

EDUCATION:

- 2016 200 RYT Nada Yoga, Certified Instructor, Yoga Alliance, Rishikesh, India
- 2002 MFA Fine Arts, School of Visual Arts. New York, NY, USA
- 1999 BGD Graphic Design, The American University of Beirut. Beirut, Lebanon

SOLO EXHIBITION:

- 2017 (forthcoming) *Sacred Catastrophe : Healing Lebanon*, Beirut, Lebanon. Curated by Beatrice Merz
- 2014 *from Mirfaq to Vega*, Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin, Italy
- 2012 *It's Not The End of The World: Beirut, I Love You: A Work in Progress*, Fondazione Merz, Turin
- 2010 *Ou Ali Mama3ou Khabar*, Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany
Ou Ali Mama3ou Khabar, Espace Kettaneh Kunigk, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2009 *A'salam Aleykum!*, Paratissima 5.2, The Waldensian Church of Turin, Turin, Italy
A'salam Aleykum!, Meteorite in Giardino, Fondazione Merz, Torino, Italy
- 2008 *Maybe, One Day Beirut Will Love Me Back*, Berardi-Sagharchi Projects, London, England
But, I Can't Let Go, Galerie Tanit, Munich, Germany
- 2006 *I Love You*, Espace SD, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2004 *Wahad Areese, Please*, Le Laboratoire, Espace SD, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2003 *Of Love and War*, Signature Art Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2017 *Dubai Art Fair*, Giorgio Persano Gallery, UAE
- 2016 *Abu Dhabi Art Fair*, Giorgio Persano Gallery, UAE
- 2015 *New Positions*, Art Cologne 2015, Germany
Fine Acts, TED, Vancouver, Canada
Art Love New York, New York, NY. Curated by Nino Azzi
Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Giorgio Persano Gallery, UAE
- 2014 *Artissima*, Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin Art Fair, Italy
- 2013 *Beyond The Cloth: The Kafiye Project*, WhiteBox, New York. Curated by Hala A. Malak
TED Fellows Retreat, Whistler, Canada
ART 13, Olympia Grand Hall, London UK
- 2012 *Arab Express*, Mori Art Museum, Japan
Le Corps Decouvert, Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris, France
Art Is The Answer, Villa Empain & the Boghossian Foundation, Brussels
Sovereign Asian Art Prize, Singapore & Hong Kong
- 2011 *Subtitled; With Narratives From Lebanon*; Royal College of Art, London. Curated by Juliana Khalaf.
Beirut ReBirth. Beirut Exhibition Center. Lebanon. Curated by Janine Maamari.
Freedom To Create Prize. Ana Tzarev Gallery, NYC.
Freedom To Create. Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai.
Freeome to Create. National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo.
Strike Oppose. Barajeel Art Foundation. Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE
Political Patterns, ifa-Gallery, Berlin and Stuttgart, Germany. Curated by Sabine Vogel.
- 2010 *Zoom Contemporary Art Fair*. Miami, USA.
Freedom To Create Prize. Cairo Opera House, Egypt.
All About Beirut, White Box, Munich, Germany. Curated by Joy Mardini
About The City, Castello di San Michele, Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy. Curated by Daniele Ratti
- 2009 *Golden Gates*, 46 Rue de Sévigné, Paris, France. Curated by Daniela da Prato
Beirut Live, Vibe Live, London, UK
Hopes And Doubts, Fondazione Merz, Torino, Italy. Curated by Costantino D'Orazio
- 2008 *Hopes And Doubts*, The Dome, Beirut, Lebanon. Curated by Costantino D'Orazio
Together, National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman, Jordan

- 2007 *The Resilient Landscape*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Paddington, Australia
More Light Than Death Could Bear, Art Lounge, Beirut, Lebanon
Red Cross Royal Gala Ball, The Old Billingsgate, London
Ana 'Njassa Al Fan (I Fear Art), Dialogpunkt Deutsch Tripoli, Lebanon
- 2006 *Pure Pop*, Art Lounge, Beirut, Lebanon
*Re*Birth Lebanon*, Dazed and Confused Gallery, London
I Love Beirut, Adam Street Private Members Club, London
Nafas Beirut, Espace SD, Beirut, Lebanon
Shu Tabkha, Ya Mara? (What's Cookin', Woman?), Art Lounge, Beirut, Lebanon
Imagining Ourselves, International Museum of Women, San Francisco, USA
- 2005 *He Rests, He Has Traveled*, Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, UAE
- 2004 *Garbagilla*, Sculpture collaboration with Greenpeace, Martyr's Square, Beirut, Lebanon
First Annual Comic and Animation Forum, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
Introducing Palestine, AFSC Friends House, Pasadena, California, USA
The Wedding Project, 65 Hope Street Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
See Williamsburg, Annual Central Williamsburg Arts Festival, Brooklyn, NY
Eat Me, 65 Hope Street Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2003 *24e Salon d'Automne*, Musee Surssock, Beirut, Lebanon
The Vending Project, ArtLink-Yanaka, Tokyo, Japan
Bayshore Festival of the Arts, The Firehouse Gallery, Bayshore, NY
Open Studio NY 11211, Brooklyn, New York
Falastine: Artists Against Occupation, Ofuroya: Contemporary Art Gallery, Philadelphia
- 2002 *ArtToy*, Gallery Mouri, Ginza, Tokyo, Japan
The Armory Show, New York, NY
Extra Virgin, SVA MFA Thesis Show, Visual Arts Gallery, New York, NY

PUBLIC SPEAKING / WORKSHOPS:

- 2017 *Can Art Change the World*, American International School, Lagos, Nigeria
Nāda Yoga Workshop, International Yoga Festival, Rishikesh, India
- 2015 *TEDxHyderabad*, TEDx Talk, India
- 2014 *TEDxLSE*, TEDx Talk, London School of Economics, UK
- 2013 *Friday Late*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
Institute Talk & Artist in Residence, New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE
Arab Spring, Arab Fall. Speaker, TED Fellows Retreat, Canada
- 2012 *TEDxAmsterdam Women*, TEDx Talk, The Netherlands
TED: Technology, Entertainment & Design, Fellow Talk, Long Beach, LA, USA
- 2011 *Subtitled; With Narratives From Lebanon*; Panel Speaker, Royal College of Arts, UK
- 2010 *SOAS, School of Oriental and African Studies*; Guest Speaker. London, UK
The Leighton House, Nour Festival of Arts; Guest Speaker. London, UK
Inaugural AUB Alumni Literary Festival; Invited Speaker, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
- 2009 *The Guardian Hay Festival: Segovia*, Segovia, Spain; Invited Speaker
Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh UK; Invited Speaker
Hay-On-Wye Festival of Literature, Wales, UK; Invited Speaker
- 2008 ***Nobel Peace Center, Oslo, Norway; Invited Speaker, "Freedom of Expression- How Free Is the Internet"***, Panel Discussion with Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia

AWARDS/HONORS:

- 2015 New Positions, Art Cologne, Participant
- 2012 TED Fellow
 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, Finalist
- 2011 Torino Film Lab, Winner of Jury Award and Audience Award
 Freedom To Create Prize, Commended
- 2002 Masters of Fine Arts Tuition Grant, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY