



EXIT WEST | ENTER EAST



HANNAH ATALLAH

hannahatallah.com



EXIT WEST, ENTER EAST | SYNOPSIS

This exhibition explores the narratives surrounding migration, displacement, and diasporic communities, particularly in Palestine and the Arab world. This exhibition of carefully crafted paintings by Hannah Atallah and Najji AlAli is named after the novel "Exit West" by Mohsin Hamid.

The artworks feature layered portraiture against complex backgrounds that are rich in subtlety and symbolism. Hannah Atallah incorporates elements such as Arabic calligraphy, painted mosaic patterns, and sacred geometrical motifs, honouring the rich and varied artistic traditions of the Arab world. While Najji AlAli incorporates symbolic elements like animals and sacred motifs. Together, the artists aim to bridge geographic divides to link diasporic communities with Palestine; aiming to provide a deeper exploration of the artists' diasporic communities and their creative visions, capturing the rich complexities of modern life beyond the usual tales of war and tragedy.

Each artwork subtly acknowledges the effects of conflict and displacement while celebrating the resilience and humanity of the portrayed individuals, each painting serving as a testament to their strength and dignity, honoring the experiences of diasporic communities, inviting you to engage deeply with the stories and identities that shape our interconnected world.

"Tatreez Pocket"

2023

60 x 89 cm

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting abstracts patterns from tatreez, a traditional Palestinian embroidery, and brings it into a contemporary context with a Palestinian woman finding glowing jasmine in her sweatshirt pocket. In the background, there are subtle sacred geometrical patterns that can only be seen in certain light conditions.



"The Island of Missing Trees"

2024

119 x 79 cm

Aerosol, Acrylic & Varnish

This painting is inspired by a moment of Ramy Youssef and Bella Hadid in a photograph captured by Nick Sethi. It features vibrant colors, a merging of realism and abstraction, and playful movement.



"Beirut Blues"

2024

79 x 119 cm

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting, "Amara," is a portrait my friend. Through referencing nostalgic scenes from Beirut and Haifa, where our families are from, it features references to Palestinian and Lebanese cultural influences and contexts.



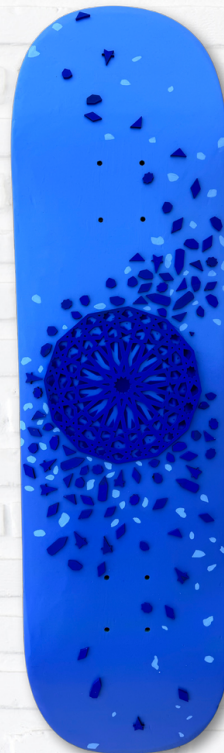
Spring Tide

2024

86 x 20 cm

Acrylic, Aerosol & Mixed Media on Refurbished Skate Decks

These skate decks were refurbished and hand painted. Tides are waves that roll around the planet as the ocean is "pulled" back and forth by the gravitational pull of the moon and the sun as these bodies interact with the Earth in their monthly and yearly orbits.



"Jaffa, La Passe"

2024

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting references archival imagery from Jaffa. It melds the past, present and future through the combination of symbolic pixels, fading buildings and portraits in the background, blocky construction type buildings in the middle ground and more fully rendered ethereal forms in the foreground.



"We, Teach Life"

2024

31 X 47" Acrylic on Canvas

In this painting, from every angle the viewer stands, the young girl directly returns the viewer's gaze. The patterned stripes on the sides of the painting, with tiny hand painted, hand cut, carefully layered pieces of canvas, and the abstraction of bombed buildings evoke the detailed and sacred geometric patterns of Islamic art and tatzeez (Palestinian embroidery). It is based on imagery from the Gaza Strip.



"The Handala That Grew From A Crack in the Concrete"

2024

Collaboration with Naji Al Ali
Acrylic & Aerosol on Canvas

In this painting, a young woman peers over a wall to overlook a scene that melds an archival photograph of Jerusalem with futuristic iconography. In the foreground, citrullus colocynthis (a bitter fruit known for it's ability to survive and grow in tough conditions due to it's long roots and the namesake of Handala) grows through a crack in the concrete, a reference to 2Pac.



“Mercedes Luf | مرسيدس لف”

2024

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting, based on photographs that I took in Jordan, features a Mercedes Luf, a classic car that is common in the Levant, and a surreal world based on the desert surrounding the Dead Sea.



