

# Lamča

VOLUME 8 : OCTOBER





# *Editor's Note*

LAMḤA /Lamha/, or a glimpse. A glimpse into our student life, and we keep these passionate days where we collectively rise for a cause.

Some days are good, some are bad. Some days you feel greatly motivated and capable, some days you fall behind. Some days are butterflies and happiness, and some days are utter pain, fear, disappointment, and impotence. Most of us can choose to reshape our perspective, but for some people, it's not a choice but a reality. Some are even born into it.

With the wars still raiding on people's roofs, we are directly witnessing history unfolding in the most cruel, atrocious way to people who are deemed "the others" by the world. We're not just saddened and heartbroken, we're enraged that the world chooses to turn a blind eye on "the others", that their lives and futures are reduced to numbers and statistics for the very same apatheists to cry on when it's already too late.

Our voices, happiness and inconveniences seem privileged, small and insignificant compared to the incomprehensible horrors other people are experiencing on a daily basis.

Only they're not.

Compassion for the oppressed and anger in the face of tyranny and injustices are necessary to rebuild our collective humanity. We feel this clearest when we are part of the group prayer for Palestine, chanting our undivided stance for justice as a community. When we see protests around the world, people who also care, we are partly consoled that humanity is still something to rely on.

As you delve into the pages of this October issue, we urge you to open your mind and heart to be compassionate, to feel the shared humanity and the hope.

LAMḤA is for the students by the students. We are more proud than ever to continue being your choice of platform to raise awareness, express solidarity and participate in the fight against injustices.

Sincerely,

LAMḤA Editor Board:

*Ithac Ngo / Mariam Hamad / Hala Al Darbasi / Maryam Al Ghanim  
/ Dana Aldisi / Dema Al Shirawi*

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# HUMANS OF CMUQ

## BACKSTAGE PASS

by Mariam Hamad

Backstage Pass is a new section in Humans of CMUQ where we will be interviewing alumni from CMUQ. For this issue, I have interviewed Sabih Bin Wasi. He attended CMU-Q in 2011, graduating with a degree in computer science in 2015. He left Pakistan for the first time to study in Qatar. He, alongside 3 other CMU-Q graduates created the Stellic platform, the academic planning website we are all familiar with.

### **What have you been doing since graduation?**

I started Stellic a week after graduation, I have been working on it since sophomore/junior year. Literally, founder of Stellic, is the only thing on my resume. Being a founder is a very consuming job. I would actually call it a passion actually, not a job. I moved from Doha to Silicon Valley recently. I also married another CMU-Q alumni Rukhsar, a cofounder of Stellic. We got engaged a day before graduation.

### **What is your most prominent memory of CMUQ?**

I have a pretty nerdy answer to that question, the fondest memory is my interactions with faculty members. I loved that I could walk into

any professor's office and speak about my ideas. Being able to build relationships outside of the classroom with my professors was very valuable to me. I never even took a class with two of my closest professors. One was Mark Stellic, we named Stellic after him as he was our advisor. The other was Maher Hakim, a board member of Stellic who has supported us in tough times throughout the early days. Alex Cheque was a design professor that also significantly helped us through our journey. I talked to all of them several times which shaped the way we thought about life and Stellic.

For my most prominent memory, there was a trip to Silicon Valley that Maher organized, and it was very emotional for me. I have always been interested in making a start up, and Silicon Valley is the center of all innovation. Going to the Google and Airbnb campuses was very exciting. I remember thinking to myself, I don't know how the hell I'm gonna get here, but I will someday. I had never traveled outside of Pakistan before Qatar, so it was like being in a dream.

### **How have you been since you graduated? What do you find differently?**

I miss Doha and the campus a lot, even after graduation. I visit the campus a lot, I like being there. Since I came to the Bay area, I like to go every other year. I always try to hang out with professors that are there. It has evolved and it's shocking that so many classes have graduated since I was there. Faculty has also changed but the essence is the same. I used to work in 2613 or the library and the arc, and those places still feel the same.

### **Describe your post grad experience with 3 words.**

Unexpected. Meaningful.  
Challenging.

"My heart is in the work" has become the core of my personality. CMU-Q is hard but it's not easy after that. If you want to live a comfortable life, CMU-Q does give you the skills to choose a life that can be more "comfortable" and have work-life balance, but it also makes you ready for more challenging "breaking the glass ceiling" type of work. The skill of learning is what played an important role in my learning. When you are doing meaningful work that is challenging it feels more purposeful.

**When you graduated did you know what you were going to do or did you feel uncertain? What advice would you give to students about this?**

Taking it one step at a time is the way I think about it. Even after college, I knew I wanted to do something that deeply impacts millions of people's lives in a meaningful manner. CMU-Q sent us first years to odyssey in Pittsburgh and I remember one professor there mentioned that the fact that we are in CMU means we won't have a job security problem. He said you are in a privileged position, the question is how will you give back. That stuck with me and it unfolded in an unexpected manner.

I always wanted to be an entrepreneur. I would see Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, and other successful entrepreneurs live a very glamorous version and think it would be like that. But this is only a sliver of the actual job. I thought we would have these late nights with parties, but it's a real grind. I work 18 hours a day.

My advice would be don't think "let's just suffer today and enjoy life tomorrow". Make sure you enjoy the present. I was so naive as a senior in university, that I remember that I had three projects and I went to professor Mahir. I remember I wanted to do two startups together and a full time job. I said Elon Musk can do it, so I can do it. He told me you're lucky if you make one thing work, that by itself is a large success.

For people interested in startups I would say two things. First, right after graduation is a great time to start it, because you have the least amount of responsibilities. They only get bigger as you grow older. Second, if possible, give the startup your full attention. I spend 18 hours a day working. If you have a full time job and work on a startup on weekends, that's not a startup, that's a hobby. If you're doing something meaningful, take the jump, and work as much as possible on it. I was fortunate enough where people

supported us with funding so I could go all in, so if you can you should definitely.

## **What has been your greatest achievement?**

I'll start with Stellic. We are currently serving 17 universities around the world with almost a million students with 65-70 employees. I am fortunate to be the leader of that group. It is incredibly satisfying but very hard. I've randomly stumbled upon people in the Bay area and people see my car plate which says Stellic so they start a conversation with me. People will tell me about how Stellic changed their life, because they were able to take a class on time or how it helped them learn a skill which led to their job.

On a personal side, I come from a very humble background and was able to take my family to Turkey. We went to different places throughout the country and my parents were really proud and happy.



# **THE INSIDER: BALANCING COURT & BOOKS**

by Thuc Ngo

In this issue's The Insider, I reached out to Ahmad Mohamad, a full-time Information Systems student and a professional basketball player for Qatar Basketball Federation. In light of his winning streaks over three major leagues this year: Quarter Final FIBA 3x3 U23 Nations League 2023 in Mongolia, Third Place in Algeria Arab Game and Silver Medal in 3x3 19th Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, I wanted to understand his recipe to balance between time in the court and time in university.

**Thuc (T):** Congratulations on your recent successes, Ahmad! Let's dive into your journey as a student-athlete. How do you manage to balance your rigorous basketball training and competition schedule with full-time studies in Information Systems?

**Ahmad (A):** Thank you! It's not too difficult, as basketball practice is only 2-3 hours a day. Everyone actually has that free time that they tend to use for procrastination daily, but if you want to, you can definitely make time for what you love to do

**T:** That's impressive. How do you plan to balance both even after graduation? Which one do you consider a career?

**A:** I consider basketball as a career but I'm also a realist, I know that basketball is not forever. I need to always have a backup plan. Thus, I'll try to continue doing both even after graduation.

