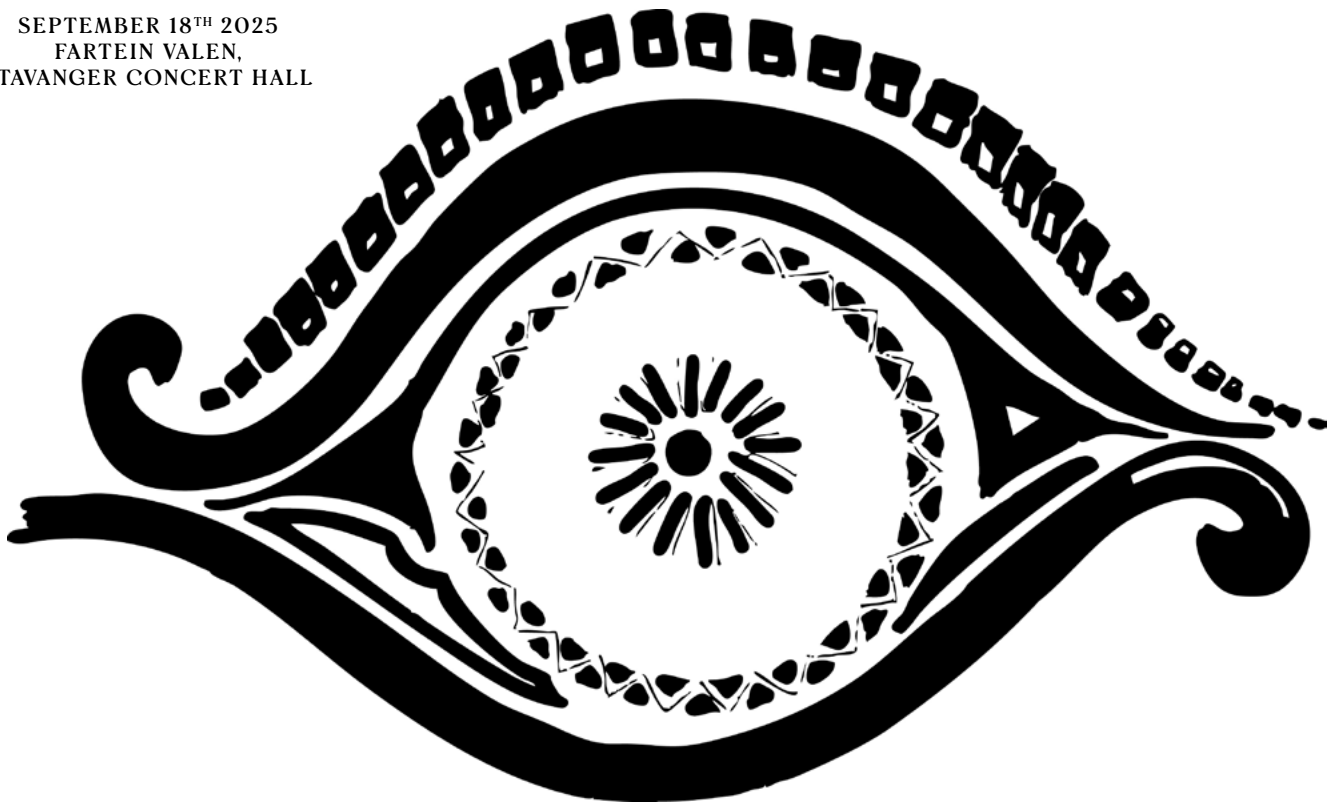


STAVANGER SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

SONGS OF EXISTENCE

SEPTEMBER 18TH 2025
FARTEIN VALEN,
STAVANGER CONCERT HALL



*In collaboration with International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN),
Kapittel and Rogaland Teater, with support from Ytringsfrihetsbyen Stavanger*

 STAVANGER
SYMFONIORKESTER

WELCOME FROM THE STAVANGER
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Tonight, unique artists and the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra meet on the stage of Fartein Valen in Stavanger Concert Hall. Artists from around the world who share a common drive: a burning need to express themselves through music and poetry — often at great personal risk. For them, art is about existence, survival, and human dignity.

For the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, this is about the belief that art and culture build bridges between people, viewpoints, generations, and cultures. We sincerely believe that culture is essential to democracy: that we need a vibrant cultural life with a rich diversity of artistic expression. Because through culture we strengthen our identity and our sense of belonging. People need other people, and we all need to feel part of the greater “we.”

When the world order is changing and feels unpredictable and unsafe, many turn to art and culture, for connection, meaning, and stability. For comfort and hope. To reinforce social bonds and regain a sense of control.

We also see how art and culture are attacked directly during war and conflict, through censorship or the destruction of venues and cultural heritage: historic buildings, churches, cultural centers, museums, theatres, and statues. Culture becomes a symbolic target because it represents our shared identity, history, and civil resilience, the core of human life and dignity.

It is therefore a joy to welcome you to Songs of Existence, where we raise our voices, celebrate freedom of expression, and embrace the boundless power of art.



PROGRAM

PART I	<i>Est. 45 minutes</i>
Marja Mortensson Mansur Rajih	Galkije johke Songarens røyst
Ghawgha Fatemeh Ekhtesari Aaiún Nin	The Crucified The 4 rooms (part 1) If we happen to meet on this road
Ghawgha Haile Bizen Selma M. Yonus	Boat Gjenlyd Alt i dette fjerne landet
Marja Mortensson Haile Bizen Selma M. Yonus Fatemeh Ekhtesari	Tjelvie Our recent family picture Etter å ha vært vitne The 4 rooms (part 2)
Ghawgha Irina Shuvalova Artur Dron Mansur Rajih	Zamāna VOX Say hello to the children Something like Poetry
Ghawgha	Sing for Me
INTERMISSION	<i>25 minutes</i>



