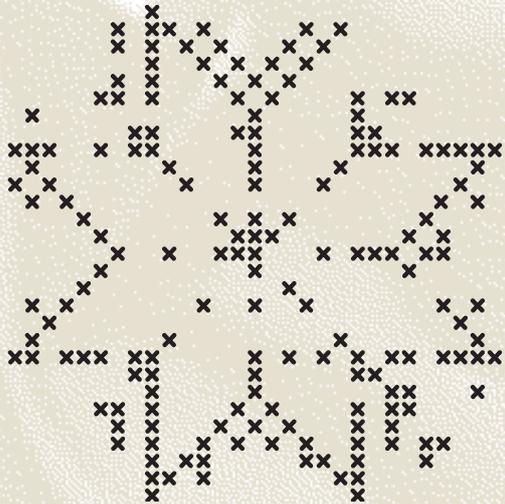


«I'm not coming back, I'm coming»



كرسي  
محمود  
درويش

MAHMOUD  
DARWISH  
CHAIR

---

# «I'm not coming back, I'm coming»

Launch day of  
the Federation Wallonia-Brussels of Belgium's  
"Mahmoud Darwish Academic and Cultural Chair"  
in partnership with BOZAR, the ULB and the UCL

**Wednesday 25 January 2017**  
**Centre for Fine Arts - Brussels**

---

**9 AM**                    **WELCOME**

**9.30 AM**                    **OPENING**

- **Mr Rudy Demotte**  
Minister-President of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels
- **Mrs Leila Shahid**  
former Palestinian Ambassador and Honorary President

**10.15 AM**                    **PRESENTATION OF THE SPECIAL EDITION OF THE  
LITERARY REVIEW "EUROPE" DEVOTED TO MAHMOUD DARWISH**

**STUDIO**

- **Jean-Baptiste Para** (poet, literary critic and translator,  
editor of the "Europe" journal)
- **Kadhim Jihad Hassan** (poet, literary critic and translator,  
university professor in the department of Arabic Studies  
at the INALCO, Paris)

**11 AM-1 AM**                    **ROUND TABLE 1 : LITERARY CRITIC**

**STUDIO**

- Moderator : **Farouk Mardam-Bey** (historian and editor, editor of the Sindbad collections published by Editions Actes Sud)
- **Miguel Casado** (poet, literary critic and translator, lives in Toledo)
  - **Rima Sleiman** (carries out research into Arabic and comparative literature, university lecturer in the Arabic Studies department of the INALCO, Paris)
  - **Evanghelia Stead** (professor of general and comparative literature, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin, member of the Institut Universitaire de France)
  - **René Corona** (poet, literary critic and translator, university professor in French Literature at the University of Messina)
-

---

**3-5 AM**

**ROUND TABLE 2 : TESTIMONIES**

**STUDIO**

Moderator : **Elias Sanbar** (historian, essayist, translator, UNESCO ambassador)

- **André Velter** (poet, essayist and editor, editor of the poetry collection/Gallimard)
- **Hassan Khader** (social sciences researcher, political and cultural commentator and translator, splits his time between Ramallah and Berlin)
- **Elias Khoury** (novelist and journalist, he edits the Revue d'études palestiniennes, Arabic edition, lives in Beirut)
- **Subhi Hadidi** (literary critic, political and cultural commentator and translator, lives and works in Paris)

**4.45 PM**

**FILM**

**STUDIO**

**MAHMOUD DARWICH À TOLÈDE**

**Simone Bitton**, 15', commissioned by the Mahmoud Darwish Chair

**5 PM**

**DRINKS RECEPTION**

**6 PM**

**FILM**

**STUDIO**

**MAHMOUD DARWICH, ET LA TERRE COMME LA LANGUE**

a documentary by **Simone Bitton** and **Elias Sanbar** - FR, 1998, 59'

In the presence of **Simone Bitton**

**7 PM**

**INTERVAL**

**8.30 PM**

**« THULTH » - CONCERT BY TAMER ABU GHAZALEH**

**SALLE M**

**Tamer Abu Ghazaleh** (vocals, oud), **Shadi El-Hosseiny** (piano), **Khaled Yassine** (percussion), **Mahmoud Waly** (bass guitar)

WORKS BY ARTIST ERNEST PIGNON-ERNEST ARE EXHIBITED AT BOZAR

---

## THE MAHMOUD DARWISH CHAIR

### “I searched for the otherness of men everywhere”

The “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” was created in 2016 by the Federation Wallonia-Brussels at the initiative of its Minister-President Rudy Demotte.

The goal of the Chair is to perpetuate the work and thought of a major poet of the 20th century, and beyond that, to promote the contemporary culture of the Arab world from a perspective of dialogue and universalism.

Mahmoud Darwish is considered to be one of the greatest contemporary Arab authors. His work – around twenty volumes of poetry and seven in prose, consisting of numerous articles and interviews – has been translated into forty languages.

Born in Galilee in 1941, Darwish, like numerous Palestinians had to flee his village in 1948, when the State of Israel was established. He became a “refugee in his own

country”; he then led a life of exile in Moscow, Cairo, Beirut, Tunis and Paris, before returning, during the final years of his life, to Ramallah. He died in 2008.

