

**Beyond the Collection:
Bringing Together Art, Tradition and Religion**







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The collection of Dar Al-Kalima University 2021

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we publish this book featuring the art collection of Dar al-Kalima University.

Dar al-Kalima University is the first and only university thus far in Palestine with an exclusive focus on arts and culture. It is committed to educating the next generations of creative leaders through innovative and high-quality academic programs and lifelong learning opportunities, underpinned by a culture of entrepreneurship, research, and social and civic engagement.

The Dar al-Kalima collection was acquired over 25 years from 1995 to 2020 and comprises three different art collections. The first is a collection of paintings and art pieces produced by international artists who came to Bethlehem to exhibit at our Cave gallery. The Cave gallery was opened in 1999 and was the first professional gallery in the southern part of Palestine. We hosted well-known artists from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Greece, Belgium, China, the USA, and Palestine. Most of these artists donated a piece or two to our collection.

The second collection is of religious paintings commissioned from well-known Palestinian artists in an attempt to push for a new genre of contextualized Christian artwork. I was concerned that much of the Christian art found in churches in Palestine depicted Jesus and the Holy Family as if they were Scandinavians or north Europeans. As a contextual theologian who was eager to write a Christian theology out of the experience of us as Palestinian people, it was crucial to me that we develop contextual Palestinian art that reflects our reality. This collection is unique and represents the heart of the collection.

The third collection is made up of paintings that won the Ismael Shammout awards over the last five years. It was important to us to invest in the next generation of creative leaders in Palestine, both through Dar al-Kalima University and through national competitions that challenge young Palestinian artists to apply, thereby giving them visibility and international recognition.



This collection builds the nucleus of the Dar al-Kalima collection that we hope will grow with time. Over these last twenty-five years, we have seen how public art galleries and privately owned art collections have become a feature of the Palestine cultural scene. These new venues and markets, including Christie's, are testimony to the cultural vibrancy in Palestine and we are glad that we could contribute to this development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, Faten Nastas Mitwasi, who has been with us from the outset. She has played an important role in developing the artistic focus of the University and managing this project. Our thanks go to art historian and art critique Rula Khoury who is the curator of this collection and was responsible for the development of the catalogue. Last but not least, we would like to give special thanks to the A. M. Qattan Foundation through the 'Visual Arts: A Flourishing Field' (VAFF) Project, funded by Sweden, for their support to this project.

Our hope is that this catalogue will not only document the collection but will make it accessible to people worldwide, and thereby contribute to preserving, archiving, and promoting Palestinian art. We would like to invite visitors to Palestine to come to Bethlehem and view the collection exhibited at the gallery of Dar al-Kalima University.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Mitri Raheb

Founder and President of Dar al-Kalima University



Beyond the Collection: Bringing Together Art, Tradition and Religion

“New Life and new hope, a vision for the future, can be seen through Palestine’s new window.”

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb

Palestinian art in the 20th century was of a different caliber than it is now. Following a revolutionary era aligned with the phase(s) of the defense and liberation movements, Palestinian art has gone through a series of transformations, from employing landscapes and still-lives as symbols to a direct, realist (and sometimes collective) revolutionary art. Now in the second decade of the 21st century, the move from the revolutionary and collective to the more political and individual came whole in our contemporary era. Engaging with the local as global, Palestinian artists ditched point blank expression for conceptual and post-conceptual art practices to approach Palestine and the manifolded Palestinian identity.

Moreover, political developments in the last twenty years have led to economic conditions that enabled more art and artists. As a result, Palestinian art moved further from the public’s affinity, artists took their politically engaged art off of street walls into galleries, and museums, and a shift from the public to the private space took place.

One could notice how past and present Palestinian art follows the on-ground sociopolitical developments in Palestine. This is made more apparent when tracing how the post-Nakba Palestinian art operates, in parallel to the geographic structures of post-Nakba Palestine: in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel, among the diaspora in the neighboring Arab countries, and the exiled Palestinians all over the world. This is why Palestinian artist and art historian Kamal Boullata considers “place” a major thematic component of Palestinian art history. The Nakba of 1948 was the point of rupture in both place and narrative, as the destruction of Palestinian society and the establishment of Israel has made it almost impossible to trace the history of art in Palestine before 1948. Along with uprooting Palestinians and the destruction of their towns and villages, Palestinian culture also suffered huge losses, as not only



books were stolen; but artworks too were looted from abandoned homes in the major cultural hubs of Palestine after their inhabitants fled for their lives. Palestinian artists who remained in historical Palestine were separated after the founding of the state of Israel, and consequently, there was a separation; those who lived in the newly founded state and those in the west bank and Gaza. There are also the artists who grew up as refugees in neighboring countries or exiles elsewhere; hence, it was impossible to speak of unity in Palestinian art, as those in exile, for example, were not very aware of what their peers who remained in Palestine were doing, and also, more importantly, "lost touch with the course of developments germinating in Palestinian art prior to 1948."

Historically, Palestinian society sought cultural expression by way of religion and folklore. Traditional craft-making, Christian iconography, and Islamic ornamental designs were popular forms of artistic expression, second to the regionally-dominating interest in oral artistic and cultural practices such as poetry and storytelling. The early years of the 20th century saw significant developments in Palestinian art, as the wealthy and the well-educated Palestinians who inhabited the Palestinian cosmopolitan and port cities were exposed to modern forms of visual expression such as easel paintings and photography. Following 1948, Palestine as an occupied homeland became a predominant theme in Palestinian art, as pan-Arab nationalism and the Palestinian liberation movement fueled artistic imaginations with works that speak of the loss, memory, alienation, Palestinian identity, liberation, and return.

Indeed, as much as displacement, exile, memory, resolve, resistance, and hope constitutes the culturally and geographically diverse Palestinian identity, it also embodies its modern and contemporary artistic identity with all its shifts and transformations. Hence comes the importance of speaking of a Palestinian art collection such as Dar Al Kalima's, situated in a religiously and culturally significant city such as Bethlehem. Recognizing the importance of allowing access to a significant part of Palestinian history, Dar Al Kalima University dedicated its efforts to assemble an



art collection that displays, presents, and preserves Palestinian art of current and past times.

The collection encompasses works and pieces from the 20th and 21st centuries, from genial artists who believed in the Dar's vision to commissions from Palestinian masters, an example of which is Suleiman Mansour's painting *The Last Supper* (1994). The painting was an essential subject for the reverent, representing a Palestinian landscape: the apostles with traditional Palestinian outfits sitting around a table under the vineyards. Mansour himself has been drawing inspiration from Palestinian natural landscapes; in his painting, he reflects on his life as a Palestinian living under occupation, combining the religious, historical scenery with connection to the Palestinian origin land.

The painting displays a Palestinian rendition of the legendary last meal that is probably closer to reality than what is typically depicted by the European imagination. Since the 1970s, Mansour has been drawing inspiration from Palestinian natural landscapes; its mountains, hills, vineyards and olive trees, and most importantly, the people. In his paintings, he reflects on his life as a Palestinian living under occupation, often through symbolism, to address the hardships and beauty of Palestinian life. One can trace hints of an influence of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, whom Mansour considers both an inspiration and a comrade due to Rivera's centralization and celebration of the human condition in the art and their mutual interest in the struggle for human liberation and progress. Hence come the lush green colors and the earthy elements that celebrate traditional Palestinian imagery and the mud that he used to play during his adolescence, a material that, in his words, reflects human fate.

The art collection has grown over the decades, more than doubling in size since its opening. Along with the historical and the contemporary, the collection includes artworks in almost all media by some of the most innovative and creative Palestinian artists of our time. A significant part of the collection was formed when the Dar purchased the most extensive embroidery collection in Palestine from Ms. Vivi Siniora. Some of the pieces are approximately 200 years old. The embroidery collec-



tion is exhibited at the Cultural Heritage and Community Development Building. Simultaneously, the Armenian Palestinian artist Lucy Janjigian donated her painting collection titled Palestinian to the University. Recognized as one of the world's top Palestinian heritage art collections, it has served students, scholars, and members of the public free of charge for years.

Works such as *God is Love* by the late Palestinian painter, critic, and art historian Kamal Boullata (1942 - 2019) is prime examples. Known for his colorful silkscreens that featured geometrics and Arabic calligraphy, Boullata employed the aesthetics of Islamic and Byzantine cultures. His interests in Arabic calligraphy—mainly the Kufic script—later played a significant role in developing the style of his geometrical and abstract compositions and associated him with Hurufiyya. This mid-20th-century Arab aesthetic movement combined traditional Islamic calligraphy with elements of modern art.

Peace (2003) by the latest Palestinian visual artist, graphic designer, and inventor Vladimir Tamari is a prime example of a painting that embodies the collection's significance. Here, Palestine, its landscapes, social and religious culture: Church life, Islamic culture, are all present. Working primarily in watercolor and acrylic paint, Tamari reflected his thoughts in his paintings, many of which were influenced by nature; rocks, light, and water, resulting in a visual language that examines tradition to approach the future.

We can juxtapose two works from the collection that embody the collection's spirit as it moves between the local and the international, and the religious and the political. *Maryam* by the Palestinian interdisciplinary visual artist, photographer, and performance artist Eman Haram (b.1958), haunting female faces in traditional head-dressing disrupt linear time and serve as a homage to land, culture, and people. Haram employs the personal and political to create a language that addresses tradition to explore the ever-changing nature of identity and belonging. By digitally-layering archival material with collected photographs, the artist unsettles the nature of the image as a medium to invoke the past in the service of centralizing histories and memories, personal and collective, as a way of examining colonial and



postcolonial effects on identity and language; their layering, and transformation. On the other hand, Rev. Christine Cowan's (b.1955) Mary employs religious figures and imagery and natural landscapes to create high-spirited watercolor paintings, all while using a lively color palette derived from the colors of earth, water, mountains, and green fields. By translating what's akin to a transcendent religious experience on canvas, Rev. Cowan's brushstroke movements applied pigmented poured and sprayed watercolor wash on heavyweight watercolor paper to paint wave movements that frame the religious human Mary-like figure. She ultimately creates a dynamic viewing experience that recalls a divine intervention during tumultuous times to induce calm, comfort, and consolation.

In addition to works by significant artists, DAK's collection also includes paintings and photographs by winners who participated in the Ismail Shammout Award in Fine Arts and the Karimeh Abbud Award. The two awards, which are now considered renowned prizes in the Palestinian art scene, encouraged young artists' creativity and motivated their artistic engagement in subjects relevant to the Palestinian struggle for freedom, equality, dignity, self-determination, and the right of return. In 2014, the Dar established the annual Ismail Shammout Prize for Palestinian Fine Art in honor of the late Palestinian artist's (1930-2006) contribution to Palestinian art and culture and encouraged and celebrate young artists" from all over historic Palestine the Diaspora and support their creativity. A pioneer of the Palestinian artistic movement, Shammout expressed the concerns of his people, their memory, and their struggle throughout his career. The late artist was distinguished by a sensitive and creative brush, with colors and themes that express the various historical stations that Palestinians have gone through since the Nakba.

