

When the Dove Arrives

GOWEN X GENEVA PEACE FORUM 2026
A SPECIAL GROUP EXHIBITION

*Canvas
of peace
&
solidarity
1956*

Waseem Ahmed
M'hammed Kilito
Seif Kousmate
James Nachtwey
Françoise Pétrovitch
Pablo Picasso
Sofia Yeganeh
Jérôme Zonder

Picasso

Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG)

October 12–15, 2026

In collaboration with the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform

Press Release

October 12 – 15 | 2026

On the occasion of the Geneva Peace Forum 2026, GOWEN is delighted to present a unique project in partnership with the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, featuring a group of artists whose works respond to the theme of this year's forum: *Choose Peace*.

When the Dove Arrives takes as its starting point an iconic, historical drawing by **Pablo Picasso** (1881-1973). From a private collection and on loan especially for the show, *Colombe de la Paix*, 1956, produced in oil stick on paper, replicates the white dove, a motif first used by the artist to illustrate the poster of The World Congress of Partisans for Peace of 1949 in Paris, becoming an iconographic image of the period. Known as "The dove of peace", the motif remains an enduring, international emblem of purity, hope and protection of the human race.

Spanning photography, painting and drawing, the exhibition brings together seven distinct contemporary international voices, each responding to Picasso's defining image through their own visual language. Across the presentation, universal themes emerge: conflict, exile, trauma and political and historical divisions, but also shared humanity, reconciliation, compassion and love. Affinities arise between the works, some united by motif, others by medium, and others by an attention to the gestures and experiences that speak to our common humanity. In dialogue with one another, they suggest that it is through recognising ourselves in others - our vulnerability, dignity and capacity for connection - that the possibility of peace begins to take form.

Waseem Ahmed, *Invisible border* (series), 2023
Dry pigment colour, gold leaf, tea stain
on Archival handmade Wasli paper, 34.7 x 25.5 cm.
Courtesy of The Artist and GOWEN. © Waseem Ahmed.





Unfolding across three thematic dialogues, the viewer encounters the *Dove of Peace* alongside works by **Waseem Ahmed** (b. 1976, Hyderabad). One of Pakistan's leading contemporary miniature artists, Waseem Ahmed addresses territorial boundaries and the plight of refugees in works from his ongoing '*Invisible Border*' series (2016–2026). In certain paintings, sanguine fissures are a metaphor for the partitioning of land. Lines are forged across the paper's surface, tracing the realities of human migration and displacement, where exclusion and segregation fracture identity and intensify the uncertainty of the unknown. Allusions to ancient Greek mythology, as are often found in Waseem Ahmed's practice, evoke the notion of victory in peace and war.

The dove motif is echoed in an image by acclaimed Moroccan documentary photographer **M'hammed Kilito** (b. 1981, Lviv, Ukraine). *Aves Pacis, Bejaad Morocco*, 2017, or 'birds of peace' is in contrast with the imposed borders depicted by Waseem Ahmed, the birds transcending such boundaries in their free movement. In his 1992 work taken in Soweto, American photojournalist and war photographer **James Nachtwey** (b. 1948) documents the lives of children in a segregated township. As they play on a trampoline, at the peak of their trajectory, they are momentarily liberated from gravity itself, as if in flight.

M'hammed Kilito, *Aves Pacis, Bejaad, Morocco*, 2017
80 x 80 cm, ed. of 5 + 2 AP.

Courtesy of the Artist and GOWEN. © M'hammed Kilito



Sofia Yeganeh, *No you for me*, 2024, Hand embroidery, acrylic and photo transfer on canvas, 101 x 142.5 cm.
Courtesy of the Artist and GOWEN. © Claude Cortinovic.

In the second thematic passage, hands appear in works by **Françoise Pétrivitch** (b. 1964, Paris), **Jérôme Zonder** (b. 1974, Paris) and **James Nachtwey**. Symbolic and gestural, they are held in postures of agreement, consolation or comfort, or, in a work by Pétrivitch, recalling the Pietà from the art-historical canon.

The presentation culminates in a moment of reflection on hope and harmony, addressing a new generation looking ahead, beyond the traumas of the past. Nachtwey's youths suspended in play; a portrait among flowers by Moroccan photographer **Seif Kousmate** (b. 1988, Essaouira) from his '*Rwandan Youth*' series, or a marriage captured in celebration evoke an escape from Rwanda's heavy past, allowing a sense of optimism for the future. In her ongoing '*Interaction*' series, British-Iranian artist **Sofia Yeganeh** (b. 1996, London) explores the bonds that connect individuals across physical distance. Using thermal imaging to capture intimate gestures, such as embraces or kisses shared with those she loves, she makes visible emotional connections that might otherwise remain unseen. Electric-like lines traverse her compositions like threads binding bodies, while recurring cellular forms, reminiscent of social media interfaces, evoke a generation whose relationships are increasingly shaped and sustained through technology, dissolving the boundaries of frontiers and physical distance.

Around twenty works are included in the presentation.

ABOUT THE GENEVA PEACE FORUM

Evolving from Geneva Peace Week with a new identity for this year's edition, the **Geneva Peace Forum** (GPF) is the flagship initiative of the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform.

Geneva has long stood as a city of peace, a place where diplomacy is practiced, humanitarian action is shaped, and global challenges are confronted through dialogue rather than division. From multilateral institutions to civil society, it brings together a unique concentration of actors committed to preventing conflict and building sustainable peace.

The Geneva Peace Forum builds on the legacy of the Geneva Peace Week. More than an annual gathering, it is a platform where decision-makers, practitioners, and experts come together to connect ideas with action. Rooted in Geneva's unique ecosystem, the Forum creates space for strategic dialogue, fosters collaboration across sectors, and generates concrete pathways to address today's most pressing peacebuilding challenges.

By bringing together voices from the field, policy, and academia, the Geneva Peace Forum reflects what Geneva does best: bridging divides, shaping solutions, and advancing peace as a shared global responsibility.

 www.genevapeaceforum.ch

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ABOUT THE GALLERY

GOWEN represents emerging and mid-career artists, developing rigorous, engaging presentations. Distinguished by a rich, expansive programme comprising exhibitions, curatorial projects, and participation in international art fairs, the gallery often undertakes ambitious, large-scale or monumental installations.

Founded in 2009 as Faye Fleming & Partner by Laura Gowen and Faye Fleming, the gallery became Gowen Contemporary in 2010. Following a period of closure due to personal circumstances, Founder and Director Laura Gowen reactivated the programme at Rue Jean-Calvin 4 in 2017. In 2021, marking a new phase of growth and development, the gallery inaugurated its flagship 200 m² space at Grand-Rue 23 in the heart of Geneva's historic old town. A second exhibition space - GOWEN LAB - housed in the original gallery location, is dedicated to emerging practices, guest curators, and artist talks, allowing the gallery to deliver its ambitious programme across two complementary venues.

Since its inception, GOWEN has championed pioneering and critically engaged artistic practices, often presenting contemporary works alongside significant historical works drawn from private collections. Committed to diversity and the visibility of underrepresented voices, the gallery embraces all media and forms of artistic expression.

Today, under the continued direction of Laura Gowen, the gallery is strengthened by the dynamic involvement of co-directors Michael Gowen and Marie Allal-Dittmar. Their fresh perspectives enhance the gallery's established programme, including the development of a stronger photography component, while reinforcing GOWEN's collaborative and forward-looking presence within the contemporary art landscape.

 gowen.art

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