

STATE OF CONCEPT ATHENS

Press Release

***Witness Lines* : Hajra Waheed**

A Solo Exhibition

Opening

Saturday, November 25th 2023, 13:00 - 18:00

Duration: November 26th 2023 - February 10th 2024

Opening Hours: Wednesday - Friday 16:30 - 20:30, Saturday 12:00 - 17:00

State of Concept is proud to announce the first solo exhibition of artist Hajra Waheed in Greece entitled [Witness Lines](#), opening on the 25th of November 2023 at 13:00, curated by iLiana Fokianaki.

Waheed's multidisciplinary practice ranges from painting and drawing to video, sound, sculpture and installation. Her long-term engagement with questions that relate to power structures and how they transcend time through the legacies of colonial and state violence, has stood out for its precision. While exploring the historical nexus between security, surveillance and the covert networks of power that structure lives, Waheed addresses the aftermaths of social injustice by weaving her stories through collective and emancipatory propositions of radical living. Characterised by a distinct visual language and unique poetic approach, her works often use the ordinary as a means to convey the profound, and landscape as a medium to transpose human struggle and a radical politics of resistance and resilience.

Waheed's presentation will foreground her video practice by bringing together her celebrated film *"The Spiral"* (2019) and the debut of a new sister film *"A Letter From My Sister, November 16, 2015"* (2023), commissioned by State of Concept and funded by the CALQ (Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec). This new film revolves around a letter that was pivotal to the initial scripting of *"The Spiral"* (2019) and was first used in a performance by Waheed in 2017. *A Letter From My Sister* is based on an intimate correspondence from November 16, 2015 between siblings in which the artist's sister responds to the implementation of a state of emergency, which she witnessed first hand.

State of Concept Athens
Institution for Contemporary Art
19 Tousa Botsari Street, Athens, 117 41
T: +30 21 3031 8576
info@stateofconcept.org
www.stateofconcept.org

While *A Letter From My Sister* is a visceral response to state sanctioned Islamophobia and the brutal exercise of colonial power, *The Spiral* (2019) focuses on the possibilities of breaking free from such deadly cycles. Taking the spiral's catalytic geometry in nature as a starting point, the film ruminates on undefeated despair and the processes for social transformation. The film begins with a narration by the artist: "*The spiral is much more than just a form.*" Together, the two works are a meditation on change, highlighting both the importance of speaking truth to power while maintaining the long view as we seek to build a just and equitable future.

Building upon Waheed's existing practice of mapping the behaviours and patterns of colonial and state violence, both works use the natural world as a springboard for reflecting on individual upheaval and collective human experience. The works come at a time of global conflict, destruction and disaster, reminding us of all of the cycles of violence in the depths of history, now also augmented through ecocide and natural catastrophe but further highlighting the ways we may be able to break from prejudice, discrimination and violence.

Hajra Waheed is a multidisciplinary artist. Recent exhibitions include: Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2023); Sharjah Biennial 15, Sharjah (2023); CAM St. Louis, Missouri (2023); PHI Foundation, Montreal (2021); Portikus, Frankfurt (2020); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); Lahore Biennial 02, Pakistan (2020); British Museum, London (2019); The Power Plant, Toronto (2019); 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (2017); 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2016); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2016); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015). Waheed was the recipient of the Sharjah Biennial 15 Prize (2023), the Hnatyshyn Foundation Award (2022) & the Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award (2014) for outstanding achievement as a mid-career artist and a finalist for the Sobey Art Award (2016). Her works can be found in permanent collections including: MOMA, New York; British Museum, London; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Art Institute of Chicago; Burger Collection, Zurich/Hong Kong and Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi.

For more information please visit www.stateofconcept.org or contact
Konstantina Melachrinou at info@stateofconcept.org

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