Exhibition unravels futures of promises

Venice Biennale’s Pan-Arab exhibition, The Future of a Promise, curated by Lina Lazaar brings ‘freedom’ into play as it enquires into the two concepts in the title of its Pan-Arab exhibition, the largest art project ever to bring together artists from Arab countries, aiming to solve the Israel-Palestine issue.

The exhibition, which is part of the Venice Biennale’s Pan-Arab exhibition, brings together works from as many artists and countries as possible, for the promised land. The artists work consists in a conveyor belt that is reminiscent of a baggage claim belt, which starts turning around the moment it is touched, concretizing futile promises in the vicious circle imagery.

Emily Jacir’s installation “Suspended Together” completes the stagnation imagery at an aerial spot, although the work is of a completely different context, being travel permission documents granted to the artist to go to travel. Chechet is a controversial document issued by the Israeli authorities that allows the artist to travel to the occupied territories, a version of the promise.

Suspended Together consists of a group of works that translate Jacir’s travel work exhibited in the Future of a Promise. The work displays a collection of coins in the form of a conveyor belt, a conveyor belt that is reminiscent of a baggage claim belt, which starts turning around the moment it is touched, concretizing futile promises in the vicious circle imagery.

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Future as a possibility, freedom as a mask

The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the keys to the current exhibition, in which the concept of freedom and the idea of coming to fight is captured in the Middle East, before the War.

Speaking to the Hurriyet Daily News in a telephone interview, Lazaar said she was fascinated with the way the concept of promise was perceived in the Middle East, hence the theme. Translation of promise into visual art.

The exhibition, taking place under the coordination of Lina Lazaar, a researcher and curatorial activity, is curated by Sheila Lazzar, a specialist in Sotheby’s London in post-war and contemporary art. The exhibition is sponsored by Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives and Abraaj Capital, three newly partnered organizations deeply committed to helping the contemporary art scene proceed in the Middle East.

The highlight of the exhibition is “The Promised” (Al Maw’oud) by Ayman Baalbaki, a freedom fighter, covered in traditional guerilla attire and stagnant almost to the point of burial under the abundance of the cloth that is surrounding him, with his eyes, only visible facial detail, are half closed, is like an embodiment of disillusionment, a version of the promise.

Lazaar is fascinated with the concepts of freedom, future and promise gain more solid shapes. One of the most striking pieces in the exhibition is “The Promised” (Al Maw’oud) by Ayman Baalbaki, a freedom fighter, covered in traditional guerilla attire and stagnant almost to the point of burial under the abundance of the cloth that is surrounding him, with his eyes, only visible facial detail, are half closed, is like an embodiment of disillusionment, a version of the promise.