



## Subcontracted Nations

Open Call, March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>

A. M. Qattan Foundation

Public Programme

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The A. M. Qattan Foundation invites artists, academics, researchers, writers, collectives, filmmakers, poets, storytellers, and any others, to submit material and entries to be considered for the group exhibition **Subcontracted Nations** between **March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup> 2017**. The exhibition will be launched at the inaugural opening of the A. M. Qattan Foundation's new building in Ramallah, in October 2017.

We aspire to build an alternative database by means of this exhibition, which aims at a format that allows audiences from different social groups, backgrounds, gender and ages to spend time reviewing the rich and diverse material the participants have to offer.

The exhibition attempts to pose questions on the contemporary issues concerning nations and societies, political structures and a neoliberal economy, through looking at histories that did not contribute to the making of the present and the imagining of the future. We invite creative practitioners to share with us their research, ideas and projections for the future on this subject.

The exhibition is co-curated by Tina Sherwell and Yazid Anani.

**Tina Sherwell** graduated from Goldsmiths, University of London, in Textiles and Critical Theory and received her PhD from the University of Kent in Image Studies. Previously Executive Director of the Virtual Gallery at Birzeit University, she was Programme Leader in Fine Art at Winchester School of Art in the UK (2005–07). She has written extensively on Palestinian art in catalogues, journals, monographs and books, and is currently the Director of The International Academy of Art Palestine.

**Yazid Anani** the Director of Public Programmes at the A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah. He received his doctorate degree in Spatial Planning, 2006 from TU Dortmund, Germany. He was a scholar at the Department of Architecture, Birzeit University from 1997–2016. Anani chaired the Academic Council of the International Art Academy Palestine from 2010–12. He is part of several collectives, and projects such as 'DAAR & 'Ramallah Syndrome' and has curated and co-curated several projects such as 'Urban Cafés', 'Digital Myth of Palestinian Flora', 'Here, in 66', 'Outside the Archive', 'If I were a Patriot?', and the 2nd, 3rd and 4th and 5th editions of Cities Exhibition and took part in several art projects. Anani lectured and published internationally on issues of architecture and urban transformations, colonial spaces and power relations, public art and public spaces and art education.

### ***Theme and Direction***

**Subcontracted Nations** will be a group exhibition that questions the concepts of nation. In these times, we are seeing major transformations in the values of nations through rhetoric and political discourse across many corners of the globe. As Benedict Anderson suggested:

*"Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined ... [the nation] is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited*

*imaginings.*” — Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp 49-50.

The exhibition draws its title from the proliferation of worldwide processes of sub-contracting found in our world today — whether it is the sub-contracting of health services, or the privatization of public resources or education. These processes have been instrumental in the fragmentation and compartmentalization of public services and a diminution of the role and obligations of the state. **Subcontracted Nations** aims to shed light on the role of service providers, of the middleperson, of outsourcing, and on how far this has spread across our societies and to which magnitude this is influencing the management of nations.

Another question it is hoped the exhibition will pose pertains to how the different forms of neo-liberal subjugation of societies are being kept within socially and economically acceptable limits, yet considered optimal for preventing dissent and thus serving to maintain a delusion of social agency. The effects of neo-liberal mechanisms have become intrinsically entrenched in the production of day-to-day relations, from family and sexual relations to the practice of citizenship and the structure of politics. This imposition of neo-liberal mechanisms has contributed in numerous ways to the transformation of the individual through reformatory techniques, pre-designed lifestyles, dependency, moralization, and so forth.

