

# FALASTIN

A 100-Day Exhibit of Palestinian Art





**An Exhibition by Palestinian Artists  
A Co-production of Palestine Museum US & Gallery Al-Quds**

**At The Jerusalem Fund  
2425 Virginia Ave NW | Washington, DC 20037**

**December 1, 2020 – March 1, 2021**

**Artists**

<b>Ghasan Abu Laban</b>	<b>Sana Farah-Bishara</b>
<b>Mohammed Al Haj</b>	<b>Samia Halaby</b>
<b>Nahla Asia</b>	<b>Samar Hussaini</b>
<b>Jacqueline Bejani</b>	<b>Solange Diaz Marcos</b>
<b>Manal Deeb</b>	<b>Taqi Al-Sabatin</b>
<b>Najat El-Khairiy</b>	<b>Ruby Yunis</b>
<b>Ayman Essa</b>	



# From the Curators

FALASTINDC

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I am delighted to co-curate FalsastinDC for Gallery Al-Quds, showcasing the work of Palestinian artists from the Palestine Museum US.

This exhibition features a broad range of subject and media, foregrounding the diversity and talents of artists in Palestine and the diaspora. From Taqi Al-Sabatin's tender landscape of Gaza, to Solange Diaz Marcos' "Tree of Life" and "Exile" in stark white on black, to Nahla Asia's surreal "Immigration", each artist handles the eternal subject of terroir in their unique way. We see faces, from Palestinian heroes by Jacqueline Bejani to images formed from artists' imaginations and memories. Sculptures by Sana Farah Bishara and Mohammed Al Haj speak to the immense talent and ingenuity of artists working under the most difficult of circumstances—viewers will be amazed at the secret behind Al Haj's evocative pieces. And Najat El Khairy gives us a porcelain sculpture that incorporates the heritage of Palestinian embroidery in a way unique to her. In that vein, Samar Hussaini also interprets tatreez in a new and modern idiom, using papier-mâché and printed silk. And, importantly, abstraction is also in the toolbox of

Palestinian artists, as we are proud to feature a large work by one of the most important living Palestinian artists, Samia Halaby.

But there is much more to be seen here, a pair of etchings that catapult us into the universe, a color field canvas that dominates a wall, an expressionistic portrayal of a woman that will leave you wondering, and much more. Whether you see this exhibition virtually or in person, the spirit of Palestine at its finest will live in Washington DC for 100 days.

**Dagmar Painter**  
Curator Emerita  
Gallery Al-Quds DC

# From the Curators

FALASTINDC

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It is a pleasure to co-curate FalastinDC at Gallery Al-Quds with Dagmar Painter, Curator Emerita of Al-Quds DC. I immensely thank Mohammed Mohammed, Executive Director, Gallery Al-Quds for welcoming this exhibition to the Jerusalem Fund space, and Faisal Saleh, Founder and Director of the Palestine Museum US for bringing the work of Palestinian artists to be seen in the nation's capital.

It is especially appropriate that the artists represented and the sponsors have united in this effort, when we look at the art and titles of the work. At a time when the world is experiencing conflicts that tear us apart, while a lone virus threatens us all, these artists have come together to show how an enlightening and optimistic display of beautifully formed and often brightly colored work can lift our spirits and unify us.

From Sana Farah Bishara's "Circle of Life", showing the unbroken circle that encompasses all lives, to Mohammed Al Haj's sculptures depicting Women's March and their ongoing struggle, not yet ended, to Samar Hussaini's "Resilient Legacy", accompanied by her "Wrapped in Color" wearables, we are reminded that art and pattern and symbols of one's culture bring us together. The golden circles of Ruby Yunis' solar etchings show us that the universal sun creates beauty for

us all. Nalia Asia's bright colors lead us up the path to mountains far away but universal in their beauty, as Manal Deeb's two paintings remind us that faces express feelings, as do the calligraphed words of her Palestinian culture.

Jaqueline Bejani's portraits illustrate the many achievers of Palestinian heritage and birth, writers, artists, teachers, fighters for social justice, featured together in one struggle for recognition. As Ayman Essa's woman dressed in blue sits "Waiting", the portraits are complemented by the hopeful abstractions and brightly colored squares in Ghasan Abu Laban's "Palestinian Village" and Samia Halaby's "Directions".

