

MISSING EXHIBITION

WHAT HAPPENED??

[PALESTINIAN MUSEUM EXHIBITION "LOST" BY AMERICAN AIRPORT SECURITY ON 1 NOVEMBER 2003](#) 25 November 2003 - Internet release

WHAT CAN WE DO??

[MISSING EXHIBITION UPDATE](#) 10 December

[Make a Donation](#)

25 November 2003 - Internet release

PALESTINIAN MUSEUM EXHIBITION "LOST" BY AMERICAN AIRPORT SECURITY ON 1 NOVEMBER 2003

The highly acclaimed travelling exhibitions of the Palestine Costume Archive have been displayed in Europe, Australia, Asia and the United States since 1995, with five museum quality exhibitions touring worldwide. The most popular of these is [Symbolic defiance: Palestinian costume and embroidery since 1948](#) which last year was displayed at the First World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies in Germany and this year was to have been displayed in the United States at the MESA 2003 (Middle East Studies Association of North America) conference in Anchorage and the Arab Festival in Seattle, with sponsorship provided by the Alaska Humanities Forum (Anchorage), Arab Festival and Humanities WA (Seattle), MESA and Saudi Aramco World.

However on 1 November 2003 the exhibition (which was being couriered over to MESA 2003 by the Archive's director) was taken for a security check/ x ray at Los Angeles airport's Terminal 4 and has not been seen since. All attempts by the Palestine Costume Archive, Qantas, Alaskan Airlines and MESA to locate the exhibition over the last three weeks have totally failed and the search has now been abandoned by all but the Archive.

The "loss" of this exhibition under such circumstances raises major concerns for all museums and curators worldwide currently proposing to tour Middle Eastern exhibitions to the United States and is a matter that should be further investigated before other such "losses" of Arab or Islamic cultural material occur. For the non profit Palestine Costume Archive - the only museum to make exhibitions of Palestinian cultural material available on the international museum travelling exhibition circuit - the loss is devastating and certainly puts in doubt the proposed 2005 tour to the United States and Canada of another popular Archive exhibition, [Portraits without names: Palestinian costume](#), which contains a great many rare and irreplaceable 19th and early 20th century Palestinian costumes on loan from international museums and private collections.

To withdraw availability of Palestinian cultural exhibitions to American museums and conference venues such as MESA at this time is against everything the Palestine Costume Archive works for. It is therefore extremely important to the Archive to not only quickly re-curate **Symbolic defiance: Palestinian costume and embroidery since 1948** but to do so in a form that can be risked in the United States, where the exhibition has several venues confirmed in 2004.

To achieve this the Archive proposes to re-curate **Symbolic defiance** in two separate display packages: one with a costume and textile component (as displayed at the First World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies, which will tour to all countries excluding the US) and a second graphics only exhibition, which will continue to tour the United States and thus be replaceable if such an incident of "loss" occurs again. The Archive (which received no regular funding) is seeking emergency funding to undertake this. If anyone can assist in any way, please [contact the Archive](#) or help by forwarding this message on to anyone on your mailing list who might find this matter of interest.

Thank you so much for your help!

ONLINE DONATIONS

10 December - MISSING EXHIBITION UPDATE

There is still no word regarding the fate of the Archive's travelling exhibition [Symbolic defiance: Palestinian costume and embroidery since 1948](#) which vanished in Los Angeles Airport's Terminal 4 on 1 November after a security check/x ray. However the Palestine Costume Archive would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contacted us regarding our missing exhibition. We greatly appreciate your concern and support. The Archive would also like to thank MESA staff and other conference delegates for their wonderful support and tireless suggestions during the MESA 2003 conference in Anchorage (where the exhibition was to be displayed).

With the exhibition unlikely to be found, the Archive has two aims in any further promotion of this matter. The first is to raise international awareness of the exhibition's loss to avoid such a thing happening again. The second is to raise public awareness of our museum's need for emergency funds to replace both lost cultural material and expensive exhibition support material (such as enlarged graphics, museum banners, wall texts etc).

For those wishing further information for use in articles, editorials etc, you will find background texts here about [the Archive](#) and the [exhibition itself](#).

For installation images and a review of the exhibition at the First World Congress of Middle Eastern Studies in Mainz, Germany [click here](#).

Please [email us](#) for further information on the loss of the exhibition, daily updates of the search and more installation photos of the exhibition.

For those wishing to make financial donations this can be done online here:

[Make a Donation](#)

Bank and personal cheques in all currencies (please add US \$9 to your donation to cover foreign currency bank charges) can be posted to the Palestine Costume Archive c/- PO Box 98 Lyneham, Canberra, ACT 2602, Australia.

Regarding cultural heritage donations please see our [website](#) for further details of what cultural material we collect, and [email us](#) so that we can advise on packing, forms of shipping and postage.

For those wishing to help in other ways, unfortunately at the moment we do not have a focus for a letter writing campaign – but please [drop us a line](#) anyway, we'd love to hear from you and share your thoughts and ideas about this matter. We would also be most grateful if you could spare some time to organise a local fundraiser, and are happy to provide Archive publications and Palestinian refugee camp embroidery project products as prizes for raffles/auctions etc. Please [let us know](#) any ideas you might have to help.

One good thing might come out of this sad event. The cultural material we lost included a great many embroidered garments and products from the Palestinian refugee camp embroidery projects and women's self help handicraft projects with whom we work (see the Archive's page on these projects [here](#)). So if we can raise the funds to order replacements this will provide significant employment and income for the women of these projects at a time when it is greatly needed.

We sincerely thank you for your support, and wish you all a peaceful Xmas and New Year.

To learn more about the Palestine Costume Archive [click here](#)

To learn more about the missing exhibition [click here](#)

For up to date information on the search for the exhibition email us [here](#)

For information on other Palestine Costume Archive travelling exhibitions on Palestinian and Middle Eastern cultural heritage [click here](#)

To make an online donation

[Make a Donation](#)

To make a cultural heritage donation [click here](#)

[Home](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)