Exile, paradise lost, nostalgia for his childhood, but also dialogue, transition, expansion: Darwish’s poetry speaks of “Palestine” but is emblematic of the universal human condition. A committed and free author, in keeping with his identity but resistant to any identitarianism, for Darwish writing is an act of resistance, but also one of peace and dialogue, pleading for the coexistence of the two States – which, according to him, presupposes that we recognise that “everyone has the right to tell their story”.

His poetry alternates the most simple of poems and the most sophisticated songs. It evokes loss (rather than defeat), drifting, margins, and above all absence – but an absence



Mahmoud Darwish with Edward Saïd ©D.R.



Ramallah 2009 ©Ernest Pignon-Ernest

that is permeated with tangible presences, those of the mother, the wife, the earth, smells, the smile that makes it all ok again. Darwish has a serene anger, a pessimism that is always open to possibilities. He turns the wound inflicted by exile into an opportunity for metamorphosis, explanation and greater opportunities for hope. As a patriot and non-nationalist, Darwish had a carnal relationship with the Arabic language, as a conveyor of concrete universalism.

By creating the “Mahmoud Darwish Chair”, the Federation Wallonia-Brussels is reaffirming its cooperative relations with Palestine, as a continuation of the MASARAT artistic season which was a showcase for the creativity of Palestinian artists for several months in 2008. Mahmoud Darwish had agreed to be its honorary president but sadly died several weeks before the official launch of the initiative. Even so, his spirit continued to be the programme’s guiding force.

While our world is experiencing unsettling times and a profound identity crisis is sweeping across the “East” and “West”, bringing

with it the mindless violence we are all too aware of; the Federation Wallonia-Brussels wants to promote universal values and set out “to conquer spiritual territories” - territories which are sadly being ruined by those who propagate hatred and fanaticism. What better way to do this than by perpetuating the work of Mahmoud Darwish who was such a major representative of universal literature?

The “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” is also involved in the promotion of the contemporary cultures of North Africa and the Middle East, as initiated by Wallonia-Brussels International and the Federation Wallonia-Brussels. It’s also a means of encouraging the creation of Chairs within French-speaking universities; Chairs which will be dedicated to this part of the world, which is where the largest diaspora resulting from immigration to Brussels and Wallonia hails from. Finally, it falls within the scope of Palestine’s adherence to UNESCO in 2011, of which it became the 195th member, and within the context of the United Nations’ recognition of Palestine as an observer state, in November 2012.



Wall in Jerusalem ©Ernest Pignon-Ernest

The goal of the “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” is to make known the poet’s work and thought and, more generally, to promote contemporary Arab culture in dialogue with world cultures. It wants to be at the crossroads of academic and cultural environments. Henceforth the Chair will offer:

- to organise colloquiums and other academic activities, encourage the drafting of graduate dissertations, theses, translations, journal issues, etc., in order to foster a dynamic in student and research environments;
- to organise cultural events targeting a broad public;
- to give the seal of approval to quality initiatives which are in the spirit of Darwish’s thought and the objectives of the Chair.

Within this framework, the “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” will create the “Mahmoud Darwish” International Award which will reward a Master’s or PhD thesis.

Finally, the role of the “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” will also be to inform academic and community environments about the different focuses of the project.

The activities of the “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” are carried out with the support of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels of Belgium and the operational support of the “de facto Consortium BOZAR, ULB, UCL”.

The Honorary President of the Chair is Leila Shahid, former Palestinian Ambassador to Belgium and the European Union. The activities organised by the Mahmoud Darwish Chair are coordinated by a Support Committee made up of Arabic and French-speaking experts and representatives of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels. ✕

---

## “I SAY SO MANY THINGS...”

Elias Sanbar

The poetic work of Mahmoud Darwish, some of the most outstanding of the last century would in itself justify the creation of this chair. In the same way, the presence - amongst those involved in this project - of many of the poet's good friends would explain their interest and gratitude when this initiative was announced to the Belgian cultural authorities of the French community.

1. Starting out from Darwish's real “universality”, from his dream and poetic gamble, it would be right, seeing as poetry has no other passport than that of its language, to make the proper distinction between nationality and environment: Darwish was a poet from Palestine, not a “Palestinian poet” as he is all too often described.

To my mind this difference is absolutely essential. It affirms the universality of this work and frees it from any nationalistic shackles – which may well be justified and unders-

tandable when we consider what has been going on in Palestine, but it is restrictive too. The poet was sensitive to this throughout his life, without this distinction ever having meant that he rejected his origins and his profound empathy and identification with his people; quite the opposite in fact.

2. The absence, disappearance and invisibility which resulted from the Nakba tragedy, rather than the reality of the occupation which has been concerning the media for decades, are the “sensitive” aspects of this poetry.

This assertion is not the simple consequence of the poet's permanent desire to escape the status of “author of poetic tracts” as his detractors, but also many fans of his verses, like to categorise him. It has arisen from the fact that Palestine disappeared in 1948. The occupation “in the classic sense of the term” I would say, would only come about twenty years later, in 1967.



“Mahmoud Darwish, et la terre, comme la langue...” ©Simone Bitton



"Mahmoud Darwish, et la terre, comme la langue..." ©Simone Bitton

The original tragedy had already been played out. A country had completely disappeared, along with its people; it was like a death by drowning. Palestine - renamed Israel - was supposed to have never existed, and for a long time it was a kind of tabula rasa, a supposedly virgin and innocent territory which could serve as a kind of receptacle for a project of national redemption following the European episodes of Nazi barbarity preceded by numerous anti-Semitic pogroms.

