

**Jumana Emil Abboud**  
***The Unbearable Halfness of Being***  
**7 October – 17 December 2023**  
**Thurs-Sun, 11am-4pm, or by appointment**

CAMPLE LINE is delighted to bring *The Unbearable Halfness of Being*, an exhibition of drawings, embroidered textiles, talismanic objects, wood carvings, video and neon light works by artist Jumana Emil Abboud to CAMPLE LINE this autumn. The exhibition will open on Sat 7 October and run till Sun 17 December.

*The Unbearable Halfness of Being* was first presented in 2022 as part of the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Documenta, an international exhibition of contemporary art that takes place every five years in Kassel, Germany. This is Jumana's first solo exhibition in Scotland, and the first presentation of this body of work since Documenta 15.



Jumana Emil Abboud, *Bdour and Qdour II*, 2020, 57 x 76cm, aquarelle pencil, shellac on paper. Courtesy of the artist

Jumana Emil Abboud (b. 1971, Shefa'amer) is Palestinian and is currently based between Jerusalem and London where she is completing her PhD. Her practice is grounded in the Palestinian cultural landscape and she draws on the traditions of folklore, myth-making and storytelling that have animated community and family life over generations, particularly around times of gathering or coming together, such as seed-sowing, water collection or harvest. She works across drawing, installation,

video and performance, often collaboratively, exploring personal and collective memory and practices of sharing and re-telling as ways to address experiences of loss and longing and the impacts of decades of dispossession and annexation.

For more than 10 years, Jumana has focused on oral histories relating to water sources, springs, wells and rivers: *'For thousands of years, the natural landscape we lived in in Palestine was a terrain of enchantment. The natural water source - spring, well, stream – was such a terrain, inhabited by spirits, good and bad. I like to refer to such waters as spirited sites.'* Together with collaborator Issa Freij, she has researched and visited water sources across the West Bank, Jerusalem, and parts of northern Israel, guided by her childhood memories of the landscape and the stories she was told about its hauntings, as well as Dr Tawfiq Canaan's study *Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine* (The Palestinian Oriental Society, 1922). Their research fed into a number of film works and performances, including the three-channel work *Maskouneh (Inhabited)* (2017, 16mins 45sec)



The bird of this story II, 2022, 39 x 20 cm, oak gall ink, natural wax crayon made from earth near 'Ein Qiniya spring, pastel and pencil on paper. Courtesy of the artist.

*The Unbearable Halfness of Being* brings together a compelling body of work that Jumana began to develop in 2020 as part of a fellowship with Sakiya, a progressive academy working across art, agrarian and ecological practices, based in 'Ein Qiniya, near to Ramallah. During her residency, her research focused on seven endangered natural water sources in the Abu al-Adham hillside, and she worked

closely with the community to share words, stories, live drawing practices, and participatory actions as part of an extended 'Water Diviners' workshop, which culminated in a live collaborative 'Water Keepers' performance including a 20-minute walk from one of the springs - 'Ein al-Balad - to Sakiya.



The Unbearable Halfness of Being, June-September 2022, exhibition view, Documenta Fifteen, Grimmwelt, Kassel. Courtesy: the artist; photograph: Frank Sperling

Whilst in 'Ein Qiniya, Jumana worked with inks and wax crayons made with locally sourced materials, and she made casts of natural objects found around the water sources with community members as part of their workshop. Then working between Jerusalem, 'Ein Qiniya and London over 2020-2022, Jumana used the materials and casts to produce drawings and votives, fused with elements of a number of Palestinian folk tales, including *Half-a-Halfling* (which lends the 'halfness' of the exhibition's title) and *The Orphans' Cow*. In beeswax, the charm objects include a pair of snail shells ('two halves of forgetfulness'), an okra pod ('for protection and longevity') and a broken jar ('to find lost things'), while drawings such as *Bdour and Qdour II* (2020), *Our other half* (2022) and *Two 'Eyun* (2022) re-cast the notion of siblinghood that is prominent in both stories.

At Documenta, Jumana showed these works alongside two videos, including *I feel everything* 2020-22; a group of seven *Sacred water guardians*, from 2016, which she carved in olive wood in collaboration with craftsmen from Bethlehem; three embroidered textiles based on drawings by Jumana and made collaboratively in 2021 with 'Ein Qiniya resident Suha atta Alqam; a small crochet featuring a horse (symbol of strength) made by Jumana's mother Clemence; two neon light works, shaped to form the Arabic letter Ein, meaning eye or water source; and a live

story-telling performance entitled *My Other Half*, inspired by the seven water springs at 'Ein Qiniya and performed with Yasmine Haj, Anna Sherbany and Mounya Elbakay.

At **CAMPLE LINE**, Jumana will present 18 drawings in our upstairs and foyer spaces, alongside a selection of embroidered textiles, wood figurines, small wax charms, and two neon works. Her films, *Hide your water from the sun* (2014-2017, 8mins45sec), *I feel everything* (2022, 9mins) and *The Water Keepers* (2022, 30mins), made in collaboration with photographer Issa Freij, will also screen over the period of the exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a new short essay written by Eline van der Vlist, CEO of **SPACE Studios**, London, and formerly artistic director, **Darat al Funun – The Khalid Shoman Foundation** in Amman.



Jumana Emil Abboud, *Facing tiger*, 2020, 57 x 76cm, gouache pigment, pastel, acrylic, pencil, ink, charcoal on paper. Courtesy of the artist

## Biography

Jumana Emil Abboud (born 1971, Shefa'amer) lives and works in Jerusalem and London and is currently pursuing a practice-led PhD at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, entitled *I begin with eye: on spirited waters and folk tale reunions*.

Over the last two decades, Abboud's work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2023), Biennale of Sydney (2022), documenta 15 (2022), *Common Grounds: Story / Heritage*, Casco Art Institute, Utrecht (2020); The Jerusalem Show (2018); Sharjah Biennale (2017); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2016); Venice Biennial (2015, 2009); and Istanbul Biennale (2009), among many others. She has participated in art residencies, including Sakiya – Art/Science/Agriculture, Ein Qiniya; Delfina Foundation, London; Arts Initiative Tokyo; and Gästeatelier Krone, Aarau.

The artist would like to acknowledge with deep gratitude Ruangrupa & Lumbung curatorial & production team of documenta 15; mini majelis kawan, the 'Ein Qiniya community of friends and waters, Issa Freij, Sahar Qawasmi, Nida Sinnokrot, Haifa Zalatimo, the Water Diviners Palestine, Kassel & Dubai groups for their heartfelt collaborations; in addition to Sharjah Art Foundation, Casco Art Institute: Working for the Commons, Radio Alhara, Marina Warner, Sharif Kanaana, Ahmad Nabil, Eline van der Vlist, Aline Khoury, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Qanat collective, Khadijeh Kanambo, The Khalid Shoman foundation - Darat al Funun, Temporary Gallery - Cologne, Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, Bétonsalon - Center for Art and Research, Laureate of the Ville de Paris aux Récollets international residency program, Al-Mawred Al Thaqafy, Slade School of Fine Art mentors and colleagues, and the Cample Line team throughout the project's extended processes. Lastly, no amount of words can express immense gratitude to my mother, sisters and family; thank you for your guardianship always.