PROGRAM

PART II

Est. 65 minutes

Mohsen Hossaini

Border

John Adams

Shaker Loops (1996), II. Hymning slews

Mansur Rajih

Orbit of Love

John Adams

Shaker Loops (1996), III. Loops and Verses

Marja Mortensson

Biegke Jarkele

Mojhtesh

Fatemeh Ekhtesari

My Head Loaded the Gun

Nils Henrik Asheim

The World Has Shut Its Ears

Mohammad El-Susi &

Abu Joury

LA (no, no, no) - Where do we go
Displaced - I wish - March for Palestine -
Ascending to Heaven

Britta Bystrom

Ten Secret Doors (2010), Suite for Orchestra
VI. Grazioso

Ramy Essam

A letter To the Security Council of the United Nations
Sawra (Revolution)
Prison in Color

Stavanger Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: Ingunn Korsgård Hagen
Concert master: Francesco Ugolini
Curated and directed by Nils Henrik Asheim

Singers: Marja Mortensson, Ghawgha, Mohammed Elsusi, Abu Joury, and Ramy Essam
Poetry readings by Mansur Rajih, Fatemeh Ekhtesari, Aaiún Nin, Haile Bizen, Artur Dron, and Selma M. Yonus

Stavanger Kulturskole Youth Choir
Percussion: Kenneth Ekornes
Organ: Nils Henrik Asheim

Arrangements:
Nils Henrik Asheim (Part 1)
Knut Anders Vestad (Mortensson)
Aleksander Waaktaar (Elsusi)
Eirik Berge (Essam)

Poems in translation, performed by Anders Dale, Mari Strand Ferstad, and Mareike Wang from Rogaland Teater.

Calligraphy: Amira al-Sharif

Prologue: Ana Ahwa performance, by Amira al-Sharif

Video graphics:
Mohammed Elsusi: Elsusi
Ramy Essam: Khalid Albaih, Studio Blunt
General video graphics: André Foldøy and Aleksander Forsbakk

Sound design: Kenneth Hernes
Light design: Tord Knudsen



DEL 1

Mansur Rajih

The singer’s voice

The singer’s voice taking you far away
To your childhood
Or to a time that might come
after you are dead
It frees you from the moment’s prison
and from the present’s rudeness
It (grabs you and leads) you far away
To horizons where no one has traveled
The singer’s voice
fills the empty place
and sets the soul in motion
Gives meaning to everything
The singer’s voice
touches the true person
I’m melting in your all-embracing sound
I die in your passion

Ghagwha

The Crucified

(tekst: Afandi)

I wanted you like an unwalked road.
I found you like a word still left unsaid.

I brought you the shelter of noisy crowds.
With you, I wept through borrowed laughter.
With you, I stayed, turning my back on the world,
and sat facing the slaughterhouse of tomorrow.

Ah, those sorrowful eyes of yours, my love—
Ah, those helpless hands of yours, my love...

Your eyes—excommunicated by verses.
Your hands—bound again and again.

They bit your hair with sharpened teeth.
The werewolves crossed out your name.

Woe upon our history of the conquered.
The unanswered cry of the crucified.

Fatemeh Ekhtesari

The 4 rooms

We, in the first room of the world
Warmth and moisture, like a vaginal embrace
Lips beside each other’s neck
A candle lit by your bedside

A mix of sweat and breath
“Body” was the only language between us
The primal human
was screaming inside you
We, in the second room of the world
Arguing over war
Making sentences of blood
Throwing punches and raining down stones

You, like a cold weapon
Sitting in a corner, more tearful than me
There is a word in my throat for you to read
There is a lump more tightly wound than me
In the third room of the world
A suitcase beside a door
We are not there,
What remains is dullness
I am the prison fan
Spinning in the air, thinking of you
You are a one-way ticket to... where?

With a window seat
”WE” is a delusion that remains
In a corner of the last room
A half-burned cigarette after sex
Two unbelievable letters
”W” and ”E”, the continuation of the world

Only four empty rooms
”W” and ”E”, two faded memories
For the world is four empty rooms

Translated by Hossein Fallah

Aaiun Nin

If we happen to meet
on this road

If we happen to meet on this road
In this dusty, transient place
The space between shelter and rejection
We are far from home

The routines we learned in our previous
lives are broken
We must forge new language
New patterns
To describe the uncertainty
That paves our respective paths

The vague nature of the hope
To not lose more than what we had

There is harsh wisdom in our calcified bones
We remember the wailing and screaming
We remember the wind
Far more clearly than peace

The ocean, the forest and the desert
Have turned into mass graves
So we must leave
The sneer and disdain
Of existing as intruders
Far from home
Pre-cadavers
Casualties of ejaculations
From the wrong types of bodies
Punished for not being dead yet

We learned early that to exist is to feel
discomfort
Here
or there
no longer matters
We must be still and keep moving
Doused in the misery that to be this far from
home
Means there is no home to return to
I cling to photographs
Text messages I feel inadequate to respond
And the occasional phone call
Sell rich fantasies
of being safe and in good health
When truly I have descended beneath the soil
Into the land of perpetual solitude
With my arms outstretched to keep my balance
Stinking of ash and sweat
Stinking of apathy
Turned into a blinded beggar
A leeching parasite
Come to feed off the decaying roots
of a fallen empire.

Ghawgha

Boat

(lyrics: Ghawgha)

The boat was gliding through the sea of bodies,
Mother’s voice lingers from behind,

“Safe travels, my dear,
This is our farewell”,

I shut the door, and the boat was drifting on,
An Arab man’s prayer was whispering,
Aaaa Aaaa Aaaa
I shut the door and the boat was drifting slowly
into the night,

The boat was drifting on slowly through
the sea of bodies,
The boat was drifting on slowly through
the boundless expanse.
I shut the door, and in the cloak of night,
The boat slipped into an eternal slumber.

“The world moves on,
the world moves on, and one can...
One learns to acclimate to the pain,
Not that it ever truly vanishes,
but one learns to acclimate”

Haile Bizen

Gjenlyd

La oss si at krigsnytt gjør ørene mine sprø
Jeg hører lyder fra ei annen tid

La oss si at radioen brøler –
er det antall døde de ramser opp?
Ukraina, Etiopia, Eritrea, Jemen, Syria, Libya –
er det flere nye land på lista?
Er det smell fra våpen jeg hører, fulgt av lyden av
smerte?
Er det rop om hjelp jeg hører?
Er det en hund uten eier som gjør?