Darwish's work should be seen as an escape from the waters, a renaissance of those who are no more, who were never supposed to have ever been there except as nomads who had squatted and dirtied a land which, for two thousand years, was waiting patiently for the "return" of its redeemers.

3. For the poet, this cultural renaissance, which occurred at the same time as the renaissance brought about by the combat of the national Palestinian movement, would come about through language, Arabic in

other words. The Palestinians would leave the invisibility and absence brought about by a poetic approach which, whilst praising the Arabic language, would do its utmost to sing it in new and innovative forms.

4. Darwish, who was a surprisingly astute political analyst, placed a great deal of emphasis on a highly significant distinction, a distinction which draws the line between defeat and loss.

Whilst defeat was considered sterile, and rightly so in his eyes, loss could on the contrary be a powerful means of helping people to surpass themselves. We Palestinians were not experiencing defeat, but loss. This observation goes some way to explaining the poet's claim: "I am the poet of Troy, I am a Trojan poet who has been given the task of creating the alternative to the Iliad, the epic poem of Troy".

5. One day his friend Yannis Ritsos said to him: "You are a lyrical-dramatic poet".

---

The lyricism relates to the environment, the epic to the universal appropriation of the world, our worlds, and first and foremost that of a sea, “our sea”, the Mediterranean. The lyricism and the epic also relate to the song, the sound of our friend’s voice which was so individual and universal at the same time. This voice, and its particular tone and melody, form and content, has been taken up by millions of listeners who, recognising their own voices, decided that from then on it would also be theirs.

**6.** Our first inaugural meeting may well be devoted to exchanges dominated by the approach of literary critics. It’s a good way in. But the next meetings within the context of the Chair will open up to many other fields of thought and exchange.

Without this, our homages could lead to what none of us wants: the “mummification” of a poetry which was nothing more than a song about the abundance of life; that of a poet, of his Palestinian and Arab brothers, of his human brothers all over the world. ✕



“Mahmoud Darwich, et la terre, comme la langue...” ©Simone Bitton

---

## MAHMOUD DARWISH

Mahmoud Darwish was born on 13 March 1941 in al-Birwa, a Palestinian village a dozen kilometres from Saint-Jean d'Acre, in Galilee. After having been chased out of the village with his family to the sound of bombs at the end of 1947, the child found himself in the south of Lebanon alongside tens of thousands other Palestinian refugees.

Approximately two years later, feeling desperate and scarcely believing that there would be a solution to the refugee drama, his paternal grandfather decided to take his family to Palestine, as "infiltrators". They discovered that their village had been demolished and the Israeli farming village, Ahioud and the Yasur kibbutz had been created in its place. They lived as refugees in Deir al-As-sad, a village further north. Later on they settled in a village in the region of Haifa.

It was in Haifa that Mahmoud Darwish received his secondary school education. He joined the Israeli communist party in which Arabs and Jews campaigned together, began

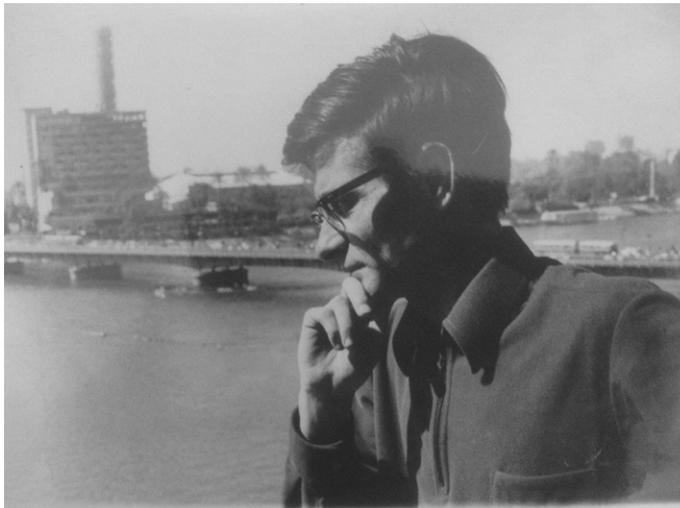
to publish poems and articles and became an editor of the *Al-Ittihâd* ("The Union") newspaper.

His writing meant the young poet and author was banned from leaving Haifa for ten whole years. He was imprisoned five times: in 1961, 1965, 1966, 1967 and 1969, without ever being tried in court, and placed under house arrest between 1967 and 1970.

In this phase of his evolution, the poet wrote the poetry collections *Oiseaux sans ailes* (1960, disowned later), *Feuilles d'olivier* (1964), *Un amant de Palestine* (1966), *Fin de la nuit* (1967) and *Les oiseaux meurent en Galilée* (1970).

His first journey outside Palestine was in 1970, thanks to a study grant for the Moscow Institute of Social Sciences. In 1968, he had tried to leave for Paris, but the French authorities refused him the visa.

After his stay in Moscow, Darwish went to Cairo, an initiative that he considers to be one of the most important events of his life,



Mahmoud Darwish in Cairo, circa 1971 ©D.R.



Mahmoud Darwish ©D.R.

and which resulted in his decision to join the Palestinian diaspora, in order to fully benefit from the freedom to write. He met Egyptian poets, authors and artists that he had a great admiration for, and soon joined some of them, who each published a weekly article in the country's main newspaper, *Al-Ahrâm* ("The Pyramids"). His office, on the 6th floor of the newspaper's headquarters, was located right alongside the offices of Tawfîq al-Hakîm, Naguib Mahfouz, Youssef Idriss and Bint al-Shâtî'.

