

Msheireb Museums, French Embassy in Qatar Present 'DEPARTURES: A Journey Back into Syria' Photo Exhibit



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Doha, Qatar – 30 April 2025: Msheireb Museums, in collaboration with the French Embassy in

Qatar, has announced the upcoming photography exhibition “DEPARTURES: A Journey Back into

Syria” by Syrian-French filmmaker and artist, Anas Khalaf. The photography exhibit will open on 5 May at Bin Jelmoed House, one of the four historic heritage houses within Msheireb Museums.

Curated by Bachir Mohamed, the exhibit is a personal and evocative exploration of memory, loss, and the deep connection to one’s homeland. Through a thoughtfully arranged series of 73 photographs, Khalaf documents his emotional return to Damascus, capturing the silent streets, lingering traces and the quiet strength of his late mother, a symbol of resilience and love amidst Syria’s turbulent history.

“In her absence, Damascus became a bittersweet reminder of her life. Every street and corner seemed to whisper her name. The rituals she loved – now silent and still – turned into the journey I wanted to capture through my camera. I searched for the way sunlight streamed into our old courtyard, the hidden corners of the souq, the windows from which she might have watched the world go by, and the streets that once echoed with her footsteps. Even though she was no longer physically with me, it felt like she was everywhere, woven into the very essence of this city,” Khalaf explained.

“This exhibition honours her strength and tells the story of a mother and her son – a journey of loss, remembrance, and the profound power of love that ultimately finds its way home. This exhibition echoes a story of Syria, an example of human suffering during conflicts and hope of a

brighter future.”

His Excellency Mr. Jean-Baptiste Faivre, Ambassador of France to Qatar, said: “We are proud to support ‘Departures: A Journey Back into Syria,’ an exhibition that explores the memory and resilience of those displaced. As a famous French novelist once wrote, ‘Memory is a place we can never return to, but it is always with us,’ and through these photographs, we bear witness to the ongoing journey of loss and hope.”

Abdulla Al Naama, General Manager of Msheireb Museums, said: “This exhibition is a moving tribute to the human spirit, of how love and memory endure despite human conflicts. Anas Khalaf’s work not only tells his own story but also echoes the shared experiences of those who long for home. We are delighted to work on this exhibition in collaboration with the French Embassy, as it reflects our ongoing work to present narratives with deep human impact.”

Moreover, Al Naama emphasised that the exhibition forms part of Msheireb Museums’ broader approach to exploring human stories that enrich our understanding of the world and open new horizons for cultural dialogue and communication.

DEPARTURES: A Journey Back into Syria will be on display until 29 May and is open to the public during regular museum hours.

Anas Khalaf is an acclaimed Syrian-French filmmaker and co-founder of Synéastes Films, dedicated to Middle Eastern cinema. His award-winning short films *Mare Nostrum* and *The Translator* have been celebrated at international festivals, and he is currently in advanced development of *Love-45*, a tennis-themed fiction feature set in Beirut and the Bekaa Valley.