



London's largest celebration of Arab Arts returns as Shubbak Festival announces their programme for this Summer

Friday 23rd June – Sunday 9th July 2023

The thrilling programme for Shubbak Festival 2023 has been announced, celebrating their seventh edition of London's largest Festival of contemporary Arab arts and cultures, with further events across the UK. With a dynamic and multi-disciplinary programme, Shubbak Festival platforms narratives representing Arab, South West Asian, and North African cultures. This year's Festival will see popular favourites, emerging artists, and highly anticipated UK debuts and world premieres, with over 80 events across both arts venues and the public realm. A collaborative endeavour between creatives and communities, the Festival will also present commissions and residencies from Shubbak's creative programme. Showcasing an ambitious and vibrant line-up of performance, visual art, comedy, dance, film, literature, and talks and workshops, Shubbak Festival will champion artists and their crafts as they confront the urgent environmental and social issues of today.

This year's festival will kick off with the group exhibition ***Totalitarian Props*** at The Africa Centre, exploring the use of political props as modalities of control in Afro-Arab nations, before embarking on a weekend take-over at the National Theatre's River Stage Festival. An unmissable ceremony of international arts and culture for all ages and co-presented with Bagri Foundation, this free event will offer an abundance of family fun, live music and late night entertainment!

Shubbak Festival presents renowned Lebanese-American musician and activist **Hamed Sinno** for their first public performance since leading up the most prominent indie-rock band of the Arab world, *Mashrou' Leila*. A key figure in representational politics, free speech, and sexual freedoms in the Middle East, Sinno is at the forefront of conversations addressing social and political discourse. Co-commissioned by Shubbak and the Barbican, Sinno's intimate and honest piece ***Poems of Consumption*** explores the resonances between Amazon-era consumerism,

mental illness, unrequited love, and environmental collapse in a captivating musical composition.

Shubbak's music line-up also includes legendary Tunisian songstress **Ghalia Benali** in an electrifying live concert, and another UK debut **Bahiyya**, a rapturous revival of revolutionary Egyptian musicians. **Love & Revenge** will present a riveting ode to Arab cinema's golden age whilst a night of Arab techno and old-time classics curated by Young Shubbak alumna is celebrated in **When the Night Speaks**. This event precedes the grounding invitation to walk along Hackney Marshes to explore the dialogue between us and the land in **When the Land Speaks**.

Marking her debut performance in the UK, rebellious Lebanese activist and the first openly queer comedian in the region, **Shaden** presents **All Hell Broke Loose** - one of Shubbak's exclusively Arabic-spoken events. Embodying satire to comment on toxic masculinity and her relationship with God, Shaden continues to pave a way for artistic freedom despite having been summoned by the military court for her criticism of the political class.

Another comedy highlight in the Festival not only represents female voices in the male-dominated sector, but also platforms disabled creatives. Blind artist Sharihan Hadweh teams up with acclaimed comedian and actress Manal Awad (*Huda's Salon*, *Hany Abu-Assad*; *Dégradé*, *Arab Nasser*, *Tarzan Nasser*), to create **Double Bill: No Cheri/Mia Chara**, a back-to-back comedy set from two Palestinian voices with Soho Theatre. Foregrounding a biting and cynical humour, this show champions fearless women in stand-up comedy.

Further highlights for female work also include an all-female group taking their UK premiere of **Woman at Point Zero**, an operatic reinterpretation of feminist Nawal El Saadawi's novel, to the Royal Opera House. Multi-disciplinary performance piece **Dreamer** will present a semi-autobiographical tale of three Black women in Arab society, whilst a staged reading of **Chambers of the Heart** confronts the love, desire and memory of four women with stories spanning the East and West.

Showcasing the unconventional performance pieces that Shubbak Festival platforms, Mohamed Toukabri presents **The Power (of) The Fragile**. Inviting his mother to join him on stage, Toukabri blurs the lines between artist and non-artist as his mother's untold narrative unfolds in a stunning and bold piece of performance art.

Poet Lisa Lux and composer Jasmin Kent Rodgman collaborate in a ground-breaking immersive call for climate justice with their promenade installation highlighting human displacement.

What The Dog Said To The Harvest draws on opera, dance, spoken word, binaural sound and film, whilst ***Bad Diaspora Poems*** debuts the new collection from young Poet Laureate Momtaza Mehri, which combines her own family history with the history of many others to speak for those who have been left behind.

