



بيت الشعر

HOUSE OF POETRY

Palestinian House of Poetry

Established in 18/2/1998

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Achievements and Future Prospects

Since her Majesty, Poetry is a corner-stone in the formulation of the project of Arab revival, the Palestinian House of Poetry has been established to be the third house in the Arab world, the others are in Tunis, Sharqa and Morocco, other houses have been established since then, in Jordan and London .

As a recognition of the importance of poetry several Palestinian poets, writers and artists collaborated to transform the idea of “the house of poetry” into a reality, with the support of his excellency, the president of the State of Palestine, Yasser Arafat .

The establishing committee of the house is headed by the poet Al-Mutawakel Taha and a declaration of the establishment of the house of poetry, was issued in February 1998 .

The editorial board of the house consists of: Al-Mutawakel Taha, Ghassan Zaqtan, Jamal Afghani, Hussein Barguotti, Murad Sudani, Mohammad Hilmi Risheh, Saddam Rantawi and Sima Keishe .

Since the establishment of the house of poetry, several steps have been taken to open the doors of Palestine to the rest of the world and to create a world wide awareness of the Palestinian cultural heritage .

The house of poetry has taken the responsibility of delivering its voice world wide, so the first step taken was the establishment of “Al-Zahira” house of publishing & distribution from where all our poetic works, critic studies and documenta tion testimonies are published .

The general aim of the institution has been to create a solid infrastructure that records the Palestinian poetical heritage, but also welcomes the new trends generating in the Arab world and the rest of the international countries .

Within this context, it's of outmost importance for the house of poetry to recognize, acknowledge and support the new talents of the country. Furthermore and most of all, we attempt to motivate those future generations of poets to join the poetical life in the country and thus contribute to the construction of a solid cultural life in Palestine. we have published their works either as separate poetry collections through "Al-Zahira" or through "Al-Shu'ara" or (Akwas) magazines, which are published by the house .

"Al-Shu'ara" is a specialized quarterly which is considered now one of the most important cultural magazines published in the Mediterranean region .

The house of poetry was able to distribute "Al-Shua'ra" throughout the world, until now, we have issued (16) issues, furthermore "Al-Shua'ra" publishes in every issue a special file about poetry in one of the five continents, not to forget to mention that the most famous Arab poets and critics contribute in the magazine, of which we publish an Arabic issue in Jordan and Beirut .

(Akwas) is another quarterly magazine its main aim is to publish all kinds of art (Cinema, theatre, story, novel, music, poetry ... etc.) .

The house of poetry has published Five issues of (Akwas) until now, the important thing is that (Akwas) Publishes the work of young people and concentrates on important subjects to discuss and confront .

The house of poetry had successfully coordinated the first Palestinian poetry festival which is supposed to be held annually .

To the festival we invited several well-known poets and critics from different Arab Countries, they came and witnessed the suffering of the Palestinian people .

Also, we, in the house of poetry, prepare a stable yearly activity through which Palestinian young poets meet in one place and are provided with recognition and importance . The first meeting was held in Gaza where they stayed for three days exchanging ideas, and organizing several poetry readings .

As for the publications, the house has already published through “Al-Zahira” more than fifty poetry books, ten of the books are for Iraqi poets living under siege, a book is published quarterly with “Al-Shu’ara” magazine called the “poet’s book” . The Palestinian poetic tradition has been kept in the dark for a long time given the immigration of a large part of its population and the situation of the remaining ones living under the Israeli occupation . The work of its artists and poets has not yet had the chance of being recorded and made public. Thus, the house of poetry has taken the responsibility to search into the work and lives of Palestinian poets and to make them known to Palestinians themselves and the rest of world, to achieve this goal the house prepared the Biography of Palestinian poets which consists of (350) poets already available on the internet .

By establishing “Poetry Camps” in the Palestinian universities, which are dedicated to reading, discussing and writing poetry, we provide an excellent opportunity for younger generations to work and to be discovered so that their special works are published in (Akwas) .

As for the activities, the house of poetry had already organized more than (35) poetry study days and cultural seminars in co-ordination with the Palestinian Cultural Ministry, Writers Union, Palestinian Broadcasting Company, Qatan institution, Khalil Sakakini institution, in addition to our participation in several Arab and international festivals .

The house of poetry strives to make poetry an entity that stands by itself in the realm of arts in Palestine, within this context, it is of outmost importance for the house to recognize, acknowledge, and support the new talents of the country.

Furthermore and most of all, we attempt to motivate those future generations, thus, we declared about the award of the house of poetry which is made available

each year for those poets and poetesses that need support and encouragement .

Recently, the Palestinian house of poetry, worked in co-ordination with “Tamer” institution on a program to support and motivate the new talented boys & girls who publish their works in “Yaraa’t” the weekly newspaper published by “Tamer”.

The house of poetry adapted a long-term strategy to expand and to stay in contact with poets in other countries, thus, we started to publish a file in each issue of “Al-Shu’ara” magazine about an international poet in different countries such as France, Norway, Sweden, Russia, United States, Britain and Africa .

In addition to that we try to collect the Palestinian poetry in the exile and translate it to make it available to the public, the translation department is currently working on this project, some of the texts will be published soon by “Al-Zahira”.

The Palestinian house of poetry aims at achieving some of its projects such as:

- Poetry study days arranged by the house on monthly basis to study works of deceased Palestinian poets .
- Establishing new cultural centers and building murals and monuments for poets of which the aim is to honor the Palestinian poets each in his country .
- Poetry scholarship: the house of poetry would like to start a program by which a total of five scholarships are made available, each year, for those poets and poetesses that need support and encouragement moreover, the house of poetry intends to publish the creative texts produced by those who were awarded .
- The international forum project: the house intends to invite poets and poetesses from all over the world to come to a festival in Palestine devoted for poetry and criticism, the idea is to break down the cultural siege imposed upon us .
- English newsletter: devoted to brief the Palestinian cultural heritage and activities to make it available to the international public.

- “ImamAl-Shafi” annual forum in Gaza: specialists in Islamic studies, orientalist and others will be invited to participate in this forum on “Al-Shafai”, one of the most important Palestinian poets and an internationally famous muslim theologian. .

- The Documentary Film project: it aims at creating audio-visual autobiographies of poets, the house has already finished the studies needed for documenting the lives of (10) poets .

- The translation project: it aims at translating poetry to and from Arabic in order to further expose Palestinian poetry to international cultural, and vice versa .

- Jerusalem project, the idea is to collect as much as possible of literary, poetic writings on Jerusalem .

- The video library project: the aim is to collect TV, cinema and video documents on Arab Palestinian poetry, and to do our own documentation too .

- The library project: it aims of creating a library of Palestinian poetry all through the ages and to make it available for scholars and other audiences .

- Popular edition project: it aims at printing poetry collections with the cheapest possible price to make poetry available for everyone .

The Palestinian house of poetry maintains the cultural bridges between different cultural to deepen democracy and civilization’s dialogue to establish humanitarian law .