**T:** What motivated you to pursue both your athletic career and your education simultaneously? How do these two aspects complement each other in your life?

**A:** It was really hard coming back from all the basketball games straight to the semester as a full time student, especially having to travel that long during the semester. For example, while I'm in Mongolia and China, outside of the tournaments & practices, I tried to do as many assignments as I can. I'm the only person in the team who juggles this as well, as they only choose to focus on one at a time.

The more I focus on basketball, the worse my grades may get and vice versa. It's a sacrifice I had to keep making since freshman year and I always keep it at the back of my mind

I also try to balance fun and life, like going out after practice to hang out with my friends. Hang out with my teammates a lot after practice too

**T:** Could you highlight any specific time management or organizational strategies that were crucial for your success in juggling both worlds?

**A:** It is always very much a gut feeling. When things come up I do it, never really plan it. But you need discipline to do all these sorts of things. I'm not disciplined but if I lack a bit more, I'd fail miserably. If I set out to do something today, I'll complete it. There's not a day where I don't work on something, even for an hour or two. Being as productive as you can, doing at least something everyday is how you can build up this sort of discipline.

**T:** Walk us through your daily or weekly routine during the lead-up to the Asian Games. How did you manage to balance sports and academics during such a crucial time?



**A:** Leading up to the tournament, we focused on preparation by watching and learning the tactics of other Asian teams. Me and my teammates had been competing together throughout the season to prepare the best for this league, so we must be in perfect sync before it started.

**T:** Winning a silver at the Asian Games is a significant achievement. What does this accomplishment mean to you personally and for your basketball career?

**A:** Qatar has been big in 3v3, having won the World Cup in 2014. But the last time Qatar won a silver in an Asian Game was in 2006 for 5x5, so this is the first time we won something for 3v3.

This definitely motivated me more. I see many more opportunities in these international games, as I see how big a medal is, a tournament is for the Federation. I want to try and get a gold medal next time

**T:** That's an ambitious goal. Can you share any memorable moments or matches from the Asian Games that stand out as particularly important or inspiring to you?

**A:** Honestly, any of the matches was crazy. After the semi final, we played against Mongolia, who was ranked 1st in Asia for 3v3. We were supposed to be the underdog but we completely dominated them. Like leaving absolutely no room to rebound type of domination. We didn't register that until we're in the locker room and realized: **Damn we're in the final league now**, we were guaranteed the Silver medal and it was just an incredible feeling.

### **"DAMN WE'RE IN THE FINAL LEAGUE NOW"**

Beside the tournament, I also had fun with friends from different countries during the tournaments. For example, in Hangzhou, all athletes lived in an Athlete Town made just for this tournament. All different sports in the same country are housed in a building. On the streets, there are stores and bicycle shops where we could rent them, so we just biked around and enjoyed the weather. The dining hall there also had different sections for cuisine, i.e: Thai, Middle Eastern, South Asia, even KFC & Pizza Hut. I got to eat some of my cuisine, which was heaven for a picky eater like myself.

**T:** What would you say was the key to your team's success at the 19th Asian Games, and how did you work together to achieve this achievement?

**A:** Me and my 3v3 team have been doing many tournaments together, and we always make sure to come in hard from the very beginning. Beat them in the energy, beat them in every hustle ball, outrun them, outjump them, dominate them in every aspect and not give them a chance to break through.

**T:** With amazing accomplishments at such a young age, what sort of support did you receive from your family, coaches, and university to help you achieve this remarkable balance between sports and education?



**A:** The whole time during every trip, after each match I talked to my mom and dad. For my friends, they kept close track of the games on the news and would hype me up after each, which was super nice. My family also watched every match and it became such a core support for me.

**T:** Your family seems like your biggest fans! Did they also lead you to basketball?

**A:** It was actually my mom who forced me to the Basketball Academy when I liked playing football more, so I thanked the stars everyday for her. But basketball used to be just a hobby for fun, until I got scouted for the National Team at 13, and my first contract at 16. That was when I realized I can make a career out of it and started to get serious,



# **SOCIAL SYNERGY**

## **LEADING THE CHANGE-SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINE**

by Thuc Ngo

I reached out to Lujain Al Mansoori, Mohammad Annan & Hala Al Darbasti- CMU-Q students that played a big role in the series of Solidarity with Palestine events in Education City to learn about their motivation and involvement in the movement.



### **From individuals with the same cause**

Mohammad and Lujain, as representatives of the Qatar Foundation-wide Entrepreneurship Club, wanted to do something for the Palestine cause, so they reached out to QF, who then linked them with a group of students in EC who also expressed similar interests. The team that organized this series of events became more refined and focused overtime. The initiative leader is the president of Cornell student government, then joined by the president of other EC schools, including Hala from CMU-Q. Other people and entities from different functions and organizations in QF also join to give feedback and inputs on elements of the event, like QatarDebate on speeches. They expanded rapidly through connections who were equally passionate about the cause, and included many representatives to enhance the collective effort that the event is meant to be.

### **To a movement**

Solidarity with Palestine consists of a series of events, from the Stand & March for Solidarity to Bake Sale, all the profit from which went to Qatar Charity for the Palestine cause. Lujain shared that time like this pushes students to apply the extremely relevant skills and knowledge they have to bring out positive change.

**Lujain:** "We were all bonded by the most important thing - the Palestine cause. The abhorrence of what's happening really paralyzed my daily routine. I heard this man in Gaza said that he has 2 choices, either he dies, or this stops, and it just broke my heart. You cannot not do something about this."

The movement came in a crucial time because it provided a platform for people to come together, speak their voices, express their anger and frustration, and share their stories.

Mohammad: "That's the least we can do as students against this genocide and collective punishment of the Palestinian. Students needed a platform to come together and utilize our diverse backgrounds, skills to create a change."

### **Voices from different disciplines against the genocide**

The movement brought together students from different EC schools to share perspectives and awareness about the genocide in Palestine through their discipline's background. For example, Lujain represented the Entrepreneurship Club to speak about Social Entrepreneurship in Palestine and by Palestinian. Hala, representing Carnegie Mellon, gave a speech about the use of technology to enforce the apartheid against the Palestinians. Texas A&M gave a speech on ethics of software developing when softwares are being used to monitor and conduct the genocide. Weill Cornell strongly condemned the series of hospital bombing and the health industry in shambles during the war.

**"IT IS OUR DUTY  
AND RESPONSIBILITY  
AS STUDENTS AND  
FUTURE LEADERS TO  
LEARN AND SHARE  
WHAT IS HAPPENING"**

- Excerpt from Hala Al Darbasti's Speech



**Hala:** "Trying to find one core theme to talk about to represent CMUQ's disciplines was kind of tough considering the variety of Majors we have but one common theme I found throughout the majors was the use of technology. I centered my speech around how technology was being used to keep Palestinians under near constant observation and enforce the Apartheid against them. It was so shocking how we're constantly learning throughout our majors about how technology can be used for incredible innovative things meanwhile we're currently watching how it can also be used for incredible harm."

**Lujain:** "It's inspiring to see voices from such diverse disciplines come together and use their own perspective to condemn the genocide. For my part, entrepreneurship has been empowering to the Palestinian community, and all was taken away in a blink of a moment. Despite that, I told stories of Palestinian entrepreneurs who are still fighting relentlessly, giving away services for free, uplifting their community during the most desperate times."

### **A collective passion**

When reflecting on giving a speech in front of more than 500 people who were also burning for the cause, Lujain recalled the rush of adrenaline she felt at the moment.

