

**Syria in Painting, Photography,  
Film and Word**

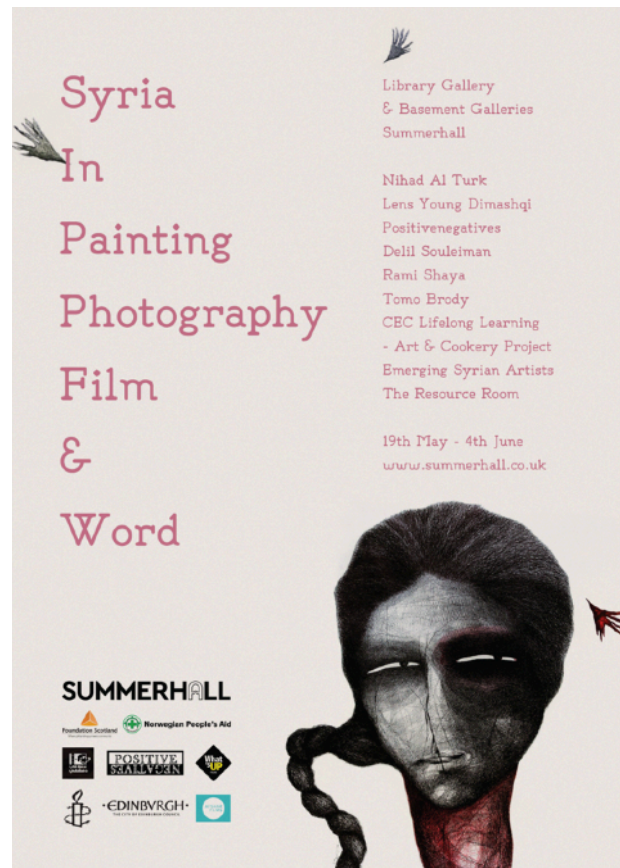
***Exhibiting Artists:***

Nihad Al Turk  
Young Lens Dimashqi  
Positive Negatives,  
CEC Lifelong Learning Art and Cookery Project  
Delil Souleiman  
Rami Shaya  
Tomo Brody  
Emerging Syrian Artists

***Documentary Film Programme:***

What's Up Films:  
*The Disappeared - The Invisible War  
of Syria*

Afshar Films:  
*Syria's Disappeared: The Case Against  
Assad*



**Summerhall, Edinburgh**

**Library & Basement Galleries**

**Preview:** 18:30 - 21:30, 18/05/17

**Daily:** 09:00 - 17:00 (Library Gallery)  
11:00 - 18:00 (Basement Galleries)  
19/05/17 - 04/06/17

*Syria in Painting, Photography, Film and Word* brings together a broad selection of new works by both Edinburgh and internationally-based Syrian artists with contributions from other Syria-centric collectives. Each artist presents a highly personal reflection of their homeland and their people through works in a variety of media.

Since November 2015, the City of Edinburgh has welcomed some 150 Syrian and Syrian Kurdish men, women and children who arrived as refugees relocated here under the Syrian Resettlement Programme; these families now form an integral part of our community, contributing to our city's sense of cultural diversity. Summerhall welcomes this opportunity to support and produce this important exhibition of Syrian art.

By sharing their stories and memories, these artists show that art can be created from catastrophe, that visions can survive, and that artistic truth has a vital role in the current world.

### **Syria in Photography, Painting, Film and Word**

Central to this exhibition are Nihad Al Turk's paintings (see poster image), which are thematic explorations of the endurance of man amidst the power struggles of good and evil. Born in Aleppo, Al Turk and his wife Sawsan Osso fled their homes during the war before eventually being brought to safety in Edinburgh.

Informed by his readings in literature, philosophy and theory, many of Al Turk's deeply psychological compositions can be read as allegorical self-portraits. The artist's distorted shapes and writhing lines express the struggles of a captive creature seeking to break his bonds.

He has more recently injected colour and a sense of flight into the dark, weighted palette of his earlier mixed media paintings; *"his latest works perhaps breathe beyond his devastating past"*.