From a retrospective look at the histories of others to the present digital age, one of the Arab world's leading contemporary dramatists and directors Sulayman Al Bassam (*The Al-Hamlet Summit; Richard III: an Arab Tragedy*) returns to London with the UK Premiere of award-winning text ***I M E D E A***. This bold reimagining of the Greek myth of Medea explores the eroding infrastructures of truth in a digital world and lies midway between a live rock concert and performance event. Further investigation into the evolution of sounds and music is also offered in the powerful 2-nighter event, ***Sonic Frontiers***, which captures and reflects on our changing times.

Presenting the Festival's first live interactive piece between 2 cities, ***The Legitimated Body and Navigated Listener*** opens a sonic dialogue between artists from their home city of Slemani and the participating audience. As well as the geographical, Shubbak presents additional boundary-breaking works in Mona Kareem's fiercely unapologetic new book of poems offering a dynamic bilingual reading - presented for the first time beside an English translation - in ***I Will Not Fold These Maps***.

Shubbak Festival will platform Palestinian narratives, with highlights including one of the UK's leading writers, Palestinian-Irish playwright Hannah Khalil and her evolutionary play ***Trouf: Scenes from 75* Years***. Palestinian choreographer and performer Samaa Wakim embodies the trauma of war in ***Losing It***, facilitating movement and live scores by Samar Haddad King into a solo dance piece.

For the visual art enthusiasts, the Festival offers multiple shows, from an investigation into the cross-pollination of coastal cultures in ***Two Seas*** to the intricate practice of Arabic calligraphy in ***Sound & Silence***. The multidisciplinary exhibition ***I'd search forever, I want to remember*** questions if matter and place remember in the same way our bodies do, featuring captivating movements of the English Channel and demolished buildings.

Shubbak celebrates the lives and narratives that exist amongst all Arab communities, with Elias Matar's ***Olive Jar***, developed from nearly a year of local community workshops, exploring the rich heritage from Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, and beyond. Thrilling action will take to the streets with parkour and circus comedy show ***Taroo***, an ambitious fusion of

acrobatics, Chinese pole and urban movement that tells the stories from streets all over the world.

Expanding its horizons, Festival events can be found across the UK as well as online, with exhibitions and touring performances heading to Greater Manchester, Devon, Liverpool and Bradford's Literature Festival. Partnering also with the UK's largest festival of Arab cinema, **SAFAR Film Festival 2023: A Journey Through Space and Time** will screen across 9 different cities.

Joint CEOs Alia Alzougbi and Taghrid Choucair Vizoso comment, *Shubbak is so much more than a festival. It is a home away from home for our artists and communities, our joyful resistance and respite from the times we live in, and our pride to continue in the breath of our ancestors' wisdom yet to sing in our own tongues our reverence for the land. It is also the courage to discard that which does not serve us, humanity and the earth – to confront with honesty the messiness that crouches in the deep seat of our shared experience. Bringing together an incredible line-up of individual creatives and collective works in one celebration of Arab arts and cultures to share with wider communities, we are beyond elated for this year's Festival - our first edition with two Arab women at the helm!*

Shubbak Festival is held with support from: Arts Council England; Bagri Foundation; British Council; A. M. Qattan Foundation; Paul Hamlyn Foundation; and Qatar Foundation International.

Notes to Editors

Title	<i>Shubbak Festival</i>
Festival Dates	Friday 23 rd June – Sunday 9 th July 2023

Full Programme of Events

Fri 23 rd – Wed 19 th July	<i>Totalitarian Props</i> The Africa Centre, 66 Great Suffolk Street, London, SE1 OBL
Fri 23 rd – Sun 25 th June	<i>Take-over Weekend at River Stage Festival</i> National Theatre, River Stage, Upper Ground, South Bank, London, SE1 9PX

Friday 23 rd June	Haya Zaatry, Badiaa Bouhrizi: <i>Sonic Frontiers Night 01</i> Servant Jazz Quarters, 10A Bradbury Street, London, N16 8JN
Fri 23 rd - Sun 25 th June	lisa luxx and Jasmin Kent Rodgman: <i>What the Dog Said to the Harvest</i> Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX
Fri 23 rd June – Sat 15 th July	Reem Acaon: <i>Two Seas</i> Rochester Art Gallery, 95 High Street, Rochester, ME1 1LX
Fri 23 rd June – Sun 9 th July	Soraya Syed/Art of the Pen: <i>Sound & Silence</i> The Coronet Theatre, 103 Notting Hill Gate, London, W11 3LB
Fri 23 rd June – Sun 9 th July	<i>Think-Sync-Arabi digital</i> Online
Saturday 24 th June	Tamara Al-Mashouk: <i>I'd search forever, I want to remember</i> Tech Fort, Citadel Road, Dover, CT17 9DR
Sunday 25 th June	Bahiyya Lafayette, 11 Goods Way, London, N1C 4DP
Tues 27 th – Thurs 29 th June	Mohamed Toukabri: <i>The Power (of) The Fragile</i> Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London, SW11 5TN
Wed 28 th – Fri 30 th June	Laila Soliman, Bushra El-Turk, Stacy Hardy, Bissan Al Charif: <i>Woman at Point Zero</i> Royal Opera House, Linbury Theatre, 35-36 Bow Street, London, WC2E 9DD

