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## VARIOUS ARTISTS FROM BERLIN: MUSIC IN EXILE

Music is something we have been doing since we were nomadic at the dawn of time. Something to unite people beyond language and status, something we keep on doing at home, away from home, on the road however perilous it may be, in our head and heart, with our body, alone and also to get closer to each other, to find our place and hopefully to belong there.

By *Nadia Says*

Each artist in this group ponders the question of searching for and finding a home. For *The Finches*, it is about learning how to belong in a place where many people reject their sound and attitude, for the others it is about finding their footing in foreign lands. *Wizzy* escaped danger and found shelter with a song by his side, while *Bana Haffar* travels with modular sounds and field recordings to strengthen her roots on the road, *Mentrix* and *Rasha Nahas* use music, movement, and visuals to keep connected to their homeland and showcase it to the world, and *Zazuka* and *WYWY*, settled in their new home, compose nesting melodies that may bring comfort to those who need it as well.

As the curator for this exhibition section, as well as for live events mostly in Berlin and Los Angeles, my work on the one hand involves showcasing all the diversity the music scene has to offer, while on the other bringing as many different people under one roof as possible to enjoy the show all together. Celebrating individuality and uniqueness, be it cultural, ethnic, communitarian, or even cliquish, by making it accessible, educational, and welcoming to the many, is the key to ensuring that these differences become the glue that transcends race, gender, language, and much more, even if just for a short period of time. Music opens a door to understanding one another without words, and to seeing each other as humans, irrespective of our circumstances.

For migrants, migration is about personal or economic growth, or about survival. For the host nation, welcoming migrants is regarded as either a burden or charity, rarely considering that most of these migration movements have been driven by imperialistic forces that have been at work for centuries. Besides the valuable labour that migrants bring to hosting nations, their arts and crafts such as music, dance, or cooking, are the positive aspects that make it easier to put aside negative feelings and try and make space for foreigners. As a result, these host nations see their cultural heritage enriched and reaching further out into the world, and migrants can enjoy the customs of both their homeland and of their new home while acting as essential cultural bridges. The same goes for communities not welcomed at home; over time, the passion and beauty springing from artists must become contagious and convert those who are entombed in their old ways.

Music will tell tales, open doors, and mend broken bonds or create new ones. All journeys involving the search for a home have their own soundtrack... I hope you will relate to and enjoy these selected stories told by *Bana Haffar*, *Mentrix*, *Rasha Nahas*, *The Finches*, *Wizzy*, *WYWY*, and *Zazuka*.

[Nadia Says](#) is a music curator at [YMA \(Your Mom's Agency\)](#) in Berlin.



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### BANA HAFFAR

Bana Haffar is an electronic musician specializing in modular synthesis and field recording. By switching from ten years of electric bass to modular synthesizers in 2014, Bana attempted to dismantle years of institutional "conditioning" in traditional systems of music theory and performance.



© Rasha Nahas

### RASHA NAHAS

Palestinian singer-songwriter and instrumentalist Rasha Nahas was born and raised in Haifa, and currently lives and works in Berlin. A classical guitarist since the age of ten, Rasha has long been crafting a sound that moves seamlessly between the resonances of early rock'n'roll and the reckless echoes of free jazz, complemented by her distinctive approach to songwriting and performance.



© Mentrix

### MENTRIX

Singer and composer Mentrix draws her sacred practice of music into a secular exploration of the illusive dualities of existence and belonging for her bold debut album *My Enemy, My Love*, for which she inaugurated her female-led record label, *House Of Strength*.



© The Finches

### THE FINCHES

The Finches is a rock band formed in Tehran, Iran in the summer of 2015. In the winter of the same year the first drummer and the vocalist were replaced, and in 2016 the band released their first single, *Ocean*, followed by a series of live performances in underground venues.



© Wizzy

### WIZZY

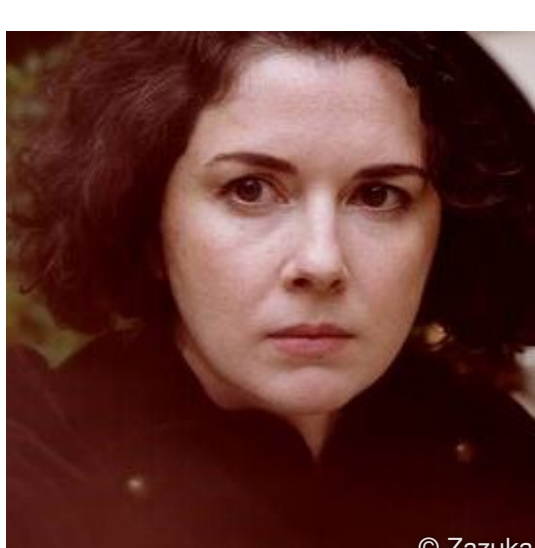
Wizzy is a Syrian singer-songwriter, performer, and mentor for *Queer Syria* and the *Dandanah* event series in Berlin where he has been living as a refugee for four years. *Queer art* and music are his passion; in contrast to conservative and dark agendas, they blossom into the most colourful and glamorous forms possible



© WYWY

### WYWY

WYWY is a dream pop couple based in the United Arab Emirates and featuring X as vocalist, synth, and xylophone player, and Mckie on synth, bass, and guitar. Since 2015, the duo have made a name for themselves with their dream-like yet dark and ethereal sound and visual live performances. In 2017, they released their first EP album *Within You Without You*, featuring five original tracks.



© Zazuka

### ZAZUKA

Zazuka (she/her) is the artist name of Jordanian-born Berlin-based composer, sound designer, and songwriter Zeina Azouqah. At times atmospheric and at times percussive, her music utilizes both acoustic and electronic elements. She started her path in music as a keyboard and piano player in bands, theatres, and Sufi poetry groups.