The stay in Cairo led him to a profound innovation in his poetic writing, which took shape shortly afterwards in the collection *Je t'aime ou ne t'aime pas* (1972), which features the famous poem "Sirhane prend le café à la cafeteria". On multiple occasions he opposed a prevailing interpretation in the Arab world, which saw Palestinian poetry of the time as exclusively "resistance poetry", and from that standpoint praised all kinds of poems, be they good or bad. An example of this was a remarkable article published in *Al-Jadîd* in 1969, entitled "Spare us this cruel love!".

Next, the poet set off for Beirut. He

lived there between 1973 and 1982. In 1975 the Lebanese Civil War broke out. The huge cultural enterprises and creative projects which had all found a home in Beirut soon made way for the dealings of different political organisations and militia fighting one another. Darwish was one of the writers from his country who felt that the Palestinians shouldn't get caught up in this war. In the company of numerous writers and researchers from Palestine, Lebanon and other Arab countries, he worked in the Palestinian Research Centre, and wrote in the quarterly review *Shu'ûn filastîniyya* ("Palestinian Questions"), before founding the *Al-Karmel* review. In this period, he published his collections *Essai n° 7* (1974), *Telle est son image et voici le suicide de l'amant* (1975) and *Noces* (1977).

After the departure of the Palestinian combatants following the Israeli army's invasion of Beirut in 1982, Darwish remained in the Lebanese capital for some time. He walked the streets in which, as he recounts in his interview, all he could see were tanks, Israeli soldiers and hooded men. He knew

---

that the apartment he was living in was under surveillance and that, in his absence, had been visited several times by Israeli security guards. So he decided to go and sleep in the back room of a restaurant. The day he heard that the Lebanese Falangists, supervised and assisted by the Israeli army, had perpetrated a massacre on the remaining Palestinians, in principle under international protection, in the refugee camps in Sabra and Chatila, he decided that staying in Beirut any longer would be both absurd and highly risky. So he let the Libyan Ambassador to Beirut drive him to Damascus, on a Tunisian passport. On the road to Damascus, they stopped off in Tripoli for a bite to eat. Darwish ate fresh fish there after months of tinned food. He looked at himself in the mirror, saw “a nose overhung by a pair of glasses” and didn’t recognise himself.

It wasn’t long before he left Damascus for Tunis, where he saw Arafat and the other Palestinians in a tragic situation. “I found out about the Palestinian revolution curled up in a hotel beside the sea”. But Arafat brought his political organisation back to life and enabled Darwish to continue publishing the Al-Karmel review. Darwish would then pass long stretches of time in Paris, where he experienced his “real poetic birth”. During the first months spent in Tunis, he completed *Éloge de l’ombre haute*, that he had begun in Beirut during the Israeli invasion, and wrote the poems included in *Blocus pour les panégyriques de la mer*. And in Paris, he wrote *Moins de roses* (1985), *C’est une chanson, c’est une chanson* (1985), *Je vois ce que je veux* (1990), *Onze astres* (1992), *Pourquoi as-tu laissé le cheval à sa solitude?* (1995), half of the poems of *Lit de l’étrangère*, his autobiographic novel *Une mémoire pour l’oubli* (1987), devoted to a day when the Israelis invaded Beirut in 1982, and dozens of articles.

In 1987, Darwish was elected a mem-

ber of the executive committee of the OLP. He was a member of it for six years before resigning following the Oslo Accords.

In 1995, he decided to leave Paris, because he felt it was immoral to not share the new living conditions in part of Palestine with his nation, after the Oslo Accords which he had judged to be inadequate and the deadlock he had anticipated. He chose to live alternately in Ramallah, which was a real observatory of the new situation, and Amman, Jordan, where he found it easier to devote himself to writing. It was in Jordan (and partly in Ramallah) that he completed *Le Lit de l’étrangère* (1998) and wrote *Murale* (2000), *État de siège* (2002), *Ne t’excuse pas* (2003), *Comme des fleurs d’amandier ou plus loin* (2005), his autobiographical novel *Présente absence* (2006), *La Trace du papillon* (2007), the poems which would be brought together in his posthumous collection *Je ne veux pas que ce poème se termine* (the majority of which are in the collection that has been translated into French with the title *Le Lanceur de dés et autres poèmes*) and, once again, numerous articles. He also continued to publish Al-Karmel, the review that he had founded.

After medical examinations in Paris, Darwish set off for Houston (Texas), on the morning of 28 July 2008. He died in one of the city’s hospitals, on 9 August, following unsuccessful open-heart surgery, and was buried in Ramallah on the 13th of the same month. ✕



Mahmoud Darwish Tolède ©Simone Bitton

#### MAIN AWARDS AND DISTINCTIONS

1969: Lotus Prize (African Asian writers Union), received in India.  
1983: Lenin Peace Prize (Soviet Union).  
1997: Commandeur de l'ordre du mérite des Arts et des Lettres (France).  
1998: Doctor Honoris of Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium)  
2001: Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize (United States).  
2003: Erich-Maria-Remarque Peace Prize (Germany).  
2004: Prince Claus Award (the Netherlands).  
2007: Cairo Award for poetic creation, Ministry of Culture (Egypt); Golden Crown of the Struga Poetry Evenings (Republic of Macedonia).  
2008: Prix Témoins (Bosnia); Nazim Hikmet Award for international poetry (Turkey); Argana International Poetry Award (Morocco); Al Quds Medal (Jerusalem), Ramallah, Palestine. ✕