Thursday 29 th June	Sandy Chamoun and Maya Al Khalidi with Sarouna: <i>Sonic Frontiers Night 02</i> IKLECTIK, Old Paradise Yard, 20 Carlisle Lane, London, SE1 7LG
Thursday 29 th June	Shaima Muhammad Ali: <i>Vital Capacities online exhibition</i> Online
Thursday 29 th June	Momtaza Mehri: <i>Bad Diaspora Poems</i> Grand Junction, Rowington Close, London, W2 5TF
Thurs 29 th June - Sun 9 th July	<i>SAFAR Film Festival 2023: A Journey Through Space and Time</i> Multiple Venues
Friday 30 th June	Shaden: <i>All Hell Broke Loose</i> Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL
Fri 30 th June – Sat 1 st July	Colette Dalal Tchantcho: <i>Dreamer</i> Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London, SW11 5TN
Saturday 1 st July	Love & Revenge: <i>Love & Revenge: Electropop meets cinema</i> Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, London, E1 6LA
Saturday 1 st July	Lama Amine, Aya Haidar & Tatreez Collective: <i>Rest, Play, Feast</i> Metroland Studios, 91 Kilburn Vale, North Maida Vale, London, NW6 6PS
Sunday 2 nd July	Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi: <i>A Friend's Kitchen - an intimate stroll with Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi and friends</i> Queensway Station, Bayswater Road, London, W2 4SS

Monday 3rd July
Hamed Sinno: *In Conversation*
The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Tuesday 4th July
Mona Kareem: *I will not fold these maps*
The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Tue 4th – Sat 8th July
Sharihan Hathweh & Manal Awad: *Double Bill: No Cheri / Mia Chara*
Soho Theatre, 21 Dean Street, London, W1D 3N

Thursday 6th July
Ghalia Benali: *Ghalia Benali*
Kings Place, York Way, London, N1 9AG

Thurs 6th – Fri 7th July
Samaa Wakim & Samar Haddad King: *Losing It*
The Yard Theatre, Unit 2a Queen's Yard, London, E9 5EN

Thurs 6th – Fri 7th July
Hannah Khalil: *Trouf: Scenes From 75* Years*
Theatro Technis, 26 Crowndale Road, London, NW1 1TT

Thurs 6th – Sat 8th July
Elias Matar: *Olive Jar*
Grand Junction, Rowington Close, London, W2 5TF

Friday 7th July
Riwa Saab: *When the Night Speaks*
The Yard Theatre, Unit 2a Queen's Yard, London, E9 5EN

Fri 7th – Sun 9th July
SABAB Theatre/Sulayman Al Bassam: *I M E D E A*
Stone Nest, 136 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W1D 5EZ

Saturday 8th July
Hamed Sinno: *Poems of Consumption*
Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8DS

Saturday 8th July
Hardi & Khabat: *The Legitimated Body and Navigated Listener*

Watermans, 40 High Street, Brentford, TW8 0DS

Saturday 8th July

Reem Acon: *Flowing Shorelines*

Medway Chatham Library, Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TX

Saturday 8th July

Mohammed Saleh: *Dar Jacir x RESOLVE*

Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London, SW5 0SW

Sunday 9th July

Hassan Abdulrazzak: *Chambers of the Heart*

26 Crowndale, London, NW1 1TT

Sunday 9th July

Bint Mbareh, Juliette Mourad, Ola El Hassan: *When the Land Speaks*

Hackney Marshes

Multiple Dates

Aya Haidar: *The Art of Borders & Child's Play*

Multiple Venues

Multiple Dates

Yasmeen Audisho Ghrawi: *From the Daughter of a Dictator*

Multiple Venues

Multiple Dates

Company Zid/Said Mouhssine: *Taroo*

Multiple Venues

Website

<https://www.shubbak.co.uk/shubbak-festival-2023/>

Content Warnings

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Social Media

@shubbakfestival

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