

Press release
9 January 2023

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind
Familiar Phantoms
2 March - 21 May 2023



In early 2023, the Whitworth will present **Familiar Phantoms (2023)**, a major new film by artists and long-time collaborators Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind. It is a joint commission with Film and Video Umbrella with support from IMMA.

Familiar Phantoms draws on Sansour's family history in Palestine and Russia, providing an intimate insight into how personal identity is shaped by geo-political events and the experiences of our ancestors imprint themselves on our lives.

An abandoned mansion serves as the seat of memory, providing the backdrop to re-enacted family recollections. These scenes are entwined with super 8 footage and material from the artist's personal archive, transporting viewers across time, re-telling and re-calling the lives of Sansour's ancestors through the stories she has inherited.

The film begins in Palestine in 1916, when, along with tens of thousands of other young Palestinian men, Sansour's great-grandfather fled to South America to avoid being captured and conscripted by Ottoman troops to fight in the First World War. This was the first Palestinian exodus. The Ottomans were replaced by the British, and the film meanders through the 20th Century, chronicling the family Sansour's great-grandmother raised in her husband's absence.

Familiar Phantoms takes us to Moscow where Sansour's father lived during a period of exile due to his affiliation with the Communist Party. Returning to Bethlehem, we are guided through Sansour's childhood memories with evocative imagery; a young Sansour burning political pamphlets to avoid trouble with authorities, the local milkman, the French nuns running the catholic school, neighbours, pilgrims, fairy tales and legends.

Central to the film is the haziness of memory, the collective nostalgia generated by family histories and myths and the symbiotic relationship between past, present and future - all set against the politically and symbolically charged backdrop of Palestine.

This commission was made possible by the Moving Image Fund for Museums, an Art Fund project conceived in partnership with and supported by Thomas Dane Gallery with the generous support of a number of private donors. With additional support from Arts Council England, Danish Arts Foundation and Knud Højgaards Fond.

**For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:
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Notes to editors

Familiar Phantoms has been funded by an Art Fund Moving Image Award which has enabled the Whitworth to collect the following works: Suzanne Lacy, *The Circle and The Square*; Elizabeth Price, *K*; Forensic Architecture, *Cloud Studies* and Isaac Julien, *Ten Thousand Waves*.

Larissa Sansour was born 1973 in East Jerusalem, Palestine. In 2019, she represented Denmark at the 58th Venice Biennial and in 2020 she was the recipient of the prestigious Jarmen Award. Her work has been shown at Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou and MoMA.

Søren Lind was born 1970 in Copenhagen, Denmark. He's a visual artist, author and screenwriter. His work has been shown at the 58th Venice Biennial, Copenhagen Contemporary and the Berlinale.

Film and Video Umbrella (FVU) commissions, curates, produces and presents artists' moving image works that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, FVU has been at the forefront of this vibrant area of practice, and has commissioned and produced nearly 200 artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film, video and online pieces.

fvu.co.uk

Photo credit: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind, *Familiar Phantoms*, image courtesy the artist

FILM CREDITS

Featuring:

Sophie Baldgiev

Leila Sansour

Larissa Sansour

Narrated by: Sofia Danu

Producer: Ali Roche

About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. It was founded in 1889 as The Whitworth Institute and Park in memory of the industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth for “the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester” and continues this mission today in new contexts. In 2015 the gallery undertook a £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA, which doubled the public space, creating new facilities to house the collection of over 55,000 works of art, textiles, and wallpaper. Along with expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and collections care centre, the gallery reconnected with its park, with communal gardens and outdoor programmes. The gallery is driven by a mission to work with communities to use art for positive social change, and actively address what matters most in people’s lives. This new vision has been developed as part of an international dialogue about how to evolve and adapt museums to a constantly changing world. This work is underpinned by three key concepts: learning together, through making and doing; creating a place of care, consideration, and community; taking action.

www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

Gallery opening times:

Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm

With thanks for our official paint sponsor Little Greene.