



# SomethingElse

@The Citadel

Since 2015



قلعة صلاح الدين الأيوبي  
SALAH AL-DIN  
CITADEL

THIRD EDITION



Darb 1718  
EGYPTIAN CONTEMPORARY  
ART AND CULTURE CENTER

# About Darb1718



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Darb 1718 is a non-profit contemporary arts and cultural centre located in the Fustat area of Old Cairo, Egypt. Essentially a development organization, Darb 1718 holds a unique position as it combines high-level international culture with active community engagement. It was founded in 2008 with facilities that include a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces that host different art mediums and cultural events.

Darb 1718 operates on the belief that access to culture is fundamental for the development of a democratic society and vital for the development of freedom of expression and opinion.



# Mission

Darb 1718's mission is to empower and inspire emerging Egyptian artists, and increase public access to the contemporary art. Darb 1718 aims to bridge cultural, social, and economical differences through arts and culture.



# Darb Activities

Darb 1718 houses two art exhibition spaces, a theater, dance as well as concert stages, an outdoor cinema for independent film screenings, gardens and rooftops. In addition, Darb 1718, established an artist residency to accommodate international artists and curators.





# Darb over the last 15 years

98 Exhibitions  
Over 400 Concerts  
24 Dance Performance  
Over 720 Workshops  
Over 200 Film Screening





# SomethingElse

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"Something Else," is a non-profit independent visual arts initiative that attempts to support Egyptian and international contemporary art through an Art Biennale idealized by Chief Curator Simon Njami and Artistic Director Moataz Nasr.

Something Else, Off Biennale Cairo international art event consists of art exhibitions, art performances, films, Music, diverse workshops, street art, talks and lectures by local as well as international artists and art connoisseurs that take place in diverse art and cultural spaces in Cairo. " The event aims to shake the grounds and attract international attention to Egypt as a vibrant art producer within the regional and international art scene.



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# Previous Editions

The festival's first edition was launched in November 2015 with a goal to introduce new and progressive presentations to the Egyptian art scene and to peel off the stereotyped concept around the role of art in the society. The first and second editions of Something Else, hosted more than 110 (local and international) artists, curators, performers, musicians and art connoisseurs. The artworks and performances took place all around Cairo; in cultural centers, Embassies as well as various locations in old Cairo.



# SE I

2015

Darb 1718

**7 Curators**  
**110 Artists**

# SE II

2018

Darb 1718 & Downtown

**12 Curators**  
**120 Artists**

# SE III

2023

The Citadel

**17 Curators**  
**>120 Artists**





# Media Coverage



[Darb 1718's 'Something Else-Off Biennale' Kicks Off in November](#)

[Darb 1718's 'Something Else-Off Biennale' exhibition](#)

[OFF BIENNALE CAIRO](#)

[AtWork](#)

[Hazem El Mestikawy](#)

[OFF Cairo Biennale: 'The Walls Book' by Stefano Cagol](#)

[Darb 1718's Something Else - Off Biennale: A full list of participating Egyptian and int'l artists](#)



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# Something Else III - This year

Something Else III will include over 15 curators and 100 contemporary visual artists from across the world. Curators will be led by Simon Njami. The event is will not only aim to be both low waste and low impact, but exhibits will include sustainability and the climate crisis as thematic areas to explore.

Something Else, aims to explore the meaning of contemporary art today. Something Else III will bringing various disciplines of creative talents together in order to provide a platform for expression and visual nourishment. Diversity and inclusion are key ingredients in the Something Else experience; as we attempt to challenge and toy with the broader questions of what is contemporary art in our present moment and explore the walls beyond that question.





# Something Else and The Citadel

With previous editions, Something Else was spread around Cairo neighborhoods with one focal area. This year, we aim to showcase the importance of celebrating our history by engaging in an imagination of a future, through situating Something Else in a historical site, celebrated as a city within a city. The Citadel with its diverse historical layers, offers layers of storytelling, an undeniable assemblage and portrayal of our rich diversity.

The location not only juxtaposes history with future possibilities –with its endless potentialities of contemporary activities—but also is situated as a premise that holds the past within its walls but sheds light on a city to become. We want to unfold “What then?” against the backdrop of “what was.”