In the competition, the top ten selected artworks are publicly exhibited at the Dar's gallery. In addition, the exhibited paintings are offered for acquisition by public institutions, art collectors, and the public. In the past years of this contest, many young artists who won the first prize are now famous and internationally known. These kinds of competitions help motivate artists and help develop their careers. In 2015, for example, the first prize went for Bashar Khalaf's Self-censorship. In the



painting, Khalaf combines humor to tackle the issue of surveillance. He places two cameras facing each other on a wall with a geometric pattern line using intense vivid colors.

In addition, the Dar also established the annual Karima Abboud Prize for Photography in Palestine in 2016, at the initiative of Reverend Dr. Mitri Raheb, President of Dar Al-Kalima University. The initiative formed a forum for male and female photographers from all over historic Palestine to exhibit their photography, supporting future generations of Palestinian photographers and recognizing the importance of Karimeh Abbud (1893-1940) photographic legacy to the Palestinian culture. As one of the first Palestinian women to master photography in Palestine in the early twentieth century, Abbud worked from her photography studio in Haifa in the early 1940s and traveled all over the country photographing Palestinian society and other places of interest.

The photography work represents Jerusalem and its meanings to the West Bank, Gaza, and the Diaspora. They demonstrate the manifold and complex emotions of the holy city; grief, resilience, confinement, and separation. In 2018, the First Prize was awarded to Alexandra Sophia Handal, a Palestinian photographer born to a Bethlehemite family living in the diaspora. The winning installment, *No Parking Without Permission, Jerusalem*, was created during several walks through the neighborhoods of what has been known as West Jerusalem since 1948, an area from which Palestinian families were forced to evacuate. Handal sought to explore the alleys and streets that were a part of her childhood stories but were no longer accessible to the people who lived there. The photos are taken through several barriers – fences, gates, and bushes-to represent the distance and closeness of the Palestinian people to these areas.

As proof of the contest's popularity among Palestinian photographers, this year's competition drew in many entries on the theme "Jerusalem through a Palestinian lens." As a part of the selection process, a jury of prominent Palestinian artists and creators narrowed the selection pool down to ten finalists, most from the greater



Bethlehem and Jerusalem areas. Next, the finalists' artwork was showcased at the Palestine: Unlimited event hosted throughout the United States and at the Dar al Kalima University gallery.

Despite the Occupation and the Wall around Bethlehem, DAK continues to serve its community, regardless of gender or religion, primarily focusing on empowering women, youth, and the elderly. Similarly, the al-Kahf Gallery at Dar Annadwa solicits art exhibitions from international artists and local Palestinian artists as well as Palestinian artists living in the Diaspora. Since its establishment in December 1999, the al-Kahf gallery hosted many exhibitions (not less than 100 exhibitions as the average was 12 exhibitions per year) less than As a result, the gallery has noticed a general increase in the local community's interest in art, proving that their efforts to support and publicize the work of artists living in and around Bethlehem genuinely pay off.

In this spirit, this book is both a celebration of Palestinian art in its diversity and an introduction to Dar Al-Kalima's collection of Palestinian art. Not only will it serve as a survey and documentation of the Collection, but also, as we aim, to speak of the diversity and innovativeness of Palestinian Art and Artists everywhere, and, moreover, to speak to the broader public of the many subjects the artworks themselves speak of.

Rula Khoury

Curator, researcher and art critic





The Art Collection Of Dar Al-Kalima

Sama Alshaibi

Sama Alshaibi is a conceptual artist who primarily works with video art, performative photography, sculpture, and installation. Born in 1973, Basra, Iraq, to an Iraqi father and a Palestinian mother from Jaffa, she and her family fled the city in 1981 during the Iraq-Iran War to Saudi Arabia, then to the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, before moving to the United States in 1986. Alshaibi's father taught her photography when she was 12 years old. Her early interest in photography led to her earning a BA degree in photography from Columbia College Chicago, followed by an MFA in Photography, Video, and New Media at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2005.

Alshaibi often deals with spaces of conflict as her primary subject and states that living during the war and later as a refugee are the driving influences of her artistic practice. She also regards the particular impact that black photographers working on issues of identity and representation have had on her. War, exile, power, and the quest for survival are frequent themes in her works. Alshaibi often employs her own body in her artwork to represent the country or the issue the work engages with.

Birthingright is the artist's visual objection to the world's dismissal of Palestinian humanity. Her project is also based on narratives of Alshaibi's mother's family's forced migration from Palestine to Iraq and then to America and culminates with her own "return" to Occupied Palestine that as a refugee, she has no rights of a permanent return to. In doing so, the work forms a discourse that complicates accepted and official history.

As witnesses to history, Alshaibi's family's memories act as a personal testimony that objects to the effacement of events shaped by geography and modern-day politics. Through basing the work on her family's story of exile, birthingright uses the body as a symbol, a retrospective witness that links her present to a time before they were refugees, exiles, and "terrorists". The quintessential woman, the pregnant mother, performs the injustices, defying all attempts to erase their Palestinian history and who they collectively are.

Alshaibi has exhibited extensively throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa since 2003. She has held solo exhibitions in New York, London, Dubai, Guatemala City, Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Arizona. Alshaibi was the co-founder of the feminist collective 6+ and is currently the 1885 Society Distinguished Scholar and a professor of Photography at the University of Arizona.





In My Country's Embrace, Digital Archival Print, 75 x 63.5 cm, 2004-2005

Adnan Al Zubaidi

Adnan Al-Zubidi is a Palestinian artist and one of the pioneers of the Palestinian visual art movement. Born in Tulkarm, Palestine, in 1951, he completed his primary and secondary education in Tulkarem, before moving to Syria and later Beirut, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Arabic literature from Beirut Arab University in 1977.

Al-Zubaidi's father helped him acquire an early interest in art and took painting as a hobby. In his primary school years, he developed greater skills and became the school's painter for educational material. At the age of fifteen, he started painting with oil colors, and after graduating, began copying works of international artists.

For Al-Zubaidi, art is a longing for true humanism in a world dominated by justice, peace, and fraternal tolerance. A realist painter haunted by unrealized dreams, Al-Zubaidi tried through his paintings to convey the everyday reality of Palestinians and their thirst for freedom, bread, and joy. By employing anonymous Palestinian figures and biblical imagery, he depicted the daily suffering of his people, stories of martyrdom, detention, occupation, siege, and the struggle and steadfastness in the face of repressive practices and continuous aggression against the land, trees, and people. His experimentation with colors and materials led him to the idea of creating artworks from fine olive-wood shavings and natural colors driven from plants, stone, and dirt. By employing his accumulated technical expertise, Al-Zubaidi broke convention and started producing work carved on pine tree husks, of which he made more than two hundred works.

Al-Zubaidi worked as a calligrapher and designer in the city of the Nativity, Bethlehem, where he lived and worked for many years. He designed numerous posters, magazine covers, and memorials, the most prominent of the Martyrs Monument in Dheisheh camp. He co-founded the Association of Fine Artists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where he remained on its administrative body for fifteen years until the League's dissolution. He participated in local exhibitions in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and other Palestinian cities in addition to numerous international exhibitions, in Japan, Italy, Tunisia, Sweden, among others..

Al-Zubaidi also worked as a professor of art at Bethlehem University and in Arab Community Colleges in Ramallah. He is the co-founder of Yabous Fine Group and won numerous awards and prizes, including the bronze medal from the Norwegian FINN Foundation.

Al-Zubaidi passed away in 2007, Palestine





The Nativity, Oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2000

Nabil Anani

Nabil Anani is a Palestinian multidisciplinary artist and one of the founders of the contemporary Palestinian art movement. Born in 1943, Latroun, Palestine, Anani moved with his family to Halhul, Hebron, during the Nakba in 1948, where he finished his primary and secondary education. Later, he went to Egypt and studied Fine Arts at Alexandria University, Egypt, in 1969 and returned to Palestine to begin a career as an artist and an art teacher-trainer at the UN college in Ramallah. In 1989 he obtained a master's thesis in Islamic archeology from Al-Quds University.

A painter, ceramicist, and sculptor, Anani pioneered the use of local media such as leather, henna, natural dyes, paper-mâché, wood, beads and copper, and other materials to build Over the past four decades, an impressive catalog of innovative art. Drawing on his experiential intuition in using color, raw materials, and forms, Anani employs mixed media to portray natural Palestinian landscapes; houses, stone walls, and most importantly, olive trees. A believer in the necessity of modernizing heritage to transcend its rigid forms, Anani employs everyday political realities to create a style that balances aesthetical and formal aspects.

During his time in Egypt, Anani was influenced by the modern Egyptian art movement. Following his graduation, he began to feel alienated and sensed a need to delve into the Palestinian environment and people. Therefore, he paved his way by engaging with the Palestinian natural landscapes and villages and crystallized a distinctive style by employing symbols from traditional Palestinian embroidery.

Anani held his first exhibition in Jerusalem in 1972 and has since exhibited widely in solo and group shows in Europe, North America, the Middle East, North Africa, and Japan. His works are featured in many museums and private collections. He developed hand-crafts studies at Birzeit University in 1985 and built monuments and murals in Hebron, Al-Bireh, and Ramallah.

Anani is the co-author of several books on Palestinian arts and folklore. He was awarded the first Palestinian National Prize for Visual Art in 1997 by Yasser Arafat. He was the head of the League of Palestinian Artists and played a key role in establishing the first International Academy of Fine Art in Palestine, and taught Fine Arts at Al-Quds University until his retirement in 2003. In 2006, Anani was awarded the prestigious King Abdullah II Arab World Prize for Fine Arts. He now lives and works in Ramallah, Palestine.





