

Laila Shereen Sakr <VJ Um Amel> is an Egyptian-American poet, designer, editor, activist, and artist. Having spent 12 years in Washington, D.C. working in the field of publishing and design on issues related to the contemporary Arab world for organizations such as Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, *Al Hayat* newspaper, and Quilting Point productions, Laila is currently a graduate student in Digital Arts and New Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her current endeavor is R-Shief, an entrepreneurial initiative in the field of knowledge production on the contemporary Arab Diaspora. She also recently designed a graphical user interface for Warren Sack's software design, Conversation Map, an exhibit running at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's show "The Art of Participation" (11/ 08-02/ 09), as well as built a social networking site for UC Santa Cruz's Graduate Division.

exhibitions

"The Public Intellectual REMixed by VJ Um Amel" (Cornell University, April 2008)
"Post-Colonial Ninja Front" at the Porter Faculty Gallery (UC Santa Cruz, February 2008)
"The Why Project" at the Green Festival (Washington, DC, September 2006)
Freedom Fire Festival (Washington, DC, February 2004)
"Awakening" at Bossa (Washington DC, October 2000)

online platforms

--> Conversation Map by Warren Sack// Designing user interface for software design by artist Warren Sack. The exhibit will be running at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from November 2008-February 2009. Perl, Python, CSS, and Flash.
--> Social Networking Site for UCSC Graduate Division// Analyze and research technologies in order to propose design and planning document for upcoming social networking site for UCSC's graduate students.
--> ccas.georgetown.edu// Designed user interface for web application built in Cold Fusion and Access db. "Web" pages using clean and efficient HTML/CSS, and Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator. Built video and photo gallery in Flash using XML.
--> arabsandterrorim.com// Designed user interface for web application built in Cold Fusion and Access db. "Web" pages using clean and efficient HTML// CSS, Ajax, and Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator. Built custom video players and web intro using ActionScript 2.0 and Flash 8.
--> guerrillapoets.org// Developed site using WordPress blog, and designed user interface in CSS, and Adobe Photoshop.
--> dexigner.com// Worked in a team of 5 people. Design conception and execution in HTML/CSS.
--> merip.org// CMS and web development in PHP/MYSQL db. Designed in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and CSS.
--> ceo4u.com// Designed user interface for web application built in PHP/MYSQL. "Web" pages using clean and efficient HTML/CSS, and Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator.

performances

Hip Hop Theater Festival (Washington, DC, July 2007)
Washington Peace Center Awards Event (Washington, DC, March 2007)
Emcee (weekly) with Thievery Corporation at Eighteenth Street Lounge (Washington, DC, Nov 06-Mar 07))
DC Coalition for Housing and Justice: Community Forum (Washington, DC, October 2006)
ROOTS in Community Workshop-hop (Washington, DC, May 2006)
Stop the Torture Vigil (Washington, DC, May 2006)
Venceremos Brigade Fundraiser (New York, NY, June 2006)
DC Coalition for Housing and Justice Awards Banquet (Washington, DC, January 2006)
Greenspace Festival (Washington, DC, January 2006)
Operation Ceasefire Concert, opening act for Thievery Corporation, Joan Baez, and Sweet Honey & the Rock (Sept 2005)
Africa in Action Dafur Rally at White House (Washington, DC, May 2005)
Workshop and Performance at Rant & Rave III (Asheville, NC, May 2005)
IMF/World Bank March (April 2005)
Ropes End Ranch Exhibition (April 2005)
Vagrant Winds: Bonfires Show (New York, NY, March 2005)
Georgetown University Living Wage Coalition Dinner (March 2005)
Workshop and Performance (Richmond, VA, March 2005)
Rhythm and Resistance Parties (Washington, DC, January 2005)
Counter-Inaugural Event Series (Washington, DC, January 2005)
Black Out Artists Collective Workshop (Washington, DC, November 2004)
Capital Heartbreak & Sweetness: 17 DC POETS, A Documentary Film By Sujewa Ekanayake (Washington, DC, 2002)

print media

“On Becoming Without Language” and “A Bunch of Feelings,” in *Language for a New Century: Contemporary Poetry from the Middle East, Asia, & Beyond*. edited by Nathalie Handal and Ravi Shankar.
“On Becoming Arab,” “Give,” “Human Skin” in *Mizna* journal, (vol. 6, July 2004).
Awakening and *Word of Mouth* chapbooks published by Mambo Nova in 2001.
Extensive graphic design portfolio online at lailashereen.com.

collaborations and collectives

Collaboration and the Archive (Santa Cruz, since 2008)
Public Media Project Group (Santa Cruz, since 2008)
Guerrilla Poetry Insurgency (Washington, DC, since 2003)
Word of Mouth (Washington, DC, since 1999)
Radius of Arab American Writers Inc. (National, since 1999)

lectures

Social Information Spaces--> Guest lecture to Warren Sack's class.//ic.ucsc.edu/~wsack/fdm171d/spring2008 (May 2008)
Urban Culture Conference -->Presented on panel: “Defining & Negotiating Public Space in the City” (October 2006)
Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project --> Led poetry writing workshop (August 2006)
Radius of Arab-American Writers Inc. (RAWI) --> Presented on panel: “Is Everything Political?”(June 2005)
American Studies Association Conference --> Presented on panel: “Disrupting Spaces” (December 2005)
National Conference of Organized Resistance --> Presented on panel: “Arab Voices of Protest”(February 2004)
Middle East Studies Association Conference --> Book exhibit for Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (Nov 2002-2006)

awards and scholarships

Florence French Scholarship, Regents' Fellowship (September 2007, April 2008)
Puffin' Grant for the Guerrilla Poetry Insurgency (March 2006)
Washington Peace Center, Peace and Justice Award (December 2005)
Teleglobe International, Monthly Master's Award for Outstanding Service (May 2000)

education

University of California, Santa Cruz, Division of the Arts --> Master of Fine Arts in Digital Arts and New Media (2009)
Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service --> Master of Arts in Arab Studies (1998)
University of Cincinnati, College of Arts and Sciences --> Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, cum laude (1993)

professional experience

Artist & Teaching Assistant --> University of California, Santa Cruz, Division of the Arts (2007-Present)
Multimedia and Publications Editor --> Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University (2002-2007)
Translation Editor and Freelance Designer --> Al Hayat newspaper, based in London, UK (2000-2002)
Graphic Designer --> Teleglobe International (1997-2000)
US Peace Corps Volunteer --> Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah University, Faculty of Arts, Fes, Morocco (1993-1995)

foreign languages

French Proficient in written and spoken. Received “advanced” on ACTFL language exam.
Arabic Proficient in written Modern Standard Arabic. Fluent in Egyptian dialect. Received “Superior” on ACTFL language exam in Moroccan dialect.