The apparatus of this culture of neo-liberalism has engaged simultaneously with the state on three main levels, leading to a systematic separation between economic and political reform. Firstly, through the conquest of the state by means of international reformatory agreements with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which have led to austerity, deregulation and the restructuring of state institutions. Continuous calls for austerity are severely diminishing the remaining welfare services and obliterating governmental public subsidies through the privatization of vital sectors such as public housing, health, water and electricity that were once part of the proud identity of the modern nation. Another, crucial symptom of the dismantlement of the public sector is the public/private coalition which has propelled the emergence of new governmental bodies that have swiftly facilitated severe structural adjustment programmes outside the mandate of the slow and bureaucratic public institution. Secondly, through controlling the outlets of public expression, hence ‘dissent’, by means of disciplinary mechanisms of policing and surveillance, accompanied by a continuous reformation of judicial systems – especially after 9/11. Third, weathering public emotions by means of false hopes in democratic politics and its electoral procedural mechanisms, coinciding side by side with a stronger infiltration of corporates to the parliamentary structure and political parties vis-à-vis all sectors of our daily life.

All this has led to a massive restructuring of our cities, on the basis of attracting global capital investment to the local realm, by means of redirecting subsidies from social welfare services to establishing infrastructure for private multinational corporations and the transnational economy.

If states are losing day-by-day control of the conduct, management and performance of vital services, such as housing, health and social security which have become privatized, how can

traditional political structures and democratic processes practically serve as a mechanism for attaining better welfare services? What does citizenship mean within these conditions? What is the relevance of democratic politics, if the political parties eventually aspire to create coalitions and profitable partnerships with multinational corporations? What does the nation mean within this new order? How can we imagine the nation when it is reduced to a series of “sub-contracted” service industries?

If sovereign states are incapable anymore of fulfilling their main mandates to alleviate distress and poverty and improve the conditions of the majority of their citizens, and if some states are better than others in subsidising welfare services or controlling the private provision of these services, then can we hypothetically engage in rethinking the politics of democracy through subcontracting other states to administer our nations and provide better services? How does that reflect on the evolving meanings of a nation and the imagining of future social structures?

### ***General guidelines***

- Entries can be submitted by applicants from any background and discipline – whether artists, academics, poets, students, etc. – and of any nationality and from any country of residence.
- Applicants need to provide two personal biographies for the publication and captions, a short one (150 words) and a long one (300 words), a portrait image of 500 x 700 pixels with a resolution of 300 dpi, and a valid contact address including an e-mail.
- Videos, images, texts and audio can be submitted via Dropbox, WeTransfer or Google Drive.
- Deadline for receipt of submissions is **12:00 midday on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017**.
- Entries may be sent to this e-mail: [subcontractednations@gattanfoundation.org](mailto:subcontractednations@gattanfoundation.org)
- Entries will be reviewed by the Selection Committee, and applicants will be sent an email notification to confirm whether or not their work has been selected in the exhibition by the end of April 2017. The decision of the Selection Committee is final and no further correspondence will be entered into regarding the decision.

### ***Entries***

Each applicant may submit entries in relation to the formats elaborated below. Entries will be categorised into subjects and themes, corresponding with the main theme as outlined above. Applicants will be notified by the **early May 2017** whether their submission is accepted and to which subtheme their entry has been assigned. Each of the subthemes will be structured from a combination of texts, images, audio recordings, objects and videos, arranged by the curators. Participants are allowed to mix between entries and submit a combination that corresponds to different formats. Please ensure all entries have copyright clearance, if required, which must be submitted along with the entry.

#### **Text**

- Entries under this category can take the form of academic texts, poetry, short stories, memoirs, narratives, ... etc.
- Text contribution may be either within the range of 2,000 words, or 4,000 words.

- Please note that text might be displayed separately without embedded images.
- Image size requirements are within the following dimensions: 8,858x8,858 pixels, 300 PPI, Or 17,717x17,717 pixels, 300 PPI.
- Image captions should not exceed 30 words.
- Please note that scanned texts fall into the 'Image' category.

### **Image**

- Entries under this category can take the form of texts, photocopies, scans, stills, photographs, sketches, etc.
- Image size requirements are within the following dimensions: 8858x8858 pixels, 300 PPI, Or 17,717x17,717 pixels, 300 PPI.
- Image captions should not exceed 30 words.
- Image ideas or concepts must be between 250–500 words, otherwise they will fall into the 'Text' category.
- The size and display of images may vary according to curatorial requirements.
- Preferable image formats are PDF, TIF, JPEG.