Untitled, mixed media, 52 x 52cm, 1995

Gevorg “ENDZA” Babakhanyan

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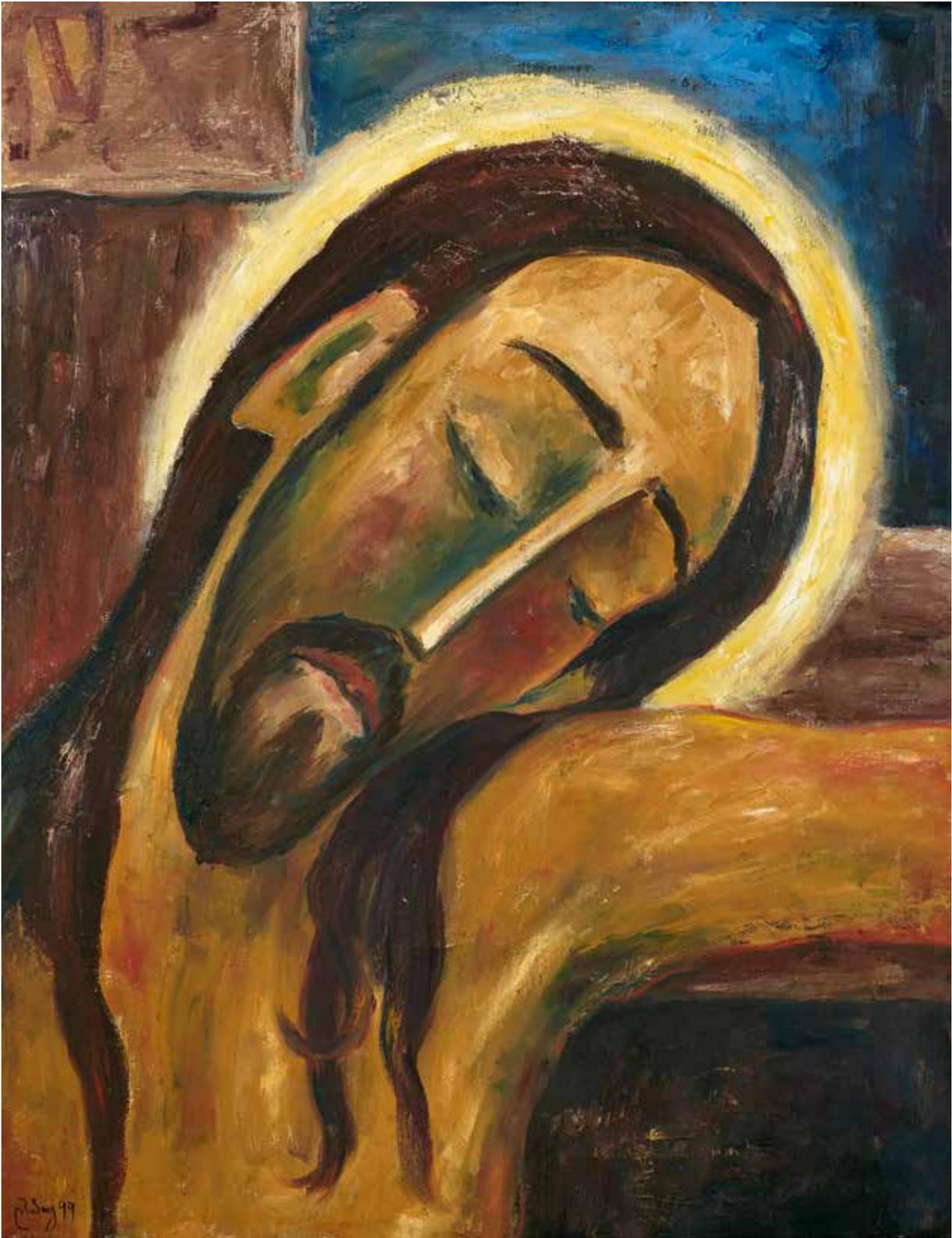
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Jesus of Nazareth, Oil on canvas, 48 x 61 cm, 2001

Zaki Baboun

Zaki Baboun is a Palestinian painter, sculptor, and woodworker. Born in 1962, a native and resident of the suburb of Beit Jala in Bethlehem, Baboun taught himself painting at a young age and began painting as a hobby before developing his passion as both vocation and business.

A self-committed man and a deep adherent to his Christian faith, Zaki Baboun's works on canvas and wood often depict biblical themes, figures, and stories, a direct reflection of the ancient religious traditions in the Christian city of Bethlehem and his religious belief in his duty as a faithful adherent to serve the message of God. As for his artistic conviction, his belief in the artist's responsibility to communicate his thoughts to people. By doing so, Baboun's works for canvas and wood capture Bethlehem's theological symbols and traditions and serve as reminder items of Christianity's historical centrality in Bethlehem and, at the same time, the daily political hardships Palestinians endure in the city and elsewhere in the occupied lands.

As a woodworker and sculptor, Baboun primarily works using finely sanded slabs of olive-tree wood and paints with oil-based colors, employing his distinctive style of thick brush strokes of bright colors against the natural, dark colors of the olive-wood. In his workshop, the pieces he produces only reference his Christian faith and biblical imagery and is often sold in Bethlehem as souvenirs to tourists and passersby.

Yet when working with canvas, Baboun doesn't limit himself to religious imageries and recognizes the responsibilities an artist has in such a harsh political reality. As a Palestinian artist living under Israeli occupation, such a reality manifests daily in the difficulties Baboun endures to secure even the most basic of materials for his artistic practice. Hence, even oil paint has to be secured elsewhere and is often smuggled by friends and volunteers from Jerusalem and delivered to him. Such difficulties are acknowledged in his paintings using ochreous colors referencing the historical landscapes of his hometown, and employs biblical imagery, sometimes with the stark symbols of the Israeli occupation such as the infamous separation wall, the religious is juxtaposed with the political to portray the actualities of everyday life in occupied Palestine.





The magi, Oil on canvas, 70 x 50cm, 2011



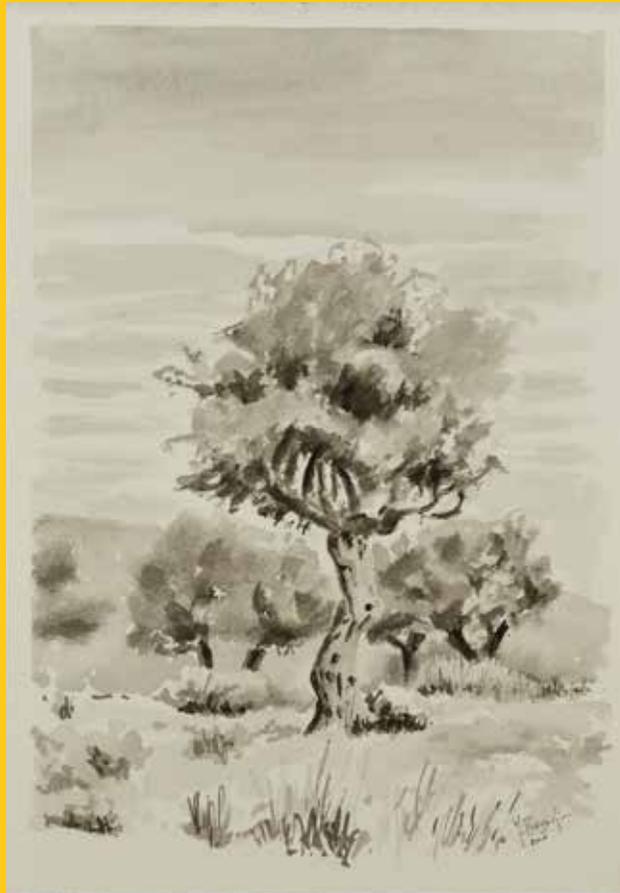
Olive tree, Ink on paper, 45 x 38 cm, 2012

Benji Boyadgian

Benji Boyadgian is a multidisciplinary artist born in 1983 and based in Jerusalem. He studied architecture at ENSAPLV School of Architecture (L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris La Villette), earning a Master's degree in Architecture with research distinction, specializing in urban sociology in post-conflict areas. Boyadgian attended the Young Artists Residency Program of Confrontation Through Art Project, organized by EMAA and Rooftop Theatre Group, Nicosia. He was co-awarded the Ismail Shammout Prize 2015 in Palestine.

Boyadgian's research-based projects explore themes revolving around perception, heritage, territory, architecture, and landscape. He works with multiple media, employing painting and drawing as his primary tools to capture fragments of overgrown ruins found in areas around Jerusalem that are disappearing under the stress of modern expansion – and documents them as if they are already a part of the past.





Olive tree, Ink on paper, 45 x 38 cm, 2012

Boyadgian's site-specific installations are means of integrating them into space and context. He spends time observing and researching Palestinian landscapes and ruins, documenting them in-situ rather than using cameras to provide a subjective glimpse, consequently questioning the temporality of land, evidencing fragments of traditional landscapes, and revealing traces of the long and complex history of Palestine. His use of Chinese ink on paper registers historical temporality. The ink blurs time and renders a more neutral aspect to his paintings, and puts his monochrome tones in dialogue with old photographs – the predominant visual documentation of pre-1948 Palestine.

Boyadgian attended the Young Artists Residency Program of Confrontation Through Art Project, organized by EMAA and Rooftop Theatre Group, Nicosia, and was a grant holder at IASPIS, Stockholm. Was a finalist of the Celeste Award 2016. His recent exhibition includes 2016: Traces, Art Rooms, Kyrenia, Cyprus; The Jerusalem Show VIII: 'Before and After Origins,' Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art, Jerusalem.

Kamal Boullata

Kamal Boullata was a prominent Palestinian painter, critic, and art historian. Born in Jerusalem in 1942, he grew up in the Christian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem, where he obtained his elementary education at the Collège des Frères and his secondary at Saint Georges School, graduating in 1960.

Due to an absence of art schools in Jerusalem at the time, Boullata taught himself to draw and received further education at the hands of artist Khalil al-Halabi, where he learned to draw icons.

As a teenager, Boullata's interest was in drawing the rich visual elements and scenes of his hometown and started selling watercolor paintings on the streets of Amman for the art enthusiasts among the diplomatic corps. This venture helped him set up small-scale exhibitions between Amman and Jerusalem, eventually securing enough finances to move to Italy and study at Rome's Accademia di Belle Arti for four years before moving to the United States to study at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, DC.

