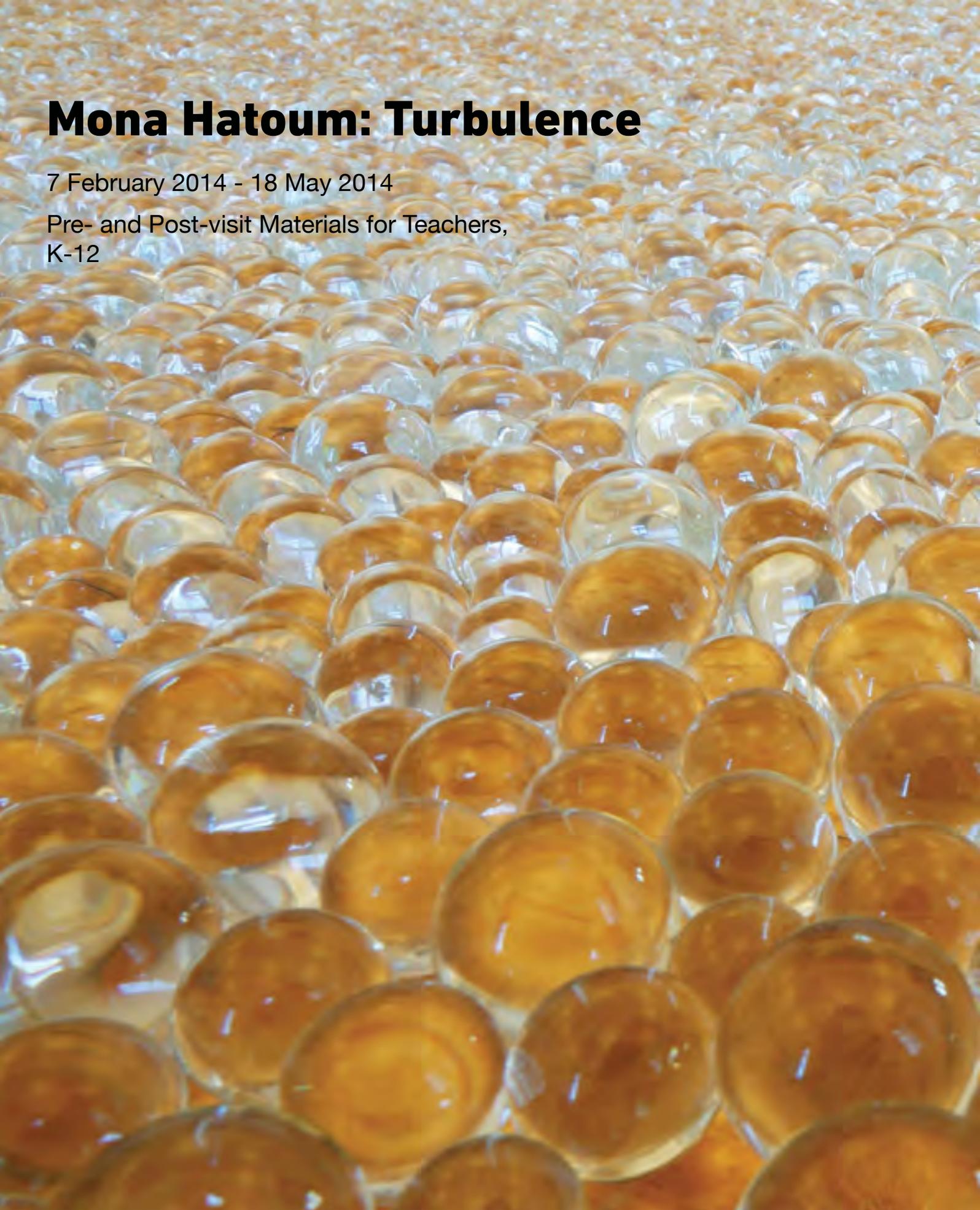


# Mona Hatoum: Turbulence

7 February 2014 - 18 May 2014

Pre- and Post-visit Materials for Teachers,  
K-12



متحف mathaf

المتحف العربي arab museum of  
للفن الحديث modern art



## Dear Educators,

We welcome you to Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. These materials provide a framework for preparing your students to visit the museum's current exhibition ---*Mona Hatoum: Turbulence*. We also offer suggestions for extending learning after your visit.

