

Ahmed Al-Nawas (born in 1980, Baghdad, Iraq) is a Helsinki-based artist and curator. He holds a master's degree in visual culture from Aalto University and is currently studying in the Decolonizing Architecture program at the Royal Institute of Art in Sweden (KKH). Al-Nawas's recent collaborative projects with artist Minna Henriksson have been featured in various exhibitions, including the Helsinki Biennale, Serlachius Museum, Helsinki Art Museum HAM, and Turku Art Museum. His works can also be found in the Helsinki City Art Collection and the Finnish National Gallery collection. Al-Nawas co-founded two interdisciplinary art spaces in Helsinki: Thirds Space and the Museum of Impossible Forms. The Museum of Impossible Forms was awarded the Finnish Association of Researchers Prize in 2019 and the Finnish State Art Prize in 2020.

Ahmed Al-Nawas & Minna
Henriksson: **Green Gold**,
2023 Augmented reality
(AR).

A site-specific AR work
Comissioned by HAM/Helsinki
Biennial 2023. The work features
a boat towing a large timber
raft through the Kustaanmiekka
channel, nestled between
Vallisaari and Suomenlinna
islands. The work engages in the
critical deconstruction of
national identity, focusing on
the role of forestry in the
project of nation building in
Finland. It also raises
questions about geopolitics,
economics, and the logistics of
moving raw materials. The
artists ask: What do the timber
rafts of today and tomorrow
represent.



Ahmed Al-Nawas & Minna Henriksson,
GENESIS Exhibition at Serlachius
Museum Gustaf 4 February – 19
November 2023

The Genesis exhibition by Ahmed Al-Nawas and Minna Henriksson reinterprets Mänttä's paper industry origins, focusing on workers' contributions and the motivations behind Serlachius company leaders. It portrays the company's founding as a collective effort, highlighting worker activism and demands. The centerpiece is a 860 x 272 cm tufted rya rug depicting the history of workers' struggles in Mänttä.



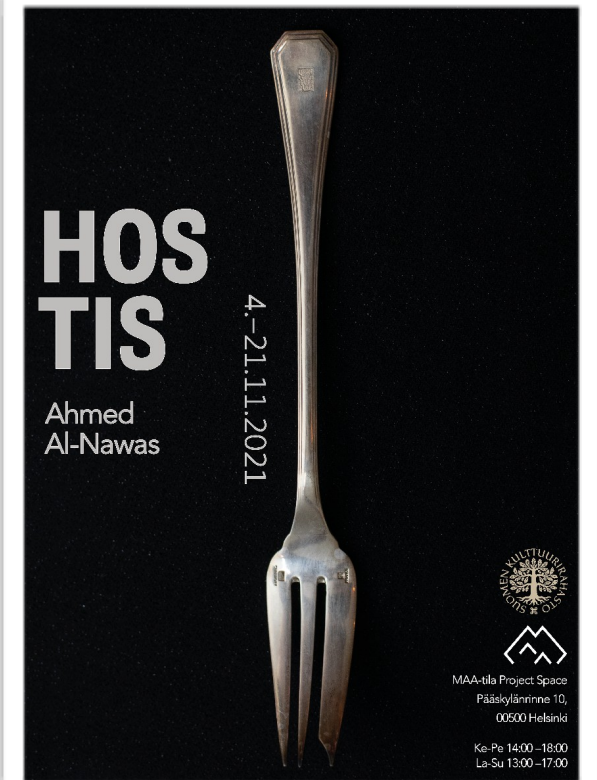
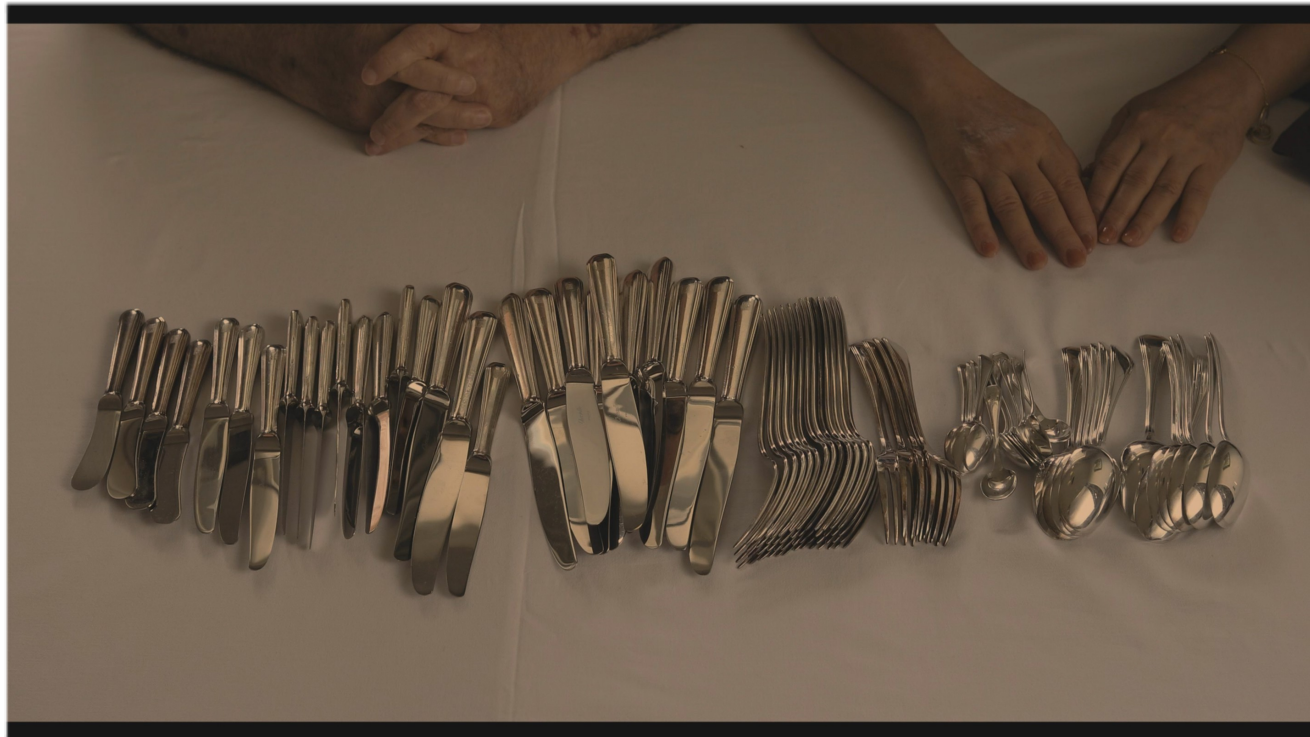
Ahmed AL-Nawas & Minna
Henriksson: **Blacklists**,
2023, peper pulp, part of
Exhibition at Serlachius
Museum Gustaf