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDE

##### **Works by Mahmoud Darwish which have been translated into french\***

- Rien qu'une autre année, poetry anthology, 1966-1982, translated by Abdellatif Laâbi, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1983.
- Palestine, mon pays: l'affaire du poème, translated from the Arabic by Elias Sanbar and from the Hebrew by Simone Bitton, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1988.
- Plus rares sont les roses, translated by Abdellatif Laâbi, Paris, Éditions de Minuit, 1989.
- Chroniques de la tristesse ordinaire, followed by Poèmes palestiniens, translated by Olivier Carré, Paris, Cerf, 1989.
- Au dernier soir sur cette terre, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 1994.
- Une mémoire pour l'oubli, translated by Yves Gonzalez-Quijano and Farouk Mardam-Bey, Arles, Actes Sud, 1994; "Babel" n° 835.
- Pourquoi as-tu laissé le cheval à sa solitude?, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 1996.
- La Palestine comme métaphore, interviews, translated from the Arabic by Elias Sanbar and from the Hebrew by Simone Bitton, Arles,

\* For the original titles of Darwish's works refer to the poet's bibliography, in Arabic, on the Mahmoud Darwish Foundation website: <http://www.darwishfoundation.org/arabic.php>

Sindbad / Actes Sud, 1997; "Babel" n° 555.

- *La terre nous est étroite et autres poèmes*, poetry anthology, translated by Elias Sanbar, Paris, Poésie / Gallimard, 2000.
- *Le Lit de l'étrangère*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2000.
- *Murale*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2003.
- *État de siège*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2004.
- *Ne t'excuse pas*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2006.
- *Entretiens sur la poésie*, with Abdo Wazen and Abbas Beydoun, translated by Farouk Mardam-Bey, Arles, Sindbad / Actes Sud, 2006.
- *Comme des fleurs d'amandiers ou plus loin*, by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2007.
- *La Trace du papillon*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2009.
- *Anthologie poétique (1992-2005)*, bilingual edition, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, coll. "Babel" n° 949, 2009.
- *Une nation en exil: followed by La Qasida de Beyrouth*, with two texts by Elias Sanbar and Abdelkébir Khatibi, translation from the Arabic

- by Abdellatif Laâbi and Elias Sanbar, engravings by Rachid Koraichi, calligraphies by Hassan Massoudi and Kamel Ibrahim, Alger, éditions Barzakh / Arles, Actes Sud, 2009.
- *Le Lanceur de dés et autres poèmes*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2010.
- *Nous choisirons Sophocle et autres poèmes*, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Actes Sud, 2011.
- *L'Exil recommencé*, selected articles, translated by Elias Sanbar, Arles, Sindbad / Actes Sud, 2013.
- *Je soussigné*, Mahmoud Darwish, interview with Ivana Marchalian, translated from the Arabic by Jana Jaber, Arles, Actes Sud, 2015.
- *Présente absence*, translated by Farouk Mardam-Bey and Elias Sanbar, Arles, Sindbad / Actes Sud, 2016. ✕

#### A few works on Mahmoud Darwish

(Dozens of articles and university dissertations and numerous critical works have been devoted, in particular in Arabic, to the work of Mahmoud Darwish. For a reliable and almost comprehensive bibliography refer to the work of Hussain Hamza, below.)



Camp Al Amari, Ramallah 2009 ©Ernest Pignon-Ernest

---

### In French

- Collective, NU(e), n° 20, Nice, June 2002, edition devoted to Mahmoud Darwish, made in collaboration with the IISMM (Institute for the Study of Islam and Societies of the Muslim World), of the EHESS (School for Advances Studies in the Social Sciences), coordinated by Gilles Ladkani and Pierre Grouix.
- Collective, Poétique et politique: la poésie de Mahmoud Darwish, published by Marie-Hélène Avril and Sobhi Boustani, Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 2010.

### In English

- Anette Mansson, Passage to New Wor(l)d, Exile and Restoration in Mahmoud Darwish's Writings, Stockholm, Uppsala Universitet, 2003.
- Collective, Mahmoud Darwish: Exile's Poet, published by Khamis Nassar and Najat Rahman, Massachussets, Olive Branch Press, 2008.

### In Arabic

- Collective, L'Olivier de l'exil (Zaytounat al-manfâ), Beirut, published by Al-mu'assassa al-'arabiyya li-l-dirâssât wa-l-nashr, 1998.
- Collective, Al-Karmel, Ramallah, n° 90, Spring 2009. In this edition, the final one of the review, published one year after the poet's death, Hassan Khader has brought together studies on Darwish's life and work.
- Hussain Hamza, Lexique des motifs poétiques de Mahmoud Darwish (Mu'jam al-mûtifât al-markaziyya fî shi'r Mahmoud Darwich), published by L'Académie arabe, Haïfa, 2012.
- Rajâ' al-Naqqâsh, Mahmoud Darwich, poète des territoires occupés (Mahmoud Darwich, shâ'ir al-ard al-muhtalla), Cairo, published by Dâr al-Hilâl, 1971.
- Abdo Wazen, Mahmoud Darwich, l'étranger se retrouve (Mahmoud Darwich al-gharîb yaqa' 'alâ nafsih), Beirut, Riad El-Rayyes Books, 2006.