#### ***The exhibition will also feature:***

*Young Lens Dimashqi (Damascus)*, a group of Syrian youth reporters and field activists who started taking pictures in 2012 during the Syrian revolution, aiming to document the impact of the regime of President Assad's offensive against the Syrian people. Their photographs not only document the war but also the compromised dignity of the Syrian people. The *Young Lens* photographers choose to remain anonymous for their safety.

*PositiveNegatives* produce literary comics, animations and podcasts about contemporary socio-political human rights issues. Detailing the hardships endured in their collective attempt to reach safety, Khalid, Hasko and Mohammad's stories present perspectives from three separate trans-European journeys made in order to escape the conflict in Syria. The literary comics and animations that form *The Perilous Journey* highlight the vulnerabilities and dangers that many families face in fleeing conflict.

*The CEC Lifelong Learning Art and Cookery Project* evolved from the idea that stories and experiences can be expressed through the sharing of food and art as an alternative common language, bypassing the linguistic barriers that often separate international communities.

*Rami Shaya* was born in Karrasa, Syria in 1985. He moved to Scotland in 2007 and settled in Edinburgh, where he currently lives and works as a freelance filmmaker. *The High Shadow* was inspired by the Syrian revolution as well as *Think of Others*, a poem written by Palestinian author Mahmoud Darwish. Shaya's contribution is highly personal, interpreting the effects of the Syrian conflict upon families from a father's perspective. Removed from the fore and currently living in peaceful Scotland, *The High Shadow* manifests itself as the feelings of powerlessness and frustration felt in observing the suffering of the artist's homeland.

*Tomo Brody* is a documentary filmmaker working with human rights groups and educational charities, *Humans After All: Voices from Calais* presents a moving tribute to the voices of the many refugees currently struggling to forge a life for themselves out of the region's 'jungle camps'. With his film Brody seeks to shed light on the myriad stories of the orphaned children, brave mothers and tortured men of Calais.

*Delil Souleiman* is an award winning photojournalist based in Syria.

## **Film**

To coincide with the presentation of visual art, *Syria in Painting, Photography, Film and Word* will also feature documentary screenings concerning the current crisis and the desperate plight of the Syrian population.

### ***What's Up Films:***

#### ***The Disappeared - The Invisible War of Syria***

*The Disappeared* is a ground-breaking investigation into an invisible weapon that has been decimating the Syrian people since 2011, causing the forcible disappearance of more than 200,000 individuals: as many people have vanished as have died in the four years of armed conflict in native Syria. Sophie Nivelles-Cardinale and Etienne Huver have carried out investigations across the Middle East and Europe, unearthing information about a killing machine that is operating silently and undetected against Syria. For the first time, escapees and accomplices provide insight into the concentration camps instated under President Assad's regime, discovering the conditions that thousands of Syrians are being secretly detained within as the dictatorship systematically kills off its opponents.

### ***Afshar Films:***

#### ***Syria's Disappeared: The Case Against Assad***

*Syria's Disappeared* tells the hidden story of the thousands of men, women and children currently being held captive under the regime of President Bashar al Assad in a network of clandestine detention centres. The film weaves together a series of powerful personal narratives from three Syrian individuals with evidence gathered from bootlegged regime documentation; providing unprecedented insight into the lives of surviving detainees and their families as well as defectors from Assad's regime. Testimonials from prominent war crime investigators highlight the actions taken towards quelling the regime and bringing justice to the affected populations. *Syria's Disappeared* delves into a multitude of emotional facets found in the ongoing campaign for the abolition of Syrian detention centres.

