

# LA CAJA BLANCA

press release



**La Caja Blanca** is a new art gallery specialising in showcasing emerging and contemporary visual arts created by the most talented and outstanding young artists from across the world.

We will be opening our doors to the public for the first time in February 2006 to present the first solo exhibition of **Yara El-Sherbini**.

**ARTIST:** Yara El-Sherbini

**CURATORS:** Amir and Eva Shakouri Torreadrado

**OFFICIAL OPENING:** Friday 3rd February 2006 \_ 20.30 – 22.30

**PRIVATE VIEW:** Thursday 2nd February 2006 \_ by appointment only

**PRESS CONFERENCE:** Thursday 2nd February 2006 \_ 11.00 – 13.00

**LOCATION:** La Caja Blanca, Calle Verí 9, Palma de Mallorca 07001, Spain

***Should I be laughing at this?...*** is what most people wonder when confronted with Yara El-Sherbini's work.

PC (political correctness) as a cultural phenomenon which has taught us to repress our reactions to "The Other" in case we offend, is a major consideration in our society. Although in theory it's been designed to generate a climate of tolerance and respect in a world full of diversity; in practice it often acts as a device for systematically disengaging ourselves from certain "issues", leaving us with "taboo subjects" which block our freedom to respond naturally. We refrain from questioning and entering into a dialogue... we stop thinking.

The works Yara El-Sherbini presents in her first solo exhibition rely heavily on humour, and are far from politically correct. With the characteristic defiance of youth, Yara's artistic discourse homes in on so called "sensitive issues", and invites the viewer to temporarily suspend disengagement.

Laughter is a reaction we have when we "get it", when we suddenly become aware of the incongruity and utter absurdity of a situation. This is how Yara uses humour, not as a device to ridicule, attack, or criticize, but as a method of engagement, a device to provoke her audience to take another look at the idiosyncrasies of contemporary society ... to have the audacity to engage with "difficult " issues and to think again.

La Caja Blanca | contemporary and emerging art

Calle Verí 9, 07001 Palma de Mallorca | [www.lacajablanca.com](http://www.lacajablanca.com) | [info@lacajablanca.com](mailto:info@lacajablanca.com) | T 0034971722364

## THE ARTISTS' INTENTION

As one of the most bold and intellectually provocative artists emerging onto the UK arts scene in 2005, Yara El-Sherbini has generated equal amounts of praise for her challenging approach, and criticism for her audacity to express what some viewers have interpreted as anger towards The West.

The truth is, that while her works can provoke laughter (this was the intention with which they were created) they leave a sediment of unease and discomfort for all viewers, admirers and detractors included. Yara uses different artistic mechanisms (video, photography, text, sculpture, etc...) as a means of inviting her audience to take another look at the idiosyncrasies of contemporary society... to have the audacity to think again.

... And so, when the laughter wears off, you are left chomping on a new thought, and what you do with it is entirely up to you.

## BACKGROUND TO THE ARTIST

Yara graduated from the Slade (University College London), with an MA in Fine Art Media in spring 2005. Ever since, her career has taken off with numerous prestigious awards, commissions and invitations from across the world. These include: *Breathing Space* (Anolfini Commission), Invitation to exhibit in *East International* (Norwich, UK), *In Between Time Festival* (Anolfini, Bristol), and an invitation to participate in a prestigious international art festival (yet to be confirmed).

Her work has been followed closely in the international art press; commentaries and articles appearing in a number of generalist and specialized publications including The Times Higher Education Supplement [*Have you heard the one about the veil?*], The Times [*Move over Brit Art, Here's Grit Art*], Tate What's on Guide [June-July 2005 edition], Tate Publishing [*Live art and performance*], Flash Art International [March 2005 issue], 9<sup>th</sup> Cairo International Biennale Catalogue, Frieze Magazine [April 2005 issue], A-N Magazine [November 2003], The New York Times [February 2003], Net Territories Catalogue, Evening Post, CDA Fine Art Catalogue

Awards received include: Arts and Humanities Research Board, Prankerd-Jones Memorial award in fine art (Slade), Arts Council England (touring work), Research and Development Fund from the Arts Council UK.

Selected recent activities: In the past few months she has published a joke book titled 'Sheikh 'n' Vac' with Book Works, offered a conference in the Tate Britain (*A quiet tradition, The Muslim Vernacular*), participated in Loop 2005 (One of the most important international video art festivals held yearly in Barcelona, Spain), Transart (Italy), Bienal de Jafre (Spain), and exhibited at the Royal College of Art (*Do not interrupt your activities*, UK)