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سريّة و متميز

# Al'Qala Exhibition

*April 10<sup>th</sup> - June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026*

*Palestinian woman embroidering with her child.*

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نور *Noor*

# Purpose of Al'Qala

- From **April 10<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**, the **Royal Tapestry Factory** will open its historic halls to a **two-month cultural journey** unlike any other: **Al'Qala: Threads of History**, a living showcase of **crafted works with *tatreez*** (Arabic for "Palestinian embroidery").
- This initiative also marks the **inaugural mission of Noor**. With Spanish-Palestinian roots, the founder envisions Noor as a heartfelt bridge for intercultural dialogues. Its mission is to **preserve the memory and honour the collective legacies** of the civilizational landscapes that have **shaped the Near East** – from the Arabs and Persians to Ancient Egypt –, while fostering intellectual and artistic exchange in **Spain and, by extension, the Western world**. By harnessing the power of culture, **Noor becomes a voice for human rights and dignity across the region of the Near East**.
- *Al'Qala* sets the tone for that vision: a platform of **culture and solidarity** rooted in **resilience and grounded by a profound moral and ethical commitment to uphold human rights in Palestine**. In this context, the title of this mission, *Al'Qala* (Arabic for "fortress") symbolises the resilience of the Palestinian people, while simultaneously evoking Madrid's "Puerta de Alcalá" — once the fortress entrance gate of the city and now one of its most emblematic monuments. Much like the Palestinian story, the "Puerta de Alcalá" has **withstood wars and centuries of transformation without being erased**. Its very name carries traces of Arabic heritage embedded within Spain's identity: as with many Spanish words beginning with "al", the word "Alcalá" derives from Arabic Al'Qala (the "fortress"), a reminder of the deep and intertwined legacies that have shaped Spain's cultural identity.



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**AL QA LA**

Real Fábrica de Tapices  
المتحف الملكي للنسيج  
COLABORAN  
صلة SILA  
INAASH  
Hilos de historia  
خيطة من ذاكرة

Del 10 de abril al 5 de junio de 2026  
Calle Fuenterrabía, 2, 28014, Madrid  
من ١٠ أبريل حتى ٥ يونيو ٢٠٢٦  
شارع فوينتيرابيا، رقم ٢، مدريد، إسبانيا

# The Royal Tapestry Factory

The Exhibition Venue



REAL FÁBRICA DE TAPICES



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- *Al'Qala* is hosted in the vibrant city of Madrid at **The Royal Tapestry Factory Foundation** (*Fundación Real Fábrica de Tapices*, hereinafter referred to as the “**Royal Tapestry Factory**”), a historic institution devoted to the creation and conservation of handwoven textiles. Founded in 1721 by King Philip V of Spain to promote Spanish craftsmanship and reduce reliance on imports, the Royal Tapestry Factory has been, for over three centuries, a symbol of Spain's cultural heritage. Renowned artists, including *Francisco de Goya*, designed some of its most celebrated works, which once adorned royal palaces and aristocratic homes.
- Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Royal Tapestry Factory has been housed in a striking **Neo-Mudéjar building** designed by José Segundo de Lema, a well-known Spanish architect. Inspired by the artistic legacy of Al-Andalus, the architecture reflects Spain's layered cultural heritage.
- Today, the Royal Tapestry Factory operates as a non-profit foundation, continuing its legacy through three main activities:
  - ✓ artisan production, restoration, and conservation, and cultural and educational programs. Master artisans still weave tapestries, carpets, and textiles by hand.
  - ✓ expert conservators restore historic pieces from institutions across Spain and abroad; and,
  - ✓ The Royal Tapestry Factory opens its doors through exhibitions, workshops, and guided tours that promote textile arts and heritage conservation.