### **Publications**

- Entries under this category can take the form of books, catalogues, brochures, journals, flyers, diaries, sketchbooks, etc.
- All books, journals, catalogues, sketchbooks or diaries should preferably be available electronically (whether published or unpublished) in PDF or EPUB formats.
- The ideas or concepts relating the main theme of the exhibition with the books, journals, catalogues, sketchbooks or diaries must be submitted between 250–500 words.

### **Video**

- Entries under this category can take the form of video art, video footage, animation, documentation, short films, feature films, etc.
- Please note that any feature or documentary films, as well as any films longer than 30 mins. will be shown separately in the cinema space at the Foundation's new building.
- Maximum file size for video is 40 GB.
- Please note that videos may be displayed on tablets.
- Video idea and concept descriptions must be between 250–500 words.
- Preferable video formats are MOV, FLV, AVI, MP4.

### **Audio**

- Entries under this category can take the form of sound, music, noise, interviews, all types of recordings ... etc.
- Audio must be clear and audibly legible.

- Max audio size is 16 GB.
- Please note that audio entries will be audible via headphones
- Audio idea and concept must not exceed 250 and 500 words.
- Preferable Audio formats are MP3, WAV

## **Objects**

- Entries under this category will need to be produced locally from specific detailed instructions provided by the applicant. Objects that do not correspond with attainable local technologies will be disqualified.
- There is no fixed budget for the production of objects, each case will need to be negotiated independently with the curators.
- Objects should not exceed 30 x 30 x 60 cm in dimensions – although in exceptional cases, if the production technique is simple and affordable, objects may be larger.
- Instructions for constructing any objects should be in PDF format.
- Concepts and ideas for each object should be in the form of a 250–500 word caption.

## **Reward**

A jury composed of the co-curators, Tina Sherwell and Yazid Anani, and invited others, will make a final selection of 3 participants from abroad and 3 from Palestine, based on the merits of their submitted entries. The A. M. Qattan Foundation undertakes to cover the expenses of transportation, return flight and accommodation of the winning 6 to attend the opening of the exhibition at the inaugural ceremony of the A. M. Qattan Foundation's new building in **October 2017**.

## **Copyright and Submission Terms**

- *A. M. Qattan Foundation is not responsible for any copyright infringements. Please note that the A. M. Qattan Foundation will not take responsibility for retrieving copyright permissions or clearance for any submitted material whether film, audio, image, or text – this is the responsibility of the applicants. Applicants must be able to provide written proof of all copyright clearances.*
- *Copyright of work remains the property of the applicant. By submitting work, the applicant grants the A. M. Qattan Foundation permission to copy and/or reproduce the submitted material and to communicate and/or issue such copies to the public in connection with the exhibition, for advertising purposes, for educational and public workshops, and for general marketing or promotional purposes, and other related activities, including without limitation the incorporation of any submitted material within promotional and marketing materials, postcards, catalogues, posters, DVDs, on A. M. Qattan Foundation's websites, in workshop presentations and on information screens throughout the Foundation and any media now known or hereafter devised.*
- *A. M. Qattan Foundation reserves the right to subject text material for copyediting and proofreading.*
- *A. M. Qattan Foundation is not obligated to return any submitted material to the applicants, before or after the date of the official opening.*

For more information contact:

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The A.M. Qattan Foundation (AMQF) is an independent, not-for-profit developmental organisation working in the fields of culture and education, with a particular focus on children, teachers and young artists.

Founded and registered in 1993 in the UK as a charity (no 1029450) and as a charitable company limited by guarantee (no 2171893), it has had a registered branch in Palestine as a non-profit organisation (no QR-0035-F) since 1998. The Foundation's operations are mainly in Palestine, with interventions in Lebanon through Selat: Links Through the Arts, and in the United Kingdom through The Mosaic Rooms.