DELFINA FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

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POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Jumana Emil Abboud, Bisan Abu Eisheh, Bashar Alhroub, Jeremy Hutchison, Olivia Plender

Delfina Foundation is delighted to announce *Points of Departure*, an exhibition that culminates a year of collaboration with ArtSchool Palestine, the British Council and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA). Presented at the ICA, the exhibition will be among the highlights of the 2013 Shubbak Festival in London (22 June - 6 July).

Points of Departure begins as a set of thoughtful explorations into the phenomena of liminality. A condition in which one's sense of identity is diffused, liminality leads not only to states of dislocation and disorientation, but also to new perspectives. From this starting point, all the exhibiting artists undertook research-orientated projects in the UK and Palestine, seeking to make meaning, and create new narratives, in response to urgent contemporary questions around nationalism and identity, history and place.

Points of Departure presents new commissions by Palestinian artists **Jumana Emil Abboud**, **Bashar Alhroub**, **Bisan Abu Eisheh**, and UK artists **Jeremy Hutchison** and **Olivia Plender** - all of whom undertook eight-week residencies in London and Ramallah respectively. In relation to themes raised by the project and the works produced, the exhibition also features a seminal work by Ramallah-based artists **Basel Abbas** and **Ruanne Abou-Rahme**. The exhibition has been curated by **Rebecca Heald** with the support of **Mirna Bamieh**.

Bisan Abu-Eisheh's installation acts as an introduction to the exhibition. Intrigued to hear how the British participants in the exchange described their experiences of Palestine, his piece *Welcome to Palestine* explores the recounting and portrayal of Palestinian geographies. The installation is centred on an analysis of a heavily biased guidebook *Jerusalem, Israel Petra and Sinai* that contains minimal amounts of Arabic history and key phrases only in Hebrew. The guidebook is filled with comments and notes contributed by the audience during the first presentation of *Points of Departure* in Ramallah.

Bashar Alhroub continues his distinctive investigation into the relationship between memory and place. For his video entitled *Attaba* (meaning 'threshold' in English) Alhroub presents the site of his residency as one infused with personal memory and attachment despite having no past relation to it. His series of figurative collages, composed of amassed paper materials from his daily excursions in London, become records that transfer public experiences to a private context.

Jumana Emil Abboud's work relates directly to ritual, anthropological theories of the liminal. Entitled *I Feel Nothing*, her installation, made up of drawings, photographs and a performance video, investigates

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cultural notions of touch, and how it can be read both in psychoanalytical and metaphorical terms. The National Gallery's *Noli me tangere* by Titian, the famous depiction of Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene at his burial tomb, is the starting point for Abboud's research on related folklore, fairytale, sacred sites and objects.

Olivia Plender's two-channel video installation, *Blind Eye*, explores questions of invisibility as a metaphor in relation to historical narration. The first film is a response to a description of a card game in Jean Genet's book *Prisoner of Love*, about the time he spent in Jordan in the early 1970s during the Palestinian Revolution. Genet only reveals at the end of the book that the card game is a mime played with invisible cards. This scene was re-enacted by a group of 20 young Palestinian actors attempting to a make a believable performance of playing a card game through gestures alone. In filming the rehearsal rather than the finished performance, Plender captures the moments where performers switch between the fictional identity and their everyday identities, leaving room for them to question the role that has been given to them, the format and the activity of the game.

Through the manipulation of manufacturing and commercial modes of production, **Jeremy Hutchison** engages in what he terms "rituals of sense-making". Collaborating with employees in factories and supermarkets in Ramallah and Nablus in orchestrating a series of actions, Hutchison creates situations that embrace confusion and propose alternative kinds of logic within commercial environments. In a jeans factory for example, Hutchison asked the workers to make jeans that somehow expressed what it was like to be someone making jeans in Nablus. The result is a series of unwearable, awkwardly shaped visual metaphors presented as part of an immersive installation, which questions the semblance of normality Hutchison experienced during his time spent in the West Bank.

