

Shuruq Harb *A Book of Signatures*

31 March – 16 May

Tower Room

The following is an extract from an email interview with Shuruq Harb, March 2010.

A *Book of Signatures* exists as a single work in two pieces. On one plinth you present a beautifully bound leather book encased in a vitrine. On its sister plinth a projection of pages from the book, each bearing a single signature of a person with the name Mohammed. To what extent is this presentation to be read as part of the work itself?

The final installation with the plinths is the work. This also includes the video projector hanging from the ceiling. In creating this duality the information is displayed in a way that is both accessible and not accessible to the public and I thought that it mirrored the idea of the work, being comprised of personal inscriptions that hint to their authors without really disclosing them.

This work was originally exhibited at *The Other Shadow of the City* group exhibition in Palestine and is now exhibited in the UK. To what extent is it conceived with an idea that our political circumstances influence our experience of it?

There are several layers or nuances to the work that have varying degrees of emphasis depending on the situation and the context of the exhibition. So of course there are social or political nuances that surface in Palestine that might not be relevant in the UK, but this is something that I embrace. This is also why the title of the work does not tie it down to a specific name or location.

Overall I hope the viewer enjoys some aspect of the work, be it drawn from social, human or aesthetic implications.

A book of signatures of the same name could be seen as an act of amassing a concentration of 'like' things. However, here the signatures of each Mohammed are revealed as quite distinct, rather than as parts of some larger faceless collective. Is the nature of human individuality a particular interest of yours?

Yes absolutely. This is why I choose to collect the signatures in a way that is primarily dictated by chance and human relations rather than one that purposefully emphasises the similarity. Unlike 'John' or 'Jose', the name 'Mohammed' is already stigmatised, and so my approach was one to emphasise both the humanity and individuality of those who carry that name.