**Lujain:** "When you go on stage, everyone there knows and acknowledges what you're saying is important. You feel like what you're doing is so important to them, so necessary - that's what they need and want to hear. Before going on stage, I wasn't even nervous, because the audience is there to listen and appreciate what you have to say for the cause. I did a panel and TedEx talk with large crowds before but this one is completely different. This time it's not about me, but about something that's bigger than everyone, yet the audience all show an

unwavering commitment towards. You're there to channel the voices of people who cannot be there."

**Hala:** "At first I was incredibly nervous, It is such a serious and heavy topic and I really wanted to make sure that I was able to use this platform I had been given to the best of my abilities to put out a good and meaningful message. However, once I actually got on stage and started to talk into the mic I immediately felt at ease because everything I was saying was coming completely from the heart."

Mohammad reflected on the profound feeling he had being an organizer and a part of the audience at the same time:

**Mohammad:** "We were there as a community fundamentally. It was a powerful event because everyone shares this cause at a deeper emotional level, in a level deeper than any other event. It came out at a more important time than ever. In between speeches, when a chant was started, we gave them space and time to express themselves and deliver the important message. It wasn't something that we accounted for, but because it's a platform for them to do exactly this, we made time and facilitated that greatly. I can see in the voices the great anger that the world's silent about this, that innocent people are under the rubble, and those moments you really feel part of something bigger than yourself."

### **Leading a 500 people rally of solidarity**

Mohammad led more than 500 people in the chant and rally through various touchpoints in EC.



**Mohammad:** "Of course there were some challenges with leading 500 people. However, even when it's something I hadn't done before, it was really seamless and natural because it was a platform for me to express myself as well. You just blend in with the passion."

**Lujain:** "It was amazing seeing people from all walks of life - mom, students, children - on the same page. Inspirational chants were passed amongst the crowd throughout the rally. By the end of it, everyone got a chance to express themselves, feel relieved to have been part of the change without judgment."

It's only a small step in the right direction towards what's happening

## **A small step in the right direction towards what's happening**

Even though the movement was major, it's just a small step in our future ambition about what change students can bring to this genocide.

**Lujain:** "We're continuously organizing events in our discipline that contribute to nuanced and meaningful discussions on Palestine. We're leveraging EC and CMU-Q's extremely diverse backgrounds and being a source of unity for them to utilize their skills for a positive change.."

The Entrepreneurship Club brought together Palestinian students who have businesses and businesses who give back to the Palestine communities in a panel to discuss the role of social entrepreneurship to Palestine. They reached out to many people from different disciplines, universities and experiences with start ups to empower people that are currently pursuing social entrepreneurship, as well as equipping them with knowledge about starting a social enterprise venture for Palestine. In CMU-Q, Lujain, Mohammad and Carnegie Analytics club also organized a panel discussion with expert professors from different disciplines on Data Ethics & Palestine. The event highlighted how knowledge we're learning first-hand in CMU-Q is extremely relevant to this genocide. For example, professors in Information Systems & Computer Science discussed the manipulation of NLP techniques & generative AI in spreading misinformation against Palestinians, while Biological Science and Arts & Sciences professors discussed practical methods to help detect misinformation and fact check.



## **Never stay silent**

Lujain, Mohammad & Hala want to send a closing message to Lamha audience, aspiring students, faculty & staff who have been and are contributing to the Palestine cause: "No matter how small your contribution is to this big humanitarian cause, just do it. It will take so much attention and effort, and it necessarily requires your attention and effort. The most important thing to do in any form of conflict is not to be silent. We need to keep the attention on the topic. We cannot get numb and complacent amid what's happening. We need to see the light at the end of the tunnel and keep fighting for it."

# THE PAIN OF OTHERS

by Thuc Ngo

This piece is written based on the course discussion I had in Arts & Politics during my semester exchange at Bocconi University. Special credit to my distinguished professor Stefania Gerevini whose lecture in Arts History provided me with understanding & context that's so relevant to what we're experiencing right now

War photography has been an important medium of anti-war activism. It brings to reality the atrocities of wars that people in positions of privilege and safety would otherwise never be able to comprehend. It challenges propaganda that attempts to minimize the abhorrence of wars, and exposes political lies.

But even when it brings out the blatant destruction of wars, it's seemingly not enough to make everyone condemn wars and bloodshed. This piece attempts to answer this question by deconstructing photography as a medium of arts & politics.

To begin, there's something about how we interact with the subject of suffering. Even if the subject depicted is very familiar, the art still inevitably represents the pain of someone else, not your own. Our ability to understand and sympathize with the subject depends entirely on our subjective experience of pain, our understanding and sympathy towards them.



Heart Comment Share

14,173 likes

jamieleecurtis TERROR FROM THE SKIES  
@samarabuelouf @nytimes 🇵🇸

Sharing the subjective experience of pain is hard for anyone who has not been in the same position, so we often experience the **generic, patronizing response to the pain of others**: "**Poor them! War is wrong**". Having understanding and sympathy towards the suffering of people seem obvious in our humanity, but less so when there's conflict in the justness of the suffering depicted. Even when war photography brings out the utmost destruction of wars, in today's increasingly divided world where wars are seen as inevitable and violence is justifiable in certain circumstances, **then this alone is not sufficient for the renunciation of wars**. Unless one firmly problematizes the notion of sacrifice as something empty, fictional and pointless, or that violence is always unjustifiable, then depiction of war atrocities, no matter how vivid,

provokes no such sentiment - **at most a bemused awareness, constantly fed into by stock of images, that terrible things happen**. We now take sides in our response to war based on our political notions, the political commentary of the images and the politics of the subject.

The next possible explanation is the nature of photography as a medium of artistic expression. Ask yourself a simple question: Do you invest your attention in reading an image the same way you do to a painting? The answer is probably not. We apply much less filters on images, not interpreting them the way we would with paintings, poetry, sculptures. This happens because, first, we implicitly perceive images as mere reflections of reality, not a medium through which mediation of reality happens like other forms of arts. Second, the purposefulness of the photographer is less apparent through images as photography is the result of technological advancement. It is quite literally through a click of the camera that an image is produced, so we view it as a snapshot without much meaning behind. Unlike paintings, you have to put effort to see creators' deliberation through the details.



For example, do you give the same interpretative lens for the sculptures of Lamentation (1463) by Niccolò dell'Arca and the image from the Syrian Civil War?

Third, we're in an era of overstimulation, unable to process things that take a long time and at a deeper level. This happens especially with images, as we're exposed to them almost constantly on a daily basis, thus our ability to mediate and decode them is eroded.

These two reasons bring us to an important point about **the right way to interact with war photography**. First, it's crucial to establish that photography is a medium through which mediation of reality happens, with a lot of deliberate decisions rather than just a click of a button. There are artists behind it that decides the artistic corners, artistic focus, and compositional means of reality to capture it from, from which they try to elicit certain responses and convey certain messages rather than just a generic renunciation of wars. Remember, photography can also be a staged medium, much like official and political paintings, frequently sponsored by institutions with political agenda. Thus, we should also train our attention span to mediate images on a deeper level, and engage with politics when we decode war photography: **What political decision does the image manifest and serve (activism, political resistance or accusations)? What political response does it elicit from us? What side is not being included in the mediation of reality?**

Second, while we acknowledge a certain distance to the subject of suffering, that pain is unique to the subject and we can only feel it to a certain threshold, remember that it's not a choice for some people to ignore. **War tears, rips open, dismembers, ruins, scorches**, whether we view it through a screen or a textbook.



