

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

There are all kinds of prisons
all kinds

The camp is prison; your house, prison;
the newspaper, prison;
the radio, prison,
the bus and the street and people's eyes . .

“Do you think we

27 Sep 2025
– 11 Jan 2026

BECOMING THE SUB TERRAIN,
THE UNDER TERRAIN

ALL THAT IS UNSEEN

Nottingham
Contemporary

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

27 Sep 2025 – 11 Jan 2026

‘It is Ulysses
Returning home
From the sea of loss
It is the return of the sun, Of my exiled ones
And for her sake, and his
I swear I shall not compromise
And to the last pulse in my veins I shall resist,
Resist—and resist.’

Samih Al Qasim “Enemy of the Sun”, 1970

Since 1948, thousands of Palestinians have been displaced from their native homeland, during what is referred to as the ‘Nakba’ (Arabic for catastrophe), unable to return. Within this context of occupation, prisons exist as sites of conflict — at once detaining and confining those already oppressed, whilst simultaneously reuniting them to lands from which they are otherwise denied. Occupation therefore becomes not just of the land but also the body, the imaginary and the mind. Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme take this as the point of departure for their new multi-channel, audiovisual installation *Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom*.

Based between Ramallah and New York, Abbas and Abou-Rahme have worked collaboratively since 2007. The artists’ practice has developed alongside the rise and proliferation of new technologies such as handheld online devices, live streaming and user-generated material like blog posts, videos or social media posts. Through these technologies, Abbas and Abou-Rahme collect, sample, layer and recast found and documented materials from both online and offline worlds, creating what they refer to as a ‘vast counter-archive to document Palestinian life’; an act intended to prevent the erasure of Palestinian voices. In their wider practice, Abbas and Abou-Rahme invent, excavate and activate chanced-upon stories, figures, gestures and sites as material for re-imagining the possibilities of the present, ultimately questioning what is, and what could be.

Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom is a major new moving image work, sound composition and constellation of printed works on fabric and paper. The installation weaves in first-hand testimonies and memories of former Palestinian prisoners recorded and gathered by the artists across Palestine, interspersed with poems and prose from scholars and revolutionary thinkers, some of whom were imprisoned themselves.

Utilising their acclaimed digital tactics of layering, splicing and overspilling projected imagery and sound, Abbas and Abou-Rahme work with light and rhythm to illuminate the wider emotional and psychological conditions of detention and imprisonment. These presentational devices might themselves be defined as ‘fugitive’, resisting captivity by seeping into and escaping the rigid structure of a frame or a screen.

Just as the small glimmers of sunlight between bricks in a prison cell or the upward stretch of a weed growing between cracks in a concrete floor become symbols of resistance to enclosure, *Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom* honours the communities who survive and persist within impossible conditions. The non-linear narrative that traverses the work speaks to the power of inner strength, the dignity and resilience of those incarcerated and the power of holding onto one’s freedom through imagining and dreaming, singing and storytelling.

In this work, the artists create a space where a new collective consciousness can exist - one that is grounded in resistance to oppression, liberation and self-determination. *Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom* invites us all to collectively strive for and imagine alternative futures, so that one day the prison walls may be turned to dust, and the sun can return once again.

We are grateful to all those whose generosity made this exhibition possible.

Headline Supporter: Diane and Tariq Al-Ghussein

Exhibition Circle: Fadi Kassis, Louisa Macmillan, Lorenzo Legarda Leviste and Fahad Mayet, Rafic Said, Maria Sukkar, The Abu-Suud Family in memory of Ghazwa Abu-Suud, Sara Tayeb, Yafa Foundation, Marwan Shehadeh, Selim & Houda Bouafsoun and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Commissioning Circle: Nissreen Darawish, Gabriela Galcerán, Hamza Serafi, Carlo Solari and Paula del Sol, and those who wish to remain anonymous.

The exhibition is co-commissioned by Nottingham Contemporary, Kunstinstituut Melly, and MACBA.

The exhibition is curated by Salma Tuqan and Niall Ó Faircheallaigh.