This show illustrates not only the talent and artistic ability of which Dagmar Painter writes, but also the hope and unity of Palestinian artists from around the world to bring color and beauty to their and our world. If artists can imagine a world, I sincerely hope that these artists portend our future, one united and bright, recognizing the talents, culture and achievements of all, and beautiful.

**Nancy Nesvet**

Head Curator

Palestine Museum US

# Director's Statement

FALASTINDC

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Since I founded the museum on April 22, 2018, I have worked toward celebrating Palestinian cultural and artistic achievement and fulfilling my dream of bringing Palestinian artists' work to a US and global audience. Believing that many talented artists, writers, musicians and filmmakers have not attained the recognition in the world outside Palestine that they deserve, it is my honor and privilege to provide a space for their work, and to showcase the Palestinian experience, in Palestine and the diaspora, and to research and preserve Palestinian history. We have shown over 100 artists of many genres who have told the Palestinian story to the US and global audience through works of visual art, film, literature and mixed media and we are proud to serve as a cultural common ground for all Palestinians.

**Faisal Saleh** فيصل صالح

## SCULPTURE

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### Mohammed Al Haj

Mohammed Al Haj is a young Gazan artist creating abstract, expressive and pop art portraits as well as relief sculpture and black and white graphics depicting the Arab and Palestinian spirit. Granted his BA in Fine Arts at Al Aqsa University in Gaza City, Palestine, his work has been featured in exhibitions and art festivals in and outside Palestine, including four solo exhibitions, in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Ramallah, Al Bireh, Amman, Jordan, and Gaza City. Using a unique technique overlaying wood relief sculpture with mixed media, his abstract sculptures look metallic, masquerading the materials of which they are made.



*Women's March and Struggle 1, Mixed Media on panel, 27" x 19" x 3"*



*Women's March and Struggle 3, Mixed media on panel, 27" x 20" x 3"*

## SCULPTURE

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### **Sana Farah-Bishara**

Sana Farah-Bishara, born in Nazareth, lives and works in Haifa. She is currently considered to be one of the most promising artists who sculpt in bronze today and is one of the leading Arab women who specialize in this field. Her work revolves mainly around the woman's figure, and she is best known for her multi-piece sculptures from which the viewer can compose a changing narrative and perspective. Her sculptures are installed in public places such as: Saint Charbel at the Maronite Church in Haifa, Industrial Park Nazareth and others. Sana's work has been exhibited both locally and internationally.



*Circle of Life, Cast Bronze, 20" x 13" x 12",  
Ed. 2/12*

## SCULPTURE

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### Samar Hussaini

Hussaini's work incorporates layers of symbols and cultural icons connected to her Palestinian heritage, writings of her father, Dr. Hatem Hussaini, a political activist and leader who spoke about creating empathy and humanizing Palestinians in hopes that people would hear him and grow from that understanding; the Palestinian Keffiyeh a traditional Arab head covering which tells the history of farmer, freedom-fighter, and activist and is a symbol of freedom, hope, and a people's fight against repression, along with traditional Arab design motifs. Mixed media, charcoal, graphite, metal leaf, stitching, and acrylic paint on canvas reveals a personal narrative inviting the viewer to uncover the depths of an intricate and multi-challenged story.

Samar Hussaini is a Palestinian American Fine Artist and Graphic Designer, working, creating, and living outside of NYC in West

Orange, NJ. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Maryland, with a double major in Studio Art and Art History, Hussaini began her career with a 1993 art residency and solo exhibit at Darat El Fanun in Amman Jordan. After graduating from Pratt Institute with an MS in Communication Design, Hussaini's advertising work won awards including the Silver Award from DTC, the Gold Award from DTC, and Creative recognition from The One Show RX. Her artwork has been exhibited in group shows around NJ, NY, and DC, Along with her solo exhibit at Gallery Al-Quds in Washington DC she was chosen as the Maplewood Ideas Festival featured artist in 2017, received the Certificate of Recognition from BWAC Gallery in 2018, an Honorable Mention at the Maplewood Art Walk, 2019 and Innovative Fine Art Award during the 22nd Annual Open Exhibition at the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club (NY) in 2019.



