

Box 951549, Los Angeles, California 90095-1549
phone 310/825.4288
fax 310/206.7007
www.fowler.ucla.edu

Stacey Ravel Abarbanel
staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
310/825.4288

Stacey Ravel Abarbanel, staceyra@arts.ucla.edu
310/825-4288

For Immediate Use

Architecture of the Veil: An Installation by Samta Benyahia Opens Jan. 28 at the Fowler Museum at UCLA

Algerian artist Samta Benyahia employs Mediterranean Islamic architectural motifs in combination with photographs and oral poetry to explore issues of gender, space, and power. Influenced by the achievements of Algerian women artists—who have emerged on local and international art scenes in spite of the repressive politics of Algeria’s recent history— Benyahia will have her U.S. museum debut at the Fowler Museum with *Architecture of the Veil: An Installation by Samta Benyahia*, on display Jan. 28 through Sep. 2, 2007.

Architecture of the Veil will be a site-specific installation that takes its theme from the *moucharabieh*, the geometric openwork screens used in Mediterranean Islamic buildings to cover windows and balconies, allowing those inside—typically women—to view the outside world without being seen. In late 2005 Benyahia visited the Fowler Museum and was delighted to see that the Fowler building was designed in the spirit of Andalusian architecture, much like the spaces of her childhood in North Africa that have inspired her deep explorations of the *moucharabieh*.

For this installation, Benyahia will cover the Fowler’s glass entrance doors and arched interior courtyard windows with digitally printed films of a blue *moucharabieh* pattern. Encircling the courtyard in the Museum’s Goldenberg Galleria will be sixty “rosettes” consisting of sequin-embroidered motifs on netting, and eight large-scale black-and-white photographs of early 20th-century Algerian women, including the artist’s mother and aunt. Recordings of poems recited in Arabic and French will be heard throughout this installation, which will be a dynamic exploration of gender relations as well as of the tension between interior and exterior, concealment and revelation, and private versus public space.

About the Artist:

Born in Constantine, Algeria, in 1949, Samta Benyahia studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris from 1974 to 1980, and taught at the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Algiers from 1980 to 1988. She immigrated to France in 1988 and received her DEA (Diplôme d’Études Approfondies) in Arts Plastiques from the University of Paris, VIII. Currently she works and lives in Paris. During the past 20 years, Benyahia has participated in group and solo exhibitions in venues throughout the world, including the Dak’Art Biennale de Dakar, Senegal (2004), the Venice Biennial (2003), the Museum of Modern Art, U.K. (2003), and the Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden (2004), as well as at many European galleries.

Additional Information:

Architecture of the Veil: An Installation by Samta Benyahia is made possible by the generous support of Barbara and Joe Goldenberg and Etant donnés: The French-American Fund for Contemporary Art. Additional support provided by Air France. Special thanks to the Levantine Cultural Center and the French Consulate of Los Angeles.

The Fowler is open Wed. through Sun., from noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thurs., from noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mon. and Tues. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Parking is available for a maximum of \$8 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call (310) 825-4361 or visit fowler.ucla.edu.

Related Programs:

Opening Day, Sun., Jan. 28, 2007

Galleries open 12–5 pm

Artist Walkthrough, 2 pm and 4 pm

Artist Samta Benyahia discusses her installation and examines how she inverts the traditional power structure by making women, who are normally hidden from view, visible through her work. Light refreshments.

Sun., Feb. 4, 2007 1–4 pm

Kids in the Courtyard: Inside/Outside

Experiment with polygons and geometric patterns to create designs like those in Mediterranean Islamic architecture. Using brilliant blue contact paper, make a screen inspired by Architecture of the Veil: An Installation by Samta Benyahia.