Exhibition graphics by Waste Studio.

Nottingham Contemporary is a registered charity and dependent on the generosity of our visitors, partners and supporters.

If you would like a calm space to reflect during your visit, please feel free to use Gallery 0 (room adjacent to Gallery 1), where you can also find support resources and tools. Please speak to a member of staff for more information.

If you would like to use any alternative forms of interpretation, we have a range of accessible versions on our Access Wall beside Reception or alongside the wall text in the exhibition.

RELATED EVENTS

ARTIST TALK

Sat 27 Sep, 2pm

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme in conversation with Hazem Jamjoum.

WALKTHROUGHS

Wed 1 Oct, 12pm

Welcome Walkthrough

Explore the exhibition with our team and community partners, Manjit Sahota, Poets Against Racism and Anna Ball, HEAL (Hostile Environment, Art-fuelled Living) followed by refreshments and conversation in the café.

Wed 22 Oct, 1pm

Curators’ Walkthrough

Join Nottingham Contemporary’s curators for a tour of our Autumn exhibitions.

Wed 19 Nov, 1pm

With Victor Kattan, Assistant Professor in Public International Law, University of Nottingham.

Wed 17 Dec, 1pm

BSL Exhibition Tour

With Jason Tennant, BSL tour guide for the Turner Contemporary & British Museum, BSL teacher & presenter.

Wed 7 Jan, 1pm

With Bint Mbareh, sound and water researcher.

12.30 Talks

12.30pm every Tue, Thu and Sat, starting Tue 7 Oct

Join one of our friendly Gallery Assistants for a short exploration of one of our current exhibitions. For more details visit our website.

Thu 2 Oct, 4.30pm

Teacher CPD Session

An art-making and practice-sharing session in our galleries. For educators of all stages.

FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

October Half-Term: 21 Oct – 30 Oct, Tue, Wed & Thu

Explore the themes in the exhibition through making and play.

Mon 6 Oct, 10 Nov, 15 Dec

Early Years Sensory Workshops: We Are Wonderlings

Explore the world through sensory free play in a safe and stimulating environment.

OTHER EVENTS

Thu 2 Oct, 7pm

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Three live performances rooted in the expression of Louis Carnell’s collaborative record. Featuring Louis Carnell, Wu-Lu, Li Yilei, Juliana Day & Tom Harris.

Wed 8 Oct, 6.30pm

Tender Stones by Lucy Suggate with Cool Company

Live performance exploring the transferable properties of stone, petrification, heaviness and tenderness, presented as part of nottdance 2025. Suitable for all.

Fri 10 – Sun 12 Oct

Print Fair Contemporary

Over 35 stalls showcasing a wide range of printmakers, illustrators and artists.

Wed 15 Oct, 7.30pm

Mónad by Alexandra ‘Spicey’ Lande with MC Jai Nitai Lotus

A contemporary dance performance exploring how we approach different incarnations of the same life, presented as part of nottdance 2025. Suitable for ages 18 and over.

Sat 25 – Sun 26 Oct

Festival of Resistance

Join us for a special weekend of community celebration and solidarity. Meet community groups and activists, take part in talks and creative workshops and be part of the action.

Sat 1 Nov, 10.20am & 1.30pm

The Show for Young Men by GuestHouse Projects

A funny and tender contemporary dance performance that considers the complexities of modern-day masculinity, presented as part of nottdance 2025. Suitable for ages 8 and over.

Tue 4 Nov, 6.30pm

Jarman Award 2025

Jarman Award Touring Programme 2025, followed by an in-conversation with Morgan Quaintance.

Fri 21 Nov, 6.30pm

Morphic Resonance by Beth Kettel

An immersive performance, followed by an after-party with collaborators and sound artists.

Fri 5 – Sun 7 Dec

Craft Fair Contemporary

40 stalls from independent designers and makers showcasing a variety of specialisms.

For more information about the exhibition, related events and learning programmes, visit nottinghamcontemporary.org or scan here:



Nottingham Contemporary



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