Fatima Shbair (AP Photo) - Palestinians mourn their relatives killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip, in a morgue in Khan Younis



Nick Ut - Trang Bang 1972

# *MAYEL ALA BALADI*

by Maya Al Salameh

This enchanting song, written by Qasem Younis, will take you on a journey through the historically rich cities of Palestine. The first stop of your journey is the 14th century BCE port city found in the northern region of occupied Palestine, Haifa (حيفا). Haifa is located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, providing the perfect location for your beach day! It also is home to a diversity of religions, as it includes Church of St. John, the shrine of the door, the Istiqlal Mosque, and the Carmel Monastery. Haifa is most commonly known for the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Baha'i gardens (حدائق ال�ائية), dating back to 4,000 BC. These Persian-founded gardens hold great spiritual significance to the Baha'i faith, and provide diverse natural scenery of stunning gardens on one side and the glistening sea on the other.

Next stop is "The Bride of the Sea", located 100km south of Haifa: the culturally enriched city of Yaffa (يافا). This Canaanite-built city dates back to more than 4,000 years ago and holds the fusion of Persian, Greek and Roman cultures all in one! Even though 98% of the native Palestinians were expelled from Yaffa after the Zionist movement (1948), the pure Arab identity is engraved in the streets of ancient Yaffa.

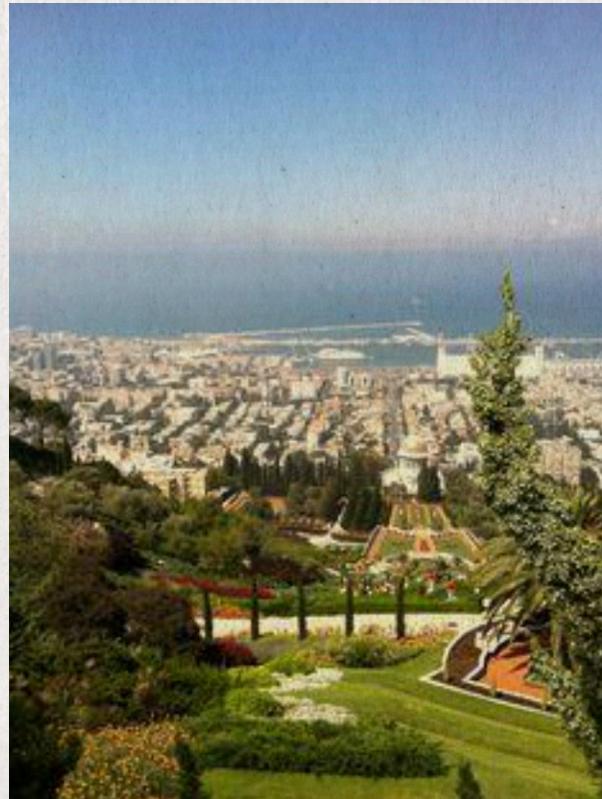
When you travel further north of Haifa, you find the port entrance of Palestine, and the 3rd oldest city in the world: Akka (عكا). You can explore more than 750 years of history in Akka, where you may stumble upon the remains of the medieval Crusader ruins dating back to the 13th century. Here, you can enjoy the tingly smell of the sea and enjoy a delicious dinner of red mullet and sea bass freshly caught from the Mediterranean.

Qassem will then take you to the heart of Palestine: Jerusalem (القدس). This city is a mosaic of different cultures and religions, including the Babylonians in the 6th century BCE, then the Romans in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, followed by Muslim ruling from 638 to 1917, with a short period of the Crusaders taking over in the early 12th century. As a result, Jerusalem holds great religious significance for Muslims, Christians and Jews, where you can find the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Western Wall.

Further north of Jerusalem is "the neglected city of Jesus": Nazareth (الناصرة). Prior to the city being a center for Christian pilgrim trade, Nazareth was mainly a Jewish town from the 4th - 6th century. After that, religious battles broke out, with the most infamous historical battle between the Christian Crusaders and the Muslim forces led by Saladin in the 12th century. Today, Nazareth is recognized to be the largest Arab city of occupied Palestine.

The last stop on Qassem's historical itinerary is the archeological site, Wadi Ara (وادي عارا), known for being a major transit corridor since the Canaanite period. The valley is located on the hill of "Ara" named by the Canaanites, for which it was given its name "Wadi Ara". It is located in the south of Haifa, and acted as a strategic passage for the Mesopotamian civilizations to reach Levant countries like Syria during the late 1400s BCE.

# میں علی بلدي



**HAIFA (حیفا).**

You can see the spiritual Baha'i gardens at the bottom of the image and the old port at the top with the Mediterranean Sea blending into the horizon.

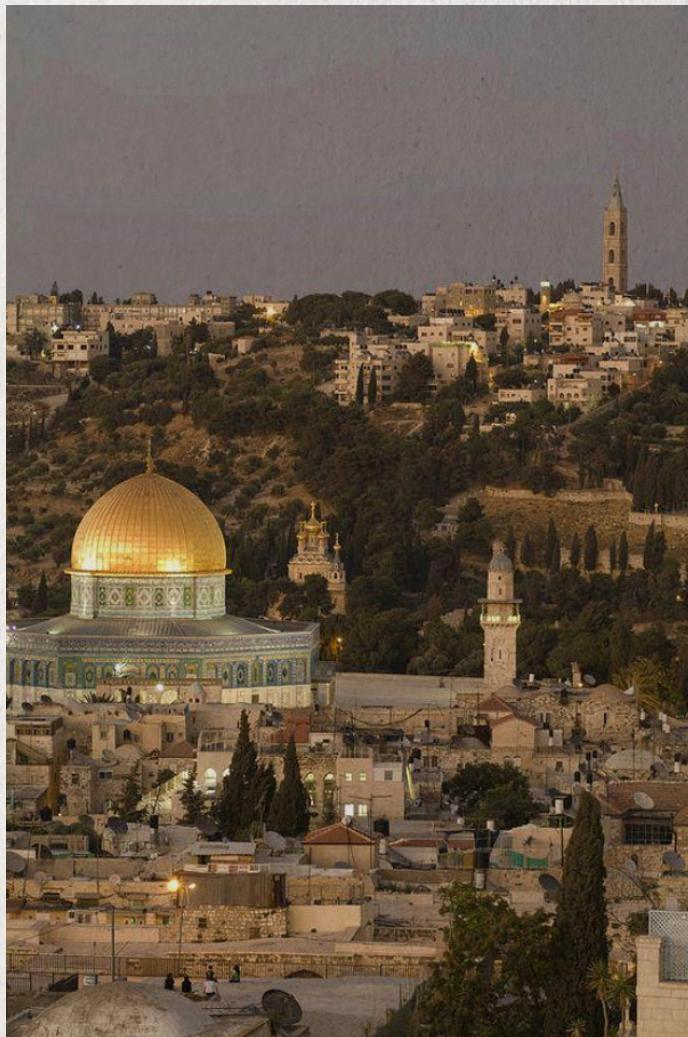
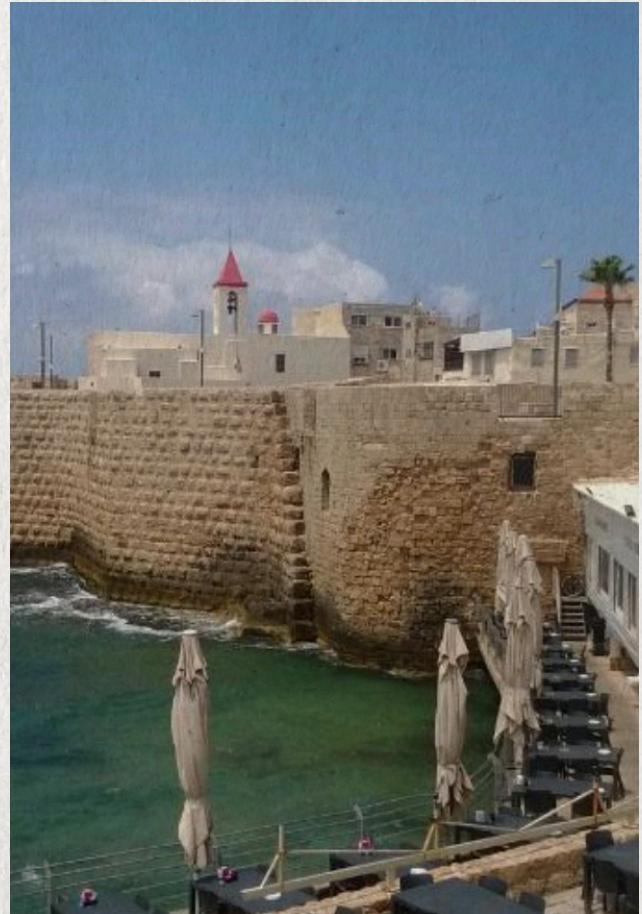
## YAFFA (يافا)