Hørselen min er stilt inn på en skurrete kanal
fra den dagen for 45 år siden
da Asmara ble ødelagt i kaoset
og vi flyktet hjemmefra
Fortida slår imot meg, lyden av tevannet som
koker
kjelen som stadig står der på ovnen og plystrer
forlatt

Selma M. Yonus

Everything in this
faraway land

Everything
in this faraway land is sprinting—
the people, cars,
pavements, trees, streets,
forests, mountains,
the colourful chimneys’ dreams
and homes’ storied years.

Everything sprints after another thing.
Nothing is static in this faraway land
except
that cloud that sees everything
and sheds no tears.

Oversetter: Ali Al-Jamri

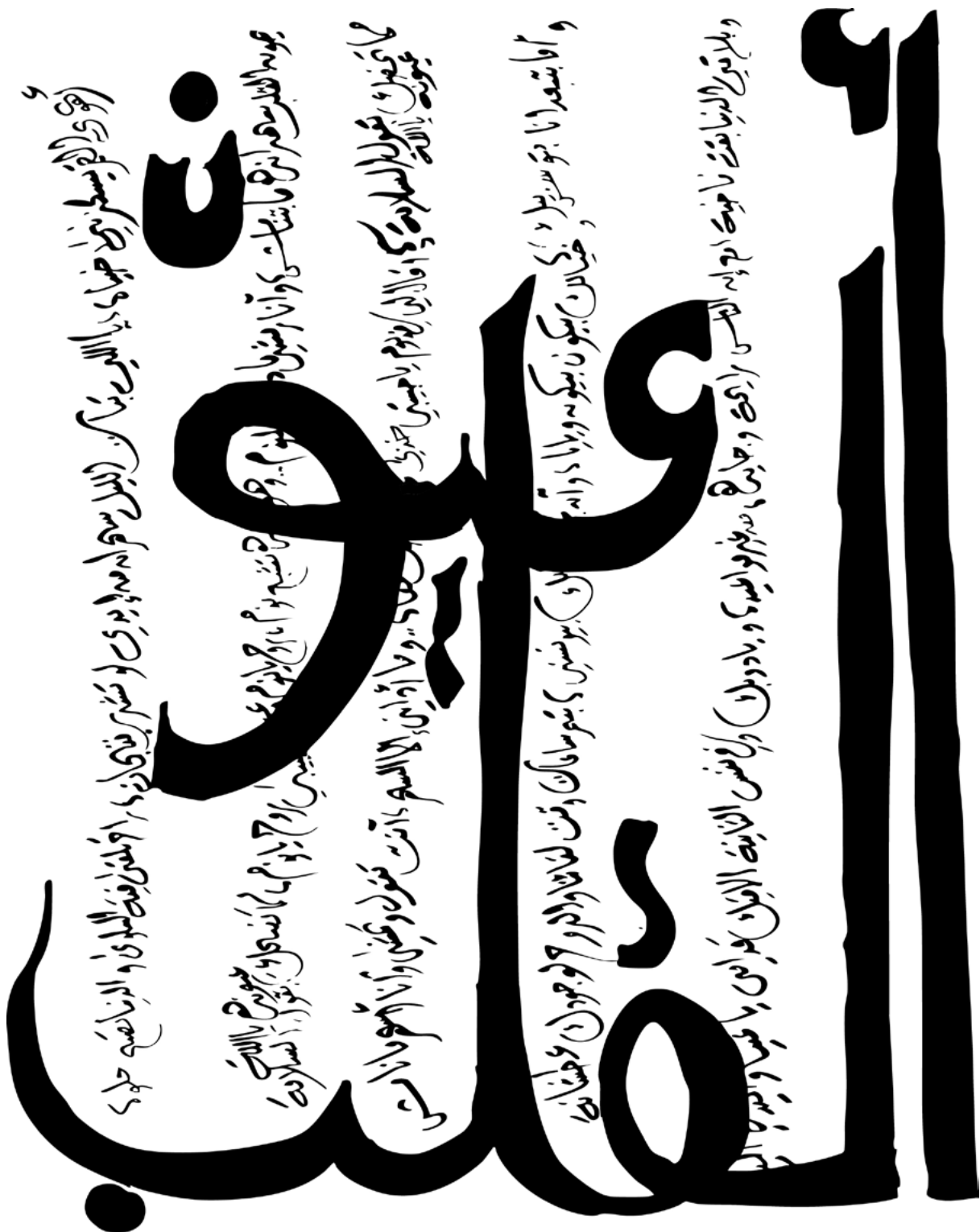
Haile Bizen

Our Recent Family
Picture

If you look straight at our recent family picture,
You can count a family of five,
I, the forlorn anchor in the center.
With an empty smile, the wife stands beside me
With surprised looks, three sitting children,
Draw what occurs to them.

If you tilt the picture rightward,
You see the wife’s flailing hands
And the children’s glimmering faces
I loom behind, masked by a cloud of smoke.

If you tilt the picture leftward,
You can see the wife knitting fantasies;



The children building, a new home, perhaps
And I looking skyward praying to be born again.

If you look at the picture from behind,
You can see five figures fumbling into the dark,
Searching perhaps for shelter or perhaps for
sanctuary--
A place for screams of anguish or shouts of
bliss.

Selma M. Yonus
After witnessing
three wars

After witnessing three wars,
after one thousand and one bullets
flew over my head,
narrowly missing my dreams,
after the doctor's scalpel left behind seven
scars
on my body,
and your absence,

I'll die a pointless death,
perhaps driven over by some zealous office
worker
down an orderly Norwegian road,
caught unaware,
thinking of you.

Ghawgha
Zamana (Time)
(lyrics: Dawood Sarkhos)

O Time, O Time! Faithless one — may you burn,
may you burn!

O Separation, Separation! From where do you
come? May you burn in fire!

Nights without song — let them vanish,
let them fade.
The cold unkindness of time — let it vanish,
let it fade.
The hearts of people burn in grief, burn in grief,
While they long to return home, to sing once
more.
The fragile hearts, broken, broken,
The bond of branch and blossom — shattered,
shattered.