Our guided school visits foster learning through engaging students' observational, communication, and critical thinking abilities. Designed by a Mathaf educator to suit your class' needs and interests, our thematic lessons encourage students to look at the world through the eyes of an artist or *fannan*.

The activities in this resource are intended for diverse classrooms, with different age groups and curriculums. We encourage you to adapt and build upon them in order to meet your objectives.

### Table of Contents:

- Guidelines for Guided School Visits
- Information About the Artist and Current Exhibition
- Pre-visit Activities
- Post-visit Activities

Thank you for making Mathaf a part of your classroom. We look forward to working with you and your students.

If you have any questions about School Programs at Mathaf, please contact the Education Department at [mathaf\\_education@qma.org.qa](mailto:mathaf_education@qma.org.qa) or 4402.8853

Sincerely,

**Maral J. Bedoyan**  
Acting Head of Education

# Guidelines for Guided School Visits

Our guided school visits foster learning through engaging students' observational, communication, and critical thinking abilities. Designed by a Mathaf educator to suit your class' needs and interests, our thematic lessons encourage students to look at the world through the eyes of an artist or *fannan*.

## Format

The format of guided visits includes intensive conversations around three to four artworks in the museum. We believe that students need multiple ways to experience an artwork; therefore, we include activities such as writing, drawing, and small group conversations as part of our plans.

The visit can be tailored to connect with your class's needs. What subject(s) do you teach? What are students currently studying, or what have students studied in the past, that you hope will be enhanced by a museum visit?

Guided visits are available in English and Arabic.

## Themes

### ***Ideal for Younger Students:***

I am an observing *fannan*

- What do artists do? How do artists represent what they see?
- Students will develop visual literacy skills and learn artistic vocabulary such as line, shape, composition, and abstraction. Excellent choice for all levels, especially first time visitors.

I am a storytelling *fannan*

- What stories do artworks tell us?
- This visit will examine the narrative qualities of art. We will discuss the main idea, mood/tone, character and setting and other relevant storytelling topics. This is a great choice for language or literature classes.

### ***Ideal for Older Students***

I am a critical *fannan*

- How do artists tell us about our changing world?

- Just as it has defined much of modern and contemporary art, this visit will focus on how art can be a medium for social change. Students will discuss topics such as social issues, politics, identity, and history. Ideal for mature students.

I am an experimental *fannan*

- What makes something art? What are the limits?
- This exciting theme will explore artistic processes and materials from the 19th century to the present day. Students can experiment with more abstract concepts in art while debating and evaluating the definition of art.

## Booking Your Visit

Please contact us in advance to discuss the best dates and times for your visit.

Visits are generally scheduled between 8:00 am to 11:00 am on weekdays. The museum is closed to the public on Monday.

The museum is able to accommodate two groups of up to 25 students at a time. We ask that a teacher (and chaperone if possible) attend and support positive group behavior and respect.

School groups arriving without a prior, confirmed booking will be asked to return at a later date.

## Transportation

Mathaf is located at the edge of Education City off of Al-Luqta Street. We advise you to check the [Mathaf website](#) for a current map or news about possible traffic diversions.

Parking is available for school busses.

Buses can access the front gate for drop off and pick up.

## Storage

We have lockers where students can store belongings; however, we recommend that you bring as little as possible.

The museum will provide all materials necessary for activities such as pencils and paper.

## Food

You can enjoy a meal at our café, Maqha, or students can bring their own packed lunch.

Kindly notify us in advance if you are planning on having lunch after the visit. The café is open from 11:00 am -6:00 pm.

## Photography

Photography is allowed for most of the artworks in this exhibition. We ask that you do not photograph artworks with a “No Photography” icon next to the label.