*Resilient Legacy II, mixed media, acrylic, canvas, 28x20x16"*





### **Samar Hussaini**

The craft of the Thob, a Palestinian traditional dress, is notable for its cross-stitched embroidered designs and the practice associated with women's self-expression in their community. Samar has redesigned wearable representations reimagining the Thob as a mixed media collage on canvas, preserving the practice passed down from generation to generation while reinterpreting past traditions. Hussaini seeks to visualize the layered challenges and enriching distinction of being a Palestinian-American artist, at the same time striving to create thought-provoking ideas of dialogue and hope.

*Hand painted wearables featuring  
Palestinian embroidery patterns  
abstracted on Bemberg*

## PAINTINGS

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### **Ghassan Abu Laban**

Ghassan Abu Laban, born in Bethlehem, Palestine, earned his BA in Fine Arts at the Yarmouk University, Jordan. Currently he teaches painting and drawing at the University of Jordan. He specializes in portrait and figurative painting. One of the leading artists in Jordan, he has exhibited in more than 15 countries with 24 solo exhibitions and additional Biennales and group

exhibits earning three international art awards. A poet and critic, his present project comprises an artist's approach toward developing a contemporary theory of aesthetics.



*Palestinian Village in Abstraction, (2018), 51"x70", Oil on canvas*



*Lean on Me, 30"x40, Oil on canvas*

## PAINTINGS

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### Nahla Asia

Nahla Asia is an artist, born in Tulkarem, occupied Palestine in 1966, now residing in Amman, Jordan.

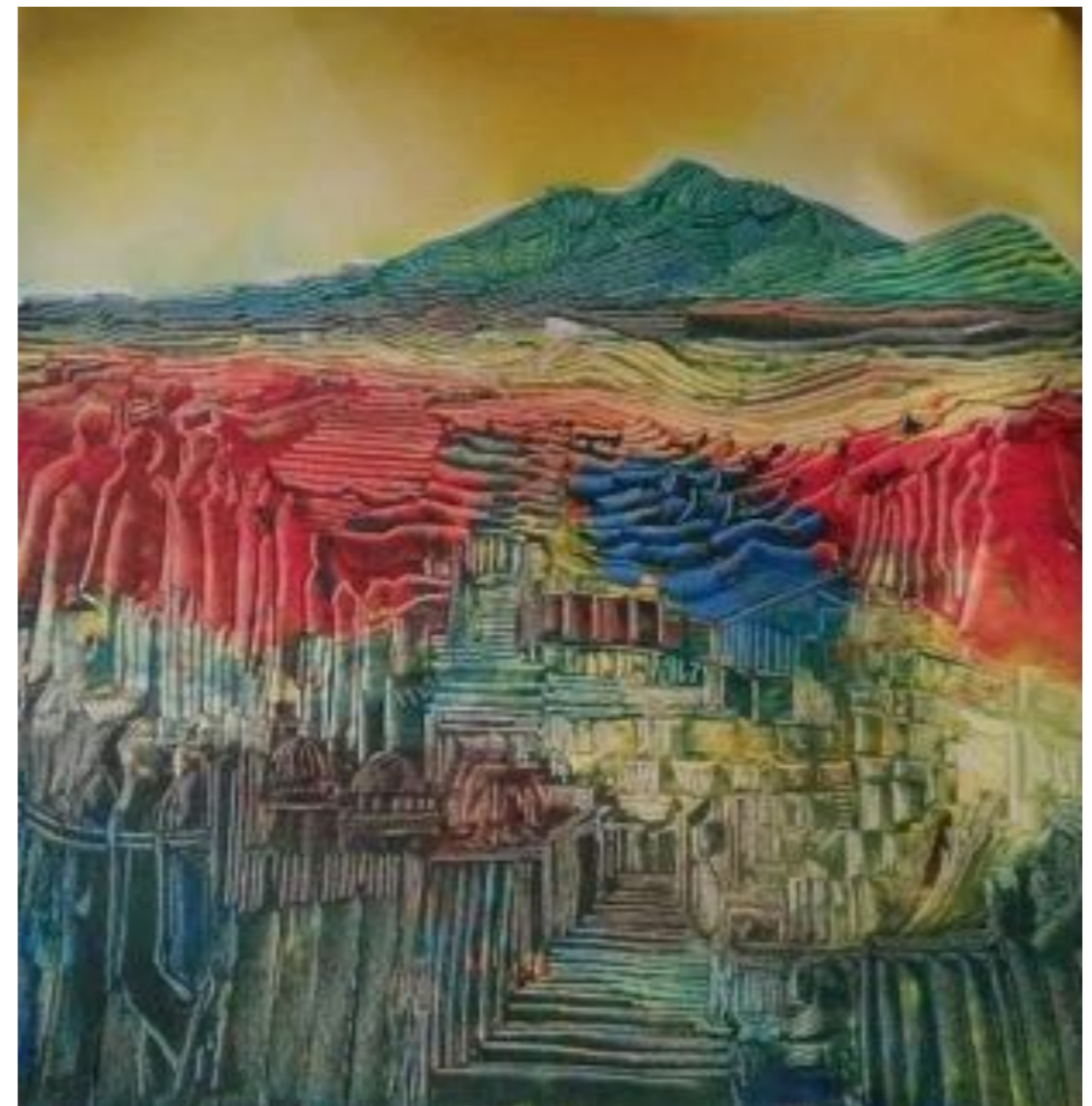
A graduate of the Fine Arts Center in Jordan, she held her first solo exhibition in 2012 and the second exhibition, entitled *Nostalgia for Light*, in 2015.