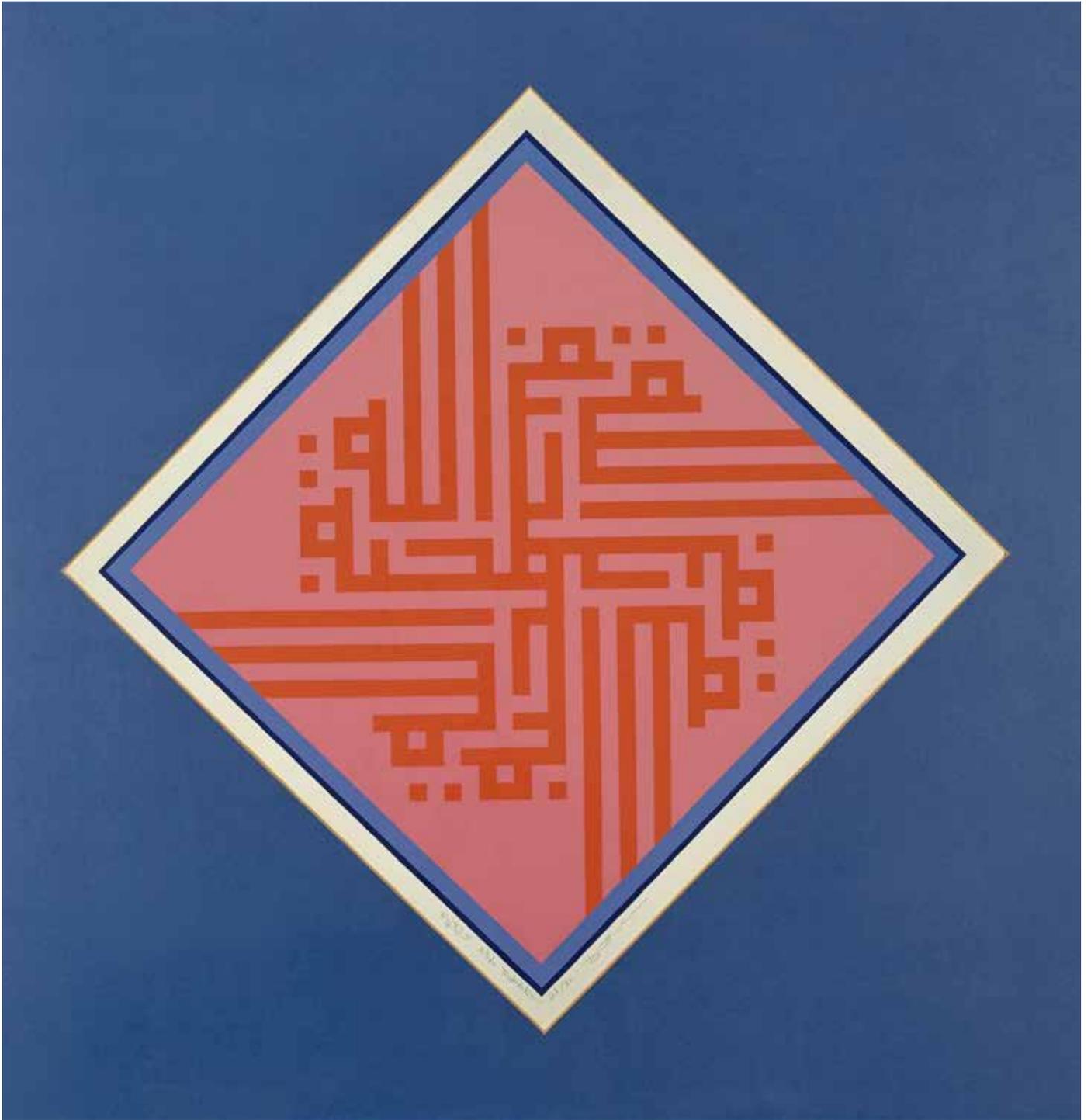
Boullata worked primarily in silkscreen, employing aesthetics of Islamic and Byzantine cultures, sometimes blending in his visual language. His interests in Arabic calligraphy—mainly the Kufic script—later played a significant role in developing his style of geometrical and abstract compositions and associated him with Hurufiyya, a mid-20th-century Arab aesthetic movement that combined traditional Islamic calligraphy with elements of modern art.

Abstract in style and painted in oil and acrylic, Boullata's work expressed his thoughts on Palestinian identity and exile, a prominent theme that spanned more than four decades of exile since Israel denied his entry back to his homeland after it annexed Jerusalem in 1967. In such works, Arabic letters, words, and calligraphy blend in geometrical forms to evoke elements from his childhood and themes of Palestinian identity and culture.

A prominent writer, critic, and art historian, Boullata wrote extensively on Palestinian and contemporary art and poetry, language, calligraphy, identity, gender, and globalization, among many other topics. His publications include three books on Palestinian artists; *Al-Manasrah* (1975), *Shammout* (1989), *Mohaziah* (1997), *Recovery of Place: A Study of Contemporary Palestinian Art* (2000, Tunisia), *Belonging and Globalisation: Critical Essays in Contemporary Art and Culture* (Saqi Press 2008, London), *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (Saqi Press, 2009, London), and *Between Exits: Paintings by Hani Zurob* (Black Dog Publishing London 2012).

Boullata died in 2019, Berlin, Germany





God Is Love, Silk Print, 78 x78 cm, 1983

Rev. Christine Cowan

Rev. Christine Cowan is a Pastor and a painter. Cowan was born in 1955, she grew up by the sea in Portland, Maine but later moved to Iowa, where she has lived for most of her adult life. She studied theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has recently retired from being solo pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Ogden, IA.

As part of her education for ministry, Rev. Cowan traveled with Luther Seminary to Palestine, which led her to make several trips in which she worked with the local church, the World Council of Churches, and community leaders in peacemaking and community development in the West Bank. Rev. Cowan's background includes many years as a pediatric nurse, a second career as a fine artist for ten years, and four years as vice president and president of the Iowa Watercolor Society.

During a cross-cultural course at Luther Seminary in 2008, Chris went on an alternative tourism trip to the Holy Land. Deeply affected by the injustices she saw in the occupied Palestinian Territories, Chris later went to Bethlehem to teach watercolor painting as a visiting artist at Dar al Kalima College, making side trips to Jerusalem.

Inspired by her love of people, nature, preaching the gospel, and advocating for a more just world, Rev. Cowan employs religious figures and imagery along with the natural landscapes to create high-spirited watercolor paintings, all while using a lively color-palette derived from the colors of earth, water, mountains, and green fields.

By translating what's akin to a transcendent religious experience on canvas, Rev. Cowan's brushstroke movements in applying pigmented poured and sprayed watercolor wash on heavyweight watercolor paper to paint wave movements framing the religious human Mary-like figure. She ultimately creates a dynamic viewing experience that recalls a divine intervention during tumultuous times to induce calm, comfort, and consolation.





Mary, Watercolor on paper, 77 x 62 cm, 2012

Taleb Dweik

Taleb Dweik is a Palestinian plastic artist and art educator with a career spanning over 40 years. Born in Jerusalem in 1952, he Received B.A. in fine arts and design from Helwan University in Cairo, Egypt, in 1977. A founding member of Al-Waisiti Art Center in Jerusalem and a member of the Palestinian Curriculum Arts and Crafts Committee, Dweik was the president of the Palestinian League of Artists from 1990 to 1996 and was the Dean of the faculty of fine arts at Al-Quds University from 2001 to 2003.

A Jerusalemite artist with a unique, quickly recognizable style, Dweik is known for his paintings of Palestinian landscapes. Many of Dweik's paintings have Jerusalem as their theme, reflecting the centrality that the city holds for him. His charming and embellishing portrayals of Jerusalem are executed in a painterly style that blends impressionism and expressionism. Although he lives in Jerusalem, his work characteristically omits the city's daily hardships and tensions to explore the charm of its landscapes and sites, opting to use vibrant colors to paint Jerusalem as a city of bliss. From 2000 and onwards, Dweik experimented with mixed-media techniques and collage to study correlations of land, heritage, and childhood.

Dweik's work is distinguished by focusing on color aspects and the overall composition of the painting. A lover of his hometown Jerusalem, Dweik interpolates his painted landscapes with lively colors as if he's projecting the spirit of an eternally young child who grew up on his hometown's soil. His color usage is deliberate rather than casual and works to achieve his vision of harmony and balance. Dweik painted everything in Jerusalem, its trees, buildings, mosques, and churches, and even its seasonal religious rituals, such as the Tarawih prayers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinian wedding ceremonies.

Dweik has held several personal and group exhibitions in local and global exhibitions, including Tokyo, Cairo, Madrid, Bonn, Washington, Toronto, Sharjah, Dubai, Amman, Jerusalem. He taught Art at Rawdat Az-Zuhur School in Jerusalem in the late 1990s. He was the inspector of fine arts education in Jerusalem and published a book on art education for secondary-level students.

He received many honors and awards, including the Welfare Association, the Sharjah Biennale, and the Jerusalem Committee; the First Award of the Palestine Ecologic Exhibition in Jerusalem (1986) and the First Award of the 'Jesus in the Palestinian Context' exhibition, Bethlehem (2003).





Nativity Church, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 84 cm, 2012

Layla Hamdieh

Layla Hamdieh was born in Rabat, Morocco in 1960 to a Palestinian father and a Spanish mother, artist Hamdieh was brought up in two different cultures. She traveled to various countries in her childhood years before her family decided to move back to Palestine, Jerusalem, where she now resides. She holds a bachelor's degree in art and education, followed by a degree in special education that led her to work in the field for 25 years before settling to paint on a full-time basis.

Hamdieh has been painting for over 20 years and studied at the Aley Center in east Jerusalem. Hamdieh's paintings are inspired by her own personal experiences, surroundings and employ her dreams and imagination to develop a painting style that approaches abstract impressionism.

Hamdieh primarily works with acrylic, pastel, and mixed media to execute abstract works that either depict her hometown Jerusalem, her stated source of inspiration, or anonymous human figures in blissful landscapes. She uses a color palette derived from the Palestinian environment and culture, evoking the inscrutability of the earth, nature, and people. Since the mid-1990s, Hamdieh's work has been exhibited in several exhibitions in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah.





Light Tree, Acrylic on canvas, 52 x 68 cm, 2008

EMAN HARAM

Eman Haram is a Palestinian interdisciplinary visual artist, photographer, and performance artist living and working between Montreal, Canada, and Amman, Jordan. Born in 1958 in Damascus, Syria, to Palestinian parents from Haifa, Haram describes herself as Palestinian by lineage, Damascene by birth, Lebanese upbringing, Jordanian by fate, and Canadian by naturalization. She moved to the United States to continue her education. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the New York Institute of Technology in New York, before earning a Master's Degree in Art History from The University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, before relocating to Canada in 2001.

As an interdisciplinary artist with such diverse life experiences, Haram employs the versatility of her media and subject matters to create works that primarily deal with the themes of Home, Colonization, the postcolonial condition, erasure, and personal and collective memory. Her interests in what she describes as the mythical frameworks that enframe the world in moral dichotomies, such as the colonizer/colonized and the civilized/primitive, are reflected in her approach to digital art. By employing the personal and political and creates a unique artistic language to address tradition to explore the ever-changing nature of identity and belonging.

In her photographic work, Haram uses digital layering to construct mutually inclusive relationships where both the form and content produce and reproduce each other along



Maryam, Digital art, 56 x 136cm, 2016



with their signifiers. By layering archival material with collected photographs, the artist unsettles the nature of the image as a medium to invoke the past in the service of centralizing histories and memories, personal and collective, as a way of examining colonial and postcolonial effects on identity and language; their layering, and transformation. Yet, at the same time, the constructed digital artwork and the subjects it depicts, such as the haunting faces of females in traditional head-dressing and other figures of the past, disrupt linear time and its flow and serve as a homage to land, culture, and people.

Haram's photographic works and installations have been presented globally and featured in private collections in Canada ((Darling Foundry, Chantier Libre, Atelier Circulaire), and globally (Contemporary Istanbul, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art, Casa Arabe Madrid, International Women's festival, Aleppo, Dar Al Kalima College, Bethlehem, Amman Image festival III). She is also the recipient of Montreal's Art Intercultural mentorship for 2009 in the Visual Arts category. Haram currently works and lives between Montreal and Amman.