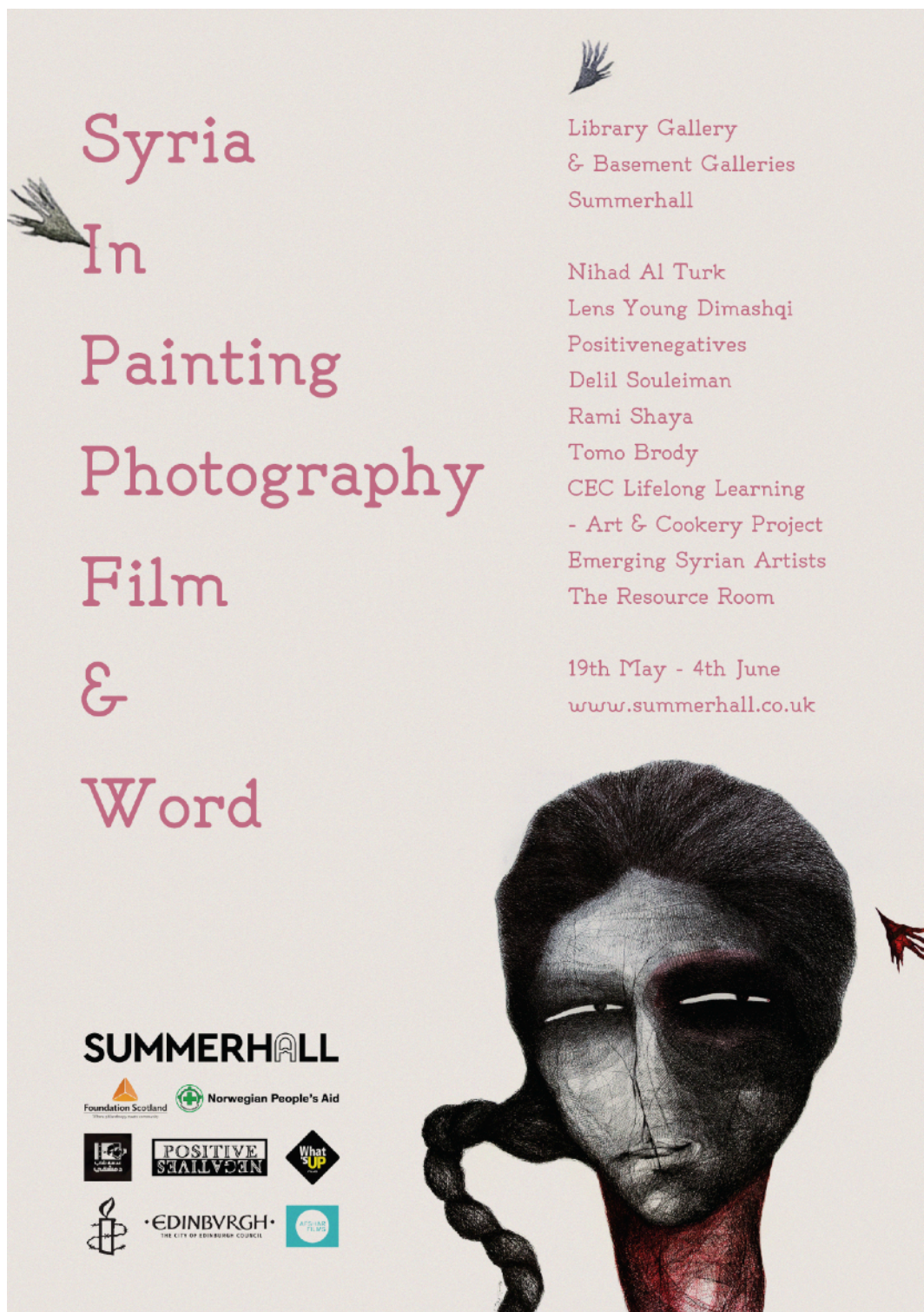
## **Additional Resources and Events**

*The Resource Room* will contain a wealth of information pertaining to the *Children's War Museum* provided by its founder Brian Devlin, as well as contributions from *Syria Aid*, *Amnesty International* and others. Accompanying events will delve deeper into the information on offer.

London-based journalist Mark MacKinnon will give a talk exploring the lives of the teenage instigators of the Syrian conflict, with whom he became fascinated by during his time spent as a former Middle Eastern news correspondent. He dedicated much of 2016 to finding out what happened next in the lives of these youths and will speak about his findings in the upcoming symposium, detailing his meeting with Naief Abazid and the other '*graffiti kids*' of Syria and what he learned about their experiences of war, and now as refugees in Europe.

*Mark MacKinnon is the senior correspondent for Canada's national newspaper, The Globe and Mail and will speak at Summerhall on the 21/05/17.*





For further details and/or images please email:  
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