Amongst the works devoted to Darwish in other languages a special place should be reserved for those of Breyten Breytenbach, Outre-voix / Voice over, Conversation nomade avec Mahmoud Darwich, poems translated from Afrikaans by Georges Lory, bilingual edition, Collection Unesco d'œuvres représentatives, Arles, Actes Sud, 2009 (Prix Max Jacob étranger 2010). ✕

### FILMOGRAPHY

- Mahmoud Darwich, et la terre, comme la langue..., documentary made in 1997 for French TV by Simone Bitton and Elias Sanbar.
- Notre musique, film de Jean-Luc Godard, 2004, made in Sarajevo, with Sarah Adler (Judith Lerner), Nade Dieu (Olga Brodsky), Rony Kramer (Ramos Garcia), George Aguilar (the Indian man), Leticia Gutiérrez (the Indian lady), Simon Eine (Olivier Naville), Jean-Christophe Bouvet (C. Maillard) and, as themselves, Jean-Luc Godard, Juan Goytisolo, Mahmoud Darwich, Jean-Paul Curnier, Pierre Bergounioux, Gilles Pecqueux.
- Écrivains des frontières, documentary made in 2004 by Samir Abdallah and José Reynes. "The film accompanies Mahmoud Darwish who, besieged in Ramallah in 2002, is welcoming a delegation from the International Parliament of writers: the American Russell Banks, the South African Breyten Breytenbach, the Italian Vincenzo Consolo, the exiled Chinese poet Bei Dao, the Spaniard Juan Goytisolo, the French Christian Salmon, the Portuguese José Saramago (Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998) and the Nigerian Wole Soyinka (Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986). Accompanied on their journey by Leïla Shahid and Elias Sanbar, the writers who have come to participate in a cultural event will be direct witnesses of the Israeli military occupation". ✕

By courtesy of revue « Europe »

---

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE SPEAKERS

**Miguel Casado** is a poet, literary critic and translator. His most recent collection of poems to be published is *El sentimiento de la vista* (The feeling of the view 2015). He is the author of a huge critical body of work, particularly devoted to contemporary Spanish poetry and poetic issues. Amongst his most recent critical essays: *La palabra sabe y otros ensayos de poesía* (Words know and other essays on poetry, 2012) and *Literalmente y en todos los sentidos* (Literally and in every sense, 2015). He has translated into Spanish, amongst others, the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, Francis Ponge and Bernard Noël. He lives in Toledo and hosts regular poetry events in Madrid and other Spanish towns, in the company of the poet and literary critic Olvido Garcia Valdès.

✕

**René Corona** teaches French language and translation at the University of Messina. He is an essayist and has published several texts, in Italian and French, about the history of language, syno-

nymy, translation and poetics. He has translated numerous authors including Gesualdo Bufalino into French and Henri Calet into Italian. His most recent works include: *Les mots de l'enferme-ment. Clôtures et silences: Lexique et rhétorique de la douleur du néant* (L'Harmattan, 2013), *Exercices d'admiration. De la langue à la parole et de quelques poètes* (Hermann, 2014), and *Le singulier pluriel ou "Icare et les élégiaques"* (Hermann, 2016). He has also published two novels, the most recent of which is entitled *L'hébétude des tendres* (Finitude, 2012).

✕

**Subhi Hadidi** is a literary critic, political and cultural commentator and a translator. His publications include: "Exile's crossing: Mahmoud Darwish and the Lyric-Epic Form" (in Arabic), "Reading Raymond Williams, after reading Edward Said" (in English), "Palestine: l'enjeu culturel" (in French). He has translated several works into Arabic, including Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Yasunary Kawa-



Mahmoud Darwish route, destroyed house, East Jerusalem 2009  
©Ernest Pignon-Ernest

---

bata, *The Sound of the Mountain*; S. H. Hooke, *Middle Eastern Mythology* and Edward Said, *Afterwards to Orientalism*. He has also translated selections of poems by Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett, Derek Walcott and Seamus Heaney. He lives and works in Paris.

✕

**Kadhim Jihad Hassan** is a poet, translator, literary critic and university professor in the department of Arabic Studies at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO – Langues O) in Paris. He has published, in Arabic and French, several poetry collections and critical essays, including *Chants de la folie de l'être et autres poèmes* (Tarabuste, 2001), which he translated from the Arabic in collaboration with Serge Sautreau, and *La Part de l'étranger – La traduction de la poésie dans la culture arabe* (Sindbad/Actes Sud, 2007). Amongst his Arabic translations feature Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, the complete works of Arthur Rimbaud, the poetic works of Rainer Maria Rilke and philosophical essays by Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. He has just been awarded the International Translation Award Gherardo da Cremona.

✕

**Hassan Khader** is a scientific researcher, political and cultural commentator and a translator. His works are primarily focused on Arabic and Israeli cultures, a domain in which he has written and translated several works. Amongst his publications, an essay entitled *La crise d'identité dans la littérature israélienne* and an autobiography: *La terre de la gazelle*. He has translated David Grossman's *The Smile of the Lamb* into Arabic and Gil Eyal's *The Disenchantment of the Orient* into Arabic. He divides his time between Ramallah and Berlin.

