

ALA YOUNIS

Natasha is...



Mountains are named, and so are rivers, storms, pets, plants, roads, buildings and robots. In some cultures, names are sciences, curses, or omens for blessings. In others, names are markers of disposed leaders. *Natasha* was the first name of an artist three curators have worked with. *Natasha* was also a name that existed in the ethnic communities of Singapore. And in a poem from Korea, *Natasha* said to a man who loved her: “going to a remote mountain doesn’t mean you lose it all.”¹

“*Natasha*” is a name given to the seventh edition of the Singapore Biennale. Naming the Biennale offers singular imaginations of what *Natasha* can be. The name is chosen not for what it means but for the ability of any name to acquire new associations. Say “*Natasha*”, and a link to some story, or an absence of one, generates in the mind. This moment of authorship, the un-fogging, or seeking to resolve this ambiguity, is what *Natasha* wants to prompt; a process of interpretation and relation.

The idea of this name was proposed in one of the early meetings of the four co-artistic directors who curated this edition of the Biennale – Binna Choi, June Yap, Nida Ghose and myself. During their preparatory meetings, the pandemic was still pressing restrictions on travel and gatherings in and beyond Singapore. We could see exhibitions being installed and opened but then shut down shortly before visitors could see them. As curators we asked, if this condition persists or in the instance where bodies cannot cross borders or be physically present in Singapore, what presence of art forms or types of interventions could interact with audiences? And who would be there for us to operate or activate these interventions?

1. a material encounter;

Working with projects from the immediate space the curators had been present in or had access to has been instrumental in identifying the curatorial strategy and characteristics of *Natasha*. What was lying on the desktops of the physically or virtually visited artists’ studios shaped the topics we engaged with and the language we listened to and carefully re-articulated. We looked into the day-to-day processes in our and the artists’ immediate spaces of living and production – methods that were interrupted, abandoned, revisited, or acquired. Therefore, the curatorial group often stated that this Biennale is about *life*. *Natasha* grapples with both the articulations of the banal, painful, and tenacious survival tactics and their flattening.

We wanted the visitors to walk into *Natasha*’s house, befriend the creatures/creations in its gardens, and tell us who or what *Natasha* is. We thus wanted these initial encounters to be readable in the presentation of the works, that is, to choose pieces that inform the immediacy and intimacy that shaped their creation. So, during its eighteen months of preparation, the Biennale was already happening. In one of the online meetings, I shared the image of Britta Marakatt-Labba’s *Flying Shamans* (1985).² In this work, people seem to be flying; some hold or drop other people into the vast sea. Some people are floating or diving in a sea stitched using blue threads.³ If this Biennale is to be understood from its archaeology, then feelings of helplessness, loss, and redemption, experienced in the months that carried us to *Natasha* are essential segments within this archaeology. The proximity to the environments the projects came from is evident in the exhibition. Visitors are to shape the experience from the openness offered by uncertain answers.

ALA YOUNIS

Whether fitted with two or four wheels, pieces of luggage do not roll easily, especially when climbing carpeted ramps. The resistance yields fatigue in the arms that lingers with the damp carpet smell after leaving the carpeted areas. Humidity is the general condition of Singapore's weather; that's why big plants spread all over the island. All year it is warm weather, too.⁴ Humidity and heat are to be tolerated while looking at works on the fifth floor of the exhibition venue in Tanjong Pagar Distripark (TPD). Joo Jae-Hwan's paintings appear on the right upon entering the TPD exhibition venue. His sets of collaged, themed works are humorous. They incorporate everyday objects that reset the relations to given norms. For instance, one group uses a variety of instant coffee packets to resemble a human body. Next to it is a work that uses the same objects as constellations in a cosmic-like surrounding, with dinosaurs as stars or planets orbiting a cup. In another work, splashes of coffee are presented as conversations between two beings that live in the artwork, one named "co" and the other "fee".

2. an agent;

Natasha may not be a person but can exist as many, i.e. our lookalikes, our possible agents; ones that age or lose their breath when they run or perform. Agents, who are aware of weights they can carry for themselves and others? *Natasha* is a carrying power that transports several types of matter in the most private carrier; the mind.