Blacklists, secret lists of
"disloyal" employees, were used
by G. A. Serlachius Ltd. in
Mänttä during the 1930s. These
lists, initially kept
confidential, were discovered
after the war and reveal detailed
information about 658 paper
workers, including their
political and social connections.
The blacklists reflect the
factory's fear of worker
unionization and political
activism, and they were employed
for employee monitoring and
dismissals.



Ahmed AL-Nawas: **HOSTIS**, 2021, series of works, Finnish National Gallery Collection

An art series explores exile and hospitality through my family's belongings brought from Iraq in times of hardship. It archives personal items that lost their monetary value during our exile journey, featuring two photographs, and a video.



The series also delves into the tragic tale of Baghdad's Al-Rashid Hotel, constructed in 1982 for hosting Non-Aligned Movement leaders. Instead, it became a symbol of international conflict, as political tensions between Iraq and Iran erupted into a full-scale war during its construction.



Ahmed AL-Nawas & Minna Henriksson: **Fake Star**, 2020, tufted rya rug 230 x 300 cm, Helsinki Art Museum Collection



"Fake Star" examines the interplay between copies and originals within the context of Finland's nation-building and the colonialist undertones of World Fairs. In March 1899, a meteorite strike in Bjurböle Bay, Porvoo, sparked speculation that it was a message from the Western world foretelling Finland's liberation from Russian rule, based on linguistic connections. A plaster copy of the meteorite was created and showcased at the 1900 Paris World's Fair within the Finnish Pavilion. This display aimed to present Finland as a civilized Western nation, featuring achievements in art, industry, education, and science. The Finnish Pavilion, though appearing as an impressive stone structure, was mostly constructed from canvas and plaster. "Fake Star" explores authenticity and imitation in the context of national identity. The centerpiece is a tufted rug inspired by Akseli Gallen-Kallela's work. Additionally, the original plaster copy of the Bjurböle meteorite and a rare display case from the Paris World's Fair Finnish Pavilion are on loan for the exhibition.

Ahmed AL-Nawas & Minna Henriksson: **Valkeat**, 2016, series of works, Commissioned by Checkpoint Helsinki

"Valkeat" is a collaborative artwork commissioned for the 'Finnish Landscape' exhibition on Seurasaaari Island. The work delves into the historical backdrop of the 1962 World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki, where various liberation movements converged. The exhibition seeks to underscore the media's silence regarding the festival's significance and its relation to Finnish nationalism. Additionally, an extension to the Florin Summer House narrative is presented, shedding light on Finnish nationalism during the era of independence. Regrettably, the flag installation faced vandalism during the exhibition, underscoring the complex and at times contentious conversations surrounding national identity and memory.