*As the exhibition's venue, the Royal Tapestry Factory reinforces **Al 'Qala's** central gesture: the preservation of heritage through skilled, often unseen labour, passed from generation to generation. Its workshops, looms, and museum form a living archive — making it the ideal setting for a dialogue on memory, craft, and continuity.*

# About Al'Qala Exhibition

Threads of History: stitching past, present, and future

- *Al'Qala* Exhibition brings together distinct installations that weave together history and modernity, all rooted in the **Palestinian tradition of embroidery** (*tatreez*):
  1. **Section I: A Legacy in Threads.** The first installation features a 19<sup>th</sup>-century tapestry and **seventeen historical Palestinian dresses**, as well as a **selection of accessories** from **Tiraz Centre (Widad Kawar Collection)**, presented alongside historical photographic archives of Palestine.
  2. **Section II: A Nation in Stitches.** The second showcases **monumental embroidered dress panels** crafted by **Inaash Association**, each created by a single Palestinian refugee woman in Lebanon, where patterns from different regions are combined into **unique, unified pieces**.
  3. **Section III: A Heritage in Motion.** The third section presents **contemporary works** by various artists from the **SILA project, curated by Rula Alami**. These works reinterpret traditional Palestinian motifs, bridging art and craft, heritage and contemporary expression.
- A series of **engaging panels** and **thought-provoking dialogues** will accompany the two-month Al'Qala Exhibition, bringing together participating artists, curators, and influential voices. Through these encounters, participants will immerse themselves in meaningful dialogue, exchanging ideas and opening fresh perspectives on **tatreez**—exploring the depth of Palestinian heritage and its resonance within global narratives. These panels will spark connections between people and Al'Qala in intimate, memorable ways, while showcasing works created by women across generations. Tatreez techniques—passed down from mother to daughter—continue to thrive in Palestinian refugee camps today, carrying stories of identity, perseverance, and living heritage. Al'Qala will thus become a space for the world to gather, share ideas, and inspire one another, celebrating the creativity and strength that shape our collective story.

*Together, these three parts form a shared tapestry of cultural continuity, endurance, and transformation*



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# Section I: A Legacy in Threads

Historical Dresses (*thobes*) – Tiraz Centre (Widad Kawar Collection)

- This first section presents a 19<sup>th</sup>-century tapestry, together with **seventeen historical Palestinian dresses and a selection of accessories** (in total, thirty-one pieces) each originating from a **different region** – Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron, Gaza, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, amongst others –. These garments have been generously loaned from **Tiraz Centre (Widad Kawar Collection)**, a Jordan-based institution that aims to preserve the **Widad Kawar Collection and promote the vibrant Palestinian and Jordanian cultural heritage and Arab living traditions**. For over fifty years, Widad Kawar has devoted herself to collecting, researching, and archiving Arab costume heritage, building one of the most significant collections of traditional dress in the modern era. Today, Tiraz Centre holds the most complete collection of Palestinian costumes from the 19th and 20th centuries. Tiraz Centre serves as the home of this remarkable collection — a place where it is preserved, cared for, and exhibited in Jordan, across the Arab world, and around the world.
- The pieces selected for Al'Qala Exhibition, distinguished by their symbolic motifs, colours, patterns, and unique embroidery, tell stories of the land, social customs, and women lived experiences, illuminating the richness of regional aesthetic, becoming a canvas for cultural expression during a period of profound social transformation. Each thobe is a deeply personal and geographic archive, expressing a woman's connection to her body, her social identity, and her village. *tatreez*, here, becomes an intimate language – a **woven testament** to memory and place.
- Together with this extraordinary heritage of *tatreez*, Al'Qala Exhibition will also present **rare glimpses of historic Palestinian archives warmly loaned by Tiraz Centre**. These include evocative photographs of women at work with needle and thread – capturing intimate moments of embroidery across time. Such images not only document craft but also honour the lived experiences of women, weaving **memory, artistry, and resilience** into the very fabric of Al'Qala Exhibition.



*Palestinian Bedouin dresses from the Bir el-Sabe.*

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# Section II: A Nation in Stitches

Embroidered panels stitched by Palestinian refugees, by Inaash

- The second section complements Tiraz Centre (Widad Kawar Collection) by presenting **six large-scale embroidered panels**, each depicting a **life-sized embroidered thobe rendered on canvas**, kindly lent by **Inaash Association**. Founded in 1969 by Lebanese and Palestinian women, among them Huguette Caland, Inaash Association has transformed embroidery into a source of dignity and livelihood while preserving Palestinian tradition of *tatreez*: an art passed from mother to daughter, kept alive, relevant, and valued.
- **Each panel was created by a single Palestinian woman living in one of the Lebanese refugee camps**, and represents a specific region of Palestine, **merging traditional techniques and regional motifs with striking formal clarity**. These monumental works elevate domestic craftsmanship into **powerful narrative form**. They honour the deep roots of *tatreez* while signalling its adaptability and power as a contemporary cultural form. Here, embroidery becomes not only an act of memory, but an act of resilience, authorship, and reclamation.