We ask that students do not bring cameras or smart phones into the galleries during tours.

Upon approval from the school and guardians, we may ask you to be a part of our public image by photographing or video recording the students during the visit.

## Manners

We aim to create a learning environment that is positive and enjoyable. Please go over these basic points with your students and chaperones before their visit.

- **Stand back from works of art, and do not touch.**

Our skin has natural oils and acids that can harm the surfaces of art objects. We want many people to enjoy the artworks for a long time.

- **Stay with the group at all times.**

The path through the exhibition can be confusing without a guide. Stay with the group and don't get lost.

- **Walk, don't run.**

We care about your safety. If you run you may fall and harm yourself, your friends, or an artwork.

- **Raise your hand to talk.**

Noise can echo through the museum. Raising our hands and taking turns helps us have a conversation where everyone can be heard.

- **Backpacks and bags should be placed in lockers.**

We want you to be comfortable during your visit, and avoid bumping into things with your bag.

- **Use pencils only for sketching or notes.**

Ink and other materials are dangerous to the safety of an artwork.

- **No photography or mobile phones in the galleries.**

To respect others while they are talking, we ask that you wait to use your phone or camera until after we are finished with the visit.

- **No food or drink in the galleries.**

Food and drink inside the galleries can damage an artwork or attract pests. You can enjoy a nice meal after the visit at the café.



## About the Artist

Mona Hatoum was born into a Palestinian family in Beirut, Lebanon in 1952. While travelling in Britain in 1975, she was stranded by the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon. Unable to return to Beirut, she enrolled in the Byam Shaw School of Art, and later the Slade School of Art. She now lives and works in London and Berlin.

As an artist, she incorporates her complex life experiences into her work; however, her work should not be considered purely autobiographical. Instead, the artist encourages the viewer to explore different themes and topics through their own perspectives.

“I’m often asked the same question: What in your work comes from your own culture? As if I have a recipe and I can actually isolate the Arab ingredient, the woman ingredient, the Palestinian ingredient. People often expect tidy definitions of otherness, as if identity is something fixed and easily definable...if you come from an embattled background there is often an expectation that your work should somehow articulate the struggle or represent the voice of the people. That’s a tall order really. I find myself often wanting to contradict those expectations.”<sup>1</sup>  
-Mona Hatoum

## About the Current Exhibition

The exhibition, *Mona Hatoum: Turbulence*, showcases the diversity of Mona Hatoum’s work over the last 30 years. As an artist, she uses a wide range of media, including installations, sculpture, video, photography and works on paper.

The title of the exhibition, *Turbulence*, is taken from one of her recent artworks. The artwork can be seen as a metaphor for the artists’ interest in themes such as identity, home, memory, belonging, oppression, gender and others.

What does the phrase “turbulence” mean to you?

Contemporary art is art produced by artists from the 1970s to the present. Unlike modern art, with movements such as Cubism or Dadaism, contemporary art defies easy classification. It incorporates ideas, concepts, questions and practices to describe a diverse array of subjects.

**For more comprehensive discussions of Contemporary art, consider the following resources:**

[Art in the 21st Century](#)  
[Smart History](#)  
[Oxford Art Online](#)

<sup>1</sup> Mona Hatoum, interview by Janine Antoni, BOMB Magazine, Spring, 1998.

## **Pre-visit Activities**

This section describes sample activities you can do with your students before your museum visit. These activities can be modified suit your curriculum and subject matter. They are organized by themes that are suitable for a range of age groups.

The activities introduce basic skills such as observation and talking about contemporary art. The artworks described in these activities give students a preview of how the artist works.

Finally, the techniques used in these activities mirror the intensive questioning style that will be used on a guided tour of the exhibition.

Try the activity that links to the theme you are most interested in or try all four.



**T42 (gold)**

1999

gold trimmed fine stoneware in two parts

5.5 x 24.5 x 14 cm

## Theme: I am an observing *Fannan*

What do artists do? How do artists represent what they see?