Haram has presented her photographic works, installations, and performances locally (Darling Foundry, Chantier Libre, Atelier Circulaire) and internationally (Contemporary Istanbul, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art, Casa Arabe Madrid, International Women's festival, Aleppo, Dar Al Kalima College, Bethlehem, Amman Image festival III).



Lucy Janjigian

Lucy Boyadjian Janjigian is an Armenian-Palestinian painter, muralist, and sculptor. Born in Jerusalem of Armenian descent during the 1930 British Mandate, she spent her early years studying English and Arabic in the Jerusalem Girls' College. In 1948, Janjigian left with her mother to Amman, Jordan, before a local bishop arranged for her to attend the British Lebanese Training College in Beirut and train as a teacher. There, she spent two years, then worked with the UNRWA among Palestinian refugees for a year, and taught at St Paul's School, Damascus, Syria. She was later awarded a scholarship to Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, where she received her B.A. in Biology and an M.S. in Plant Ecology from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

A prolific painter for over four decades, her topics most often feature Biblical and social issues and the theme of uprootedness. Janjigian has been influenced by her parents' stories of the Armenian Genocide and her personal experience of the 1948 Nakba. While her dramatic depictions of biblical narratives show the experience of uprootedness in epic proportions, her journey as an Armenian/Palestinian refugee adds depth and dimensions to her work, illustrating a narrative dialogue and bare her inner soul.

Her abstract works have been inspired by nature and her travels. The strength of her expressionistic and cubistic technique, as well as her vividly contrasting colors, heightens the starkness of her expressive power. She has created thematic series of paintings, such as Uprooted, The Homeless, On the Edge, Flora in Abstraction, Collages, Interiors, and Travel, among others.

Janjigian credits her experiences across the Middle East and her Christian faith as incredibly influential to her work. Janjigian has been actively involved in her church as a deacon and ruling elder and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) nationally for many years. Today, she still serves as a board member of the Presbyterian Hunger Program and with the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women.

Janjigian has been commissioned for paintings, magazine and church bulletin covers, murals, and children's book illustrations, among other projects. She has participated in numerous one-person and group exhibitions, and her works hang in many public, private and corporate collections around the world. Considering an appropriate permanent home for her extensive collection of paintings, she has selected her Journey to Resurrection series of 33 paintings to send home to Palestine and donated them to Dar al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem.





Passages, Oil on canvas, 90 x 122 cm, 1990

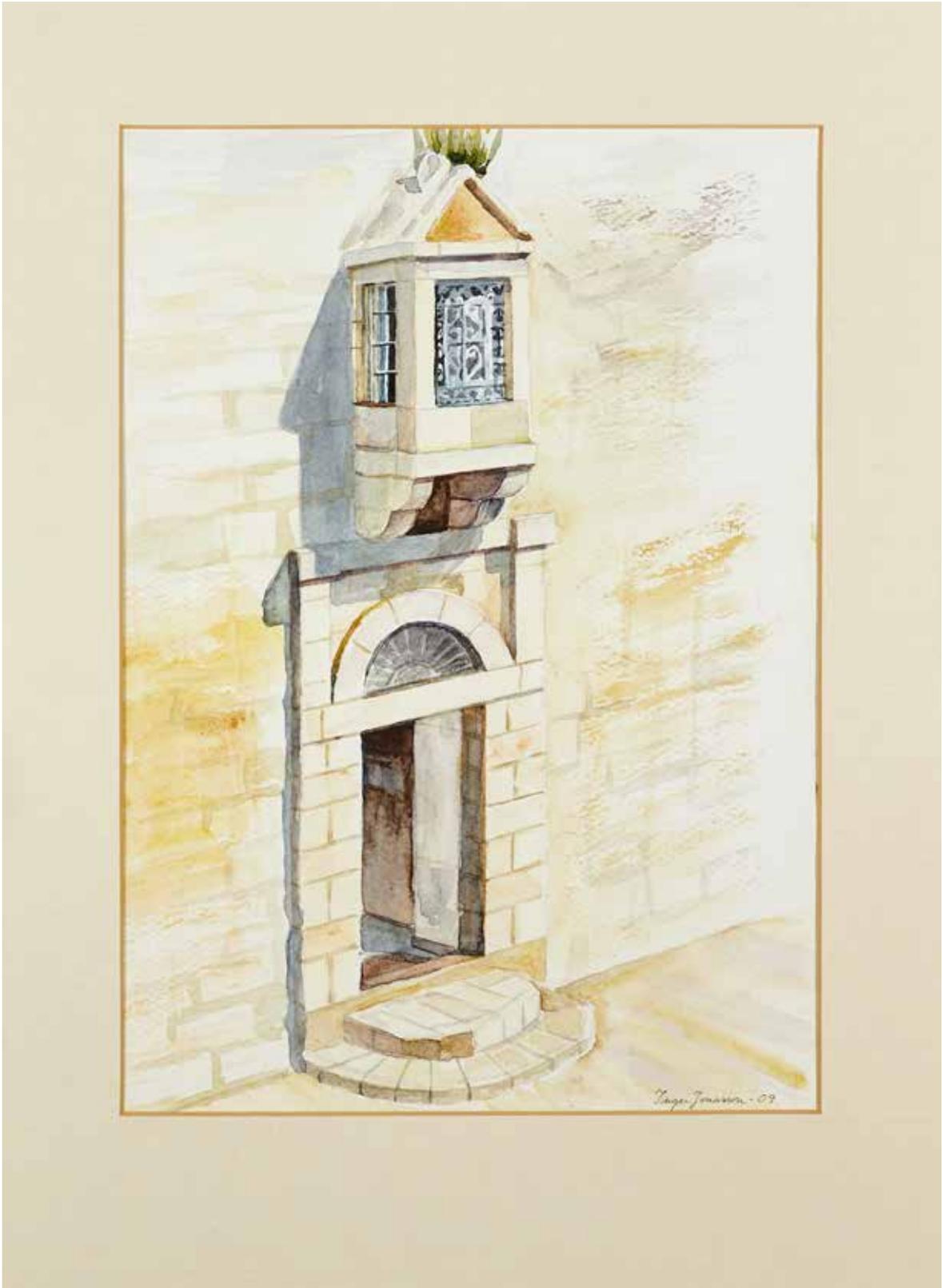
Inger Jonasson

Inger Jonasson is an artist, missionary, and teacher. Born in 1964 in Sweden. Jonasson finished high school in 1966 and studied art history at Stockholm University in 1967, before earning her B.A. in Occupational Therapy, Örebro High School, Sweden 1971. Throughout her life, she also studied weaving, ceramics, oil painting, spinning, natural wool dyeing, color theory, and in 2001 spent a year studying Drawing, Oil- & Acrylic Painting, Water Colour at Väsby Art School in Sweden. Between 1972 - 1980, Jonasson worked at several hospitals in Sweden practicing Occupational Therapy with both children and adult patients. In 1980, Assignment by Church of Sweden to Palestine, giving courses drawing, painting, weaving, sewing, wool dyeing in Lutheran School in Beit Sa-hour.

Palestine, especially the city of Bethlehem, proved inspirational for Jonasson's uplifting art. She painted using watercolor on paper, especially the local natural landscapes and the beautiful 19th century Bethlehem traditional architecture. For her, art takes on the characteristics of local life, hence the choice of bright, earthy colors that reflect the local nature and culture. She also works with glass, producing pieces and sculptures inspired by her faith and theological background as a missionary and Palestine. She originally made her mini sculpture, named Glass Angels of Peace, from pieces of broken glass from the rubble an Israeli tank left behind when it slammed into the gift shop at the International Centre of Bethlehem (ICB) in 2002. Today, the glass angels of peace are made by many of her art students using used glass bottles and have emerged into a small business enterprise employing around 50 people in Bethlehem. Since the tank incident, thousands of angels have been produced and sold worldwide. She is particularly fond of art projects which transform sad things into something hopeful. The angels of broken glass allude to suffering and have become a symbol of sympathy with the Palestinian people.

Jonasson is a long-time advocate of peace and reconciliation and has been involved in several cultural programs over the years. Moreover, she has overseen numerous exhibitions during her three-year tenure as a coordinator at the International Center of Bethlehem. She continues to work as a teacher for one month each year at the Dar al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture (DAK) in Bethlehem and also chairs the Friends of DAK in Sweden, which gives scholarships to art students at the Dar al Kalima College.





Door and window, Watercolor on paper, 40 x 53 cm, 2009

Mohammed Joulani

Mohammed Joulani was a Palestinian visual artist and educator. Born in Jerusalem in 1983, he earned a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Al Quds University in 2009 and an MFA degree from Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem. Following that, he returned to Al Quds University and taught visual arts between 2011 and 2013, and at the Friends Boys School between 2016 and 2018, and other school and Palestinian cultural foundations.

A winner of the 2016 Ismail Shammout Award and remarkable young talent, Joulani continued working up till his sudden and untimely passing in 2020 after a long battle with cancer. Even in his sickness, Joulani continued working to produce his last paintings; a series of three self-portraits that reflects on the ideas of isolation and repetition; the first portrayed himself wearing a mask, the second portrayed himself drawing the first painting, and in the third, he painted his reflection in the mirror working on the two previous paintings.

Such themes of isolation and repetition are central to Joulani's overall artistic practice as they are central to his favored themes of the human condition concerning Palestine. Whether painting portraits, self-portraits, or in his more symbolic visual compositions, Joulani's brush portrayed himself or anonymous Palestinian human figures either waiting, in transit, or wounded, sometimes with traditional tools and everyday objects as poetic and symbolic references to the harsh reality of a city and people under threat.

In his paintings, Joulani usually dealt with freedom, mobility or its lack-of, and space with an often earthy color palette with varying shades of blue. In doing so, Joulani directly taps into the harsh everyday reality of Palestinians and their lives and painted works depicting his hometown of Jerusalem as an eternal place that is still withstanding the onslaught of its harsh everyday reality and transformations.

A founding member of the Visual Artists Club of Jerusalem, Joulani was directly involved with his local community in Jerusalem. In addition to teaching art at local schools and facilitating art workshops in local foundations, Joulani directly took his practice to the streets, walls, and rooftops of his beloved hometown Jerusalem and produced many paintings and murals of exuberant colors and shapes. In addition, he worked directly with young adult students to create The Street Museum project, a loving nod to the city and people he loved, something that in return earned him the love of his community; a crowning award to his numerous artistic achievements, awards, and local and international exhibitions.





Palestinian woman, oil on canvas, 61x 43 cm, 2004

Riikka Juvonen

Riikka Juvonen is a Finnish visual artist, graphic artist, illustrator, author and teacher living in Helsinki. Born in 1955 Kangasala, Finland, she attended the Vocational School of Art and Design and then studied at the University of Art and Design in Prague, as well as at the Finnish University of Art and Design in 1972-1975.