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# Section III: A Heritage in Motion

Contemporary Works from SILA project

- The third section explores **contemporary interpretations** of *tatreez* through works created by artists selected by **Rula Alami**, founder of the **Sila Project**. A distinguished curator, and Vice President of the Inaash Association, she has long been dedicated to promoting Arab modern and contemporary art.
- In this space, ***tatreez* becomes an open-ended language** through which **artists translate narratives** of rootedness and resistance. Each work demonstrates how inherited forms can evolve while preserving their essence, transforming tradition into a living dialogue between heritage and contemporary expression, and questioning the boundaries between art and craft.
- At its heart, Al'Qala celebrates **embroidery as a transformative force, that embodies an enduring link to Palestinian culture**. These **twenty-one works** engage the senses, stir emotions, and rearticulate a tradition that evolves with each generation.
- **Thirteen participating artists:** *Ahmed Amer, Areen Hassan, Ayham Hassan, Bokja, Dahouk Chamsi Pacha, Farah Behbehani, Jaqueline Bejani, Joanna Barakat, Leila Jureidini, Liane Al Ghusain, Nour Hage, Souad Amine, and Zaid Farouki.*





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# Between Two Shades of Blue

Special Cinematographic Installation by Fadia Ahmad

- Al'Qala Exhibition includes the special contribution of Fadia Ahmad, whose cinematic installation "**Between Two Shades of Blue**" examines exile, memory, and the search for belonging through a Mediterranean lens.
- Drawing on her personal experience of being born away from her ancestral homeland, the work reflects on **life between two cultural and geographic realities**. The sea functions as a **central metaphor and visual element**: not as a boundary, but as a space of connection linking different shores, stories, and identities.
- Fadia Ahmad is a Lebanese-Spanish photographer and filmmaker whose artistic practice explores identity, memory, and belonging from a transnational perspective. After returning to Beirut in 2002, she initiated the series *Beyrouth | Beirut* and later directed the internationally recognized documentary *Beirut, the Aftermath* (2021), followed by her second feature film, *Together* (2024). Exhibited across Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, her works addresses the traces of conflict, displacement, and resilience, positioning visual storytelling as a tool for awareness and transformation.

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# Beyond Borders

Direct Action: United Palestinian Appeal

- Al'Qala Exhibition carries a **deeper purpose**. While it honours the enduring beauty and heritage of Palestinian embroidery (*tatreez*), it also stands as an **act of profound solidarity and shared humanity**. All ticket proceeds and private donations are dedicated to supporting urgent humanitarian programs for Palestinians, through socially responsible and sustainable programs in health, education, and community and economic development. These initiatives provide not only critical assistance, but also healing, dignity, and hope to Palestinians facing extraordinary hardship.
- In this sense, every contribution to Al'Qala Exhibition will become immediate and meaningful action through our trusted humanitarian partner, **United Palestinian Appeal** ("UPA"), a 501(c)(3) New York not-for-profit corporation, established in 1978 by Palestinian American professionals. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., with field and program staff across the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt, UPA operates as a non-political, non-sectarian organisation dedicated to addressing urgent relief and long-term development needs.
- Through direct program implementation and partnerships with vetted local organizations, UPA ensures that funds are managed responsibly, transparently, and in accordance with the highest international standards of accountability. UPA has achieved the Charity Navigator's highest rating – four stars – for financial health, accountability, and transparency for the last 14 years. Additionally, UPA meets all 20 Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance standards, and has attained the Guide Star Platinum Seal of Transparency.



# Noor

A decorative flourish in a golden, textured font, resembling a stylized calligraphic element, positioned below the word 'Noor'.