O ruthless world, what have you done, what have
you done?
That Kabul, piece by piece, lies broken, broken.

Iryna Shuvalova
VOX

Translated from Ukrainian by Uilleam Blacker

yes yes that's just how I want to speak, as
though into an elevator shaft
I want to speak like a woman who burns a pile of
old paper in the street
and the flame dances but you can't see her face
I want to speak like a woman without a face
without a body
a woman like headlights illuminating the wall
flitting and disappearing and touching no one
but making everything in the room visible for a
moment
I want to speak the way you'd speak into a
keyhole or a crack in a brick wall
I want to float without falling like a plastic bag
on the wind
that rises to the sixth floor and then to the ninth
this is how the air flows between the buildings

this is how we flow between the walls
unseen we wake up unseen we fall asleep
unheard we cry whisper speak
in bathrooms kitchens fire escapes
balconies dark stairwells
this is how I want to speak
like a flash of fire on the sea in the night
like a woman singing drunk in the street
as though no one can hear
but god

Artur Dron
Say Hello to the Children

Say hello to the children.
Tell them a bird in my chest
has driven me East again.
Tell them not to be scared.

I know you don't like the bird,
but it's not as though I chose her over you.
It's just that she wakes up,
stretches
and has such wings -
how can I not go?

Send love to the children,
just as they send drawings
to me and the boys.
Like the one
where nine little fingers were traced
but the marker ran out
on the tenth.
And the one that I've been carrying
in my coat pocket since summer.
And especially the one
of a wooden bird feeder.

That one's my favourite.

Translated from Ukrainian by
Yulyia Musakovska

Mansur Rajih
Something like poetry

I fought fear—
still do—
with writing.

Each word:
carved like a blade’s edge,
pulled from my chest,
plunged back in.

I fight pain.
I don’t bend.
I write.

I fight oppression.

When the words are done,
I feel joy—
like a mother,
seeing her child
see her
for the first time.

Like a reader—
if the words
are good enough
to astonish.

I read them again,
and joy returns.
So I write again.

When I open the notebook
and hold the pen,
the sea begins to move.

When I start to write,
the waves rise.

When the pen touches paper,
it’s like pressing a finger
into someone’s eye.

I keep pressing.
I keep dancing with the wave—
one after another.



Ghawgha
Sing for me

(Lyrics: Elyas Alavi)

Sing for me, Mohammad,
I want to return
to tumble down the valley,
to find wheat before me,
apricot trees and poppy flowers.
Sing for me, Mohammad,
I want to return.

I looked into the mirror
and into the almond-shaped eyes
that cast me out of the breadline.

Sing for me, Mohammad,
so I don’t forget
our poor neighborhood
the one I was ashamed to name:
Ten meters of Afghans,
ten meters of debt and sorrow,
temporary permits and camps,
Roma and Baluch.

“Hey, Afghani! Watch yourself
this isn’t your place.”

Sing for me, Mohammad,
I want to find you
among the mass graves
I want to find you.

Sing for me, Mohammad,
so I don’t forget.
Sing for me, Mohammad,
I want to return.
Sing louder, Mohammad;
I need to find you.



DEL 2

Mansur Rajih
The Orbit of Love

I sing
Here I am, I still am
The scent of your innocence still
fills me
The feel of your body still
pervades my spirit
You're still a bride
and your love still weaves my connection to the
universe.

You'll always be my love
and I'll always be able to make love
because our world overflows with hatred
and the ugliness of rulers
and because you - most importantly -
are worthy of love
and ripe with life
that renews me
O my female that fills up language
my woman that is like nature
moaning as our coming together approaches
its zenith
Distance: Zero to the left of you presence
This prison is surrounded by your freedom
and my insistence on my right to love
and life: in the shape of this poem.

*
I write to you
I live - continue - in you
and in you I inhale the future

*
Thinking of you
the arousal of the senses
Whenever this body awakens

I think of you
The blossom of my life
the whole of life, in its real sense
You are my companion
in the loneliness of this falsity
there is art!
My longing for another time
is not shaped by the wall
but by kisses
And the horizon, always open to renewal
is not prison,
but freedom

*
Can you see
how my freedom takes shape in you
How able you are to express
longings that tey try to bury in vain
So come
in your daily effort to be an emblem
of beauty in an ugly reality
Come with your insistence on your right to life
and liberate me from this fear
by being yourself
the woman of an inmate's yearnings,
in his eleventh year,
who still dreams
and contemplates the meaning of being needed
urgently by a determined woman
who wants his body to contain her passions
as well as a spirit
in which the flames of the body burn.

*
Thinking of you
the arousal of the senses
Whenever this body awakens
prison leaves me
and the door opens
onto the largest spaces of freedom
delving deep into real life
and the meaning of essential existence,
that is not arbitrary
of the being

that is me,
a being of the storm of a woman's yearning,
of your strength
My love

Your love defeats prison
Your love is the victory of life

Marja Mortensson
Biegke Jarkele

(lyrics: M. Mortensson)

Hoar frost covers everything, my hands have
grown stiff in the cold
storm winds tear the sky into pieces
I long for a calm day
My heart is aching

Shards of ice offered as rain, my hands have
grown stiff in the cold
inherited knowledge, rooted in this land
is the only thing that can help me now
My heart is aching

The wind is turning now,
Surely it is turning

A never-ending whiteout, my hands have grown
stiff in the cold
a prayer is the only thing
that can help me now
My heart is aching

Frigid days, my hands have grown stiff in the
cold
I sit down and wait,
It would be a stroke of luck
if the weather would change

The wind is turning now

Mojhtesh

(lyrics: M.Mortensson)

In this act of bringing memories to mind
I can see
how every stream, every body of water flows,
how the falling snow covers the mountain
In my memories
I can see
how the arctic grouse
sings its own, peculiar song
Through these stories, I remember
I remember all these stories
that my grandmother told me,
how each wrinkle on her face slowly changed
A solitary voice
I have been left behind here,
resting, in solitude
I remain,
the others are gone
Everyone has left
leaving you to fight your battles on your own
I stand alone,
facing the wolves
How could I ever abandon
this heritage,
our ancestral homelands
How could I ever leave all this knowledge
behind
abandoning this language of ours,
running away from this way of life
Left behind, in solitude
When is it best to give up, and
when is it best to keep on fighting?