Her art combines hyperrealism painting with sculptural elements, pop and kitsch styles, taking pain as an experience and uses myriad of colors to tell strangely alluring stories. In her photography, she takes photographs of roller derby girls, of which she collects photographs of their bruises and then reinterprets it into large-scale artworks charged with human emotions and strength.

As an author, Juvonen has published her own works for children and adults and illustrated more than fifty works, such as Juice Leskinen's books *Räkä and Roiskis* (1992), *Räkä and Roiskis in Suuvesi* (1995) and *Räkä and Roiskis in Women* (1997). She has received several awards and recognitions for her artistic work, such as the Bronze medal at the Leipzig International Book Fair, 1985, the Finnish Picture Book Award, 1986, 1990 and 1996, and the Engel Prize for Church Art, 1999.





Sarah, Oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm, 1999-2000

Céline Lackar

Céline Lackar is a visual artist and teacher. Born in 1977 in Nice, France, she studied fine arts at Beaux-Arts de Paris. A multidisciplinary artist, Lackar works with several media and forms, including painting, ceramics, engraving, photo, video, sound, bronze casting, stained-glass, stone cutting, illumination, textile printing, embroidery, and above all drawing, which she considers a sensitive, poetic act of quest for the living and fertilizer for the soul.

Her work unfolds like a multi-faceted symbolic tale that allows for multiple reading levels and speaks of two visions that form her perception of the world. Her installation, *Counterpoints* (2018), was deployed in Bethlehem, Palestine, including Bethlehem Convention Palace, Dar Al-Kalima University, and Dar Annadwa Center. It allows linking different parts of the Palestinian cultural identity: textiles, music, and architecture, with the collaboration of the inhabitants and musicians, creating links between people and other places in the city. Designed in three parts, the project includes Textile installations, designed partitions with musical performances, and a series of drawings. These works link and highlight the different modes of expression of Palestinian culture and also, in part, a tribute to traditional Palestinian embroidery and music.

She participated in many international exhibitions, including the 2018 Bethlehem Convention Palace, Dar Al-Kalima University, Bethlehem, the 2017 Johanssen Gallery - Direktorenhaus, Berlin, 2016 Hotel an der Oper (Borssenanger gallery), Chemnitz / Le Séchoir, Mulhouse / 2015 Le Séchoir, Mulhouse, and many others. She lives and works in Mulhouse, France.





COUNTREPOINTS – INSTALLATIONS TEXTILES, Crayons, acrylic, gilding foil, embroidery on cotton
4 x 7 m / 25 m / 25 m = 78 m, 2018

Suleiman Mansour

Suleiman Mansour is a Palestinian painter and sculptor and one of his generation's most celebrated Palestinian artists. Born in 1947, Birzeit, Mansour grew up in the Palestinian Countryside between Bethlehem and Birzeit. Although he originally planned to study abroad at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Six-Day War broke out in 1967, before he was due to leave, drastically reshaping the territory and Mansour's future. Israel's victory, which resulted in the destruction of Palestinian villages and the dismantlement of refugee camps, forced Mansour to remain in Palestine due to his fear of not being able to return.

Considered an important figure of contemporary Palestinian artist and an artist of the Intifada, Mansour's work gave visual expression to the concept of Sumud, an ideological theme and political strategy that promotes rootedness and resistance to occupation that first emerged among Palestinians in the wake of the 1967 Naksa.

This early experience of oppression heavily influenced Mansour's practice. Although he studied at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Mansour resisted abstract expressionism and opted to develop a socialist realist style of painting, depicting the daily life of those living and rooted in Palestine. Mansour drew political cartoons for local newspapers and illustrations for educational books. In 1987, during the onset of the Intifada, Mansour and a group of artists including Tayseer Barakat, Vera Tamari, and Nabil Anani established New Visions; an artistic movement at its core rejecting Israeli art materials in protest of the occupation and support of the Intifada, turning to locally sourced materials from the Palestinian environment such as coffee, henna, mud, and clay. With this shift, Mansour created a new formal language, translating his practice from figurative to abstract painting and simultaneously making the subject of his work and process a political act.

Since the 1970s, Mansour has been drawing inspiration from Palestinian natural landscapes; its mountains, hills, vineyards and olive trees, and most importantly, the people. In his paintings, he reflects on his life as a Palestinian living under occupation, quite often through employing symbolism, to address both the hardships and beauty of Palestinian life. One can trace hints of an influence of Mexican painter Diego Rivera, whom Mansour both an inspiration and a comrade due to Rivera's centralization and celebration of the human in art and their mutual interest in the struggle for human liberation and progress. Hence the lush green colors and the earthly elements that celebrates traditional Palestinian imagery and the mud that he used to play within his adolescence, a material that, in his words, reflects human fate.

In addition to painting, Mansour taught art at UNRWA school in Ramallah and taught craft making at Birzeit University, and currently teaches at the international academy of contemporary arts in Ramallah. Mansour co-authored two books on traditional Palestinian clothing and embroidery (1985-1987). He is also a co-author of *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, published in 1998 by the Contemporary Art Museum with University of Washington Press.





The Last Supper, Oil on canvas, 118 x 145cm, 1994

Adel Naser

Nasser was born in the city of Jerusalem in the Government Hospital in 1936. At the age of six, he attended first grade in the Government School for Boys following a year of preparation at the St. Joseph Sisters School. There, he started learning the Arabic language, among other subjects and memorized its alphabet.

In Jerusalem, Nasser was impressed by a calligrapher who writes the headlines in red al-Raqqa script, so Nasser was eager to take Al-Quds newspaper after his father finished it to start imitating the headlines. Since then, Nasser has loved the Arabic letter, which he considers to be the most beautiful letter in the world's languages without a doubt.

Later, Adel Nasser moved from the Government School to Tierrasanta College, Bethlehem, in primary school. He grew knowledgeable of Arabic calligraphy types and the beauty of letters, so he satisfied his love for calligraphy. Nasser used to write for cinemas in Bethlehem, such as Bethlehem Cinema, Al-Amal Works, and Al-Sharq Cinema in Beit Sahour. He was planning with paint brushes of different sizes and colors on 80x50 cm paper called Afeesh, meaning advertisement posters pasted on the walls of houses or the streets. He also drew the signs for various small shops and businesses and wrote welcoming messages to the guests of Bethlehem. And so things went until I graduated from Terra Santa College in 1956. Later, Nasser worked as a teacher in the Ministry of



*The word became flesh, Ink on paper
64x64 cm, 2002*





*Glory to God in the highest, Ink on paper
64x64 cm, 2002*

Education while planning cinema and banners.

In the early eighties, after deep thinking, he specialized in Arabic calligraphy. The first thing he chose was to paint the words of the holy books: the Bible and the Holy Qur'an. Nasser loved the verses of the Noble Qur'an found in shops or on car windows and in the rooms of homes. It is a unique and beautiful style that draws attention. He draws different Arabic letters directly using gel on fabrics such as silk, viscose, satin so that, according to him, it can last forever.

Nasser held his first exhibition in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nativity in Bethlehem in 1994. All the paintings were sold at that time, all of which were selected religious verses, some of which included "roses" with their beautiful colors.

In addition, he held an exhibition in 2002 at Dar Al Nadwa International, where he displayed 70 paintings that took more than three years to work, all of which were verses, some of which also included roses. He also displayed pieces of art made of stained glass, in which he inserted religious verses in Arabic calligraphy and exhibitions in Germany (2005) and the USA (2010 and 2016).

Following his retirement from the Ministry of Education in 1982, Adel Nasser lives in Beit Jala, where he devotes his time to working, exhibiting, and developing his practice.

Valentin Oman

Valentin Oman is an Austrian visual artist with a Slovenian mother tongue. Born in 1935, in St. Stefan, he graduated from Marianum Tanzenberg / Plešivec in 1958, then studied at what is now the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. In 1963, he completed a special class for printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts in Laibach / Ljubljana.

In addition to painting and photography, Oman creates frescoes, reliefs in concrete, aluminum, and bronze, often as works in public spaces, including the design of several churches such as the church of the Tanzenberg monastery, the parish church of Eisenkappel, Sankt Jakob im Rosental, or the Easter church in Oberwart, as well as the subsidiary church of St. Magdalena in Wasserhofen with the 24-part cycle *Ecce Homo*.

Oman is considered a representative of the early avant-garde in Carinthia and a master of sacred art. For decades, he has been mainly concerned with the image of man as a subject, painting figures often fractional and vaguely recognizable in many layers that have been revised over time. Another important topic of his art is the transience, or the becoming and passing away. Even when painting heaven and earth, Oman is not interested in the surface of nature but rather in what man has left in it. Even with photography, he's also interested in the same theme, where he considers his landscape images a histological cross-section of the earth.

In *Ecce Homo*, his central work, Oman uses dark-toned colors, blue, brown, and rarely green. Red is almost always present, which, for him, is a color that represents a memory of what is happening. Layers of paint are applied to imitate time and produce a memory of humanity. Taking inspiration from the Greek mythological account that humankind was formed from lumps of clay and held together by threads, Oman weaves these threads into networks and structures to show Man in his frailty and claim to eternity and mortality.

Since 1963 Oman has had several solo exhibitions, mainly in Austria and Slovenia, and in Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg, Belgium, Italy, Paris, London, Prague, and New York. Among other things, Valentin Oman has an honorary doctorate from the University of Klagenfurt, has received the Cross of Honor for Science and Art in 1st Class, and has received Slovenia's Golden Order of Merit. He lives and works in Vienna and Finkenstein / Bekštanj.



Ecce Homo, Mixed media on canvas,
45 x 200cm, 2017

Fan Pu

Fan Pu is a Chinese artist and paper cutter. Born in Nanjing, China, she grew up in a Christian home where her father Fan Peiji was a well-known artist and calligrapher. After graduating from middle school at the age of 17, Fan Pu volunteered in Xinjiang's Autonomous Region as part of the "up the mountain, down the countryside" movement inspired by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution in 1966-76.

Part of what is often referred to as "the lost generation" who missed the opportunity for formal education, Fan Pu familiarized herself with the life of simple people and their hand-made gift habits, especially paper-cuttings. After 14 years of farm work, she returned to Nanjing with her husband and two daughters in 1979. She worked for a fine art company while simultaneously doing independent university studies and taking fine art courses.

One of the most important Christian artists and paper-cutters in the new China, Fan Pu, mastered paper-cutting techniques to make small presents and propagate her faith. She deliberately retained the centuries-old Chinese ethical consciousness rooted in Confucianism in the context of developing art that reflects Chinese particularities in a stage of rapid social change. She has made a series about the teachings of Confucius to emphasize her sense in honoring this tradition and follow it as a crucial ethical guide, signifying her belief in the lack of contradiction between Chinese heritage and Christian ethics. Children, men, and women; workers and peasants alike, along with a representation of Christ altogether, are frequent subjects in Fan Pu's art, which can be subdivided into two categories, namely biblical illustrations, and thematic representations.

