

# Palestinian Artist Barred from Attending New Museum Show

Ben Davis, Monday, July 14, 2014



Khaled Jarrar.

The New Museum's sprawling "[Here and Elsewhere](#)" show of art from the Arab world, opening to the public on Wednesday, July 16, is the result of more than a year of research by star curator Massimiliano Gioni and his team, and promises to introduce "urgent questions and new aesthetics to US audiences." It will, however, be missing one voice.

Ramallah-based Palestinian artist [Khaled Jarrar](#) was scheduled to be in New York for the festivities, and was supposed to play a key role in the opening days of "Here and Elsewhere" as part of a [panel discussion](#) moderated by curatorial associate Natalie Bell. Instead, Jarrar says he remains trapped in the West Bank after being turned back by Israel on Sunday while trying to travel to Jordan to catch an international flight to the event.

In an email, Gioni confirmed the story to artnet News: “Unfortunately there isn’t much to comment about the sad news that Khaled Jarrar was not allowed to leave Ramallah and travel to NY. His work is so invested in witnessing reality and capturing history as it unravels in front of his eyes, that sadly it is only too appropriate that reality and history would get in the way of his life.”

The news was broken by [Noa Yachot](#), writing for [the website +972](#), who quotes Jarrar about his experience at the border crossing:

After a very long wait and without understanding what was happening, I was informed that there are “security reasons” that will prevent me from traveling until the 1st of August. For now, that means that I missed my morning flight from Amman to New York, that I will miss the opening of the show at the New Museum, and that I will miss my ‘artist talk’ with Lamia Joreige and Charif Kiwan, with Natalie Bell, that was supposed to happen on the 16th of July.

Yesterday was the longest day of my life and a day of humiliation. I felt real racism on the part of the security at Allenby Bridge. When this one soldier was talking to his superior officer, I understood he called me “zevel” [“garbage,” in Hebrew -NY]. I shouted at him that I was no “zevel” and he was impolite to call me that. No one listened to me, like I did not even exist.

Jarrar is perhaps best known for his project that involves him [creating a passport](#) for the non-existent state of Palestine. Explaining the motivations behind that initiative two years ago, Jarrar [told Rolling Stone](#), “Why should Israelis be the only ones to decide who gets to enter Palestine? I wanted to welcome people, as a Palestinian, to Palestine.”

His piece in “Here and Elsewhere,” the 70-minute-long film *Infiltrators* (2012), will still be seen on the New Museum’s third floor.

Jarrar’s plight—while perhaps seeming like a small detail compared to [the surge of military violence](#) that has seen Israeli forces kill over 170 in Gaza, three quarters of them civilians—has some particular symbolic value in that his work, including *Infiltrators*, deals directly with the travel restrictions faced by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank.