



## PRESS INVITATION

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With her science fiction works, the Danish–Palestinian artist Larissa Sansour creates conversations about history, recollection, and identity following a climate disaster. The exhibition *Heirloom* – the Danish entry at this year's prestigious Venice Biennale – can now, for the first time, be experienced by a Danish audience at Copenhagen Contemporary (CC) along with other works thus developing Sansour's universe even further.

The exhibition *Heirloom* presents Larissa Sansour's evocative dark science fiction film *In Vitro* and the large-scale sculpture *Monument for Lost Time*. Both works were created in collaboration with the writer and artist Søren Lind and shown for the first time in the Danish pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. This total installation from Venice has now been specially adapted to hall 3 at CC. Additionally, the work trilogy *A Space Exodus* (2009), *Nation Estate* (2012), and *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* (2016) will be on show and, collectively, the works portray a bleak future as a consequence of present-day problems.

*In Vitro* takes place in Bethlehem in a not-too-distant future. A major disaster has forced the city dwellers to take refuge in subterranean bunkers. Inside one of these bunkers, we meet the work's two protagonists, the young Alia and her ageing teacher, Dunia, played by the international Palestinian film stars Hiam Abbass and Maisa Abd Elhadi.

Here they attempt, along with other scientists, to re-cultivate crops and plants in the hope, one day, to be able to replant fields if normal conditions were to be re-established. Where Dunia and the older generation experience life below ground as a temporary exile, life in the bunker is the only life known to Alia.

Alia was born below ground and has never seen the place she will help to rebuild in the future. Even so, she remembers detailed scenes from life before the apocalypse. Her own memories are replaced by the stories told to and implanted in her. The dialogue between the two women develops into a conversation on reminiscence, memory, and exile. Are the heritage and the memories passed on to Alia of any use,

whatsoever, when the world has been destroyed and a new one must be rebuilt? Does it make sense to cling to the past, reproduce its myths and recreate its constructions?

Alia's stock of memories appears in the film as a large black sphere. It is part of her imaginary world and represents her broken memory, the absence of her own independent memories and identity.

In the exhibition, the sphere materialises as the five-metre-tall jet black, spherical sculpture *Monument for Lost Time*. The floor around the sculpture is covered with beautifully decorated tiles, which also appear in the film work, rekindling memories from pre-apocalyptic times. The tiles are hand-painted by a tilemaker on the West Bank where Sansour has her roots.

Heirloom paints a picture of the implications of collective memory, exile, and inherited traumas on identity. While *In Vitro* is based on a concrete disaster, geographically located in the heart of Bethlehem, the examination of themes such as division, exile, and identity are universal. With her poetic and sensuous images, Larissa Sansour establishes dialogue, putting a perspective on current political and universally human issues.

#### **ABOUT LARISSA SANSOUR**

Larissa Sansour (b.1973) was born in East Jerusalem, but now lives in London. She was educated in Copenhagen, London, and New York. Sansour applies an interdisciplinary approach to her works comprising film, photography, installation, and sculpture, often taking their points of departure in a science fiction universe, addressing both current political and universally human issues relating to identity and belonging. Among recent solo exhibitions are Dar El-Nimr in Beirut, Bluecoat, Liverpool's centre for the contemporary arts, Liverpool, the Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, New Art Exchange, Nottingham, and Nikolaj Kunsthall, Copenhagen.

The Danish Arts Foundation appointed and funded Larissa Sansour's exhibition for the Danish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, which was open to the public from 11 May to 24 November 2019.

**The exhibition *Heirloom* will be open to members of the press Thursday December 12 2019 from 15.00–16.00.**

After a welcoming speech by CC's Director, Marie Nipper, Senior Curator Janna Lund and the artist will introduce *Heirloom*. Refreshments are served afterwards.

**For attendance at the press preview or interview requests please contact no later than Friday 6 December:**

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**Press kit and images are available for download from the CC website:**  
[copenhagencontemporary.org/en/press](http://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/press)

The official opening is Thursday December 12 from 17.00–21.00. Read more about the event here: [copenhagencontemporary.org/en/event/cc-opening-larissa-sansour](http://copenhagencontemporary.org/en/event/cc-opening-larissa-sansour)

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