Fatemeh Ekhtesari
My head loaded the gun

My head loaded the gun
My throat swallowed the lump
The poet wrote these words
And died in her own poem

Hush! The wind betrays us
No time for stories! Sleep is a fugitive
Tears gather in the dam
Bombs hide in the throat

We're sick of queuing for the gallows
Clotted grief in our blood
Trouble is all that's left
Rage is all we own

A people struck by earthquake: you
A people struck by drought: me
A people struck by floods: you
A life in danger: mine

Blood boils in our hearts
Fury burns in our heads
We are tattooed in black
We are the crucible that overflows

The world has shut its ears; we shout
From the well that history has dug
In our hearts the roots of hope once grew
Until someone wrenched them out

Breathless we've lost our way
Like a path greeting night
Our will to leave or stay has left us
We're an abandoned suitcase in the road

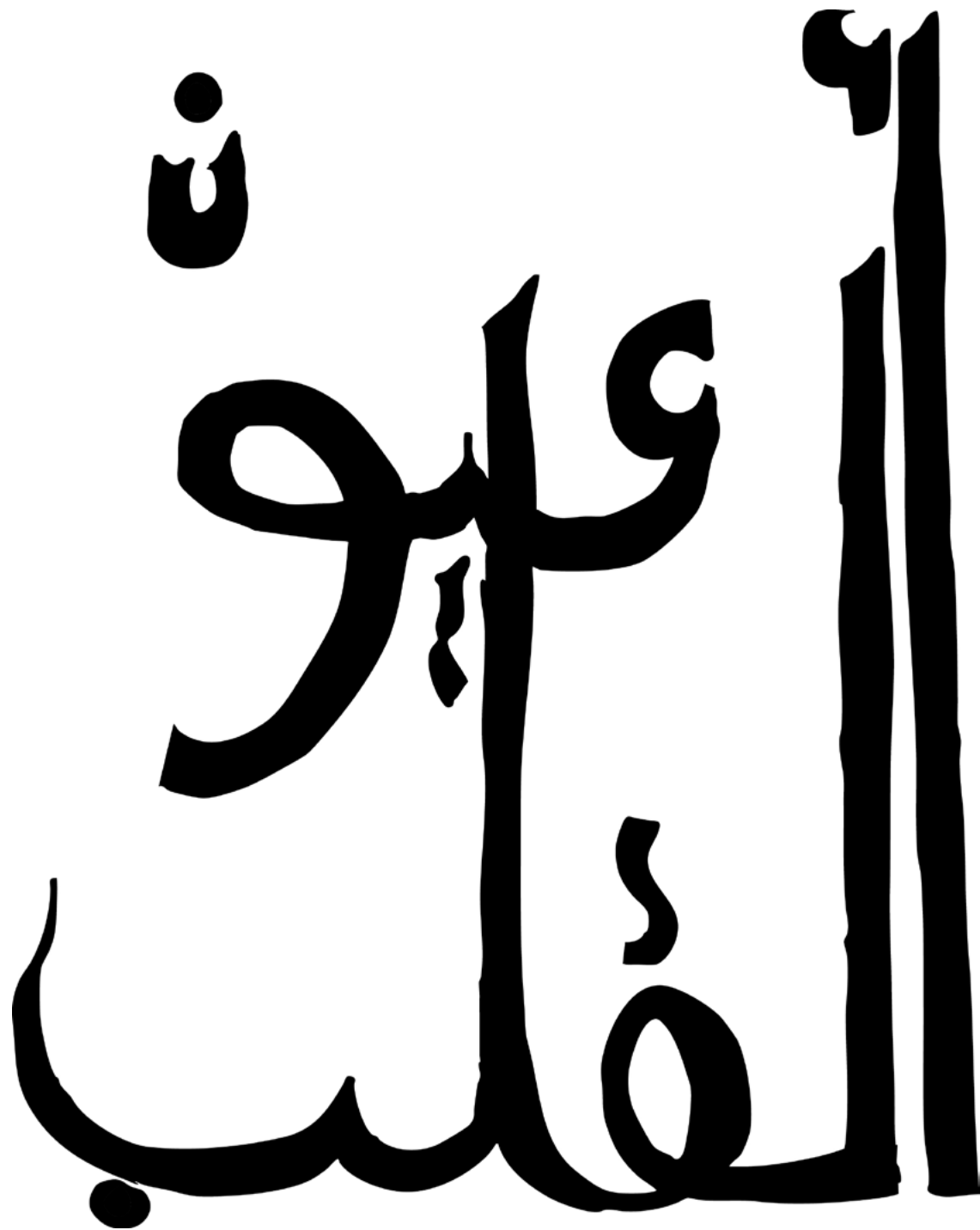
Don't leave me, blood brother!
Hold my hand, my blood...

Mohammed Elsusi
LA LA LA LA
(No, No, No, No)

I live with inherited misfortune.
Drowning my endless sorrow.
A year has passed- every day a doomsday.
Sacrificed in the name of an idol.
Death dominates my people.
While politicians sleep on roses.
Claiming comfort in their lives.
While our children burn as fuel for the idol.
But monsters create lions.
Oppression gives birth to fearless fighters.
Love will endure.
And justice will prevail for my people.
No matter how many times they try to silence
me,
I hold on to hope, I summon my strength.
The night becomes my consolation.
And with hope, I will rise from this abyss.

No to injustice- no, no, no, no!
Even if my soul is sacrificed- no, no, no, no!
My hope is wroth the price- no, no, no, no!
But I will still raise my 'no, no, no no'

In nations consumed by TikTok,
I was born Palestinian- into suffering, into
genocide.
Saying 'yes' is not in my vocabulary
I try to turn each day around, like postman
carrying burdens
I pray my children will survive,
Even as I fear that my words may cost them
their future.
Tomorrow comes stubborn and unyielding
And I must remain steadfast.
Not for myself, I did not choose this,
I only fear they will suffer.
For my children, who long for a world filled
with songs.