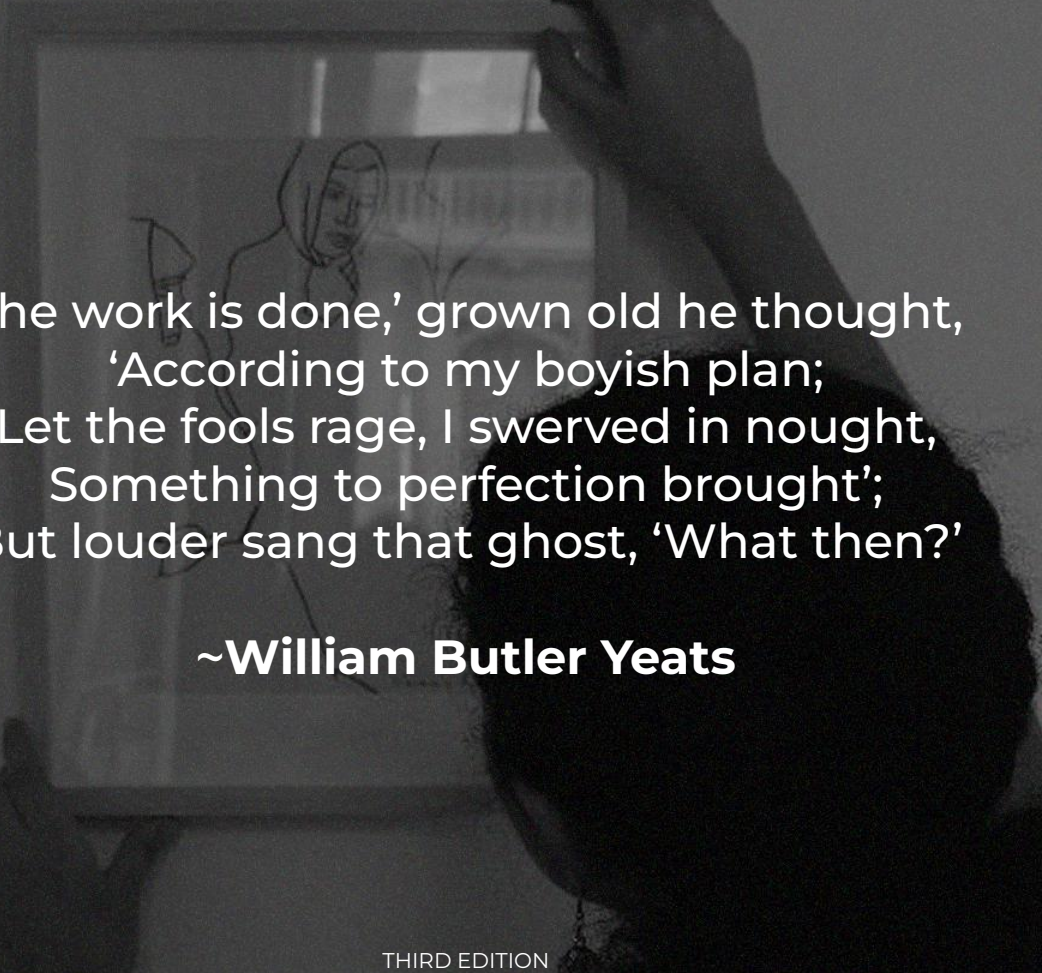
The Citadel of Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) is one of the most iconic monuments in Islamic Cairo, and among the most impressive defensive fortresses dating to the Middle Ages. Its strategic location on the Muqattam Hills gave it a formidable defensive position, and offered, as it still does today, an unrestricted panoramic view of Cairo.

Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi was the first to order the construction of a fortress over the Muqattam Hills in (572 AH/ 1176 AD), but it was not completed during his lifetime. This was achieved during the reign of Sultan al-Kamel ibn al-Adel (604 AH/1207 AD) who decided to reside in it, making it the official residence of the rulers of Egypt. In the mid-nineteenth century, Khedive Ismail moved the official residence to Abdeen Palace in downtown Cairo.

The Citadel witnessed some of the most significant events in Egyptian history from the time it was built to the end of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty, which was in power from the early nineteenth century until the 1952 revolution, when the modern Egyptian republic was born. Many monuments were added to the Citadel over the centuries, providing visitors today with an array of places to visit, such as the Mosque of Muhammad Ali Pasha, which dominates the Citadel. Other places to visit include the mosque of the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, the Ottoman-era Sulayman Pasha al-Khadim Mosque, as well as a number of museums such as the Police Museum, Al-Jawhara Palace Museum, and the Military Museum.







The work is done,' grown old he thought,  
'According to my boyish plan;  
Let the fools rage, I swerved in nought,  
Something to perfection brought';  
But louder sang that ghost, 'What then?'

~William Butler Yeats

# Theme

On this historical site, Citadel of Saladin, we are going to convey ancient memories in order to dream of new futures. It has always been foolish, as suggested by the poet W.B. Yeats, to ever think that the work was done. The work is never done. On the contrary. It is a never-ending process of awareness and actions. There is always something else to be discovered, something else to be formulated, something else to be invented. This our commitment.

We shall respond to question posed by the Yeats.

What Then?

Our answer will be Something Else.

**Simon Njami**  
Chief Curator



# Objectives

Although Egypt is making considerable efforts to develop access to culture in general, it still remains under endowed and isolated, a paradox when considered that it was for millennia one of the worldwide richest culture and art producing countries. The project's objectives are the following:

- Push further for a progressive presentation of the art scene in Egypt and the Middle East and to move away from stereotypes by creating this dynamic and unexpected fresh space of expression
- Build solid relationships between Egypt and the world in the field of contemporary art.
- Contribute to the progression of a contemporary art culture within Egypt, based on the participation of contemporary artists in different fields with different modes of expression through visual arts.
- Open new communication channels to the international contemporary art scene to allow mutual enrichment, open new and alternative horizons, pass frontiers and to explore Africa, the Middle East and Gulf countries.



