

Dala Nasser, *Cemetery of Martyrs* at Nottingham Contemporary

Sat 7 Feb – Sun 10 May 2026

Private View: Fri 6 Feb



Dala Nasser, film still of the artist making a rubbing of Ghassan Kanafani's grave, 2021. Courtesy the artist.

In Spring 2026 Nottingham Contemporary will present the first solo exhibition in a major cultural institution in the UK by Dala Nasser (b.1990, Lebanon). The exhibition will feature a large-scale sculptural and sonic installation that invites viewers into a collective space of mourning and remembrance.

Cemetery of Martyrs departs from Nasser's past explorations into archaeological ruins, myths and histories of Southern Lebanon and wider West Asia; a region imprinted with the remnants of ancient cultures, landscapes and geology. Whereas Nasser's previous work has drawn on historic subjects and sites, ranging from the tragic love story of mortal Adonis and Goddess Aphrodite, the 600-400 BCE tomb of King Hiram, or most recently, three tombs of Noah in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, her new work will transform the exhibition space into a symbolic graveyard.

By using the process of frottage (the technique of taking a rubbing from an uneven surface), Nasser will create a collection of charcoal grave rubbings collected from the graves of seminal artists, writers, poets, filmmakers, historians and journalists from across Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan and England. Representing cultural figures from the mid nineteenth century (specifically the Nahda, Arab Renaissance) to the present day, the work honours those who fought for independence and freedom in times of political dominance and occupation and whose art, writing, and intellectual contributions have shaped the notion of true sovereignty in Western Asia. Cyanotypes will serve as the visual representation of the figures whose graves are unreachable or unknown, and will accompany the grave rubbings alongside black mourning fabrics. These mixed fabrics will hang from a wooden skeletal structure that traverses two gallery spaces, creating a canopy of graves that visitors can experience from underneath. An accompanying audio installation will permeate through the installation, featuring a voice communicating between both realms of the living and the dead.

Reflecting on the challenge of interpreting the extreme and unceasing violence of the present moment, *Cemetery of Martyrs* will invite audiences to contemplate the endurance of cultural sovereignty and to reckon with their own role in forging new pathways of thought and action. Nasser's cemetery will create a collective space to gather and hold the voices and legacies of figures who were steadfast in their commitment to freedom; a graveyard to mourn, learn, and reaffirm the power of culture and humanity to connect us to histories of resistance and renewal.

For more information about *Cemetery of Martyrs* and other exhibitions at Nottingham Contemporary, please visit [our website](#).

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the generous support of:

The Henry Moore Foundation

The Dala Nasser Exhibition Circle: Zaza Jabre, Cherine Magrabi and Maria Sukkar

The Nottingham Contemporary Commissioning Circle: Nissreen Darawish, Gabriela Galcerán, Il Posto, Rafik&Najoua, Hamza Serafi and Mercedes Vilardell

Cemetery of Martyrs is produced and commissioned by Nottingham Contemporary in collaboration with KM21 The Hague, Netherlands and Peer Gallery, London, UK where the exhibition will be presented during 2026.

With residency and production support towards a new sound commission as part of Cemetery of Martyrs from Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge.

The exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary is curated by Katie Simpson and Klara Szafrńska.



KM21

Peer

Notes to Editors:

Currently showing (until Sun 11 Jan 2026):

I Gusti Ayu Kadek Murniasih: *Feels Strangely Good, Ya?*

Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme: *Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom*

Dala Nasser: *Cemetery of Martyrs* is showing alongside Shahana Rajani: *Lines That World a River*

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About Nottingham Contemporary

Nottingham Contemporary is one of the leading centres of contemporary art in Europe. Since opening in 2009, we have welcomed over 2 million visitors – with free admission for all – to our highly ambitious programme that has featured hundreds of artists and cultural practitioners from across the globe.

Our programme champions international art and artists who invite us to imagine the world in new ways, and empower different perspectives into the most pressing cultural, social, and political questions of today. We support artists at different stages of their careers – from first-time solo shows in the UK to surveys of renowned or overlooked figures – and regularly present significant thematic exhibitions and major artist-curated projects. Nottingham Contemporary was shortlisted for Art Fund Museum of the Year 2019. Nottingham Contemporary is supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

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