For her, the beauty that Christian art seeks to express God's truth, goodness, omnipotence, and kindness manifested in all creation, where every piece of good art is a revelation of God's beauty. From 1993–2003, Fan Pu worked as the associate director of the Amity Christian Art Center. She has participated in several exhibitions in Hong Kong, Beijing, Vienna, and Germany.





The Mountain Sermon, Paper Cut, 40 x 50 cm, 2003

Dr. Ali Qleibo

Dr. Ali Qleibo is an artist, author, and anthropologist. Born in 1964 in Jerusalem and educated in the United States, he has lectured at Al-Quds University, teaching ancient classical civilization. He was former Director of the Cultural Studies Programme at Al-Quds University Fellowship at Shalom Hartman Institute; Director of Fine Arts at Al-Quds University; Visiting Professor at Tokyo University for Foreign Studies; and former Assistant Professor at Birzeit University. At the Jerusalem Research Centre, he developed the Muslim tourism itinerary in Jerusalem, encompassing tangible and intangible heritage. He is a specialist in Palestinian social history and has authored various books, such as *Surviving the Wall*, documentation of aspects of contemporary peasant Palestinian culture, and *Before the Mountains Disappear*, an ethnographic description of everyday Palestinian life that provides a narrative rich with anecdotes from personal experience the manners and customs of modern Palestinians.

A renowned oil painter, Dr. Qleibo's oil painting *Double Window* was the first Palestinian artwork chosen by UNICEF. He had numerous art shows worldwide. His artwork is kept locally and internationally in private collections in Tokyo, Vienna, Brussels, Cairo, Amman, Paris, New York, Rome, Boston, Costa Rica, Salvador, Honduras, and elsewhere. In his recent art exhibition, *In the Realm of Light*, Qleibo's artwork expressed his spiritual Sufi interests through the use of the play of light and shadow.

Qleibo's ethnographic cum artwork includes film documentaries that cover aspects of Palestinian Social history. His film, *le Regard de l'Autre* a film subsidized by the French Government relating to postmodernism in French Society, was filmed in Paris and was first released in the Jerusalem Film Festival in 2003. He has written several plays, two of which were produced in Japan and Israel.

Following a three-year sojourn in Tokyo, Japan, as a visiting professor, where he lectured on Palestinian Culture and society, among othhre topics, his nostalgia to Jerusalem brought him back to his hometown.

As a specialist in Palestinian social history and through his work at the Jerusalem Research Center, he has developed the Palestinian Social and Muslim Tourism Itinerary. He held a fellowship at Shalom Hartman Institute and was a visiting professor at Tokyo University for Foreign Studies and Kyoto University, Japan. Dr. Qleibo presently lectures on Ancient Classical Civilizations at al-Quds University.





Untitled, Oil on canvas, 48 x 55cm, 1999

Yousef Rajabi

Yousef Rajabi is a Palestinian painter and craftsman. Born in Jerusalem in 1966, Rajabi studied glass and ceramics at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, before earning a diploma in Pottery Arts from Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron. He also won a scholarship to study glass sculpture at the University of Washington's School of Art, Art History, and Design.

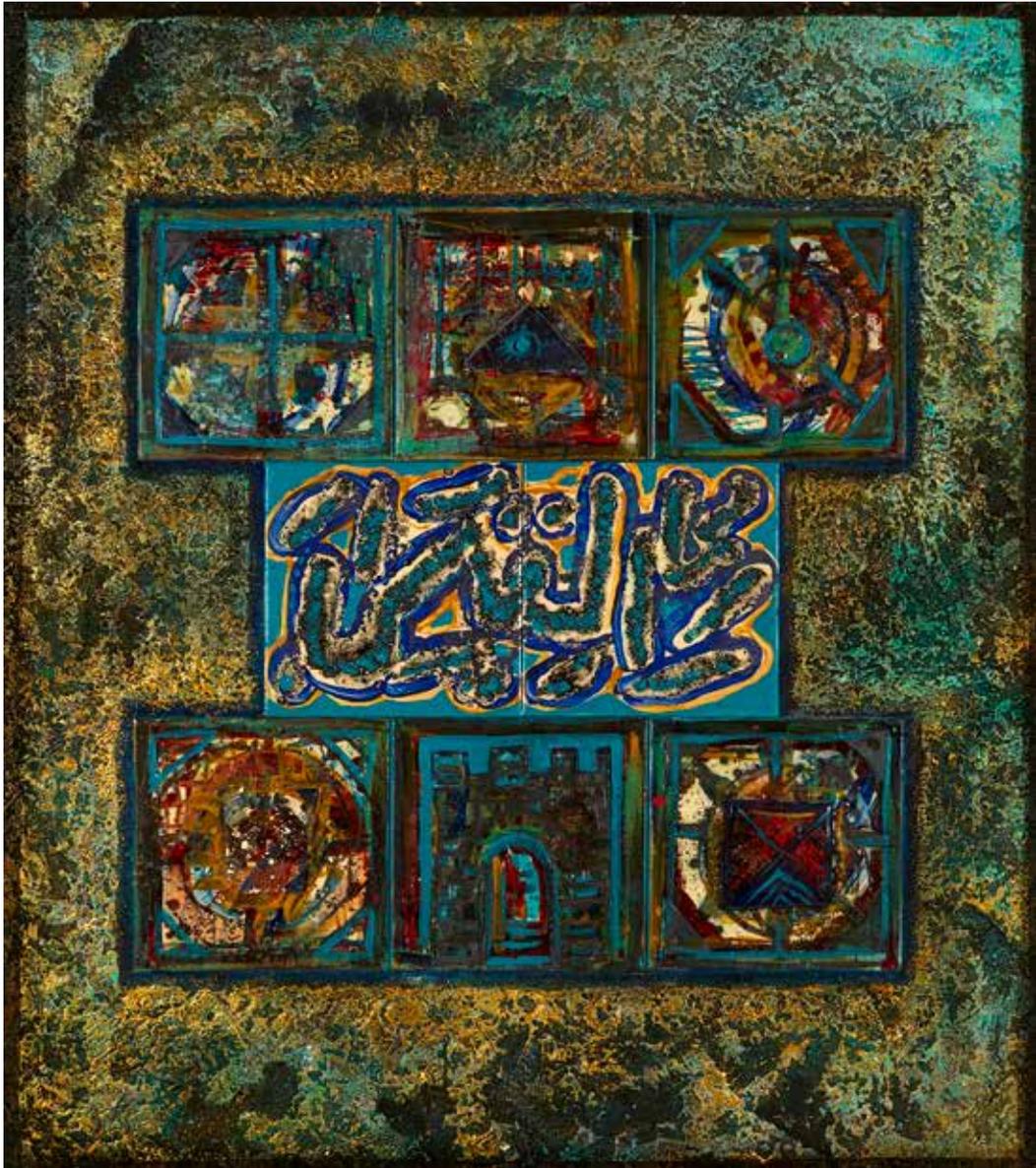
Rajabi discovered his artistic tendencies from a young age; art classes in his school were a catalyst for his unconventional, creative innovations, competing with his peers until he formed his personal artistic language. He did not want to become a traditional artist. Rajabi began devising new methods to integrate fine arts with craftwork in the context of Palestinian art. In creating a new form of Palestinian artistic language, Rajabi highlighted his practice and moved away from convention by employing carpentry, iron, glass, and clay.

He started drawing in black and white and later began introducing transparent colors with black before moving to watercolors. In 2000, he moved to start using acrylic while utilizing new techniques through which he was able to create a distinctive artistic language and style through the use of carpentry and wood techniques. In 2005, Rajabi introduced glass and metals in his art and constructed paintings by mixing paint with glass and metals. What prompted Rajabi to do so is not the only distinction but the painful reality of Jerusalem. For him, bending and shaping solid materials clears sorrow and negative energy.

Rajabi's search for everything new pushed him to acquire many tools. His studio, which is more of an experimental lab, houses his works and his unique color mixes, a clay oven, and tools for cutting and slicing metal.

Rajabi taught art in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and worked with UNESCO and the Sabreen Association for Artistic Development. He also participated in several workshops and seminars in Palestine and local and international exhibitions, including the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Korea, and Japan. Rajabi has received many awards and certificates of appreciation, and has authored and contributed to many publications and artistic posters.





Jerusalem, Ceramic and Glass on Wood, 61 x 70 cm, 1995

Heidi Niehaus & Yasser Saymeh

Yasser Abu Saymeh is a Palestinian calligrapher and poet. Raised in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan, he received training from master Arab calligrapher Khalil Al-Zahawi. He began his career by drawing signs for what he said were peaceful demonstrations against Israel's military occupation. Abu Saymeh was trained in Baghdad and worked from a small studio in Bethlehem, a few hundred yards from the Church of the Nativity. He also teaches calligraphy at Bethlehem University and is sometimes asked to testify in court as a handwriting expert, usually in fraud cases. He participated in several local and regional exhibitions as a calligrapher and wrote the complete Luke Gospel that was dedicated to Pope Benedict XVI upon his visit to Bethlehem in May 2009.

Heidi Niehaus is a musician and artist from Germany. Born in southern Germany, she studied music and English in Minnesota and Freiburg. For decades, Heidi has been preoccupied with different techniques, and her focus on free (abstract) calligraphy has crystallized over the last 15 years. The sound and rhythm of speech of philosophical thoughts, aphorisms, and text fragments are her impulses for the visual implementation.

Between 2010 and 2013, Niehaus lived in the Palestinian Territories. Mahmoud Darwish's epic poem *Al-Jidariya* (Mural), which Darwish wrote after his near-death experience in 1999, acted as a philosophical bridge between Niehaus and Saymeh, which translated into a two-year collaboration in Beit Jala. They created a series of around 70 images in various formats shaped by the variety of Arabic fonts and Saymeh's technical and artistic skills and the multicolored, exciting, expressive, and sometimes spacious calligraphy with which Niehaus implemented her response to the poem.





Mahmoud Darwish (Music for your eyes), Watercolor and calligraphy on paper, 70 x 100cm, 2011

Vibeke (Vivi) Thykjaer Siniora

Vivi Siniora is a Danish-Palestinian artist. Born in Denmark to a seamstress mother and an engineer father, who were both accomplished artists and encouraged and cultivated the artistic talents of Siniora and her siblings. Siniora is long associated with the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, where she was a house matron for over 17 years.

In 1969, Siniora traveled to Palestine on a pilgrimage, at which time she met her future Palestinian husband Benoit Siniora from East Jerusalem and has lived here since. Siniora was fascinated with the richness and intricate details in the Palestinian embroidery, the harmony in the colors, and the variety of design patterns from various regions across the country. She began studying this and started collecting traditional embroidered dresses and pieces.

