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- **Exhibition: ALA YOUNIS**
  - **Opening: February 15, at 20:00 h.**
  - **Date: February 16, - June 10, 2018**
  - **Space: South Cloister**
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From a socio-political perspective, Jordanian artist Ala Younis (b. Kuwait, 1974, lives in Amman) investigates different narratives that have been used to construct diverse visual, intellectual and emotional images of the Near East. Her attention is focused on, but not limited to, two particular geographical and cultural contexts: Egypt and Iraq.

This spatial framework is further delimited by a specific time period, beginning with the aftermath of the 1948 war, the first in the long, unresolved Arab-Israeli conflict, which gave rise to historic national processes in the 1950s where ideas of social and political modernization were accompanied by the quest for a social, Pan-Arab identity. That quest materialized in international organizations and complex ties of alliance, rivalry and relations among Near Eastern countries and between them and the Soviet Union, as well as the dialectics of confrontation that characterized the Cold War with the Western nations and Israel.

However, war and conflict are not the central themes of Ala Younis' s work - with the exception of her *Tin Soldiers* (2010-2011)- for she prefers to explore other issues that permeate and become entrenched in the cultural bedrock once they have been emphatically expounded by the political authorities.

Occasionally alternating between the roles of researcher, curator and artist, Ala Younis' s approach to different case studies that typify this geopolitical hotspot

not only offers insight and fresh perspectives -alternatives to those responsible for the stereotypical Western perception of the region- but also invites a critical reflection on the orientalizing lens inherited from colonialism. Comparing and contrasting ideals and truths in a subtle mythology, her artistic projects reveal the contradictions and longings that power and historic fables have established in the collective imagination.

The solo exhibition at the CAAC features a considerable number of the projects she has produced over the last 10 years, from the earliest, titled *Nefertiti* (2008), which examines the modernization processes that characterized the Middle East in the 1950s and 60s from a feminist perspective, to her latest creation, made specifically for this show in collaboration with the Seville University School of Architecture. In fact, the architecture, plans for change, visionary political leaders and ideological forces—both forward and backward-looking—involved in grand schemes of power are the pillars underpinning this exhibition of works that delve into the tradition of artistic and historical modernization and its reiterated failures.