✕

**Elias Khoury** is a literary critic, essayist and editor, but above all he's the author of a dozen novels, including *Gate of the Sun* (Actes Sud,

2002; Babel n° 586) which has been translated into several languages. Actes Sud has also published *Yalo* (2004), *Le Petit Homme et la Guerre* (*The Little Man and the War*) (Babel n° 639), *Un parfum de paradis* (*A Scent of Heaven*) (Babel n° 834), *Little Mountain* (Babel n° 974), *As Though She Were Sleeping* (2007), *The Box of secrets* (2009) and *The Broken Mirrors: Sinalcol* (2013). He is currently editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Arabic edition) in Beirut.

✕

**Farouk Mardam-Bey** worked as a librarian at the Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (1972-1986), publishing director of the *Revue d'études palestiniennes* (1981-2008), cultural advisor at the Arab World Institute (1989-2008), and since 1995, has edited the Sindbad collection (Actes Sud) notably devoted to the translation of classical and contemporary Arabic literature. He has published, in collaboration with Samir Kassir, *Itinéraires de Paris à Jérusalem: la France et le conflit israélo-arabe* (Institute of Palestinian Studies, 2 vol., 1992-1993), with Elias Sanbar, *Être arabe* (Actes Sud, 2007) and, with Edwy Plenel and Elias Sanbar, *Notre France* (Actes Sud, 2011). He is also the author or co-author of three books on the culinary tradition in the Arab world and he has edited several group works of a historical, political, literary or bibliographic nature.

✕

**Jean-Baptiste Para** is a poet, literary critic, translator of Italian and Russian and editor-in-chief of the review *Europe*. Between 1994 and 2004 he and André Velter hosted the radio show *Poésie sur parole* on France Culture. He has published several poetry collections, translated into several languages, including *Une semaine dans la vie de Mona Grembo* (*Arcane 17*; 1986) and *La Faim des ombres* (*Obsidiane*), for which he

---

was awarded the Apollinaire Prize in 2006. He has been awarded the Nelly Sachs Prize and the Laure Bataillon Prize for his translations. He is the author of an essay on Virgil, a biography of Pierre Reverdy (Cultures France, 2007) and a collection of essays on painting and the visual arts entitled *Le Jeûne des yeux et autres exercices du regard* (Éditions du Rocher). He has written essays on contemporary poets and authors (Claude Esteban, Jean-Loup Trassard, Pierre Michon...).

x

**Rima Sleiman** is a former pupil of the École Normale Supérieure, qualified to teach Arabic literature and the author of a thesis on Badr Châkir al-Sayyab and Charles Baudelaire. She is a university lecturer in the department of Arabic Studies at the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO – Langues O) in Paris. As a researcher in Arabic and Comparative Literature and an essayist, her publications deal with modern poetry and the novel (Mahmoud Darwish, Naguib Mahfouz, Ibrahim Al-Koni...). She has also published works on the war novel in Lebanon and works on women who wrote about the war.

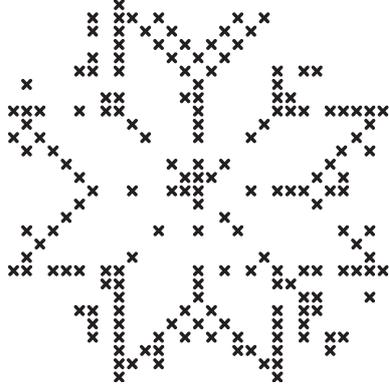
x

**Évanghélia Stead** is an essayist and multilingual literary translator, she teaches general and comparative literature at the University. She works on old and modern texts, on books and periodicals, literature and iconography, myths, and the literary tradition of *La Mille et Deuxième Nuit* (The Thousand and Second Night). Amongst her latest works, *Contes de la mille et deuxième nuit*, multilingual edition (Grenoble, Jérôme Millon, 2011) and *La Chair du livre: matérialité, imaginaire et poétique du livre fin-de-siècle* (Paris, PUPS, 2012, republished 2013).

x

**André Velter** is a poet, essayist and editor. It is to the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the Algerian War, which had just ended, that he published his first book of poems, written with Serge Sautreau, Aïsha, preface by Alain Jouffroy (Gallimard 1966, reprinted in 1998 and 2005). A few years later, *De la déception pure, manifeste froid*, was written by Serge Sautreau, André Velter, Jean-Christophe Bailly, Yves Buin (10/18, 1973). Numerous collections by Velter followed, including *L'enfer et les fleurs*, illustrated by Antonio Saura (Fata Morgana 1988), *L'Arbre-Seul*, Mallarmé Prize (Gallimard 1990), *Le Haut Pays* (Gallimard 1995), *La vie en dansant* (Gallimard 2000), *L'amour extrême et autres poèmes pour Chantal Mauduit* (Poésie/Gallimard 2007), *Paseo Grande* (Gallimard 2011), *Avec un peu plus de ciel* (Gallimard 2012), *Jusqu'au bout de la route* (Gallimard 2014) and *Loin de nos bases* (Gallimard 2016). He is a columnist in the newspaper *Le Monde*, a big fan of long-distance travel (Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia), an editor of reviews (*Caravanes*) and literary collections (*L'Arbalète* and *Poésie/Gallimard*), a radio presenter (in 1987 he created *Poésie sur Parole* on France Culture, a radio show that he hosted with Jean-Baptiste Para between 1994 and 2004; *les Poétiques*, recorded every month in front of a live audience at the théâtre du Rond-Point, with Claude Guerre, from 1995 till 1999, then *Orphée-Studio* at the théâtre de l'Aquarium, from 2001 to 2004). Since his early days, *poésie vécue* (according to the term used by Alain Jouffroy) has been André Velter's main *raison d'être*. He was awarded the «Goncourt / Poésie» in 1996. He has organised and participated in several meetings with Mahmoud Darwish, notably at the *Maison des Cultures du Monde* (The show *La terre nous est étroite*, 22 March 2000) and at the *Maison de la Poésie* in Paris (two evenings on 4 and 5 October 2007).