The southern part of the port bordering the Palestinian coast is more commonly used for fishing. You can also see the blue Minaret (Minbar to call for prayer) of the Al-Bahr Mosque, or The Sea Mosque, built by the Ottoman empire in the 19th century.



## **AKKA (عكا).**

The dancing waves of the Mediterranean splash against the Akka fortress, also known as the port entrance. You can see the pink bell tower of "the Church by the Sea", the St. John the Baptist Church, built in the 18th century over the ruins of the 12th century Crusaders church (St. Andrews).



## **JERUSALEM (القدس)**

The familiar golden dome of the Al-Aqsa mosque is seen in this image, and holds the value of the 3rd holiest site in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad is believed to have been raised to heaven at the Dome of the Rock. You can also find the Western Wall, known as the Wailing Wall in Judaism and the Buraq Wall in Islam, a sacred Jewish site for prayer and pilgrimage.

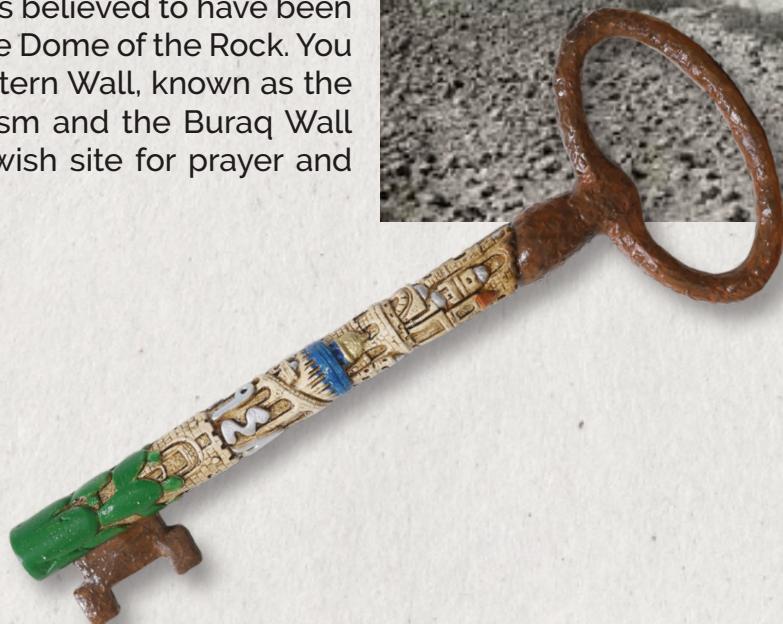


## NAZARETH (الناصرة).

The dancing waves of the Mediterranean splash against the Akka fortress, also known as the port entrance. You can see the pink bell tower of "the Church by the Sea", the St. John the Baptist Church, built in the 18th century over the ruins of the 12th century Crusaders church (St. Andrews).

## WADI ARA (وادي عارة)

The familiar golden dome of the Al-Aqsa mosque is seen in this image, and holds the value of the 3rd holiest site in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad is believed to have been raised to heaven at the Dome of the Rock. You can also find the Western Wall, known as the Wailing Wall in Judaism and the Buraq Wall in Islam, a sacred Jewish site for prayer and pilgrimage.



# *THE LUMP IN MY THROAT*

by Maya Al Salameh

Sunday morning, the day I got the news that the fence was painted with the Israeli flag, I swore not to walk on that grass and see it. I told myself that maybe if I don't see it with my own two eyes, it never happened. I put my pride aside, walked to the fence, and saw it. One glance was enough for me to look away with tears welling in my eyes.

You have to put your pride aside for a lot of things if you're a Muslim Palestinian in America. You swallow your pride when they ask you where you're from. You think "Palestinian," but your fear instinct says "Jordanian" instead. You have to swallow your pride when you talk about your faith because you don't want to appear too "extreme." You have to fake a smile when you hear another Zionist talk about their birthright to Israel and how they spent a wonderful summer in the Mediterranean. You're envious. They get to see your home before you. They ask you if you've ever been to Jerusalem, knowing well that you haven't, then they act surprised when you say "No."

You swallow your pride when you're called a "**terrorist sympathizer**," "**baby killer**," or "**rapist**." You swallow your pride when you get glared at for wearing the hijab, and you smile back to seem approachable. You swallow your pride when someone asks you why the majority of people on campus have Instagram stories in solidarity with Israel. You tell your parents that you're doing well and everything is okay, even though you're afraid you're going to be targeted next after the brutal murder of the 6-year-old Muslim Palestinian boy in Chicago. You can't complain or else your parents will worry more, and you tell yourself that you chose this. You tell yourself that "**YOU CHOSE TO BE IN AMERICA**." You tell yourself that this is the norm and it's always been like this; this isn't even the worst that can happen.

If the professor that harassed you for speaking the truth apologized, then you should move on, right? But then the next person will harass you and apologize, then the one after, and the one after. You're waiting. You're waiting until something bigger happens, something beyond verbal harassment and public humiliation. Maybe then your complaints will matter. **Maybe then your cries will be heard.**



# **How can YOU SUPPORT PALESTINE?**

by Mariam Hamad

## **How can you support Palestine?**

- Continue to educate yourself on Palestine and the history of the region. Some terms to look up are: Nakba, Israeli apartheid, Gaza blockade, Palestinian right of return
- Raise awareness, especially to those who are susceptible to Western propaganda. These are some reputable sources to follow:
  - Al Jazeera
  - @eyeonpalestine
  - @middleasteye
  - @letstalkpalestine
  - @sbeih.jpg
  - @motaz\_azaiza
  - @wael\_el dahdouh
  - @wizard\_bisan1
- Support the **Boycott, Division, Sanctions (BDS) movement**. This movement focuses on boycotting specific companies that support Israel. There are many companies that are complicit and support Israel, so BDS focuses on a few to have maximum impact. Other companies to boycott can be those who support Israel, like Starbucks, McDonalds, and Disney.
- **Hewlett Packard (HP)** helps run the biometric ID system that Israel uses to restrict Palestinian movement.
- **Siemens** is complicit in apartheid Israel's illegal settlement enterprise through its planned construction of the EuroAsia Interconnector.
- **AXA** invests in Israeli banks, which finance the theft of Palestinian land and natural resources.
- **Puma** sponsors the Israel Football Association, which includes teams in Israel's illegal settlements on occupied Palestinian land.
- **Sodastream** is actively complicit in Israel's policy of displacing the indigenous Bedouin-Palestinian citizens of Israel in the Naqab (Negev). SodaStream has a long history of mistreatment of and discrimination against Palestinian workers.
- **Ahava** cosmetics has its production site, visitor center and main store in an illegal Israeli settlement.
- **Sabra** hummus is a joint venture between PepsiCo and the Strauss Group, an Israeli food company that provides financial support to the Israeli army.