Students develop skills of looking at art, enhancing visual literacy skills and learning artistic vocabulary such as line, shape, composition, and abstraction.

Mona Hatoum re-imagines and uses everyday objects to create art. Here, the artist has fabricated two delicate teacups which are stuck together. This artwork is an observation on human nature and relationships: you cannot drink from one of these cups alone, but drinking with a partner presents new difficulties.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see.
- Spend two minutes describing what the artwork reminds them of.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.

As a group discuss their observations:

- What did they see?  
Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time.
- What adjectives would you use to describe this image?  
If students have difficulty with this question, ask them to describe things such as material, color, size, shape, line, texture, composition, etc.
- Have they seen an object that looks like this? If so, where?
- Could they use this object for something? Why or why not?

Discuss what they think the artwork means. The meaning of an artwork is **open ended**. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.

- The title of this artwork is T42, pronounced “tea for two”. Imagine using these teacups to drink with a friend or a family member. What would it be like? Why do you think that?
- Why do you think the artist put the tea cups together?
- Is it always easy to work together or share things with others, even if you are very close to that person? Why or why not? What do you think the artist is trying to say about working together?



**Static Portraits, (Momo, Devrim, Karl)**

2000

set of 3 polaroids

72 x 56 cm each

## **Theme: I am a storytelling *fannan***

What stories do artworks tell us?

This visit will examine the narrative qualities of art. We will discuss the main idea, mood/tone, character and setting and other relevant storytelling topics. This is a great choice for language or literature classes.

To make these photographs, Hatoum plays with the power of electricity – an invisible, yet powerful force in our everyday lives. She invited people to place their hands on a Van der Graaf generator, a dome which creates a wave of static electricity that makes the user's hair stand on end. The resulting photographs are mysterious and humorous. Who are these people? Why is their hair standing on end? What are their stories?

Try doing a character study with your students. Analyze the photographs carefully and build a narrative about the people in the portraits.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Explain that an artist, much like a good writer, can create an interesting portrait of characters through subtle cues. To understand a character, one must be observant.

As a whole group, ask your students to describe the people or characters in this photograph.

- What do they look like?
- Are they young or old? Are they men or women?
- What are their clothes like?
- How are they posed in the photographs? How are they sitting?
- What other details can they observe?

Ask students to draw some conclusions about these characters. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.

- What is the mood of these photographs? Why do you think that?
- What are the people thinking or feeling? How do you know that?
- What else is happening in the photographs?
- What is the backstory of these photographs? Who are these people?
- Why do students think that?



**Hotspot**  
2013  
stainless steel, neon tube  
234 x 223 x 223 cm

## Theme: I am a critical *Fannan*

How do artists tell us about our changing world?

Just as it has defined much of modern and contemporary art, this visit will focus on how art can be a medium for social change. Students will discuss topics such as social issues, politics, identity, and history.

While many of Mona Hatoum's earlier artworks are overtly political, her later works show a subtler approach. What do your students think about Hotspot?

Instead of using a traditional sculptural material such as marble, the artist uses steel, glass and electricity to create Hotspot. The globe is comprised of bent steel, suggesting the lines of longitude and latitude. The artist outlined the continents' borders with red neon lights. The air around the globe is warm because of the neon bulbs.

The phrase "hotspot" can be used to describe a dangerous place, whether because of political unrest or volcanic activity in the Earth's crust. The artwork can be read in multiple ways. Is the artist talking about the global nature of violence? Is this artwork about the environment?