Abu Joury

I Wish

Kids in the alley playing hide and seek,
Running wild, hoping our hands would meet.
Nights spent outside, Umm Hamed brings the tea,
Sunflower seeds, pistachios, as neighbors gather with glee.
But suddenly, a raid erased our street,
No stones left standing, no house complete.
Who’s there? Who’s left? Can anyone hear?
Can you hear me, world, or is my voice drowned in fear?
The house is gone, and the people too,
The agony runs deep, a wound that grew.
How many lives, how many souls to mourn?
A loss so heavy, and hope is lost.
From house to house, we wandered displaced,
Hatred inside, for every power involved.
I can't keep silent; I'll disbelieve every law,
They shed my blood and deprive me of even bean cans.
Our mornings start early on donkey cart, watch your back,
Fill the jugs with water, and hope luck never lacks.
If you catch the first line for bread, you're blessed,
You fight, you bleed, you die, and still your pain's suppressed.

Mohammed Elsusi

March for Palestine

Patience has always been our strength
Fighting for our rights
So many fear for their daily bread
When they dare to speak the truth
For seventy years, my people have had their eyes on the dawn
It’s not just survival but enforce resilience

We are the people who stand firm, free,
not slaves to aid
We teach the world what freedom means in affliction
We awaken a conscience long bought and confined
Submissive to the pockets of power
The weakest among us is nobler
Than all those who are called honorable
A child here, in their faith
Outweighs a nation and its elders
No one has betrayed us without ending in disgrace

Disgrace, disgrace, disgrace, disgrace, disgrace
To all who starved the freedom of this people

Honor, honor, honor, honor, honor, honor
To all who spoke the truth in support of the people

It is your duty to boycott, your duty to reject
Anyone who upholds the occupation or fears its end
Revolution runs in our blood
And justice runs in our veins
Strong enough to end the occupation
And proclaim the hope of independence

Free, free, Palestine
Push them to end the genocide
Free, free humanity
Recognize your freedom now
Free, free, Palestine
Push them to end the genocide
Free, free humanity
Recognize your freedom now

Mohammed Elsusi

Ascending to Heaven

I never imagined the road to heaven
Would be so short
A path for the pure, a flight for the birds
I never imagined our time would fade so quickly
We will not say goodbye, not even at this crossroads
I thought patience would bring hope
I didn't know it would bring sorrow
I know our dreams still hold each other
I know we will never forget
But fate has carried you far from me

Ascending to heaven
Your hearts soaring far beyond our reach
Ascending to heaven
Your memory remains the strength in our hearts
Ascending to heaven
Your kindness will intercede for us
Ascending to heaven
This is not a farewell- love still unites us

Most burdens have a cure
But losing you has no remedy but reunion
Each memory cuts with both joy and pain
I hide with a smile, pretending I'm fine
I'm patient, I'm faithful
Yet my faith weeps with me
I don't believe in forgetting, only in meeting again
And through our patience, we will make our sorrow into celebration

Aaiun Nin

Mourning is movement

Mourning is movement.
Mourning is to feel sorrow
For loss.
For the passing of people.
For tragedies and deep misfortunes
It is to feel sadness.
Hopelessness.
Rage.
Insanity.
Rage.
Above all things rage.
It is not to sit still and wait
for justice.
To mourn is to move
It is to name, yes
to name
and not forget.
It is closure.
Acknowledgment.

Grief is not static.
There is no dissonance
between mourning
and organizing.

We mourn
because we are human
to acknowledge that we are human
and that those who have died
At the hands of those who breed injustice
Are human.
And deserve to be treated as humans.
Mourning is to not forget.
As people whose history has been erased
We cannot afford to forget.
And we forget
when the vulnerable are discouraged
From speaking
any words that express pain

And the insurmountable grief
that floods out
That makes us act.
Mourning is an act.

It is not something that happens onto us.
Mourning is an act.

Black people have taken to the streets of the
world Screaming that our lives matter
Enraged.
Because of grief.
In an act of mourning.
Grief is not static.
To mourn is an act of power
Protest.
Here
where we are not considered people.
Who will mourn for us
If we don't do it ourselves?
Who will make us human,
if we don't do it ourselves?

And treated like we do not exist.
We exist.
Yes, we exist
in parenthesis
we exist
In mourning we exist.

Ramy Essam

Songs

A letter To the Security
Council of the United Nations

UN Security Council
405 East 42nd Street,
New York, NY 10017,
USA

I hope my words reach you
despite your concerns.
Dear UN Security Council,
this is not my first message.
This is me, the bloody human.
Ignorance about my silence has sharpened the swords of rulers.
Out of darkness, injustice and slave traders were born.
I have become one without knowledge, following my obsessions.
I have become the enemy of my friend.
Not even knowing my own flaws,
I have become a stranger to my own journey.
Others reading my compasses for me,
Ignorance navigating me.
Your Excellency, dear secretary of the council and all secretaries
betraying my dreams,
I might not understand all the words said on TV,
but I know that the air of prison is heavy.
I might not know how to spell the word ‘freedom’,
but I carry its meaning within me.
I know that today will pass,
but tomorrow I might break free.
Your Excellency, watch out for me.

Ramy Essam
25 Tahrir sq.
Cairo 2011
Egypt
ramrevolt@gmail.com

أرجو أن تصلك كلماتي
رغم مشاغلك
يامجلس أمن الأمم المتحدة
ليست هذه أولى رسالاتي
ها أنا ذا الإنسان الدامي
سنّ الجهل سيوف الحكام على صمتي
ومن الظلمة خُلق الظلم ونخّاسي
أصبحت بلا علم أتبع وسواسي
أصبحت عدواً لصديقي
فأنا لا أعرف سوءاتي
أصبحت غريباً بطريقي
غيري يقرأُ لي بوصلاتي
يختار لجهلي وجهاتي
يا مولاي، أمين المجلس والأمناء جميعاً في كل أمنات خيانة أحلامي
قد لا أفهم كل الكلمات بتلفازي
لكن أعرف أن هواء السجن ثقيل
قد لا أعرف أن أكتب كلمة حرية
لكني أحمل معناها
أعلم أن اليوم سيمضي
وغداً قد ينفلت زمامي
يامولاي، فل تحذرنني

REVOLUTION ثورة

The revolution must break out

I can't go to bed oppressed again

The people must rise

to be the ruler, not the ruled

Revolution, Revolution, Revolution!