SIEMENS



sodaStream®



AHAVA

- What about those long lists of companies that support Israel?
- This is BDS's message on this:

"The global nature of today's economy means that there are thousands of companies that have links to Israel and are complicit to various degrees in Israel's violations of international law. However, for our movement to have real impact we need our consumer boycotts to be easy to explain, have wide appeal and the potential for success. That's why globally, while we call for divestment from all companies implicated in Israel's human rights violations, we focus our boycott campaigns on a select few strategic targets. We also encourage the principle of context sensitivity, whereby activists in any given context decide what best to target and how, in line with BDS guidelines. There is a lot of information online claiming that some large companies give money to Israel, some of which turns out to be false. BDS has built a reputation for strictly adhering to established facts and producing the most accurate information".

- For more information, look at the BDS's website: **bdsmovement.net**

# *ARTSCAPE*

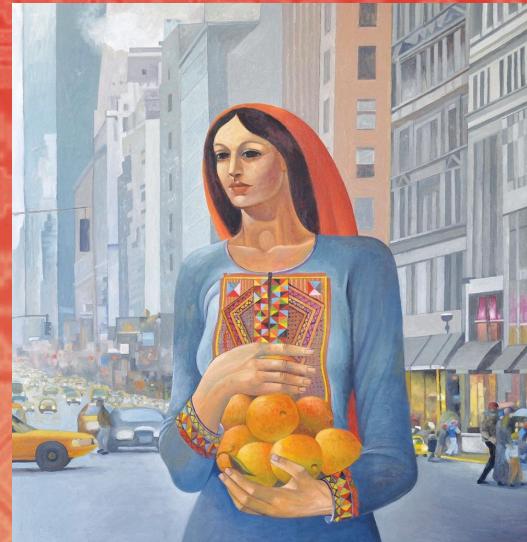
## *RESISTANCE THROUGH EMBROIDERY*

By Najoud Al-Talib

Palestinian embroidery is a cultural practice passed down through generations, and is mostly seen sewn on a garment called the thobe. According to a NY Times article by Raja Abdulrahim, embroidered thobes are recently more of a wedding/special occasions attire, as well as a symbol of resistance, as it proves thousands of years of Palestinian existence in Palestine. According to museum curator Rachel Dedman, embroidery patterns differ across the different regions of Palestine: in Jaffa, the embroidery patterns were reminiscent of water due to its close proximity to the sea, while in Hebron it is reminiscent of vines as Hebron is rich with olive trees. However, due to the displacement of Palestinians during the Nakba, the distance from home led to the different embroidery patterns slowly converging (Abdulrahim, 2023). Embroidery is also a symbol of resistance due Palestinian women's heavy involvement in the First Intifada in 1987, as they initiated mass protests and boycotts against violent Israeli occupation while embroidering Palestinian flags and motifs on their thobes ('Intifada dresses') as the flag itself was banned (El Shafi, 2023).

**“WE RESIST BY PRESERVING OUR EMBROIDERY.”**

**Faten Mia'ary, Palestinian embroidery teacher.**



**"The Immigrant" by Silman Mansour**

Palestinian paintings are beautiful and bold and never silent. A great deal of these artworks center Palestinian embroidery, which stresses its strong ties with the Palestinian identity. 76-year-old Palestinian artist Silman Mansour stresses the centering of Palestinian women as symbols of home or revolution/resistance, all of which don the traditional thobe. The deliberate detailing of the thobe's embroidery is at the center of every piece, emphasizing the embroidery's role in representing Palestinian culture and resistance and in turn preserving it in art. His piece "The Immigrant" (المهاجرة) directly addresses the forced migration and displacement of Palestinians due to violent Israeli occupation.

**“THE PAINTING EXPRESSES TREMENDOUS ATTACHMENT TO PALESTINE THAT PALESTINIANS IN EXILE HOLD DEAR IN THEIR HEARTS, WHICH ONLY GROWS THE LONGER THEY RESIDE IN THE DIASPORA.”**

**– Silman Mansour on "The Immigrant"**

The detailed embroidery seems to represent the woman's strong ties to her culturally rich land, a form of resistance despite Zionism's tyrannical denying of Palestinian roots and existence. To the right are more paintings that center Palestinian embroidery by Palestinian artist Heba Zagout. Heba Zagout was tragically killed by Israeli airstrikes on October 13th with her two children. She is an incredible talent and wanted to share her art with the world, using it as an output for her feelings and an expression of identity, "underscoring the need of preserving Palestinian identity in the face of adversity" (Essa, 2023).

## **"HOW DO WE HAVE A JAFFA AND AN AKKA AND A BEERSHEBA THOBE IF WE WERE NOT THERE? THE BIGGEST EVIDENCE OF OUR PRESENCE IN THESE AREAS IS OUR THOBE."**

– Maha Saca, founder of the Palestinian Heritage Center.

Her art contributes much to the appreciation and preservation of the Palestinian identity. Her female subjects, self-portraits, wear the traditional thobe with tatreez embroidery, often against the backdrop of a green and growing Palestine, again showing an emphasis of embroidery's ties with identity and as a means to connect to the homeland, as well as hope of coming back to the land, with the keys of her home in hand. Heba Zagout will forever be remembered, and her work and identity preserved, despite the violent Zionist regime's wishes for the opposite. Palestinian embroidery is beautiful and full of identity. To recognize this also means recognizing that it is heavy, with history and stories of resistance, told through many mediums of art. These are stories we must learn and remember; we must stand firmly with Palestinians and protest against their ongoing genocide and massacre conducted by violent Israeli occupation for 75+ years.



**"Untitled" by Hiba Zagout**

# **CELEBRATING**

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The palestinian people have gone through years of occupation, bloodshed, and grief. They are strong and resilient in the face of death. What I want to highlight in this piece is their art. In the face of struggles, Palestinians still wrote poetry, painted art, photographed beautiful pictures, and more.

**“IN ORDER FOR ME TO WRITE  
POETRY THAT ISN’T POLITICAL,  
I MUST LISTEN TO THE BIRDS,  
AND IN ORDER TO HEAR THE  
BIRDS, THE WAR PLANES MUST BE  
SILENT”**

- Marwan Makhoul

لكي أكتب شعرا ليس سياسيا يجب  
أن أصفي إلى العصافير،  
ولكي أسمع العصافير يجب  
أن تخرس الطائرة

مروان مخول //

## **“AND WE LOVE LIFE”**

And we love life if we find a way to it.  
We dance in between martyrs and raise a minaret for violet or palm trees.

We love life if we find a way to it.  
And we steal from the silkworm a thread to build a sky and fence in this departure.

We open the garden gate for the jasmine to go out as a beautiful day on the streets.

We love life if we find a way to it.