There is a possibility of encountering some of the three beings living in a presentation at the exhibition on the TPD's first floor. It is one of forty-one stone tablets chosen by Shin Beomsun to recall a lost ability to engage with messages inscribed in nature. On the left is a stone tablet fixed on a short, thin black pedestal. Next to it is a pedestal fitted with an optical device created by Lee Sungeun; a camera set in the ceiling emits a delayed capture of the visitors who bend over to look into the optical device. Koon Kwon repainted the lines/beings of the stone enlarged in a painting fixed on the wall. Introductions to the creatures encountered in these stone tablets are presented in A4 sheets of text.

Then two vitrines layout drawings from five sketchbooks by Samia Halaby. The first drawing is from 1975, a visual study of autumn leaves that prompted the artist to "make a painting gestate like something living."⁵ The nearby batch is Halaby's experimentation with algorithmic methods that "allowed shape to gestate step by step through a process of dividing, subtracting, adding, and coalescing of parts."⁶ Samia Halaby notes "how a point on a paper is nothing until it is given motion and attributes of behaviour."⁷ These drawings are shown for the first time with the artist's computer works. Halaby bought her first computer to teach herself to program the making of paintings, "My intention was an unwavering plan to find out the potential of the media and not the potential of ready-made software programs."⁸

As curators, we were interested in the space where art intersects with life and the studio time embedded in the shown works. Elements related to Halaby's programming are shown in this display, too; a floppy disk that carries a version of the short software she wrote on her Amiga 1000, a photo of the computer station in the studio, some manuals, drawings, and screen captures. In the second vitrine, fifty-four sheets from *Sketchbook D46* (1988-89) unwired to bring us through abstraction processes, ones that imitated "the general principles of things we see... and the behaviour of living things."⁹

Natasha is...



3. a turtle;

A line drawn after specific instructions; an early software that appeals to a painter to create digitally; a figure associated in the past with a software called Logo; a creature that crosses the road slowly as we come back from a site visit in the South of Jordan; an emoji continuously shared by a co-curator. The vibrant colours of *Kinetic Painting with Sound* (1986–88) radiate from two large LED screens, colouring the faces of those looking at the vitrines. The kinetic paintings were programmed in Basic and C on an Amiga 1000 between September 1986 and May 1989. Their duration ranges between a few seconds to several minutes. “All images, shapes, colours, apparent movement, and sound in these programs are created by simple commands such as LINE, POINT, PALETTE, SOUND, etc.”¹⁰ In loops, the works mediate their appearance in moving lines and colours visible on the screens.

Halaby initially shared recordings from her Amiga 1000 screen in the 1980s; their dimensions were 4:3 with a pixel size of 640x400, so their quality was limited. We discussed whether we wanted to show these works with the limitations of the recording realm from which they emerged. Instead, the artist employed an emulator to record higher-resolution video files for this presentation, not of animated videos but how the core of these videos is a code capable of generating kinetic paintings anew every time. The heart of this art work is its code. In the presentation, the core

ALA YOUNIS



di'van_12

Natasha is...

is invisible, except through its mediator, the technological ability to show us these paintings moving on a screen. In proximity to these works is another constellation, of works by Kanitha Tith. *Hut Tep Soda Chan (Hut of an Angel)* (2011/2017) is a reproduction of the Cambodian artist's family house in Phnom Penh, which she used as a living and studio space between 1994 and 2008. The hut is rich with personal objects that reminisce, not only the history of the artist with her parents but also how the artist used it as studio space. On the floor is metal wire bought from Japan, which the artist contorts into sculptures that are not planned ahead of time but matured through intimate coiling time and a sense of completion. Some of these sculptures are shown on the opposite wall as woven webs of wire. They look like undressed attire, like a ghost that had just left a body or like a tree that left its leaves to wander away. Some look like rugs or braids. Between them are watercolour drawings. Some look like these sculptures or like a body or a heap of unidentified things. The artist drew all of them except one illustration of her in the studio. There are two handwritten lists of films that played on the TV the artist watched while she worked in this hut. The TV set sits on a green refrigerator in the house.

Kanitha Tith named the work after a 1968 Khmer film about an angel who has given up her divine life for the sake of a man she loved. This film is like this hut, a relic or an effect of sequences of change seen in Cambodia, to which people had to find ways to adapt. Tith placed a bubble-wrapped wire sculpture between the wooden parts of her roof, only recognised by the observer after patient inspection of the hut's intricately detailed contents. Visitors are welcome to enter the house, sit and contemplate this space. There is a hint that what lies beyond this exhibit is naturally vast; many personal lives in one. Connected times here can only be visible if we decode the space into these 'time details' of what we see.

