

About the artist /

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, the self-described 'Private Ear', has over a decade of experience investigating audio on behalf of people under attack from state authorities. He has a doctorate from the University of London on the role of sound in legal investigations, and his investigative work has been used as evidence at the UK Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and in a formal request to the International Criminal Court. In 2023, he founded Earshot, the world's first not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the study of audio for human rights and environmental advocacy.

His work has been presented in the form of forensic reports, lectures and live performances, films, publications, and exhibitions all over the world, including at the 61st and 58th Venice Biennale, MoMA New York, MUAC Mexico, the 22nd Biennale of Sydney, the 11th Gwangju Biennale, the 13th and 14th Sharjah Biennial, the 34th Biennial of São Paulo, Tate Modern, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin.

Abu Hamdan has been widely recognised internationally with awards such as the Grand Prix at Winterthur International Film Festival, the Toronto Biennial Audience Award in 2020, and the Turner Prize in 2019. In 2019, he won the Edvard Munch Art Award, which included being given a solo exhibition at MUNCH, Oslo, which was the first presentation of 'Zifzafa'.

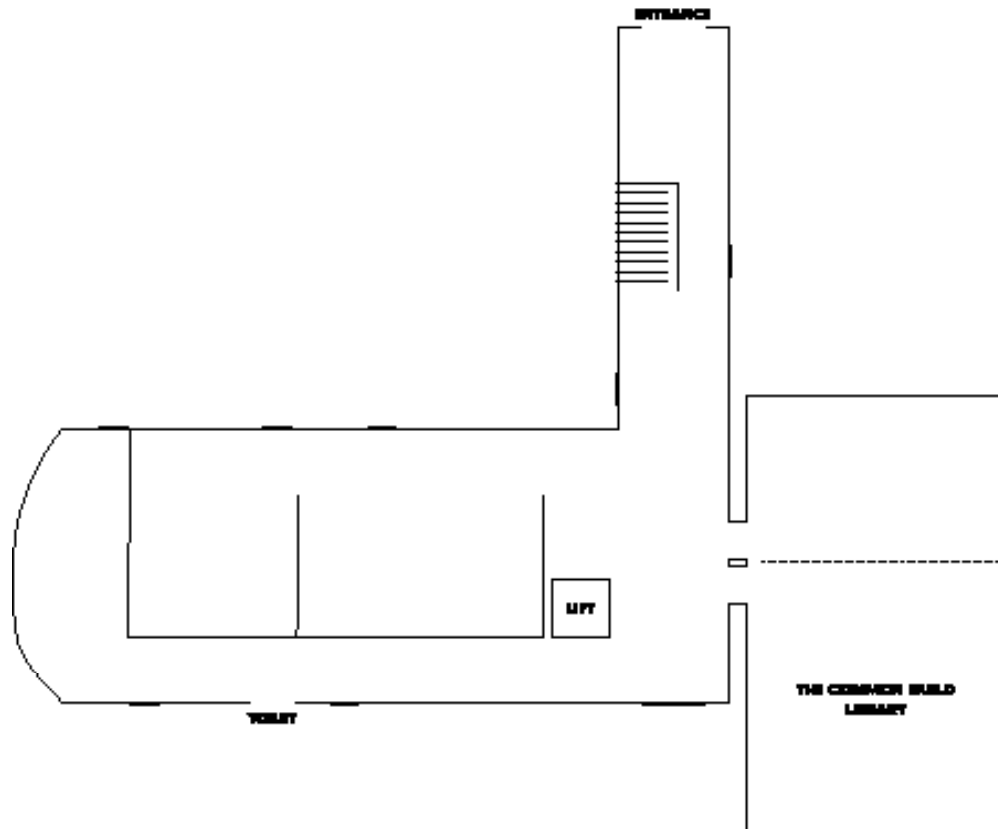


THE COMMON GUILD

Zifzafa

Lawrence
Abu Hamdan

Ground Floor Gallery



1.

Tilting at Windmills i, ii & iii (2024)

CGI animation

3 mins, 4secs

The phrase ‘tilting at windmills’ cites Miguel de Cervantes’s ‘Don Quixote’ (1615), referencing a moment in the novel when the titular protagonist charges defiantly towards windmills thinking they are giants. Used here as a metaphor for combating illusory enemies, Lawrence Abu Hamdan questions the efficacy of the fight against proposed wind turbines in the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights. This three-channel work displays digital visualisations of the sonic impact these turbines will have on the surrounding landscape.

2.

Wind Ensemble (2024)

Single-channel video projection, Ampeg amplifier stack

7 mins

This installation features a projection of Jawlani musician Amr Mdah performing his own composition for saxophone on the balcony of a farmhouse 50 metres away from one of the proposed turbine sites. The film is projected onto an iconic Ampeg stack, an amplifier commonly used for bass guitar. The amp cabinet and head have an imposing, embodied presence. Drawn to the relationship between Mdah’s breath as it activates the instrument and the natural sounds of the Jawlani landscape, ‘Wind Ensemble’ presents a visually simple, yet stirring, act of sonic resistance.

3.

Zifzafa: Livestream Audio Essay (2025)

Single-channel video projection

45 mins, 51 secs

‘Zifzafa: Livestream Audio Essay’ (2025), travels across a simulated, digital landscape which illustrates the intense sonic impact of wind turbines on residents of the Golan Heights. Proposed as a green energy project, each of the colossal 256 metres tall turbines are anticipated to generate between 70–90dB of noise – an intensity of sound equivalent to a busy highway. Some turbines are planned as close as 35 metres to homes, their sonic footprint rendering the area uninhabitable and effectively enforcing a sonic annexation.

The video digitally maps the sonic footprint of a similar wind farm site, recorded in Germany, across the geography of the Golan Heights. These sounds are met with field recordings of natural and community life captured by Jawlani composer and sound artist Busher Kanj Abu Saleh. Sounds of bees, cows, thunder, saxophones, shovels, weddings, and playing children are inserted into the video using gaming software. The video exists as both a piece of environmental evidence, demonstrating green colonialism in action, and as a record of a soon-to-be past version of the Golan Heights.