



The Fifth Riwaq Biennale

June 1, 2014 to June 1, 2016
Courtesy of RIWAQ

Cinema Sayyara!

A project by Phil Collins

May 19 – June 16, 2015, 9:00 p.m. daily

You are sitting in a car, but not your own car. You actually have no idea whose car this is. All you know is that it was lovingly placed on the rooftop of a historical building, here in downtown Ramallah, and that you've been watching a 1970s Egyptian Western, a French political musical, and an experimental program. The smell of popcorn fills the air, and the radio dial is a little buttery with your greasy fingerprints.



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enthusiasm, and collective ownership, within the neighborhood and beyond.

“Cinema Sayyara!” is a rooftop drive-in cinema by the artist Phil Collins, commissioned by the fifth Riwaq Biennale. It is the latest model of Collins’ “Auto-Kino!” The first exhibition was rolled out in Berlin five years ago. The new film program for Ramallah has been collectively selected by artists and filmmakers whom Collins invited as guest programmers, as well as by residents of the Beit Saa neighborhood.

The project runs for only four weeks and offers a maximum of twenty-one seats per night. But if you live nearby, you can watch the program from the street, your balcony, or your favourite cafe by using a standard 98.9 FM frequency to tune into the soundtrack on the radio.

Cinema Sayyara! thinks through existing structures in order to produce new forms of public display, and to create new audiences in the process. Its host venue, Beit Saa, is a 1910 edifice newly renovated by Riwaq. Eventually, Beit Saa is planned to join the ranks of the many museums in Palestine. But instead of a homage to the past in the name of some faraway future, *Cinema Sayyara!* proposes a celebration of the here and now. It suggests that contemporary art, architectural conservation, and cultural policy need not be in conflict with dynamic local engagements, and it is ready to spark a sense of curiosity,

The Riwaq Biennale is named after an institution, not a place. It was initiated in 2005 to expand upon Riwaq's approach aiming at the revitalization of the historic centers of fifty local towns and villages. In other words, this biennale comes with an agenda. It is invested in Riwaq's efforts to clarify the growing political and epistemic significance of architectural heritage in Palestine. With its concrete political outlook and its durational, discursive approach, Riwaq has always challenged what a biennale can be. This time, the Fifth Riwaq Biennale is spanning two entire years, beginning in June 2014 and ending in May 2016.

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