The revolution is light, full moon

light, the lover of the deprived

As long as silence is the roof of houses,

the crows and owls will be hovering

Go out, rise up, imprison the palaces,

the destiny of the betrayers is inevitable

The martyr's cry is the anthem,

humming inside the hearts.

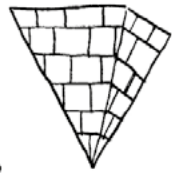
The revolution is the 'NO' that breaks out & boils over

The revolution is the truth that conquers deceit

The revolution is a scary red torrent

The revolution is the blood that defeats the sword

Bread, freedom, social justice...



الثورة يوم لنزيم تقود
ممنوع آيات مظالم
فالشعب يوم لنزيم يقوم
حاكم يكون مش محكوم
ثورة ثورة ثورة
الثورة نور بدر البدر
عشيقه المحرور
طول ما السكوت سقف البيوت
غربان وبوم ختموم
انزل وثورة اسجن قصور
قدر اللي خان محتوم
مرخة شهيد هي النشيد
جوه المردور بي زوم
الثورة 'لا' بتطلق وتفور
الثورة حق بينصرع الزور
الثورة سيل احمر مخيف
الثورة دم بينصرع السيف
عيش حرية عدالة اجتماعية...

Prison in Color

There is a prison with a rose inside, a jailor guarding its doors

All prisons are one, but this prison is in color

Four walls made of light, blessing your disobedience

Birds migrate to it & land on the cell's bars

You can't jail a rose, oh government of blind men.

Oh my, occupied nation, oh people in slumber

The night has fallen upon you, and now the owls rule

All men have saluted, and Sanaa alone rises

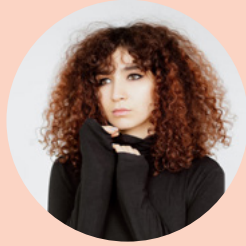
To uncover your misleading lies & stand up to the Pharaoh

Oh country of miserable people, shame on your ideas

GLORY to all prisoners, so long as you are hypocrites

For those who are used to humiliation, nothing will ever budge

The solution is revolution, go ahead & ask Douma.



GHAWGHA (Afghanistan) is a musician, songwriter, and singer. She is known for her songs about peace from her homeland, where singing is prohibited and women's voices are not meant to be heard in public. In 2021, she was named one of the world's 100 most influential women by the BBC, and in 2023 she performed at the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony. ICORN residency in Harstad from 2022 to 2024.



MARJA MORTENSSON (Norway/Sápmi) is a South Sámi singer, joiker, composer, and reindeer herder. Drawing inspiration from reindeer herding and the nearly lost South Sámi joik tradition, she creates music that places the voice at its center and highlights Sámi identity. She has won the Spellemann Award for several of her albums, including her debut *Aarehgjire – Early Spring* (2017) and *Raajroe – The Reindeer Caravan* (2021).



RAMY ESSAM (Egypt) is a rock artist and human rights activist from Egypt. Known as the voice of the Egyptian revolution during the Arab Spring in 2011, he became a symbol of the struggle for freedom, with his music spreading across the Middle East before being banned in his home country. He has received several awards for his music and activism, including the Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent, and in 2017 he released the single *The Camp* together with PJ Harvey. ICORN residency in Malmø from 2014 to 2016.



MOHAMMED ELSUSI (Gaza) is a rapper, music and video producer from Gaza, Palestine. Through his music, Elsusi has fought for artistic freedom in Gaza. He criticizes the Israeli occupation as well as the authoritarian and political restrictions that have prevented artists in Gaza from producing and publishing their work. Today, he continues to fight for the survival and dignity of his people. ICORN residency in Stavanger from 2024 to 2026.



ABU JOURY (Gaza) Ayman Mghamis, known as Abu Joury, has been an influential figure in the rap scene since 2001. He is a member of PR, Palestinian Rapperz, the first rap group in the Gaza Strip, and has performed at various international concerts and festivals, representing Palestine.



HAILE BIZEN (Eritrea) is a poet, editor, translator, and journalist. He has published several collections of poetry and short stories in both Eritrea and Norway. After the release of his book *Behind the Doors* in 2009, he was forced to flee his home country. In Norway, his work has appeared in several anthologies, including *Å kysse en ørken, å kysse en myr* (Aschehoug, 2019). In 2021, his poetry collection *La oss si at jeg er* was published by Aschehoug. ICORN residency in Kristiansand from 2011 to 2013.



FATEMEH EKHTESARI (Iran) is a poet, human rights activist, and midwife who seamlessly combines literary skill with a steadfast commitment to social justice. She has published several collections of poetry and short stories, with her work translated into multiple languages. In Norway, she has released two poetry collections: *Vi overlever ikke* (TransFer) and *Hun er ikke kvinne* (Aschehoug). ICORN residency in Lillehammer from 2017 to 2019.



AAIÚN NIN (Angola) is a poet, activist, and multimedia artist whose work explores identity, race, and sexuality in the context of migration and postcolonialism. They published the poetry collections *På min huds sort* in 2021 and *Broken Halves of a Milky Sun* in 2023, the same year they was awarded the Grimsrud Scholarship. ICORN residency in Bern from 2023 to 2025.

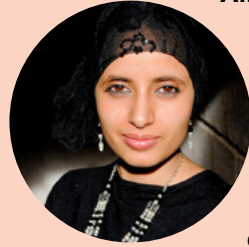


MANSUR RAJIH (Yemen) is a poet and human rights advocate. He has published several collections of poetry, some of which have been translated into Norwegian by translators including Tor Obrestad and Maria Aano Reme. He has performed on multiple occasions with the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. His most recent poetry collection, *Der trærne sto*, was published by Communitato in 2021. ICORN residency in Stavanger from 1996 to 1998.



