

# INDELIBLE

## Randa Shaath

21 February – 5 April 2016

Randa Shaath is known for her lucid black and white photographs that document the daily life of Cairo residents, and the rapid transformations that the city has witnessed over the last decade or so. In her latest exhibition entitled “Indelible”, Shaath asks: when does one feel at home? Shaath explores this question through a suite of more than forty colour photographs that she has been working on for the last two years. She takes her camera inside the homes of family and friends and acknowledges ordinary and familiar objects, moments, and spaces that we often overlook, granting them a grace that evokes the people that breath life into them.

Light and shadow animate objects and spaces alike. Images are shot with a natural light that induces a soft atmospheric mood: brightness seeping through the slats of traditional wooden shutters, a flowery shadow of an iron grill cast against a yellowing wall, a dancing reflection of the sun bouncing off shiny white bathroom tiles. Many of the images resemble 19<sup>th</sup> century realist paintings in their depictions of everyday life, and in the interplay between darkness and light.

In her photographs, time does not stand still. Time is channeled in the movement of light. It is experienced in the worn out furniture, in the peeling walls, and in the leftovers of our daily life. Shaath is adept at creating resonating images from the most mundane objects with a subtle sense of humor can be gleaned in her choices. In one image, two table fans just sit side by side covered with see-through plastic bags. They at once speak of heat, dust and the desire to preserve. They also speak of the intensely visceral life in Egypt.

Randa Shaath (b. 1963) is a photographer based in Cairo, Egypt. She received her BA from the American University in Cairo in Middle Eastern Studies in 1985, and her MA from the University of Minnesota, School of Journalism and Mass Communication in 1987. She is a trainer of award-winning photographers of the Arab Documentary Photography Program in partnership with the Prince Claus Fund and Magnum Foundation. She worked as a photo editor at Al Shorouk daily newspaper for six years and served as photographer for Al-Ahram Weekly from 1994 to 2005. Her work has been exhibited in Egypt and abroad in Photoforum (Switzerland), Witte de With Art Center (Holland), Fondation Tapies (Spain), Ifa Gallery (Germany), Noorderlicht Photo Festival (Holland), Aperture and the International Center of Photography (USA). She represented Egypt at the Bienal de São Paulo in 2006. Shaath has published three monographs: Watani ala Marma Haggag (1988), Misr Umm el Dunia (1990), and Under the Same Sky; Cairo (2003). She currently teaches photography at the American University in Cairo.