But what of the present more generally and the so-called 'Arab Spring'? **Basel Abbas** and **Ruanne Abou-Rahme** address these subjects in their installation *The Incidental Insurgents*. Through telling the stories of a range of significant twentieth century bandits, the artists present an investigation into the possibilities of the future. Abbas and Abou-Rahme ask how this time of radical potential can be inhabited, and what we can learn from the past and use to help construct the next chapter.

Points of Departure will include an extensive public programme of talks and events. For full details please visit www.ica.org.uk.

Visitor information
Opening days/times: 26 June—21 July 2013 (Tue—Sun, 11:00—18:00 Thurs, 11:00–21:00)
Address: Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Mall, London, SW1Y 5AH
www.ica.org.uk

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In partnership with:

ArtSchool Palestine
منتدى الفنون المعاصرة

BRITISH COUNCIL

ICA

Points of Departure is also supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and by the Czech Centre and Sula Wines. Caspian Arts Foundation is the educational partner on the public programme of events surrounding the exhibition.

Notes to Editors

Biographies of artists and curators

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme (b. 1983) work together across a range of sound, image, installation and performance practices. They have exhibited and performed internationally and most recently founded the sound and image performance collective *Tashweesh*. Selected exhibitions include: the 6th Jerusalem Show (2012); *The Zone* as a solo show at the NAE (Nottingham, 2011); Freies Museum Berlin (2010); Bluecoat Art Centre (Liverpool 2010); *HomeWorks 5*, Ashkal Alwan (Beirut 2010); and *Palestine co/Venice* at the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009).

Jumana Emil Abboud (b. 1971) uses drawing, video, performance, objects and text to navigate themes of memory, loss and resilience. She has participated in numerous exhibitions over the last decade, including: the 53rd Venice Bienniale (2009); the 11th Istanbul Bienniale (2009); and at the Institut du Monde Arabe (Paris); Darat al Funun (Amman); and the Carré d'Art (Nimes, France). She lives and works in Jerusalem.

Bashar Alhroub (b. 1978) works in painting, photography, video, installation and mixed media. His work addresses the polemics of a place. He has exhibited at venues including: the Eli and Edythe Broad Museum (Michigan State University, USA); Laznia Center for Contemporary Art (Gdansk, Poland); Mosaic Rooms (London); Instants Vidéo (Marseille, France); and Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE. He was recently awarded the first grant prize at the 15th Art Asian Bienniale Bangladesh. He lives and works in Ramallah, Palestine.

Bisan Abu-Eisheh (b. 1985) lives between Jerusalem and London. Selected group exhibitions include: V&A Friday Late night (London, UK); Les Ateliers de Rennes - Biennale d'Art Contemporain (Rennes, France); *Arrivals and Departures* (Ancona, Italy); *The Jerusalem Show on/off Language*; the Istanbul Biennial; *Belongings*, Vita Havet Konstfack (Stockholm); and SIN festival, Al-Qattan Foundation (Ramallah, Palestine). He holds a B.A. from the International Academy of Art in Palestine is currently doing his Masters at Central Saint Martins, London.

Mirna Bamieh (b. 1983) is an artist based in Ramallah. She is currently pursuing her M. A. in Fine Arts at Bezalel Academy for Arts and Design in Tel Aviv. Her current artistic and curatorial research interests lie in psychic spaces, the landscape of politics, and the construction of collective memory.

Rebecca Heald (b. 1976) is a freelance curator and consultant. Between 2009 and 2013 she was Director of New Contemporaries. She has worked across curatorial and education departments at Sadie Coles HQ,

Tate Britain, and the Hayward Gallery. Before working in galleries she was Arts and Features Editor at telegraph.co.uk.

Jeremy Hutchison (b. 1979) graduated from the Slade, and lives in London. Having trained in linguistics and written advertising for Coca-Cola, he designs projects that intervene in the production and circulation of consumer ideology. Recent exhibitions include: *Erratum*, Paradise Row (London, UK), *The Future Can Wait* / Saatchi New Sensations, Victoria House (London, UK); *Acoustic Mirrors*, 176 Gallery, Zabludowicz Collection (London, UK); and *Keeping Up Appearances*, Nassauischer Kunstverein (Wiesbaden, Germany), along with a commission for the Southbank Centre, London. He is currently developing a site-specific project for Liste 18 that will launch in June 2013 in Basel.

