

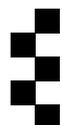
art  
exchange

LARISSA  
SANSOUR



IN THE  
FUTURE  
THEY ATE  
FROM THE  
FINEST  
PORCELAIN

26.11.21 –  
12.02.22



University of Essex

***In the Future They Ate From the Finest Porcelain* resides in the intersection between Sci-Fi, archaeology and global politics.**

In this ambitious show, Larissa Sansour creates a vision of a futuristic world where the excavation of the past is a battleground. Reminding us of Britain's colonial past in the Middle East and the borders created across lands, she offers a poetic reflection on the politicisation of archaeology.

At the core of the exhibition is a film that combines live action, computer generated imagery and historic photographs to explore the role of myth in the shaping of history and national identity. It follows an imagined resistance group that makes underground deposits of porcelain, suggested to belong to an entirely fictional civilisation. Their aim is to influence history and support future claims to their vanishing territories. Once unearthed, this buried tableware will prove the existence of this counterfeit people. By implementing a myth of its own, their work becomes a historical intervention – de facto creating a nation.

In a contemporary context of globalisation and transnationalism, Sansour raises questions about concepts of nation, authorship and the malleability of history. In doing so, she encourages the viewer to question what is portrayed as fixed and definitive, reminding us of the party slogan from Orwell's 1984, *'who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.'* In doing so, this exhibition poses important questions about the role of museums and their collections in the formation of national identity, the presentation of history and the constitution of the future.



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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Larissa Sansour was born in 1973 in East Jerusalem and studied fine art in London, New York and Copenhagen. She works in collaboration with Søren Lind.

She represented Denmark at the 58th Venice Biennale (2019) and is a Jarman Award winner (2020).

Larissa has exhibited at venues such as Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; LOOP, Seoul; Al Hoash, Jerusalem; Queen Sofia Museum, Madrid; Centre for Photography, Sydney; Cornerhouse, Manchester; Townhouse, Cairo; Maraya Arts Centre, Sharjah, UAE; Empty Quarter, Dubai; Galerie Nationale de Jeu de Paume, Paris; Iniva, London; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Third Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China; Louisiana Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark; House of World Cultures, Berlin, and MOCA, Hiroshima.

She lives and works in London.

[larissasansour.com](http://larissasansour.com)

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## ARTWORKS

### **In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain**

Film, 29 Mins, 2016

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind

A film that amalgamates live action, CGI and historic photographs to explore the role of myth in the shaping of history and national identity.

It presents a vision of a post-apocalyptic world in which the leader of a resistance group plants fabricated archaeological evidence to secure the destiny of her people. We hear her dwelling on the demise of her sister, and this loss can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the loss of land.

### **In The Future They Ate From The Finest Porcelain**

2016

Photographic series, C-type print

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind

The photographs accompanying Larissa Sansour's film let us explore in greater detail the fictional world she creates. Through utilising Sci-Fi as a genre, time is collapsed and past, present and future meld together. Archive imagery of traditional Palestinian people in folkloric costume, Bedouin tents, Ottoman Empire soldiers and British Mandate officers are all situated in a futuristic dystopian desert.

### **And They Covered The Sky Until It Was Black**

2017

Polyresin moulds

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind

An installation made up of hundreds of spaceships that assume the shape of insects and as a group, look like a locust swarm. Referencing the plagues of the Old Testament, the installation becomes a futuristic doomsday vision with biblical undertones.

It extends Sansour's ongoing interest in the role of myth and fiction on collective psychology, narrative structures and history writing.

### **Archaeology of Absentia**

2016

Bronze and aluminium

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind

A series of exquisitely crafted bombs, that are also reminiscent of Faberge eggs. Inside each of them is a metal disc inscribed with coordinates referring to a site in Israel/Palestine where Sansour has buried porcelain. Each bomb refers to an absent artefact, yet to be unearthed, yet to intervene in historical records.

They ask us to question the role of museums and their collections in the formation of national identity and the presentation of history.

### **Archaeology of Absentia performance stills**

2016-17

Photographic series, Inkjet print

Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind

In a performance that attempts to make 'real' the fictional Sci-Fi film on show with us, Larissa Sansour and her collaborator Søren Lind buried handmade porcelain plates with folkloric patterns at the place recorded in the coordinates of *Archaeology of Absentia's* artefacts.

# EVENTS

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## ARTIST'S TALK

Thursday 9 December  
3.00 – 4.30 pm, online

Larissa Sansour will talk about her work on show at Art Exchange with long-time collaborator Søren Lind and curator Jess Twyman.

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## SCI-FI SCREENINGS

We bring together a short Sci-Fi season of films that have inspired Larissa Sansour.

### 2001: A Space Odyssey

Dir. Stanley Kubrick | US, UK, 1968,  
2 hours 29 mins

Wednesday 19 January

6.00 – 9.00 pm

Cine 10, LTB

The discovery of mysterious monolith on the moon leads scientists to embark on an epic journey of space exploration.

Followed by Q&A and drinks reception.

### Stalker

Dir. Andrei Tarkovsky | USSR | 1979,  
2 hours 42 mins

Wednesday 26 January

6.00 – 9.00 pm

A guide leads two men through the 'zone' to find a room that grants your innermost wishes.

Followed by Q&A and drinks reception.

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## SCI-FI SHORTS

Wednesday 9 February

6.00 – 7.30 pm

Cine 10, LTB

### A Space Exodus

Dir. Larissa Sansour | Denmark, Palestine, 2008  
5 mins

### Nation Estate

Dir. Larissa Sansour | Denmark, 2013  
10 mins

### In Vitro

Dir. Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind |  
Denmark, UK, Palestine, 2019  
28 mins

An evening of Larissa Sansour's films selected by Professor Shohini Chaudhuri.

Followed by a Director Q&A with Larissa Sansour, her collaborator Søren Lind and Shohini Chaudhuri.

After Q&A, a drinks reception will be served.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY, HERITAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Thursday 10 Feb (TBC)

6.00 – 7.15 pm

We are joined by archaeologist Dr Beverly Butler from University College London (UCL) to discuss the impact of heritage in our cultural identity, state building and sense of nationality.

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## MOBILE MAKING

Wednesday 2 February

6.00 – 8.00 pm, in the Hex

Artists Tom & Iris will show you how to make your own Sci-Fi inspired mobile.

Free for UoE students – with all art materials provided.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR EVENTS,  
VISIT [ARTEXCHANGE.ORG.UK](http://ARTEXCHANGE.ORG.UK)

ALL OUR EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS  
ARE FREE