

Arts Council England
Letter of support

6 March 2025

On behalf of Aspex Portsmouth I am writing to confirm our support of Lara Kobeissi's application to the Arts Council England to support her development of work to be developed during an artist residency at Aspex Portsmouth.

Aspex is situated in the heart of Portsmouth, bringing art and creativity to a range of audiences across our communities through a varied programme of exhibitions, off-site projects and participation events. As Portsmouth's long-standing Arts Council England, National Portfolio Organisation, contributing to the well-being and cultural opportunities of those in our local community is key to what we do. We work to create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience contemporary visual art – from looking and discussing, to making and curating. Working in partnership with other creative individuals in the city helps us to increase our impact, and to this end we are committed to developing our relationship with Lara during the Aspire Programme to further support her practice.

The project builds on previous work developed for Nazar, a VR-based performance that incorporates physical touch to explore intergenerational protection practices. It explores the integration of sensing technology not just as a tool, but as a medium to facilitate the unearthing of knowledge that is stored in the body, centering touch as the main conduit for communication. This approach not only moves away from immersive experiences that typically only engage the visual and auditory, but also challenges the intellectual, affective and physical borders that dominate our contemporary worldview.

Through a development program that will take place at Play Office prior to the residency, I will engage with up to 4 artists to explore best practices for combining sensing technology and embodied practices. As part of the one month residency, I will implement these developments to evolve Nazar from a prototype of a 1:1 performance into a full mixed-reality installation by engaging audiences through a series of activities including workshops, a user-testing of the installation with the workshop's participants, and a showcase open to the public at the end of the residency.

At Aspex Portsmouth, our dedicated team and I are committed to providing essential mentoring and practical support to empower Lara throughout the project. This collaborative effort will empower participants to develop their creative and leadership skills, fostering a shared vision and ensuring inclusivity at every step of the project. We are thrilled about the prospect of participating in this innovative program and wholeheartedly support the attached application.

Yours faithfully,



Ricardo Reveron Blanco

Curator/Programme Manager, Aspex Visual Arts Trust



UNIVERSITY OF
PORTSMOUTH
CENTRE FOR CREATIVE
AND IMMERSIVE XR

Eldon Building
Winston Churchill Avenue
Portsmouth
PO1 2DJ

21st January 2025

Re: Lara Kobeissi: Project Nazar funding applications
The Old Pay Office,
Portsmouth Historic Quarter,
Victory Gate,
HM Naval Base,
Portsea
PO1 3L

To whom it may concern,

We are very excited to see the development of Lara's "Nazar" project and are looking forward to working with her to help develop the project further. We will be helping Lara to explore the use of Volumetric Video and Haptic Devices to enhance the viewer experience, and how to best integrate these technologies into the project.

The Centre for Creative and Immersive Extended Reality (CCIXR) is the UK's first integrated facility that brings together a full suite of the latest XR technologies under one roof. Our world-leading facility places us at the forefront of innovations in the next generation of digital technologies of virtual, augmented and extended realities. As well as equipping our graduates with highly sought-after skills in a rapidly evolving field, CCIXR provides support for organisations to explore how XR can work for them. CCIXR supports many local artists and cultural organisations and have a partnership in place with The Play Office.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Counsell
Technical Director, CCIXR

**Shubbak: A Window on
Contemporary Arab Culture**

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Letter of Support for Lara Kobeissi

To Whom it May Concern

It is with pleasure that Shubbak confirms support for Lara Kobeissi's project *Nazar*.

We saw a work-in-progress version of this piece and became instantly invested in bringing a developed version of it to Shubbak Festival. It is evident from this piece of work that Lara's skill in using innovative technology, combined with her acutely sensitive & humane storytelling, is not only visionary departure from the perceived binary of creative technology versus artistic warmth, but that it will also be an important contribution to the Arab & SWANA-led arts scene in the UK.

Shubbak is Europe's largest biennial festival of contemporary Arab arts and cultures, reaching over 38,000 audiences in 2023 alone. Shubbak aims to reach over 50,000 audience at our 2025 festival. We will be supporting the project with £1500. In addition, we will be providing In Kind support in the form of:

- 5 days of marketing and PR: 5 x 400 = £2,000
- Office Space: 5 days x £70/day = £350
- Meeting Space: 3 days x £500 = £1500
- Photo and video documentation of performances = £750

Live Arts Development Agency are confirmed as venue partners for 2025's presentation.

We can only recommend this project for an Arts Council England grant and wish Lara the best of luck.

Sincerely,



Alia Alzougbi

CEO & Artistic Director, Shubbak



IDFA DocLab
International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam
Vondelpark 3
1071 AA Amsterdam
The Netherlands

18 July 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

This is a letter to express our interest in *Nazar* by Lara Kobeissi on behalf of IDFA, the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam.

Since 2007, IDFA offers an international platform to immersive and interactive documentary art and performance within its IDFA DocLab program for new media.

We have been following the development of Lara Kobeissi with great interest and love to express our support and seriously consider *Nazar* for selection in the future. Contingent on pending funding applications on our side, we will be able to support the presentation of selected projects with contributions to travel costs, as well as location costs, audience outreach and publicity throughout the festival.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be in contact,

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caspar', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Caspar Sonnen
Founder and Curator of IDFA DocLab



Date: 5th April, 2025

To: Arts Council England

From: Marc Boothe
B3 Media

Dear Assessors,

Re: Letter of Support for Lara Kobeissi

I am delighted to support Lara Kobeissi's application for the ACE Project Grant. Having demonstrated immense promise during our TalentLab XR programme, Lara has emerged as a compelling storyteller and a bold creative voice in immersive practice. Her work on *Nazar* has already achieved several significant development milestones.

Nazar takes audiences on an intimate journey into a digital excavation of Lara's childhood home, exploring the evolving complexities of her relationship with her mother over three decades of conflict and migration. Part memoir, part immersive archive, *Nazar* delves into the traditions of evil eye protection and tactile rituals passed down through generations. The experience unfolds as a form of experiential poetry, featuring motion-captured gestures and chanting that seal a covenant between people and place — land, moon, stars, and vines.

Lara's distinctive ability to merge her rich cultural heritage with cutting-edge technology sets her work apart. Whether self-teaching advanced 3D creation techniques or harnessing AI to craft emotionally resonant narratives, her work consistently pushes creative boundaries. Her growing role as a mentor to emerging artists further underlines her influence within our creative community.

At B3 Media, we are committed to supporting Lara's continued growth. As part of her digital residency at our microstudio at Brixton House, we are pleased to offer in-kind support valued at **£4,500**, which will be instrumental in the further development and technical refinement of *Nazar*. This includes:

- Motion-Capture Equipment Hire: £2,500
- Provision of PCs and VR Headset: £2,000

We are confident that, with the backing of the ACE Project Grants, Lara will be well-equipped to bring this pioneering project to full fruition — continuing to explore the intersection of culture and technology in powerful and resonant ways.

Thank you for considering this application.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Boothe'.

Yours sincerely,
Marc Boothe
Founder / Creative Director
B3 Media

Mobile: 07984 713 664