**Something Else III** will include over **100 artists** from across the world with particular focus on African and Middle Eastern Artist. Exhibits will be curated by fifteen curators, lead by Chief Curator Simon Njami.

In an effort to expose the diversity of contemporary art , both well-known as well as new and emerging artists will be invited to reflect on the question **What Then?** in a variety of disciplines including documentary and independent film, installation, video installations, photography, and fine and performing arts.

Experts in the field will comment on the different artistic artwork represented, during public discussions talks with artists and cultural actors. An illustrated publication highlighting artist will include reflections of cultural actors.



### **Concerts:**

The music program will represent the entire spectrum of musical acts of the Egyptian underground scene, ranging from emerging talents to well established artists, both live Performers and DJs. Evening will be carefully curated to bring together visual and audio expression to create an immersive experience that answers the question What Then?



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### **WorkShops:**

Darb 1718 has over ten years of experience in organizing a wide variety of creative, hands-on workshops for all ages. Something Else III will include a dynamic range of workshops providing a space for participants to express and create freely. The workshops will harmonize with exhibits blurring the line between Artist and Audience, give guests the opportunity to submerge in to the cultural experience.

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### **Talks:**

Through a series of talks, Something Else III will transform Cairo and the Citadel of Saladin into a space for discussions on the importance of culture and Contemporary Art in answering some of societies deepest questions: How can society, during uncertain times, try to build something else? The speakers will be, invited to reflect on the theme What Then? and the construction and dissemination of the “history and effects of art on contemporary society.”



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# The Program

- 15 international curators are invited to organize 10 art exhibitions 3 exhibition opening events that include performing arts
- More than 100 artists present their work to the Egyptian and international audience.
- 16 workshops are organized covering different artistic scopes. The workshops will be open for emerging Egyptian artists.
- 16 panel discussions are organized to discuss important current art topics and its relations with the contemporary scene.
- 8 experimental film screenings are curated within the programme.
- Egyptian artists cooperating with international curators and artists on developing and presenting their artistic projects and gaining experience from the whole process.
- Local and international media coverage of the exhibitions and events.



# Something Else III Output

For our event we are expecting to have local and international visitors. Local visitors are represented in press, personalities from cultural centers in Cairo such as Goethe Institute and the French Cultural Center (both supporters of the project), Embassies, art collectors, gallerists, art connoisseurs, artists, curators, art students and visitors of art events.

International visitors such as: press, curators, artists, personalities from the international art scene, speakers, etc. Moreover, street art events will attract an extra audience, during and post execution of our activities. We expect to have 100,000 visitors throughout the whole month besides the public art exposure.





**Cultural Partners:** The participation of galleries, art studios, culture centres will be crucial to the success of Cairo Off Biennale. In order to develop contemporary art scene in Cairo, Something else needs to include a diverse range of artist and cultural actors.

**Independent artists:** following approach of transparency and equal opportunities, a call For proposal will be launched, addressing young students, independent artists to participate with their work. A list of criteria will be developed and will be announced through website of the project and social media channels.







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## Moataz Nasr – Artistic Director

An Egyptian painter, sculptor, multimedia artist and self proclaimed cultural activists, and founder of Darb 1718. The space was founded in 2008 as a contemporary art and culture center located in the Fustat area of Old Cairo.

## Simon Njami - Chief Curator

born in 1962 in Lausanne, a writer and an independent curator, lecturer, art critic and essayist. Njami is the co-founder of Revue Noire, a journal of contemporary African and extra-occidental art. His new exhibition «The Divine Comedy – Heaven, Hell, Purgatory by Contemporary African Artists» was previously shown at The SCAD Museum of Art from October 16 to January 25 and at MMK (Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main) in 2014.

# Confirmed Curators



Elena Abbiatici, Italy  
Sumesh Sharma, India  
Power Anchor, Sweden  
Sara Rossling, Sweden  
Birta Gudjunsdottir, Iceland  
Laurie Ann Farrell, USA  
Leif-Magne Tangen, Norway  
Hanna Wildow, Sweden  
Sara Catalan, Spain  
Diana Padron, Spain  
Monica Hirano, Brazil  
Khadija Hamdi, Tunisia/Spain  
Tomasz Wendland, Poland

# Confirmed Artists



Stefano Cagol, Italy  
Fleur Blumee, France  
Juan Pedro Fabra Guemberena, Sweden/ Uruguay  
Feasal Samra, Saudi Arabia/France  
Nikita Kravtsov, Ukraine  
Yasmine El Meleegy, Egypt  
Rida Abd El-Salam, Egypt  
Nina Esber, Lebanon/Egypt  
Saba Nikman, Iran  
Amr Elras, Yemen  
Maria Griza, Italy  
Amira Parree, Egypt/France  
Rida Abdel-Salam, Egypt  
Youssef Limoud, Egypt  
Ahmed Basiony, Egypt



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