Olivia Plender (b. 1977) lives and works in Berlin. Her research-based practice varies from graphic novels to performance, video and installation. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Rise Early, Be Industrious*, MK Gallery (Milton Keynes, UK), touring to Arnolfini (Bristol, UK) and CCA (Glasgow); *Aadieu Adieu Apa* at Gasworks (London, UK); *Information, Education, Entertainment*, Marabouparken (Stockholm, Sweden); and *The Folly of Man Exposed or the World Turned Upside Down*, Frankfurter Kunstverein (Frankfurt, Germany). Her work has also been shown in the British Art Show 10 (2011) at the Hayward Gallery (London) and touring; Folkestone Triennial (2011); Taipei Biennial (2010); *Altermodern*: Tate Triennial (2009) and the Bucharest Bienniale (2010).

About the partners

Delfina Foundation is an independent, non-profit foundation dedicated to facilitating artistic exchange and developing creative practice through residencies, partnerships and public programming, with a special focus on international collaborations with the greater Middle East & North Africa. In Autumn 2013, Delfina Foundation will expand into London's largest international residency programme, also broadening its geographical remit beyond the Greater Middle East. Along with new commissions at Art Dubai and Chisenhale Gallery, *Points of Departure* is one of several off-site partnership-projects during Delfina Foundation's renovation. www.delfinafoundation.com

ArtSchool Palestine is a non-profit organisation founded in 2005 by a group of art professionals, curators and artists based in Palestine and London. ArtSchool Palestine is committed to the production, facilitation and circulation of artistic practices, and the provision of networking opportunities with the aim of enhancing cultural exchange, educational opportunities and encouraging critical debate. ArtSchool Palestine's work includes activities from exhibitions, film and video screenings, lectures, performances and publications, to establishing networks and initiating partnerships for reflection, dialogue and exchange. www.artschoolpalestine.com

The **British Council** is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. It operates in 109 countries to create opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and to build trust between them. In the Palestinian Territories, the British Council's work focuses on building stronger ties and greater mutual understanding between Palestinians and the UK, through providing opportunities for engagement between people and organisations in education, English, arts and society projects. www.britishcouncil.org

The **ICA** supports radical art and culture. Through a vibrant programme of exhibitions, films, events, talks and debates, the ICA challenges perceived notions and stimulates debate, experimentation, creativity and exchange with visitors. Founded in the late 1940s by a group of artists including Roland Penrose, Peter Watson and Herbert Read, the ICA continues to support living artists in showing and exploring their work, often as it emerges and before others. The ICA has been at the forefront of cultural experimentation since its formation and has presented important debut solo shows by artists including Damien Hirst, Steve McQueen, Richard Prince and Luc Tuymans. More recently Pablo Bronstein, Lis Rhodes, Bjarne Melgaard and Juergen Teller have all staged key solo exhibitions, whilst a new generation of artists, including Luke Fowler, Lucky PDF, Hannah Sawtell and Factory Floor have taken part in exhibitions and residencies. The ICA welcomes 400,000 visitors a year to its building on The Mall in the heart of London. The Director of the ICA is writer and curator Gregor Muir, author of Lucky Kunst.
www.ica.org.uk

Launched in 2011, **Caspian Arts Foundation** is a not-for-profit arts and education organisation. The Foundation's main objective is to support young aspiring artists from across the Middle East, Greater Middle East and North Africa in their post graduate studies in fine art, film, photography and fashion at University of the Arts London. The Foundation is also committed to supporting specific projects and exhibitions in the UK that promote and enhance cultural exchanges between the UK and the Middle East.
http://www.caspianartsfoundation.com/

Points of Departure is in association with London's **Shubbak** festival, which returns for two weeks in 2013 from 22 June to 6 July. Now running every two years, Shubbak (meaning "window" in Arabic) presents outstanding artists and cultural events from across the Arab world. The festival offers audiences the chance to discover and enjoy some of the most exciting voices and practitioners of contemporary Arab culture, in partnership with leading organisations in London and the Arab region.
http://shubbak.co.uk/