

Sabir | Dor Guez

curated by **Luigi Fassi**

from 9 November 2018 to 3 March 2019

Opening: 7 p.m., Friday 9 November 2018

From Friday **9 November 2018** to Sunday **3 March 2019**, the MAN Museo d'Arte Provincia di Nuoro presents *Sabir*, the first solo exhibition in Italy by Israeli artist **Dor Guez** (Baka, 1980), curated by **Luigi Fassi**.

The project forms part of the programme of exhibitions curated by Luigi Fassi, who has headed the institution since March 2018, marking the start of a new exhibition season at the MAN. As part of the museum's winter schedule, there will be a further two exhibitions open to the public from 9 November 2018 to 3 March 2019: **François-Xavier Gbré's** solo exhibition *Sogno d'oltremare* and the collective exhibition *O Youth and Beauty!* by the artists **Anna Bjerger**, **Louis Fratino** and **Waldemar Zimbelmann**.

Featuring different styles and languages, the three exhibitions illustrate the artists' need to explore their cultural identity by keeping one eye on the past and the other on the future and progress, establishing a dialogue with viewers.

The exhibition narrative conceived by Dor Guez for *Sabir* comprises a collection of archive documents, two videos and a new sound installation, produced and commissioned by the MAN specially for the occasion.

The artist triggers a wide-reaching artistic reflection on the sense of belonging to a community in relation to its great history and its upheavals. Having grown up in Israel, in a family interwoven with Christian, Arab, Jewish and Palestinian elements, Guez belongs to the Palestinian Christian community, a minority within a minority in the state of Israel. It is on this basis that the artist offers his view of the Mediterranean, presented in the exhibition halls of the MAN.

The exhibition is named after one of the two videos it features: *Sabir*. This Arabic term comes from the Latin root of the word *sapere*. It refers to a spurious language shared by speakers of different tongues, made up of reinventions to develop a lingua franca. The video begins with a close-up of the sun setting over the beach at Jaffa in Israel and is accompanied by the voice of the artist's grandmother Samira, as she tells her life story. Without ever showing the protagonist, and alternating Arabic with Hebrew, the monologue passes from the tale of a happy Mediterranean childhood in Jaffa to the violent Israeli expulsions of 1948, the family's dispersal through Middle Eastern countries and then Europe, all the way through to the establishment of the new Israeli society.

The second video in the exhibition is named after its protagonist, *Sa(mira)* (2009), who acts as the narrator. This time she describes the inner social conflict of living with a dual identity in Israel, as an Israeli citizen of Arab origin.

The exhibition narrative imagined by the artist continues with a wonderful environmental sound installation entitled *Two Lines and a Yard*, produced by the MAN especially for the exhibition. Here the artist fragments and distorts the sound of the waves breaking on the shore at Jaffa alongside an audio recording of the demolition of his grandmother's family home by the Israeli authorities. Destruction, death and rebirth alternate in the soundtrack, highlighting a symbolic process that embodies the meaning of the entire exhibition.

The narrative concludes with *The Christian Palestinian Archive (CPA)*, a work in progress that gathers documents and photographs testifying to the history and life of the Palestinian Christian community from the first half of the twentieth century until its forced exodus following the foundation of the state of Israel. The CPA was created by the artist in 2009 and contains thousands of images collected thanks to the direct participation of a number of families involved in the Palestinian Christian diaspora. Guez uses a reproduction process to restore life to the photographs, turning them into scanograms, analogue images obtained by scanning the originals and transforming them into new and unique visual documents.

The *Scanograms* offer an opportunity for reflecting on the relationship between the aesthetic and historical qualities of historic documents and on the civic role played by testimony in constructing a shared history.

In this exhibition Guez presents *Scanogram # 1 and Scanogram # 2* (2010), two chapters of the archive that contain a large number of images dated 1938–58, featuring a woman, Samira (the artist's grandmother), and her family.

In many different ways and via various forms of representation, the artistic research that characterizes Guez's work reveals the relationship between personal identity, memory and the continuity of the past in present events, with the objective of looking back over the complex history of Israel. Intimate and personal moments help to reconstruct a collective tale, restoring a voice and telling the story of the political and social events that have involved the Palestinian and Israeli people.

We would like to thank the institutions that support the MAN: Regione Sardegna, Provincia di Nuoro and Fondazione di Sardegna.