x



كرسي  
محمود  
درويش

MAHMOUD  
DARWISH  
CHAIR

MEMBERS :

- **Leila Shahid**, former Palestinian Ambassador – Honorary President
- **Joël Mathieu**, Advisor to the Minister-President - President of the Committee
- **Elias Sanbar**, historian, essayist, translator, UNESCO ambassador
- **Farouk Mardam-Bey**, historian and editor, director of the Sindbad collection published by Actes Sud
- **Kadhim Jihad Hassan**, poet, literary critic and translator, university professor within the Arabic Studies department at INALCO, Paris
- **Fabienne Verstraeten**, former director of the Halles de Schaerbeek and former curator of MASARAT
- **Edouard Delruelle**, Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education (FWB)
- **Rajae Essefiani**, former diplomatic advisor to the Minister-President (FWB)
- **Alain Sougnez**, Representative of Wallonie-Bruxelles International (WBI)

DE FACTO CONSORTIUM BOZAR/UCL/ULB :

- BOZAR : **Tarquin Billiet**
- ULB : **Xavier Luffin, Jihane Sfeir**
- UCL : **Johannes Den Heijer, Perrine Pilette**

---

## CONTENTS

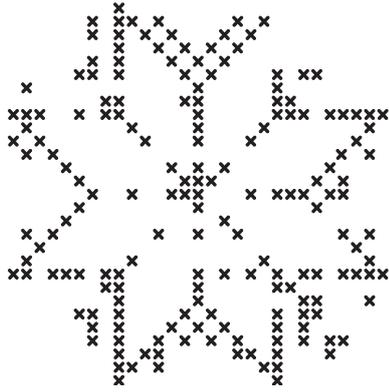
LAUNCH DAY - PROGRAM.....	P.2-3
THE MAHMOUD DARWISH CHAIR .....	P.4-6
“I SAY SO MANY THINGS...” ELIAS SANBAR.....	P.7-9
MAHMOUD DARWISH.....	P.10-12
BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDE .....	P.13
FILMOGRAPHY .....	P.15
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE SPEAKERS.....	P.16-18
SUPPORT COMMITTEE .....	P.19
APPENDIX: COLLOQUIUM MAHMOUD DARWISH — AUTUMN 2017	

Translations : **Erik Ross** (NL), **Carherine Hall** (GB),  
**Kadhim Jihad Hassan, Mohamed Elkhadiri, Alchaimaa Osman** (Arabic)  
Graphic design and logotype : **sunny-side-up**

Chaire Mahmoud Darwich  
Bozar - Palais des Beaux-Arts  
Rue Ravenstein 23  
1000 Bruxelles  
info@chairemahmouddarwich.org  
www.chairemahmouddarwich.org

The “Mahmoud Darwish Chair” is an initiative of  
the Federation Wallonia-Brussels of Belgium,  
in partnership with BOZAR, ULB and UCL Universities





كرسي  
محمود  
درويش

MAHMOUD  
DARWISH  
CHAIR

## COLLOQUIUM MAHMOUD DARWISH — AUTUMN 2017

Literature as an act of resistance.  
Writing about politics and religion in modern Arabic fiction.

Arab writers have often been at the forefront when it comes to criticising their society's political and religious representatives – in spite of the inevitable recovery of the literature by some governments – sometimes exposing themselves to censorship, or even legal proceedings, imprisonment or exile.

These writers have at times used an allegorical style – like Naguib Mahfouz in *Children of Gabalawi* – at times a very realistic style – like Abderrahman Munif in *East of the Mediterranean*.

This colloquium is about introducing Arabic-speaking writers who, through fiction, have questioned political and/or religious power, from the 20th century up until today, with a particular interest in events which have taken place since the Arab Spring. Indeed, numerous novels which have been published in recent years, such as Abdelaziz Baraka Sakin's *The Messiah of Darfur*, Salim Brakat's *The Captives of Sinjar*, Ali Bader's *The Infidel Woman*, Ahmad al-Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* and Hazem Kamaledin's *Desertified Waters*, have been inspired by the chaotic situation that some Arab states are currently experiencing; this in order to fuel the fiction in an original way, by taking the political (authoritarianism of the State, political communitarianism, foreign interference, etc.) and religious dimensions (community antagonism, development of the Islamic State, etc.) of this chaos into account.

The entire Arab world will be taken into consideration, from North Africa to Mashriq by way of the Arabic Peninsula.

Communication will be in French or English.

Chaire Mahmoud Darwich  
Bozar - Palais des Beaux-Arts  
Rue Ravenstein 23  
1000 Bruxelles  
info@chairemahmouddarwich.org  
www.chairemahmouddarwich.org

The "Mahmoud Darwish Chair" is an initiative of  
the Federation Wallonia-Brussels of Belgium,  
in partnership with BOZAR, ULB and UCL Universities

