



The Water Diviners – Workshops with Jumana Emil Abboud

The Water Diviners is a project by artist Jumana Emil Abboud, who uses storytelling to explore water, heritage, imagination and the future. Jumana's work began with research on wells and springs in Palestine, which are sites with magical, spiritual, and folkloric significance. This history is preserved and continued in the Palestinian tradition of collective storytelling.

First developed in the Occupied West Bank village of 'Ein Qiniya in Palestine in 2020, each Water Diviners workshop builds upon a growing anthology of stories composed by people from all over the world. For its first UK activation, the Water Diviners will be hosted at the V&A, and we are seeking participants for a series of sessions this summer.

The workshops involve tracing water's presence within the museum: in the hidden histories of the objects, in the crevices and context of the building, as well as in participants' memories, languages and imagination. The group will explore the power of water stories in museum spaces, and bring together personal stories, cultural myths, and often-overlooked indigenous knowledge into a collective narrative of resilience and renewal.

The group will meet up to 8 times on Friday evenings in June, July and August. The workshops will culminate in a collective spoken-word performance during the V&A Friday Late on 19 September 2025, which is part of London Design Festival.



Jumana Emil Abboud

Things to note:

- The workshops are open to anyone 18 years or older.
- All sessions take place at V&A South Kensington.
- No experience of writing, storytelling, spoken-word or performance is necessary, and you do not need to speak English as a first language.
- The workshops are free. Those taking part in the performance will be paid £13.85 per hour for their time on the day (Friday 19 September).
- We hope participants will attend as many sessions as possible over the course of the project, and will commit to at least 3. Participation in the final performance is not obligatory.

Taster Session: Friday 13 June, 6–8pm

Come along to learn more about the Water Diviners and get a feel for how the workshops will run. Key themes for the summer sessions will be introduced, including oral narratives, water-lore, myths, and magical mirrors, all inspired by the prompt: *Where is your reflection?*

Register for the free taster session by emailing Holly Power: communities@vam.ac.uk

At the end of the taster session, you can decide whether to sign up for the rest of the workshops.

Session 1 – Friday 20 June, 6–8.30pm

Session 2 – Friday 4 July, 6–8.30pm

Session 3 – Friday 11 July, 6–8.30pm

Session 4 – Friday 18 July, 6–8.30pm

Session 5 – Friday 15 August, 6–8.30pm

Session 6 – Friday 22 August, 6–8.30pm

Session 7 – Friday 29 August, 6–8.30pm

Session 8 – Friday 12 September, 6–8.30pm

Rehearsal – Thursday 18 September, time TBC

Performance – Friday 19 September, 6pm–10pm

About the artist:

Jumana Emil Abboud's practice weaves together folklore, folktales, water lore, and the entangled legacies of human and more-than-human worlds, activating the survival of stories and landscapes in the wake of dispossession.

Her work has been included in exhibitions and biennials including the Aomori Contemporary Art Center (2024), the 8th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2023), the 23rd Biennale of Sydney (2022), documenta 15 (2022), and the Venice Biennale (2009, 2015). Solo shows include Cample Line (2023), TAVROS (2022), Darat al Funun – The Khalid Shoman Foundation (2017), Bildmuseet (2017), and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art (2016).

Jumana is shortlisted for the Joan Miró Prize (2025) and Artes Mundi 11 Prize (2025-2026), and is currently a Jameel Fellow at the V&A, a residency undertaken in collaboration with the International Glass and Visual Arts Research Centre (Cirva), Marseille (2024-2025).