Post your photos of our exhibition on social media using the hashtag #OMABoundless
In his classic book, *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran described an immigrant’s passage as a transformation from “a boundless drop to a boundless ocean.” Gibran was a young boy when he passed through Ellis Island in 1895. His mother took her children from their home in the mountains of northern Lebanon to start a new life in the U.S. Gibran would go on to become a seminal figure in American culture as a thinker, writer, and artist. Our exhibition, exploring the work of immigrant artists in the United States with Arab and Iranian heritage, begins with a drawing by Gibran.

I conceived of the exhibition *A Boundless Drop to a Boundless Ocean* as a kind of visual narrative, one that sheds light onto the diverse, complex, and layered histories of the American immigrant experience. Each of the twenty-one artists on view has developed a distinct visual vocabulary. They draw on color and design, technique and materials, composition and iconography to convey meaning. As I worked with the curators at the Orlando Museum of Art to consider the selections for this show, recurring themes emerged from the artworks. In their own ways, artists were narrating the immigrant’s journey, searching for a sense of belonging, questioning fixed cultural identities, tracing the lingering aftermath of wars, and bearing witness to history.

We organized the exhibition as a narrative that unfolds in circular fashion, because this story has no clear beginning or end. And we wanted the gallery to feel like an open space, to give you an opportunity to see the works in dialogue with one another. Though we have arranged the hanging of the artworks thematically, most of the artists’ work speak to several of these notions. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian’s *Second Family—Triangle* (2011) anchors our exhibition. We see ourselves reflected in the mirrors of her artwork—not as a singular whole but as fragments that shift depending on our position. Monir always said art opens our imaginations to “infinite possibilities.”

- Shiva Balaghi, Ph.D.
  January 2021
Kahlil Gibran
*Untitled*, 1903
Conté crayon on paper
Collection of Telfair Museum of Art
Gift of Mary Haskell Minis

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian
*Second Family - Triangle*, 2011
Mirror, reverse-glass painting and plaster on wood
The Alfond Collection of Contemporary Art, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College

Pouran Jinchi
*Fly Like Dandelions 1 Diptych*, 2020
Gesso and ink on canvas
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line Gallery, Dubai

Pouran Jinchi
*The Book of Dandelions 1*, 2020
Ink on paper and card
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line Gallery, Dubai

Pouran Jinchi
*Dandelion Clouds*, 2020
Installation of 14 individual paintings
Gesso and ink on wood panel
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line Gallery, Dubai
Huguette Caland  
*Self-Portrait (Bribes de Corps)*, 1973  
Oil on linen  
Courtesy of Caland Family

Huguette Caland  
*Corps Bleu (Bribes de Corps)*, 1973  
Oil on linen  
Courtesy of Caland Family

Huguette Caland  
*Bribes de Corps*, 1973  
Oil on linen  
Courtesy of Caland Family

Huguette Caland  
*Yellow, Purple, and Red Lines*, 2011  
Mixed media on canvas  
Courtesy of Caland Family

Kour Pour  
*(Untitled) Migration Painting*, 2016-2017  
Acrylic on canvas over panel  
Courtesy of the artist
THE SEARCH FOR A SENSE OF BELONGING

Youssef Nabil
Île d’If, Self-Portrait – Marseille, 2011
Hand colored gelatin silver print
Collection of the Orlando Museum of Art,
Purchased with funds from Acquisition Trust

Youssef Nabil
Self-Portrait Essaouira, 2011
Hand colored gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist and Nathalie Obadia Gallery,
Paris/Brussels/Dubai

Youssef Nabil
Self-Portrait with Pyramid, Cairo, 2009
Hand colored gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist and Nathalie Obadia Gallery,
Paris/Brussels/Dubai

Youssef Nabil
Self-Portrait with Roots, Los Angeles, 2008
Hand colored gelatin silver print
Courtesy of the artist and Nathalie Obadia Gallery,
Paris/Brussels

Ala Ebtekar
Thirty-six Views of the Moon, 2019
59 individual cyanotypes on found book pages
exposed to moonlight
Winter Edition
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line Gallery,
Ala Ebtekar
*Luminous Ground*, 2020
Cyanotype on handmade ceramic tiles exposed by sunlight
Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line Gallery, Dubai

Jordan Nassar
*To Climb, To Walk, To Breathe*, 2020
Hand embroidered cotton on cotton on canvas
Collection of Mary Patricia Anderson Pence

Farah Al Qasimi
*Falcon Hospital 2 (Blue Glove)*, 2016
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist and Helena Anrather Gallery

Farah Al Qasimi
*It’s Not Easy Being Seen*, 2016
Archival inkjet print
Courtesy of the artist and Helena Anrather Gallery

Amir H. Fallah
*The Love Letter*, 2019
Acrylic and collage on canvas
Collection of Jorge M. Pérez
Diana Al-Hadid
*Tomorrow’s Superstitions*, 2008
Mixed media, including polystyrene, polymer gypsum, steel, silver leaf and paint
Collection of Robert B. Feldman

Ali Banisadr
*All The Hemispheres*, 2013
Oil on linen
Collection of Mark Dean and Alberto Moreno-Barreto

Ali Banisadr
*Cannons Hidden in Roses*, 2019
Hand-colored aquatint on photogravure, spitbite, drypoint and burnishing on Hahnemuhle Cooperplate
Bright White 300 gsm Paper
Courtesy of the artist and Cristea Roberts Gallery, London

Ali Banisadr
*Nocturne*, 2019
Hand-colored aquatint on photogravure, spitbite, drypoint and burnishing on Hahnemuhle Cooperplate
Bright White 300 gsm Paper
Courtesy of the artist and Cristea Roberts Gallery, London

Michael Rakowitz
*The invisible enemy should not exist*, 2020
Artifacts from cardboard, Middle Eastern packaging and newspapers, glue, museum labels
Courtesy of the artist and Barbara Wien Gallery, Berlin
Nicky Nodjoumi
*Here is Aleppo*, 2017
Ink on paper
Courtesy of the artist and Taymour Grahne Projects, London

**QUESTIONING IDENTITIES**

Shiva Ahmadi
*Ascend*, 2017
Single-channel video animation with sound
Courtesy of the artist and Haines Gallery, San Francisco

Arghavan Khosravi
*Simurgh (The Muslim Ban Series)*, 2017
Acrylic and inkjet print
(of scanned images of artist’s Iranian passport)
Private Collection

Lalla Essaydi
*Harem #14c*, 2009
Chromogenic print mounted to aluminum
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Sherin Guirguis
*Untitled (El Sokareya)*, 2013
Plywood
Courtesy of the artist
Hayv Kahraman
*Not Quite Human 7, 2019*
Oil on linen
Private Collection

Hayv Kahraman
*Not Quite Human 6, 2019*
Oil on linen
Collection of Susan and Michael Hershfield

**WITNESSING HISTORY**

Shirin Neshat
*Nida (Patriots), 2012*
Ink on LE silver gelatin print
Collection of the Orlando Museum of Art
OMA Acquisition Trust

Siah Armajani
*Oil Belongs to US, 1957*
Ink, watercolor, and wax seal on paper
Collection of Neda Nobari

Siah Armajani
*Post Office, 1957*
Pencil, ink, and wax seal on paper
Private Collection
Kahlil Gibran, Untitled, 1903, Conté crayon on paper, Collection of Telfair Museum of Art, Gift of Mary Haskell Minis
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