As a way to preserve and display the impressive handwork of Palestinian women, who frequently sold their dresses in times of need, Vivi started creating tapestries using the embroidery in these dresses. Since 1980, she has designed over one hundred tapestries, some of which are on display at Dar-Al Kalima, utilizing the patterns and colors in each tapestry design to express emotions, events, or places. Many of the tapestries made are designed where all portions of a traditional dress (chest, sleeves, front, back, and side panels) are incorporated into the piece so one can appreciate how much needlework goes into making each dress. Other pieces are a mix of two dresses where design and color complement each other. The portions of embroidery are hand-stitched on silk material that highlights the colors of the embroidery thread itself.

The Treasure of Jericho displays the dress's six vertical panels that make up the lattice arrangement and the four center squares adorned with silver Maria Theresa 1780 coins, used typically in a traditional Palestinian headdress. Cross-stitching using French DMC cotton thread on black polyester material, she intentionally left the alternating yellow and green stitching on the edges of four of the six panels to represent the flat stitching that Palestinian women do by hand to join two panels together and hide the seam.





Sunset, fabric, 110 x112cm, 2015



Spring in Beit Jala, Fabric, 2015



Summer Garden, Fabric, 98.5 x103.5cm, 2015

Ghita Beck Svensen

Ghita Beck Svensen is a Danish Artist, painter, graphic designer, and sculpture. Born in 1961 and raised on the marshland in Højer, a small marsh town in the south-westernmost corner of Denmark is Højer.

A trained teacher in visual arts and music, Beck's primary medium of expression is painting, but she also deals with graphics, ceramics, and bronze. No matter what art form she works with, the simple lines, the fantastic light, and the interplay between dark and light colors are characteristic of her art.

Beck's choice of color, the use of contrasts, and the harmonious structure mean that the viewer is made aware that there is a codependency between light and darkness in art or life. With a brush and spatula, she works her way to an expression that is as simple as the marshland she is surrounded by, which contains as much light and air as the open land she is surrounded by. And maybe a single curl appears - that can turn into a flock of sheep, a cow, or a reed moving in the wind. The simple lines and stunning lights of the marshland are the starting point for Ghita's creativity. No matter what artistic branch she deals with - painting, graphics, ceramics, bronze - the musical simplicity is expressed in the works.

Beck has exhibited at home and abroad since 1993 and has performed decorating assignments for the National Institute of Public Health in Copenhagen, Mommark Business School in Als, Kommunedata in Odense, VUC Ribe, RGW on Rømø, and DR Syd.





Bread, Oil on canvas, 65 x 65 cm, 2003

Vladimir Tamari

Vladimir Faik Tamari was a Palestinian visual artist, graphic designer, and inventor. Born in Jerusalem in 1942, Vladimir was raised in a house fond of arts and culture. His elder sister, Tania, is a trained classical soprano singer and author, and Vera, his younger sister, is an artist and historian of Islamic art. Tamari finished his primary and secondary education at the Ramallah Friends School before moving to Lebanon to study physics and art at the American University of Beirut in 1963. Soon after, he traveled to England and earned a degree in arts from St. Martin Academy in London, focusing on Arabic calligraphy, after which he spent another year at Pendle Hill School Quaker Center of Study and Contemplation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, before settling back in Lebanon in 1967.

The vibrant city of Beirut proved formative for the young Palestinian artist. There, he worked as an art teacher, tutoring Palestinian refugee children in UNRWA schools, designing and illustrating educational books, creating political graphics and posters, and even designing the PFLP's official logo. Tamari also helped to film documentaries about the plight of Palestinian refugees and collaborated with the Jordanian artist Mona Saoudi to produce a book of drawings and interviews with Palestinian refugee children. In 1970, Tamari left Beirut for Tokyo, where he lived and worked till the end of his life, pursuing his passion for painting, graphic design, and inventing.

Tamari's interest in Arabic Calligraphy led him to study Arabic typography and eventually manifested in his invention of Al-Quds typeface, a pioneering solution to the problems of adopting Arabic calligraphy into printing type. Yet, it was his fascination with Palestine's nature, the clear sunshine, unpolluted air, and the intense visual reality of space and color that influenced Tamari to find a solution to express that rich spatial solidity and enable artists and designers to draw spherical forms and axonometric projections. The result was Tamari's invention of the 3DD, a Three-dimensional drawing instrument in 1982, a 15-year project that he started in Jerusalem in 1964 yet was lost when an Israeli rocket hit his home.

Palestine, its landscapes, social and religious culture greatly influenced Tamari and profoundly impacted his thought and practice: Church life, Islamic culture, Palestinian and Arab nationalism, and the educated Arab who thinly adopted European modernist values. The shock of Palestine's occupation inspired in him a need to find solutions for the many problems posed by a new harsh reality. Working primarily in watercolor and acrylic paint, he reflected his thoughts in his paintings, many of which were influenced by nature; rocks, light, and water, resulting in a visual language that examines tradition to approach the future.

Tamari passed away in 2017, Tokyo, Japan





Peace, Watercolor on cloth, 116 x 128cm, 2003

Mary Tuma

Mary Tuma is a Palestinian-American artist and art professor. Born in Oakland, California, in 1961, Tuma's interest in art developed early when her mother taught her embroidery at a young age, leading her to seek training in textile design as an apprentice at the Beautiful Arts Hall in Kerdasa, Egypt. Tuma's interest in textile design led her to earn a Bachelor's degree in Costume and Textile Design from the University of California at Davis. Later, she studied women's fashion design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York before switching to art studies and earning an MFA in Visual Art from the University of Arizona in Tucson in 1994.

Renowned for her compelling and transcendent installations, Mary Tuma's artworks engage with issues of time, women and femininity, the place of individuality within a group, identity, and loss. Departing from the personal to the political, she prefers engaging with small ideas rather than large ones to aid her in communicating her personal experiences. Tuma's artistic practice deals with the physical reality of her own body and the social and political conditions of modern Palestine, hence injecting her work with an individualized perception of women within contemporary critical frames.

In her works, Tuma works with a variety of fiber media and uses textiles and clothing forms as metaphors while at the same time utilizing found objects or specific environments to evoke particular feelings of loss and memory, a combination that blends boundaries of illusion and reality. By creating various fabric-based objects or structures redressed with a sheer, skin-like fabric, Tuma superimposes worlds to allude to loss and the passing of time, hinting at the transformative nature of human identity, where the body is treated as an emotional landscape.

Tuma's work has been exhibited at the Cheongju International Craft Biennale, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, the Crocker Art Museum, The Station Museum, The Birzeit University Museum, and the Maruki Gallery in Hiroshima, among others. In 1997, she began teaching art at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte, where she lives and serves as an Associate Professor and the head of the Fibers Program.





knitted piece, Width:35,depth:10,height:8, 2012

❖ Ismail Shammout Fine Art Award



Bashar Khalaf, *Self-censorship?*, Acrylic on canvas, 128cm x 117.5cm, 2015

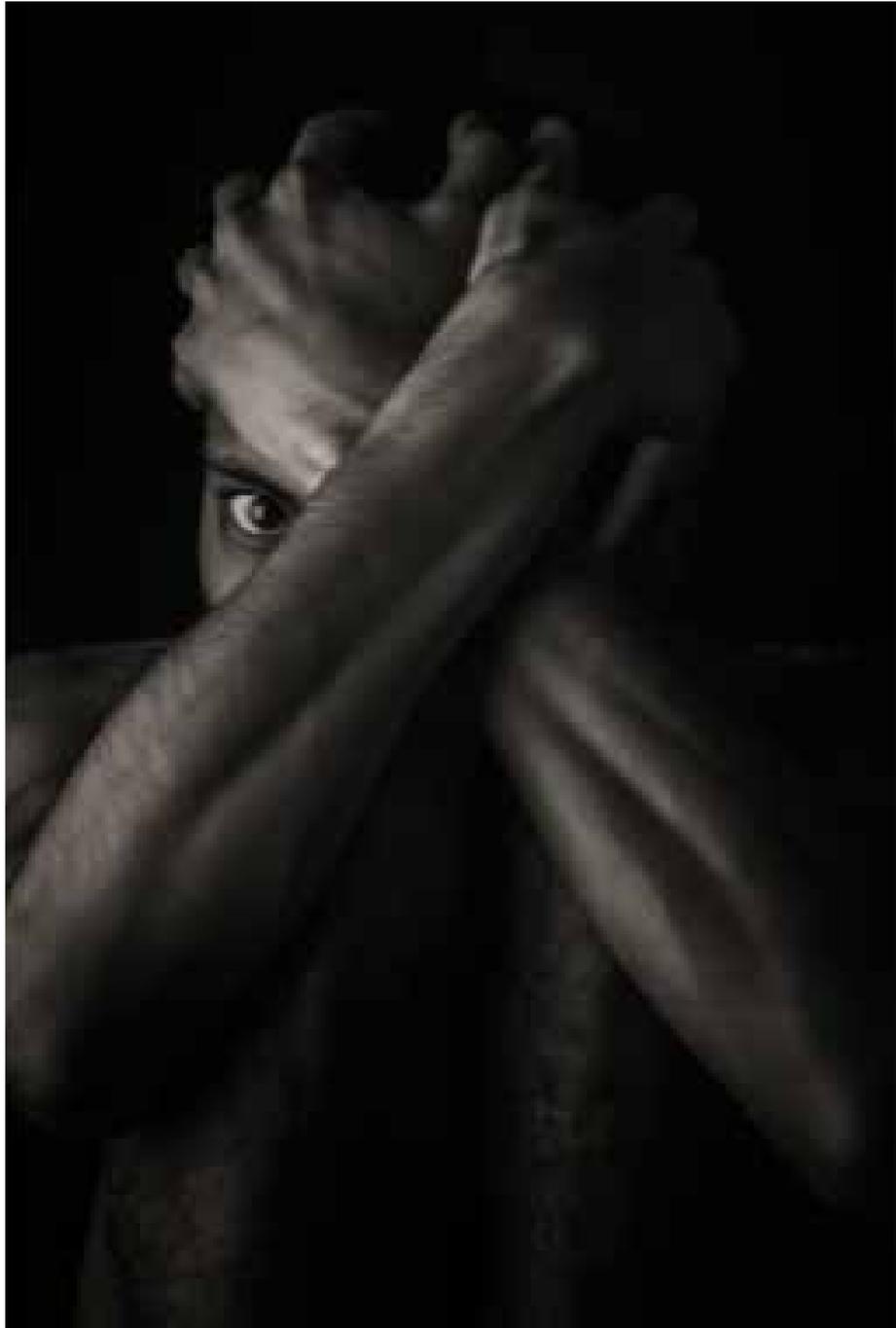


Motaz Hjeir, *Where to?*, Acrylic on canvas, 95 x 70 cm, 2019

✦ Karimeh Abbud Photography Award



Mahmoud Abu Tir, *Kindness / Strength*, 40 x 60cm, 2019



Yousef Abu Said, *Corona*, part of a series, 60 x 40cm, 2020



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