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# ARTFORUM

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*Rosalind Nashashibi*  
Imperial War Museum, London  
by Alex Davidson



Rosalind Nashashibi, *Electrical Gaza*, 2015, HD video, color, sound, 18 minutes.

Rosalind Nashashibi's new film *Electrical Gaza*, 2013, recasts Gaza as an enchanted place behind sealed borders, codified through danger and division, bristling with beauty and life. Shot prior to the most recent Israeli assault on the area in 2014, it images scenes of the region where violence is, for once, not at the center. The camera luxuriates in quotidian life: Kids play in an alley, horses are washed in the searing blue Mediterranean, and men prepare falafel and sing together in a living room.

Every so often, Nashashibi's footage morphs into computer-modeled animations resembling children's stories. The music—uplifting synth—that frames certain scenes feels foreign to the context and calculatedly cloying. Fixed in these filters, brushed with a knowing sentimentality, Gaza seems an impossible fiction. Nashashibi's films have a tendency to twist back on themselves, showing artifice by way of cinematic construction. Whereas in her other films, her slow, probing camera can inject magic into seemingly routine activities, in *Electrical Gaza* there is another force at work. These scenes are threatened by tragedy implicit to this region, which loops back upon questions of exoticization bound up in Nashashibi's own gaze. One final shot pans across the Rafah sky looking toward Egypt, resting at the border crossing. Accompanying this scene is Benjamin Britten's *Fanfare* (1939), an operatic adaption of Arthur Rimbaud's *Illuminations*. Its words translate to "I alone hold the key to this savage parade." But this work, if any, knows the falsity of this sentiment.