She is president of the Colors Association for Artistic Creativity, a member of the Jordanian Plastic Artists Association, a member of the Union of Fine Artists in Palestine,

and a member of the Jordanian Writers Association.

She is the recipient of several Arab-based awards in short story writing and her work was honored as best work of art in 2014. She has participated in many local and international exhibitions.

She exhibits with Jodar Artistry in Amman, Jordan.



*Immigration, Oil on canvas, 32" x 32"*

**Jacqueline Bejani**

Jacqueline Bejani, born in Beirut, Lebanon of a Palestinian mother and Lebanese father, is currently resident in Luxembourg. She studied art at the Academie Royale des Beaux Arts d'Alon and later, at L'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs. Her ongoing practice, painting representational portraits, using acrylic paint on stretched canvas, call attention to the Palestinian achievers in many areas, from poetry, philosophy, visual art, music, literature and politics among other areas.



Hanan Al Hroub



Elia Suleiman



Nagi Al Ali



Rania Elias



Samia Halaby



Rajie Cook



Rashida Tlaib

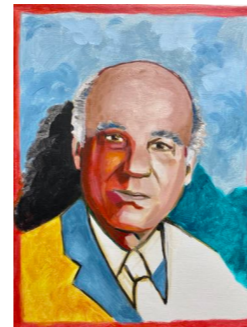


Noura Erakat



AnneMarie Jacir

***Palestinian Portraits***  
*Acrylic on Canvas, Various Sizes, Maximum Size 22"x12"*



Imail Shammout



Mona Hatoum



Amer Hlelel



Razan Najjar



Ahed Tamimi



Leila Khaled



Mohammed Assaf



Edward Said

### Manal Deeb

I believe that memories are held within oneself; that is that memories comprise part of the self. In my artwork, I explore emotional and psychological connections that each of us has with memories that form our identity.

I have always been attracted to facial expressions, especially those of female faces. I use them as a basis for revealing the deeper and more spiritual dimension that comprises, in each of us, a mix of traditions and cultures that give meaning to humanity and the ways that

human beings carry their own memories.

I place female faces in emotional tension to convey vibrant feelings. At the same time, I use color, calligraphy, and natural settings to play up either the conflicting sentiments or the fluidity and harmony that define the self. Although different female faces repeat themselves in my paintings, those faces represent the same woman. My artistic approach helps the viewer understand that answers to all inquiries are

found in one's eyes—the windows to the soul and to memories. Ultimately, it is our common humanity that grounds us: we are all the same, regardless of our differences.