And we plant, where we settle, some fast growing plants, and harvest the dead.  
We play the flute like the color of the faraway, sketch over the dirt corridor a neigh.  
We write our names one stone at a time, O lightning make the night a bit clearer.

We love life if we find a way to it...

- Mahmoud Darwish

# **PALESTINIAN ART**

## **OH RASCAL CHILDREN OF GAZA.**

Oh rascal children of Gaza.  
You who constantly disturbed me  
with your screams under my window.  
You who filled every morning  
with rush and chaos.  
You who broke my vase  
and stole the lonely flower on my balcony.  
Come back,  
and scream as you want  
and break all the vases.  
Steal all the flowers.  
Come back.  
Just come back...

-Khaled Juma

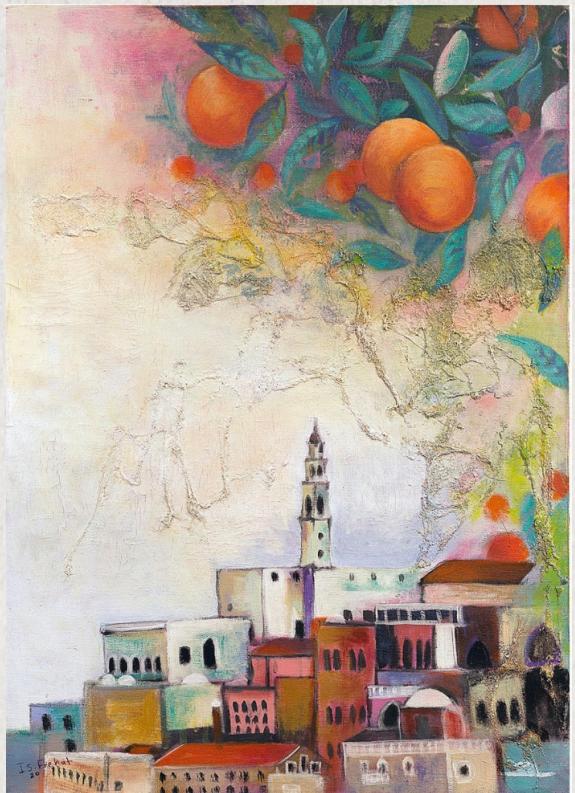
## **F\*CK YOUR LECTURE ON MY CRAFT, MY PEOPLE ARE DYING**

Colonizers write about flowers.  
I tell you about children throwing rocks at  
Israeli tanks  
seconds before becoming daisies.  
I want to be like those poets who care about  
the moon.  
Palestinians don't see the moon from jail  
cells and prisons.  
It's so beautiful, the moon.  
They're so beautiful, the flowers.  
I pick flowers for my dead father when I'm  
sad.  
He watches Al Jazeera all day.  
I wish Jessica would stop texting me Happy  
Ramadan.  
I know I'm American because when I walk  
into a room something dies.  
Metaphors about death are for poets who  
think ghosts care about sound.  
When I die, I promise to haunt you forever.  
One day, I'll write about the flowers like we  
own them.

- Noor Hindi



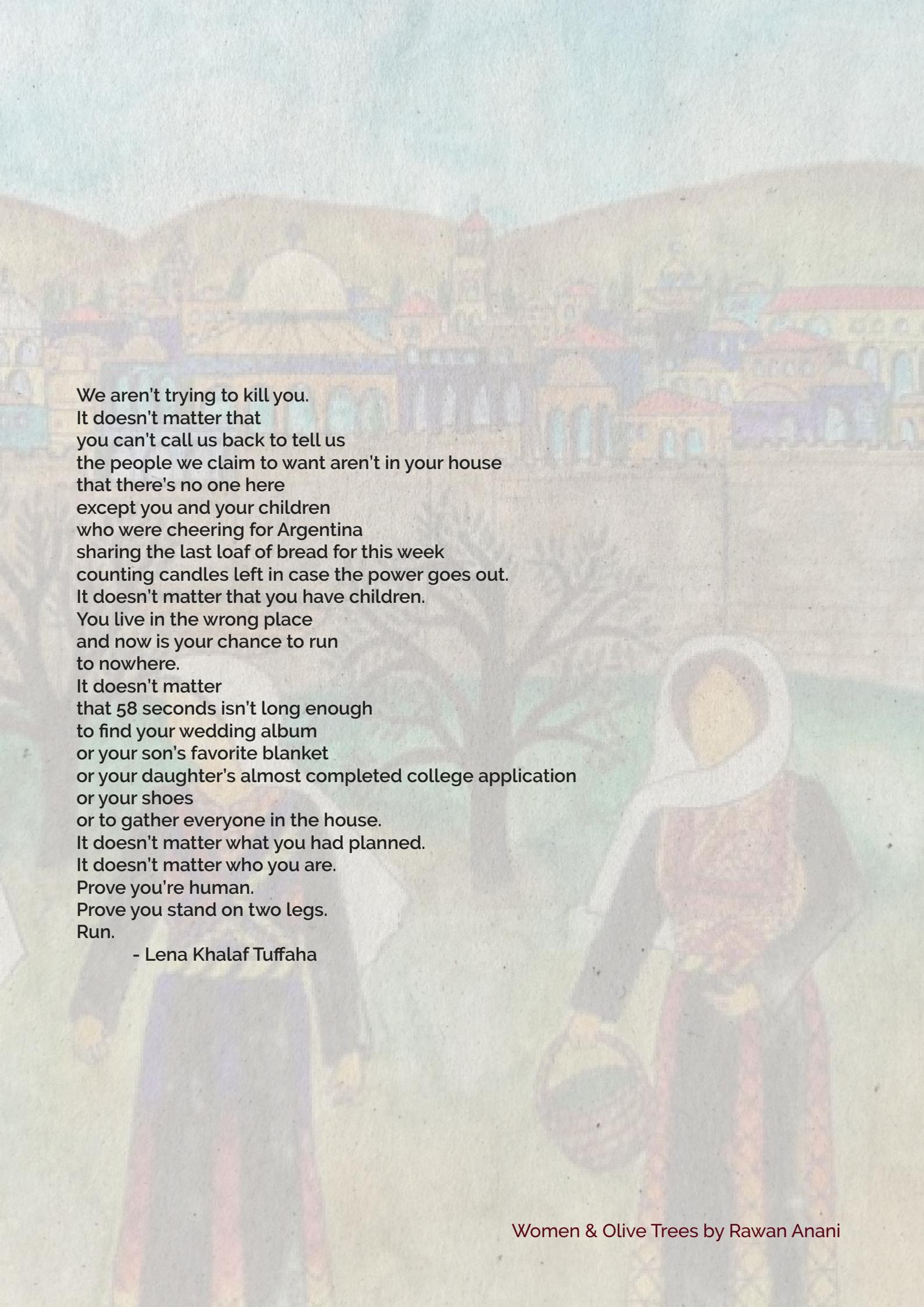
Palestinian Women with jarrah (water clay vase) by Mohammad Baghdadi



Jaffa Oranges by Isra' Frehat

## **RUNNING ORDER**

They call us now,  
before they drop the bombs.  
The phone rings  
and someone who knows my first name  
calls and says in perfect Arabic  
"This is David."  
And in my stupor of sonic booms and glass-shattering symphonies  
still smashing around in my head  
I think, Do I know any Davids in Gaza?  
They call us now to say  
Run.  
You have 58 seconds from the end of this message.  
Your house is next.  
They think of it as some kind of  
war-time courtesy.  
It doesn't matter that  
there is nowhere to run to.  
It means nothing that the borders are closed  
and your papers are worthless  
and mark you only for a life sentence  
in this prison by the sea  
and the alleyways are narrow  
and there are more human lives  
packed one against the other  
more than any other place on earth  
Just run.



