

## In New Exhibition Nearly 50 Arab Women Forget Trump's Travel Ban And Revel In Female Lust

02/10/2017 02:49 pm ET | Updated Feb 11, 2018



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About a year ago, Irish actress Róisín O' Loughlin stumbled across a collection of Arabic poems compiled by Abdullah al-Udhari. Entitled "Classical Poems by Arab Women," the verses — which read like short, intense pop lyrics - were written by women over the span of thousands of years, mostly between the 7th and 12th centuries.

One of those poems, by Wallada bint al-Mustakfi in 11th century Cordoba, stayed with O'Loughlin long after she'd set down the collection:

*"I am made for higher goals and by Allah*

*I am going my way with pride.*

*I allow my lover to touch my cheek*

*And bestow my kiss on him who craves it"*

Think Muslim women back then were submissive?

Turns out, O’Loughlin told me, Wallada was “this amazing Muslim poet and the daughter of a Caliph who inherited her father’s estate and ran her own palace and literary salon, which many of the great minds of the time attended. She gave lessons to the women of her court and held her love affairs openly and unapologetically, writing rhymes in praise of her lover, Ibn Zaydún, and when things went bad, lambasting him. This was in today’s Spain. Why have so many of us never heard about her?”

Moved to introduce the poems to a modern audience, O’Loughlin decided to curate an exhibition. Called “Radical Love: Female Lust,” the show features 48 female artists, half of Arab and Muslim heritage, responding to the Arabic poetry written by women over a thousand years ago.

Having already created quite a buzz long before it opens (appropriately) on February 14th at The Crypt Gallery in London, the show features both emerging and acclaimed artists from around the world, including Syrian artists who have been displaced, such as Yara Said, who designed the [flag](#) for refugee athletes competing in the recent Olympics (inspired by the life preserver she wore while fleeing Syria)

Given that the show is especially timely in light of the current court hearings regarding President Donald Trump’s executive order restricting immigration and refugee resettlement from seven Muslim countries, featured below are six artists from four of those banned nations, along with the ancient poems these contemporary artists are engaging with.

[...]

5. Nadine Faraj (Canadian Iraqi) “Only A Thrust Rocks Out My Strains Until My Blues Fly Away”



*Dahna bint Mas-hal*

*Basra, Iraq, 8th Century*

Lay off,

You can't turn me on with a cuddle,

a kiss or scent.

Only a thrust rocks out my strains

until the ring on my toe falls in my sleeve

and my blues fly away

Adapted from the Internet:

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/in-new-exhibition-nearly\\_b\\_14643316](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/in-new-exhibition-nearly_b_14643316)