SELMA M. YONUS (Iraq) is a poet, writer, and journalist. Her poetry addresses themes such as war and exile. She has published three poetry collections and two prose books in Arabic, and her work has been translated into several languages. A selection of her poems was presented in Norwegian in *Å kysse en ørken, å kysse en myr* (Aschehoug, 2019). *Vuggesang for liten kriger* (Aschehoug, 2021) is her first poetry collection published in both Norwegian and Arabic, for which she received the Ordknapp Prize. ICORN residency in Stavanger from 2009 to 2011.

BIOGRAPHIES



AMIRA ALSHARIF (Yemen) is an award-winning photographer and artist from Yemen, based in Paris. She has extensive experience in visual storytelling and has received numerous awards and grants, including from the World Press Photo Foundation and the Prince Claus Fund. Her work has been published by National Geographic, The Washington Post, The Guardian, Los Angeles Review of Books, and The New York Times. Her art documents both the beauty and suffering of her homeland, Yemen, while exploring the relationship between tradition, religion, and identity. ICORN residency in Paris from 2019 to 2021.

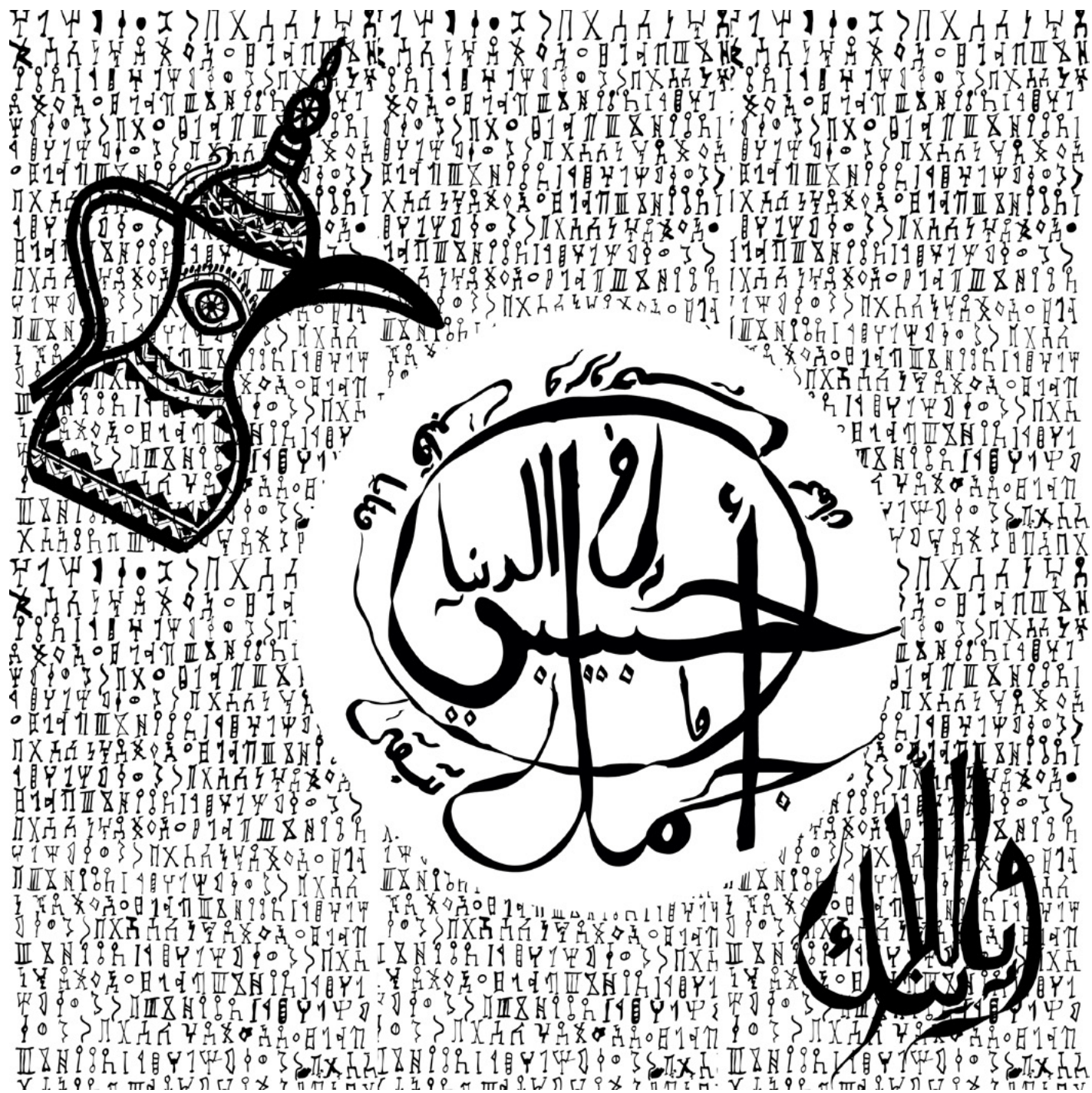
ARTUR DRON (Ukraine) represents the young generation of Ukrainian poets who have gained international recognition. Shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion, he enlisted in the 125th Territorial Brigade. Since then, he has been writing from the front lines, and in his own words, his poetry is "not about the war, but about people who love more than they fear." Artur Dron is featured via recording, reading from his 2023 collection *We Were Here*.



MOHSEN HOSSAINI (Afghanistan) is a respected artist and animator known for his outspoken criticism of war, as well as traditional and religious taboos. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Film and Television Directing from the College of Iran Television. In addition to filmmaking, Hossaini's visual art has been featured in international exhibitions. ICORN residency in Drøbak 2015-2017.

KHALID ALBAIH (Sudan) is an award-winning political cartoonist, artist, journalist, curator, and human rights activist. His work has been published internationally in outlets such as The Atlantic, Al Jazeera, The Guardian, and NRP. Albaih's cartoons and artworks have been featured in both solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including Qatar, India, the USA, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Italy, and the UK. ICORN residency in Copenhagen from 2017 to 2019.





لا اله الا الله

محمد