4. morphing body;

Natasha is a morphing body, a lost encounter; a transient body; a formula; and a momentary learning process. *Natasha* reconfigures its temporal bounds. The artist spoke to an ancient tree in Utrecht in 2020. There she stood in front of the tree, admiring its ability to survive by exchanging air with its environment. For one hundred and fifty years, the tree has been taking air but also giving it back to the "things that walk on two legs," Kanitha told the tree, "I don't think I am a verbal person. But my gesture can show you gratitude and pay respect to you... No matter what air it is, I think you'll always find a way to breathe, in and out... I feel that you always find a way to continue to be rooted here."¹¹ This encounter with the living non-human is to be verbalised by human greeting and identification of names, "I am pleased to meet you in person, and my name is Kanitha," she salutes the tree.¹²

When Binna Choi and I visited Kanitha Tith in Phnom Penh, she took us to the National Museum of Cambodia, which neighbours the art school where she studied. She walked us through the rooms, and we learnt about the museum collection's displays, ethics, and interests. But the artist was keen on visiting the sculpture conservation workshop of the museum, where her friend, Bertrand Porte, works. These encounters gave exciting stories of reassembling, just like the found broken parts of artefacts that fill the museum's repair shop.¹³ We asked about a moonstone that we glimpsed near the museum's exit. Bertrand spoke on how he put together an exhibition of museum objects that gestured or centred an appearance of the moon. The display included this moonstone which Cambodia received as a gift from the US Embassy in 1973.¹⁴ We did not see the display but

ALA YOUNIS

were intrigued by the telling of its making. *Natasha* is seen in the assemblage of words and relations besides the physical objects put on display. In her studio in NYC, Halaby grabbed her notebooks to show her way of observing the surround(ing) nature and how she brings these observations into her works. When I expressed interest in showing the notebooks, the artist insisted she carries her notebook to Singapore. "My heart and life were in these notebooks. When you eyeballed them, I was ready to kill you," she joked when we sat to look at how to arrange the drawings in their display vitrines.

5. a lost encounter;

In our early online meetings, the co-curators exchanged their interests and areas they wanted to research; the places they wanted to travel to, amid or despite the pandemic, and were remapped based on calculated quarantine days for each stop. What is in people's meetings in their spaces that appeal to us?

Proposed:

3h 20m Singapore (SIN) > Hanoi (HAN)

2h 15m Hanoi (HAN) > Ho Chi Minh City (SGN)

1h 10m Ho Chi Minh City (SGN) > Phnom Penh (PNH)

1h 15m Phnom Penh (PNH) > Bangkok (BKK)

2h 30m Bangkok (BKK) > Singapore (SIN)

Realised:

1h 40m Singapore (SIN) < > Phnom Penh (PNH)

I think of a collective research visit to Vietnam to catch up on the possible friendships we could have built by physically visiting artists in their living or working places in Southeast Asia. I understood that the art scene in the north of Vietnam (especially Hanoi) has many 'returnees' (from the US and elsewhere). In my head, I saw a bus of friends meeting and eating with artists and cultural activists in Hanoi before moving down the coast to Ho Chi Minh City for more encounters. We would see how art and life are in different parts of Vietnam, make friends, come back again, and mix our worlds.

6. an exile;

Returning from a research trip to Singapore's southern islands of Saint John's and Lazarus, I landed at the ferry station to the mainland. The line from our ferry's passengers merged with the line of arrivals from other ferries that brought passengers from Indonesia. A fence separated us; I could see the passengers queuing to have their IDs checked before we all took turns placing our bags on an X-Ray belt. A Malay arrived with a backpack. He picked it off the belt and swiftly headed towards a motorbike. He undid his ponytail, put on a helmet and took off to his life in Singapore. Should I take a year off to roam Southeast Asia via buses and ferries? In my part of the world (being the Middle

Natasha is...



East), the word 'returnees' describes the exiled Palestinians who managed to move back to Palestine due to the Oslo Accords that saw the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. Much has changed in the art scene in Palestine after that moment. Many of these 'returnees', who became artists, know the difference between crossing one border versus many borders.