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

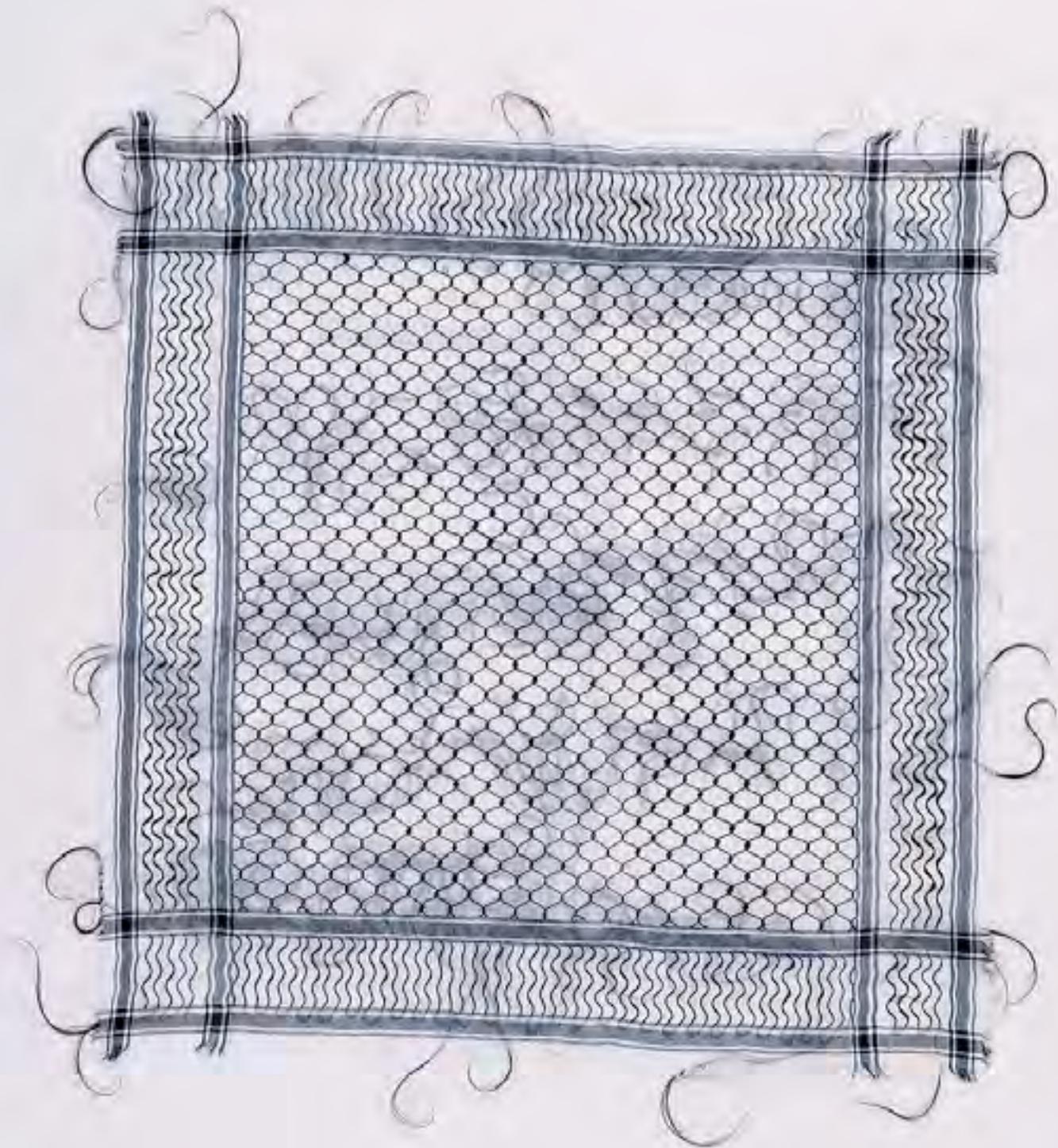
- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see.
- Spend two minutes describing what the artwork reminds them of.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.

As a group discuss their observations:

- What did they see?  
Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time.
- What adjectives would you use to describe this image?  
If students are stuck, ask them to describe things such as material, color, size, shape, line, texture, etc.
- Did the sculpture remind students of anything? Why?

Now, discuss what they think the artwork means. The meaning of an artwork is **open ended**. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.