*From There, Acrylic on canvas, 25x13"*

### **Manal Deeb**

I paint my female faces to reflect the emotions I feel when I look deeply into the meaning of a poem or a piece of music I am listening to. Colors and calligraphy allow me to enter the spiritual realm. By focusing on certain elements or on the forms and structure of Arabic calligraphy, I make manifest the beauty of the similarities between facial emotions and the curved and gentle movements of the lettering. My hope is that by raising such awareness, I foster in each viewer a certain level of respect and acceptance of my identity and my being.



*Horizon, Mixed media on canvas, 30" x 24"*

### Najat El-Khairy

Canadian of Palestinian origin, Najat El Khairy, born in 1948 has researched, lectured, and preserved Palestinian art during her 40 year art career. Her artwork, adapting Palestinian embroidery to a non-perishable surface, porcelain tiles, has been displayed in North America, Europe and the Middle East.

In her bridal chest panel she used a pen and 24 karat gold to create raised enamel work on porcelain tile. She writes "In older times, it was believed that mythological symbols embroidered on Palestinian dresses prevented the evil ghosts from harming the woman, and those symbols are recognized in the work displayed here."



*Palestinian Embroidery, painted porcelain 17.5x17.5"*

## PAINTINGS

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### **Ayman Essa**

Born in Gaza in 1974, Ayman Essa graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from the Al Najah University in Nablus. In 2011, he obtained a Master's degree in Fine Arts, specializing in Painting from the University of Helwan. His paintings, characterized by their vibrant colors and figures of women have been shown at the University of Nablus, Palestine, at UNDP, (United Nations Development Program) in Jerusalem, at Galerie Braffault, in Montauban France, at the Palestine Museum, Connecticut and at the Jerusalem Fund, Washington, D.C. among other venues.



*Waiting, Acrylic on canvas, 38x29"*



### **Samia Halaby**

Samia Halaby, now living in New York was born in Jerusalem during the British Mandate. Her family was forced from Jaffa in 1948.

Recognized as one of the Arab world's leading contemporary painters, her work is in museum and private collections in the UAE, U.S., Europe, Asia and South America. She is an abstract painter who explored the media of programming computing machines. Halaby is the subject of several monographs and the author of three.

Outstanding among her books is her treatise in word and image about the Kafr Qasem Massacre.



*Directions with Pink Square, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 in*

### Solange Diaz Marcos

Born in Argentina in 1976 of Chilean parents, Solange Diaz Marcos was 4 months old when her family became political exiles in Switzerland, living there for 28 years. Her maternal grandfather, Jorge Marcos Jaque, was of Palestinian origin from Bethlehem. That powerful cultural mixture strongly influences her art. Solange is a feminist visual artist whose work is copyrighted and has been managed by Crealmagen Chile since 2019. Last October, she organized a Palestinian Cultural Day in Cafe de las Mujeres (Ñuñoa, Chile) on the occasion of Indigenous Peoples' Day, and also held the "Different yet all the same" Art Event at Huelen Art space (El Marroquí, Providencia, Chile). She participated in the exhibition "global feminist movements" at the Yellow



*Tree of Life I, white pencil on black paper, 8.3" x 11.7"*



*Exile, white pencil on black paper 11.7" x 16.5", (NFS)*

Café (Leipzig, Germany) in March 2020. For International Women's Day 2020, she held an exhibition entitled "Women and Resistance" at Cafe de las Mujeres. For all of the events that Solange organizes, all women artists are invited: writers, poets, singers, actresses, musicians, dancers, the

objective being that women empower each other, help each other, flourish and shine together without competing, making each exhibition a cultural event.

### Taqi Al-Sabatin

Taqi Al-Sabatin is a realistic landscape artist born in Husan. His show, Holy Land (Zawyeh Gallery, Ramallah, December 2015), provided a unique and very important perspective on the current state of the Palestinian countryside and environment and pays homage to the beautiful and extremely varied nature of the Palestinian landscape.

Stone terraces, vineyards and olive groves peppered with almond and apricot blossoms are often juxtaposed with the rugged terrain of the Hebron hills and the Jordan valley – brilliantly captured by Al-Sabatin. Critics have commented that his

realist style comprises a harmonious, balanced and timeless feel to many of his paintings.

