Press Release

New Exhibition Opening at the Palestinian Museum

**A People by the Sea: Narratives of the Palestinian Coast**

29/9/2021 - Birzeit/Ramallah:

The Palestinian Museum announces the opening of its latest exhibition *A People by the Sea: Narratives of the Palestinian Coast*. The exhibition, guest curated by Inass Yassin with assistant curator Ahmad Al-Aqra', runs until 31 October 2022.

The exhibition constitutes a shift in the presentation of Palestinian historical narratives. Starting from the mid-eighteenth century and ending in 1948, the exhibition allows for a re-examination of the Nakba through a presentation of two hundred years of historical landmarks regarding the history of the Palestinian coast. “Nakba”, or catastrophe, is the term used to describe the expulsion of over three quarters of a million Palestinians from their homeland and the destruction of more than 400 of their towns and villages when the State of Israel was established in 1947-48.

The exhibition includes two focused narratives: the first highlights the rise of Akka (Acre) in Norther Palestine in the mid-eighteenth century, presenting its political, economic, urban and architectural history before the formation of modern states in the region. A second narrative focuses on the rise of Yafa (Jaffa) in the nineteenth century, with the gradual concentration of capital and trade in Palestine’s coastal cities. This was accompanied by a growing European influence in the mid-nineteenth century, which preceded the 1948 Nakba and the fall of the country.

The exhibition’s varied exhibits – archival images and videos, historical artifacts from Palestinians’ daily life, original artworks, interactive stations, maps, oral history testimonies and historical documents – attest to the presence of an enduring and vital Palestine in its urban, architectural, economic, social and political ensembles and structures prior to the formations of modern nation-states and the ensuing demarcation of political borders. That presence is continuously established and reinforced through Palestinians’ steadfastness and will for self-determination, and their close bond with their land and their seas.

The Director General of the Palestinian Museum, Dr. Adila Laïdi-Hanieh, stated: “With this new exhibition, the museum continues realising its mission to produce and disseminate emancipatory learning experiences about Palestine. The exhibition, along with its publications, and accompanying public, educational and intellectual activities, constitute a new direction in knowledge production on Palestine. A synthesis of documentary material, arts and design interventions, that affords spaces for reflection and experiencing the past sensorially and cognitively.”

Guest curator Inass Yassin added, “Through this exhibition, we managed to focus on the narratives of the people of this country, enriched with personal experience, and a chronology spanning 200 years. Most important, we placed the Nakba in its broader historical context.”

The exhibition advisory committee consisted of historians Dr. Adel Manna and Dr. Mahmoud Yazbek.

The Palestinian Museum extends its thanks to the participating artists Abed Abdi, Raed Duzdar, Essa Grayeb, Suzanne Groothuis, Bashar Khalaf, Sasha Khoury, Noor Abu Hashhash, Shareef Sarhan, Nasser Soumi, Dima Srouji, Amir Nizar Zuabi and Manar Zuabi.

The Palestinian Museum also thanks its lenders, contributors and donors: Maha AbuShusheh, George Al Ama, the American University of Beirut, Jonathan Cook, Raed Duzdar, Directorate of State Archives-Republic of Turkey, Getty Images, Amjad Ghannam, A.S. Hanieh family, Institute for Palestine Studies, Library of Congress, NINO Collection-Leiden University and Amer Shomali.

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