- Discuss the meaning of the artwork with students:
- What does the title "Hotspot" mean? Why do they think that?
- How does using neon light on top of the metal add to the sculpture? What does it represent? Why did the artist outline the continents in red, instead of one small spot?
- What is the message of this sculpture? What is she critiquing?
- Why would an artist choose to be subtle or ambiguous rather than direct in their artwork?



**Keffieh**  
1993 – 1999  
human hair on cotton fabric  
117 x 122 cm

## Theme: I am an experimental *fannan*

What makes something art? What are the limits?

This exciting theme will explore artistic processes and materials from the 19th century to the present day. Students can experiment with more abstract concepts in art while debating and evaluating the definition of art. In this artwork, the artist has woven a *keffieh*, a traditional Palestinian headscarf. Along the edges of *Keffieh* you can see tendrils of what looks like loose fabric, but is really human hair. The hair seems to grow out of the scarf, as if it is unraveling, or perhaps... even alive. The *keffieh*, for many, is a symbol of Palestine's heritage, and political resistance. This garment is traditionally worn by men, so it is associated with masculinity, but all of the woven hair comes from women.

Is this art? What do your students think of Mona Hatoum's experiment with material and meaning? What do they think she is trying to explore?

Explain to students that Mona Hatoum is a contemporary artist born to a Palestinian family. She experiments with different material and method. Sometimes she uses materials that are unexpected, and even gross.

Why do artists experiment with non-traditional material?

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see.
- Spend two minutes describing what the artwork reminds them of.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.

As a group discuss their observations:

- What did they see?  
Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time.
- What adjectives would they use to describe this image?  
If students are stuck, ask them to describe things such as material, color, size, shape, line, texture, etc.
- What is this object?  
If students do not know, offer some context: A *keffieh* is a traditional headscarf, which has become a symbol of Palestine's heritage, politics, and even masculinity. This particular *keffieh* is made of cotton fabric interwoven with women's hair. Along the edges, you will find tendrils of hair poking out beyond the boundary of the fabric.
- Why does the artist draw their attention to the hair by allowing it to hang loose at the edges? How is weaving women's hair into such a symbolic object important? What might it represent?
- Look again at the *keffieh*. What patterns and lines can they identify? What do they remind you of? How do these shapes and patterns add to the ideas conveyed by this artwork?
- Do they think this art? Why or why not? Is it good or interesting art? Why do they think that?

## **Post-visit Activities**

These activities offer suggestions for reflecting on your visit, and connecting back to your classroom. We encourage you to modify these activities to suit your needs.

### **I am an observing fannan**

After your visit, have your students reflect on their experience.

Ask them to draw or describe an artwork that was memorable. Why was it memorable? What did they learn about art and artists? What new ideas did they learn from their visit?

### **I am a storytelling fannan**

How does Mona Hatoum suggest stories in her artworks? Have students choose an artwork and use it as the starting point or inspiration for their own short stories.

### **I am a critical fannan**

Ask students to think about their tour: How does an artist like Mona Hatoum incorporate the issues that she cares about into her work? How does she use material to express her ideas?

Encourage students to make an artwork addressing an issue that is important to them, and work like a contemporary artist.

Brainstorm issues that they care about. How do they want to speak on that issue? How will they depict that issue visually? How will they make the viewer think deeper on the subject?

### **I am an experimental fannan**

Mona Hatoum uses non-traditional artistic materials and techniques in her work. Ask students to make a list of all the materials they remember seeing. For example, video, furniture, neon lights, hair, marbles, etc.

Then, ask them to choose a material they are familiar with to use as the basis of an artwork.

Have students propose an artwork by making sketches, and write about why they are attracted to this particular material. Challenge students to think as purposefully and sensitively about material just as a contemporary artist would.

Give students time to create their artworks, and then have a final discussion about the work. How did the final work change from the original proposal? Why or why not?



### **Credits**

Images courtesy of Mathaf: Arab Museum and Modern Art, Alexander and Bonin, and White Cube.

Written by Rasha Al Sarraj and Maral Maral Bedoyan, Education Department.