The curators wanted visitors to see Kanitha Tith's hut from a distance. We wanted them to stroll into the exhibition as if walking in a garden. We also liked to greet them with faces of different levels of expression. Two works by Afifa Aleiby embrace the journey through Kanitha's works. Aleiby's first painting is *Intifada (Uprising)*, painted in 1989. It shows a woman raising her arms, grabbing a flag. Behind her body is a person on their knees. I was interested in the ambiguity of whether the figure was rising or falling, and the subdued tones that muted this figure. There are

ALA YOUNIS

two possibilities for the protagonist of the painting; one is the female figure representing the artist herself, stuck in exile from Iraq while wars follow each other, distancing her further from her country. The other is the character at the back, that the fore figure is shielding with her body. The attention required to read this pressured figure is another crucial tool in *Natasha*. How much time or patience is needed from the visitor to engage with this person?

I started painting at a young age. After secondary school, I joined the Fine Art Institute in Baghdad, and at the same time, I worked as an illustrator in a popular newspaper for young readers. In 1974, I received a scholarship from the Surikov Institute and moved to Moscow for six years. Due to the political situation, I could not return to Iraq after completing my studies, and I moved between Italy, the Soviet Union and Yemen for a few years. In Yemen, I taught drawing and painting at the Fine Art Institute and illustrated children's stories. In Italy, I worked as an assistant to some established Italian artists. Then I worked in an antique shop that produced copies of sixteenth and seventeenth century artworks, or what is known as Flemish painting. I moved to the Netherlands mid-1990s and have dedicated my time to my art practice since then.¹⁵

The corporeality of Aleiby's figures, all representing her, demonstrate an art of survival in the places she has inhabited. In her other work, a beautiful woman in white attire is raising her two arms against a figure of a Mesopotamian relic behind her. They are both punctured with bullet holes, hurt imposed by the aggression of the work's eponymous *Gulf War* (1991) that saw destruction of Iraq's people, heritage, and infrastructure. Afifa Aleiby has not returned to Iraq since the 1970s, but the war's pain and suffering has reached her wherever she was. New York's Museum of Modern Art PS1 included this work in its exhibition *Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991–2011* in 2019. When the authorities denied the artist entry to the US, the image circulated again in response, partly why this work has been invited into *Natasha* are these quiet (auto)biographical stories of the work hovering over it.

7. erasure;

The entangled lives of humans and the archaeological relics they become are also present in the work of Doa Aly, *Semenkh-Ka Re: The Many Forms of Silence* (2022), presented adjacent to Afifa's artwork. Included are delicate pencil drawings, charcoal drawings of photographs of excavation sites, and a set of gold-plated flat sculptures displayed in a museum-like setting, Aly's attempt to duplicate a display after observed in Cairo's Egyptian Museum in 2017. Here Aly had discovered the haunting debris of an excavation that showed two blocks of clay with twisted bands of gold and fragments of stone (or perhaps bone) embedded in them. They were part of a jewellery display, surrounded by gold trinkets. Behind them, photographic images of a recent archaeological dig documented the careful disinterring of the objects. A wall label referred to the displayed items as "Jewels of King Semenkh-Ka Re" excavated from a site that archaeologists designated Tomb 55 of the Valley of the Kings, or KV55. Since 2019, these objects have been removed from display and stored. Trying to understand what these objects are, Aly had to research the history of the excavation of KV55 and the identity of King Smenkhkare.¹⁶

Natasha is...

The mummy found in the tomb was preliminarily stated as that of a female because of its pose. Yet, it has been regarded since as that of a male in his early twenties. In all catalogues and lists of KV55 contents, there is no mention of these strange objects at the Egyptian Museum. And the undated photographs do not look like the excavation images published in 1910 by the excavator. Her ink drawings are based on digital manipulations of the excavation photographs, the gold leaf painting recreates the central figure erased from the shrine. The pencil drawings are based on various reliefs and portraits said to be those of Smenkhkare at one point or another in history.¹⁷

The installation traces the trajectory from forms of silence to those of erasure. How much of a biennale's 'silence' is shaping its erasure? What is it that we are attempting to make live longer here, the time we have spent studying or explaining how we brought *Natasha* together as an exhibition? Like the character in Aly's project, her drawings so delicate they almost disappeared (or were invisible) when the installation was photographed from a distance. Can such thin and laborious veins of the Biennale also be considered one of its sites? Does an abundance of text overwhelm as much as it overrides the audience's interest or ability to engage with a biennale? What established systems of engagement can here be defined then revisited?