"Exit West"

2024

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting melds past and present scenes from Mo, which is loosely based on Mo Amer's life growing up in Texas as a Palestinian undocumented immigrant.

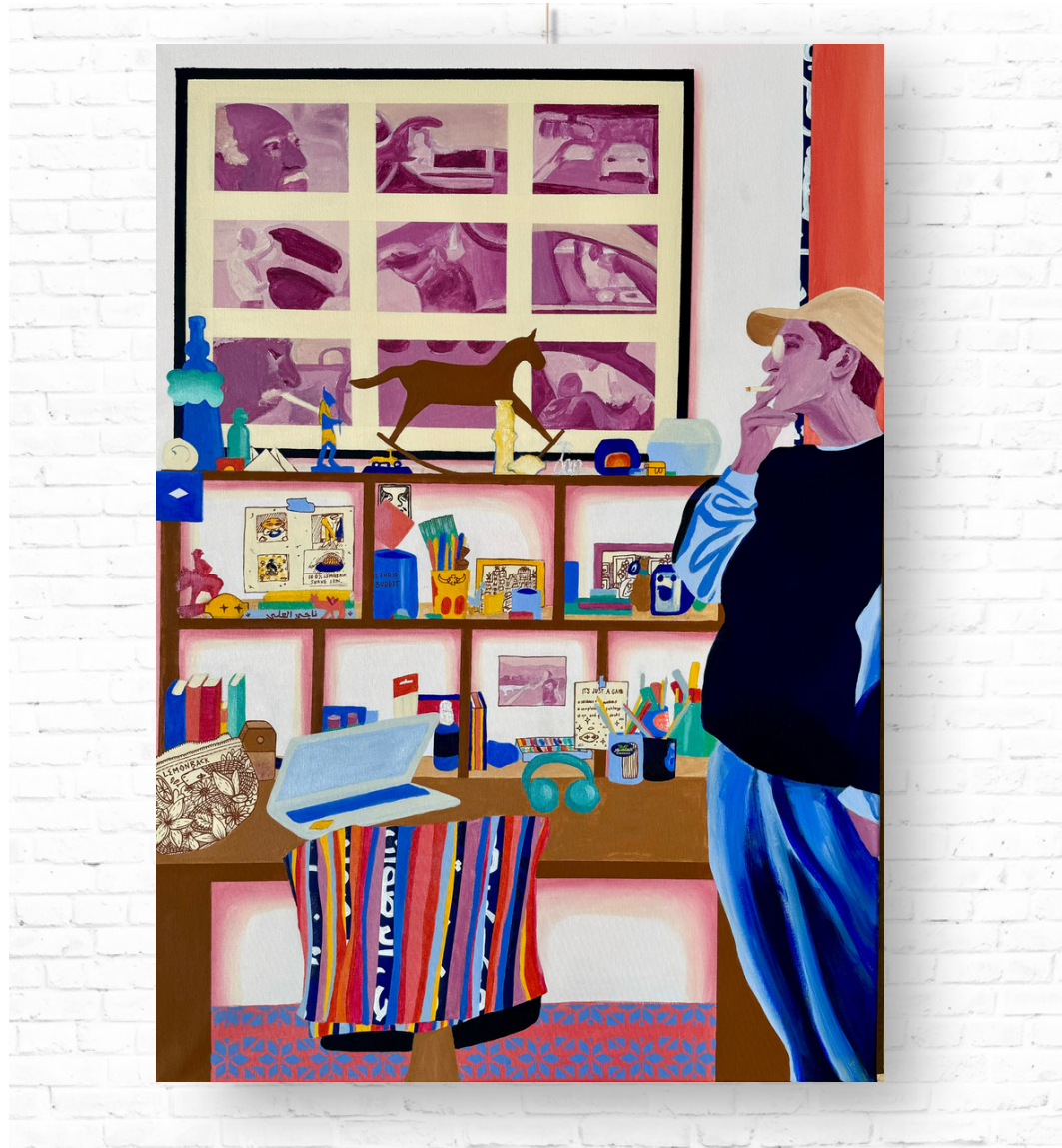


"Namesakes"

2024

Acrylic on Canvas

This painting features artist Naji Al Ali looking at portraits of his grandfather in his studio. When the viewer looks closely, many tiny symbolic objects that Naji has collected over time can be viewed.





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THANK YOU!

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