Al-Sabatin's desire to study and practice art stemmed from his relationship with the land of his ancestors. His birthplace of Husan and nearby Battir are part of a phenomenal tract of land that is considered by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site which is at risk. His work is a solid addition to the well-established genre of Palestinian landscape painting with work identified by delicate strokes and near perfect depictions.

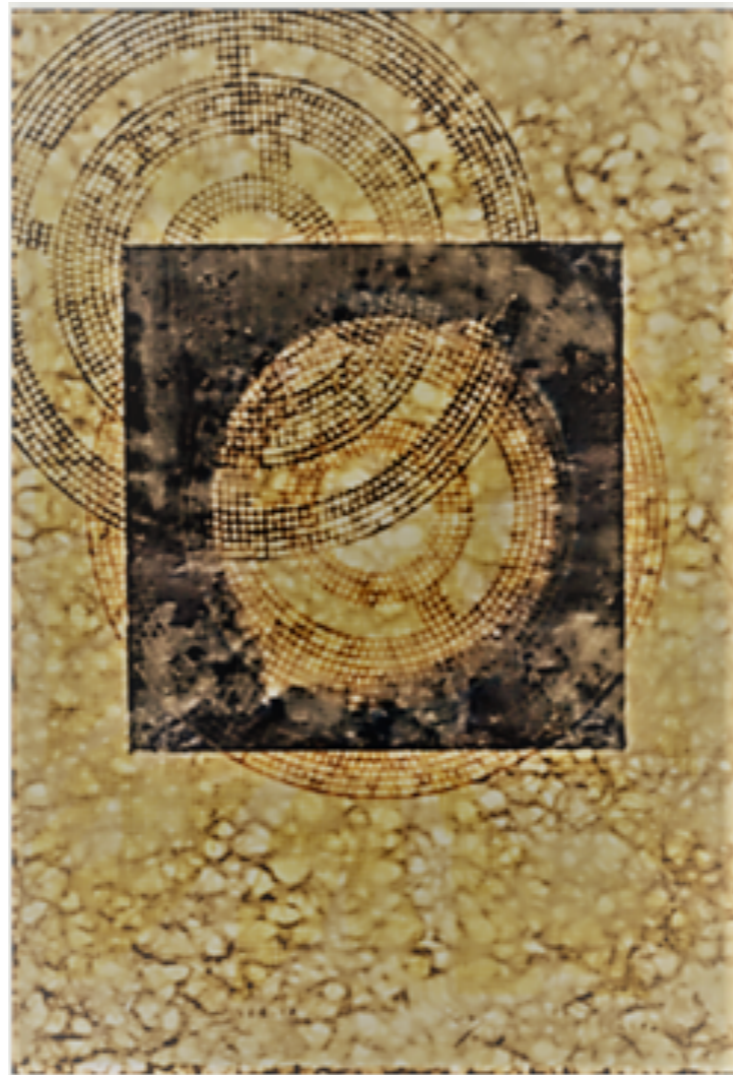


*Gaza, Acrylic on canvas, 14x18"*

### Ruby Yunis

Descended from Bethlehem ancestors, Ruby Yunis lives in Chile. Exploring different styles and techniques from figurative to abstract, oil to pastel, mundane to sacred, she writes: "I have felt a strong attraction for risk and chance which hide unknown feelings that flow in water-color technique...where a just equilibrium between observation and meditation of nature spontaneously result from the colored water traveling over the paper."

Believing her paintings to be "the most honest portrait of my soul", she adds, "Through color I am able to communicate all that I live and feel unable to be transformed into words."



*Nebula, Solar etching and encaustic, 24" x 20"  
2012*



*Fractal II, Solar etching and encaustic, 24" x 20"  
2012*

# Thank You

FALASTINDC

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Thank you to our talented artists who contributed their work to make this exhibition possible and to Faisal Saleh, Mohammed Mohammed, Gabriel da Silva and all who came together with the curators and artists to create a space for contemplation, cooperation and joy in this threatening world of ours.

*Dagmar and Nancy*



# فلسطینی فنی

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