8. struggle;

Fear is invisible. Hope is invisible. Speech is a wave or air that is, to the bare eye, invisible. An idea rushing to the mind is hidden. In the form of vapour, water is invisible, but visible in the form of water droplets. Intentions are invisible. Words deleted from final edits are, technically, hidden.

Through several forms and documents, pitched ideas are described, explained, justified, itemised and then produced, installed, lit, and labelled. Little fabrication happens on the Singaporean island, while permits and clearances are integral. Lead-up time and profuse details are thus essential. The text-abundant process became fifty-word wall labels; the works shall generate relations with the minds of *Natasha's* visitors.

On the TPD's fifth floor is Firas Shehadeh's *Signal Feels Collision* (2022). Eight large prints reveal how indigenous people radicalise abstraction to produce meanings that bypass algorithmic censorship practised on social media. Shehadeh uses coded characters and signs, and the word "feels" in the title references unexplainable, overwhelming emotions. Firas sees an extension of colonial practice through algorithmic censorship of particular political content when shared on social media, and thus, his world and work are focused on assigning new meanings to and within constructed environments. He takes images and sinks them in water before reworking them as digital images and printing them. Since the treatment is not digital, it is difficult for the algorithms to access their meanings. Only the human mind can process the elements and deliver their purpose.

The other side of the hall are the works of Brightworkroom artists.¹⁸ On opening day the three artists from Brightworkroom, Yoon Mi Ae, Na Jeong Suk, and Kym Jinhong spoke about their artworks in *Natasha*. In Korean, Na Jeong Suk explained how obsessively she weaves patterns of stars together into dense constellations, and how they begin to take form in her hands. She begins from one corner of the work, one star after another. With little dots, swashes of colour, bits of fruit or vegetable drawings, and an impression of a nose or an eye, the artwork becomes an illusory skin of statements of her mind. Yoon Mi Ae engages in the same obsessive task, but with collages cut

ALA YOUNIS



dr'van_12

Natasha is...

from shreds of packages of everyday objects. Webs of glistening sheets of A4 paper with endless constellations of meaning and illusory journeys are Yoon's neurodiverse communications. Kym Jinhong paints profiles for neurodiversity, so lucidly, as if explained in a children's story. These endeavours against invisible forces are characteristic of the artworks presented in this gallery of *Natasha*. Whether fighting against the algorithm, mental challenges, societal norms, or other forms, 'the enemy' is intangible, invisible, but forceful. These artists' works show us their methods of defiance. Similarly, Assem Hendawi collaborates with and against Artificial Intelligence image generation. To speculate upon future imaginaries, Hendawi uses archival images from the social movements and critical historical moments of the modernisation of the Middle East from the 1940s to the 2000s, which he feeds into AI image generators. He then supplants the generic stereotypes provided by the algorithms to speculate a future world. The work emphasises classification bias as it results in an uncanny collapse of the past into the future.

9. speculative;

Assem Hendawi painted his projection room red for his video, *Simia, Stratagem for Undestining* (2022), which begins with continuous questions: What is the space for the communist imagination in the future? What is the possibility of its revision and reinvention? How can we repurpose the thinking about technology towards a positive and emancipative vector while being aware of technology's history and presence in shaping capitalism and colonialism and even police/military states? What is the possibility and opportunities of addressing the techno-politics of the SWANA region¹⁹ from a post-critical position, or in other words, through a propositional and projective imagination that allows for options for the political design of possible political forms and social organisations that might emerge in the future? What is the space for techno-capitalism, that just for being excessively capitalist and exploitative, it can open against the resistance of religious and military fascism? Hendawi attempts to answer by utilising different AI processes to weave a narrative that responds to a history of capitalist and colonialist turbulence in the Middle East that cancels out a possibility of a future outside this cycle of violence.²⁰

Naming *Natasha* pressed continuous demands to identify who or what it is. *Natasha* is a concept; a meeting body, a journey of encounters; a report on one of many journeys; a re-examining and experimentation on processes. Processes of making art, putting together exhibitions, deciding to travel (short or long distances) to encounter art. *Natasha* is an institution in mind and an institution of meaning. Like any biennale, it is a web of relations: advisory, administration, financing, publication, press, production, fabrication, installation and education. Its makers and visitors want it experimental but also want it to be easily accessible. It is exuberant in the knowledge it produces but requires resilience in surpassing the pre-conceptions that typify the scope of its production. It is also buoyant, calculating much of its appearance on works before being built. It required a substantial amount of time spent in meetings that ran estimates, of curatorial relations and costs, dimensions, weights, technologies, space capacities, and text requirements. There was also an abundance of technical lists and renderings in the N-mailbox. In notebooks, on scraps of paper, or post-it stickers, endless types of structures and creatures live in between my notes and to-do lists. Some of the feelings permeated or generated in *Natasha's* meetings are present on these pages too.



10. housed in mind;

The mind is a vehicle; a travel companion, a drifter; a dark space that can also be bright; a location that tolerates continuously changing combinations of presence; a shared ride towards dis/agreement; and a house for a stream of interpretations.

Several exhibition options also exist in similar notebooks, with varying clusters of artists' names and projects from past and future projects. Some of these works were not shown but remain essential to imagining what *Natasha* is. Binna Choi brought images of Ruth Asawa's home with her sculptures and children sharing the same space. She spoke on the artist integration, work, and education efforts. I thought much about Marguerite Nakhla's *Scene Dans Le Parc* (c. 1940s) and how women and their families colour a garden. I paired it with a photo for a children's playground designed as a fountain in a park.²¹ From a distance, it looked like children were walking on water; the image was overwhelming. At the time, I imagined the Biennale as a garden, where remoteness is as essential as play, nature and gatherings. This idea found its echo in the curatorial meetings, the possibility of building a children's playground in Singapore and imagining one at Yan Kit Playfield. Eventually, we created a garden with the Malaeb collective in a remote village south of Jordan. Neither Nakhla's work nor the physical playground of Malaeb is in Singapore, but both are part of *Natasha's* experience.

Natasha is also about publishing. How to bring some of these remote or unpublished realms to the exhibition imagination? One idea was to print elements from the references, shown or not presented, as stickers and circulate them. Here, people can choose what works they want to organise as a presentation on the cover or inside pages of their notebooks. Their collections of work stickers befriend their papers of diminishing to-do lists or intimate journals.

Natasha is...

I would like to thank Dina Taha for her valuable remarks on the structure of this text

Notes

¹ Poem translated by Chae-Pyong Song and Anne Rashid, *Korean Poetry in Translation*, 15 January 2013; <https://jaypsong.blog/2013/01/15/natasha-the-white-donkey-and-me-by-baek-seok/>

² 'Britta Marakatt-Labba: History in Stitches', *e-flux*, 19 November 2018; <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/226277/britta-marakatt-labbahistory-in-stitches/>

³ FOMO: I've been in Tromsø, so distracted that I did not realise that I landed on Britta's Island, and so I have not seen her twenty-four-metre work, Historjá (History), also known as the Tromsø Frieze

⁴ It may rain on the way to the site visit, so in the SB's backpack are masks, umbrellas, candy, juice, scented hand sanitisers, and small battery-operated pastel-colour fans

⁵ Samia Halaby's footnotes for the drawings shown in Singapore Biennale 2022

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Samia Halaby's statement, 'KINETIC PAINTING WITH SOUND', was produced in the context of this collaboration

¹¹ Kanitha Tith in *How heavy is time?* (2020), a performance documented in the video. Organised by Casco Art Institute, Utrecht, 5 June 2020; https://youtu.be/vs0e05Bc_Tc

¹² Ibid.

¹³ <https://www.efeo.fr/base.php?code=216#2>

¹⁴ 'US Embassy and National Museum to Unveil Goodwill Moon Rock', US Embassy in Cambodia website, 15 June 2018; <https://kh.usembassy.gov/u-s-embassy-and-national-museum-to-unveil-goodwill-moon-rock/#:~:text=The%20moon%20rock%20was%20donated,17%20mission%20in%20December%201972>

¹⁵ Artist statement to be published in the biennale guide

¹⁶ From an unpublished statement by Doa Aly

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Founded in South Korea by novelist, Kim Hyona, and visual artist, Kim Inkyung

¹⁹ SWANA: South West Asia and North Africa, a less Eurocentric term for Africa north of the Sahara and a varying number of territories in West or South-West Asia

²⁰ Letter from Assem Hendawi to Ala Younis, 11 October 2022

²¹ I took it while I was in town in June 2021, installing the *Hands* show, I co-curated with Madhusree Dutta, Akademie der Künste der Welt, Köln