We aren't trying to kill you.  
It doesn't matter that  
you can't call us back to tell us  
the people we claim to want aren't in your house  
that there's no one here  
except you and your children  
who were cheering for Argentina  
sharing the last loaf of bread for this week  
counting candles left in case the power goes out.  
It doesn't matter that you have children.  
You live in the wrong place  
and now is your chance to run  
to nowhere.  
It doesn't matter  
that 58 seconds isn't long enough  
to find your wedding album  
or your son's favorite blanket  
or your daughter's almost completed college application  
or your shoes  
or to gather everyone in the house.  
It doesn't matter what you had planned.  
It doesn't matter who you are.  
Prove you're human.  
Prove you stand on two legs.  
Run.

- Lena Khalaf Tuffaha

# ART AS A MEANS OF RESISTANCE

By Aya Al Sabahi, The Arts & Crafts Club

In times of censorship and control of mass media, art has roots in playing an important role in the telling of a collective story of pain, loss, and suffrage. Art can also be used as a means to resist when voices are being silenced. For Palestinian artists, this could be a way of expressing life under occupation. Art can also serve as a way for people to heal or relate. There have been many Palestinians and non-Palestinians who spoke of occupation in the means of poetry, music, films, and even books, but visual art will be the focus of this article.

## The watermelon.

The start of using the watermelon as a replacement of the Palestinian flag stems from its origins from 1976 during the Six-Day war due to Israel criminalizing public display of the Palestinian flag in Gaza and the West Bank. However, not only was the flag banned, but also used watermelon, and its colors in art as well according to artist Silman Mansour. This transitioned into people resisting even more, using the watermelon in their own art, protests, and even social media, but even more so on social media where people were getting shadow banned for using or even posting the Palestinian flag.

## Traditional Art.

Many artists have also created, and continue to create art during the occupation, one of the most renowned being Naji Al-Ali who has created over 40,000 cartoons, as well as creating the Handala as a symbol of resistance. Handala, became widespread as a means to show what Palestinian children go through. This has written itself in history, as so many other artists did. "Handala was born 10 years old and he will always be 10 years old. It was at that age that I left my homeland. When Handala returns, he will still be 10 years old, and then he will start growing up." Despite Handala first appearing in 1969, the character continued to be the face for many movements, one being the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), but also other movements with similar ideals.



Another example is artist Mohammed Saba'aneh, a cartoonist with a unique style. "the most striking feature of his cartooning style is that he often draws his Palestinian characters with blank eyes and haggard faces. They reflect the harsh, soul-draining circumstances of the occupation. Mohammad draws them grotesquely because the occupation is itself grotesque." – The Jerusalem Fund. Mohammed was arrested in 2013 due to his 'suspected collaboration with Hamas', after the two-month mark, he drew incomplete drawings that reflected life in the prison cells with blank spaces that left out details that would let the Israeli authorities know that it was about life in prison.



### Apartheid Wall graffiti art.

The apartheid wall at the West Bank began its construction in 2002 during the second Intifada, it confiscated many Palestinians' homes as well as restricted their movements. It is not just a 'separation barrier', it has cut through many families and communities as well as restricting Palestinian movement. Art on the wall soon became a symbol of resistance, but also reminders of hope.

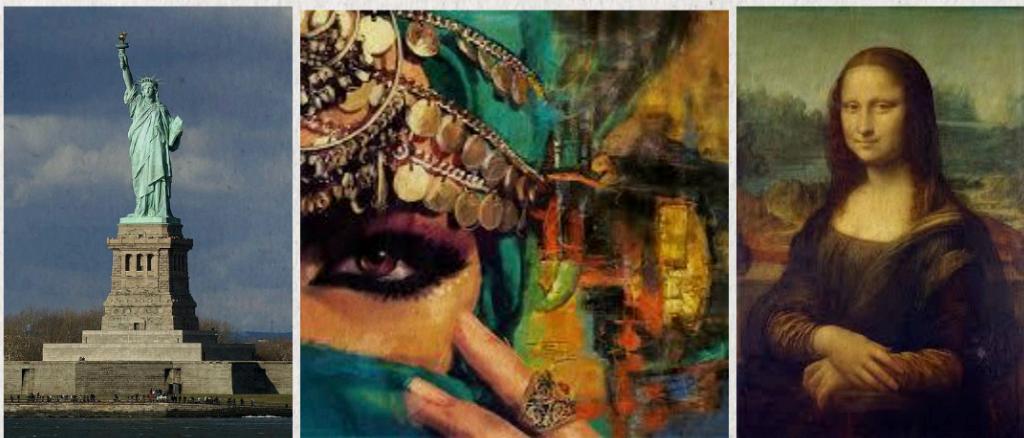


Art always has, and forever have the power to shape public opinion, empower voices, and unite millions.

# ***ART IN THE AR & METAVERSE: A DIGITAL RENAISSANCE***

By Maria Sultana Mina

In the vast realm of human creativity, art has always been a reflection of our ever-evolving society. From the earliest cave paintings to the masterpieces of the Renaissance, art has adapted and thrived through the ages. Today, as we stand on the precipice of a new era – the era of the Metaverse and Augmented Reality – art is experiencing a transformative renaissance like never before.



## **Traditional Arts**

Traditional art encompasses a rich array of disciplines, including the seven classical forms of fine arts: drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, cinema, music, and theater. With its roots deep in history, culture, and craftsmanship, traditional art has long held an esteemed place in our hearts. Yet, as the digital revolution has swept across the globe, it has also dramatically impacted the world of art. The emergence of digital art has blurred the lines between traditional and contemporary, forcing us to reevaluate our understanding of creativity.

## **Digital Arts**

Digital art, originally known as computer art or new media art, encompasses any artistic work or practice that utilizes digital technology as a fundamental part of the creative or presentation process. This can include computational art that engages with and utilizes digital media. Born in the quiet corners of the internet, digital art has unleashed a torrent of innovation, compelling artists to explore uncharted territories. The digital medium offers

boundless possibilities, allowing artists to transcend the confines of what was previously considered unachievable. With a digital canvas at their disposal, artists can seamlessly weave together vibrant dreamscapes, blend various mediums, and even breathe life into the seemingly impossible.



The rise of NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) has further revolutionized the art world, enabling artists to monetize their digital creations and establishing a new art market. Through NFTs, digital artists have the opportunity to gain recognition and financial support, opening up new possibilities for creative careers.



### NFT Gallery

However, as digital art continues to gain ground, traditional art has not lost its allure. The tangible beauty of a brush stroke, the depth of an oil painting, and the authenticity of a handcrafted sculpture still hold a special place in our hearts. There is a unique connection between artist and medium that digital art, as advanced as it is, cannot fully replicate.

But what lies ahead for art in the age of the Metaverse and Augmented Reality? These emerging technologies promise to blend the lines between the physical and the digital, offering a new dimension for artistic expression. Imagine walking through a virtual gallery, where each step you take transports you into a new realm of artistic wonder. Or consider

the possibilities of AR, where everyday life is embellished with interactive and immersive art experiences. The Metaverse and AR have the potential to bring art to life in ways that were once only the stuff of science fiction.



## Metaverse & AR Virtual Gallery

With the Metaverse and AR, art becomes a dynamic and evolving entity. It is no longer confined to the walls of a gallery; it can manifest in our homes, our cities, and our daily lives. Imagine seeing a digital masterpiece that reacts to your emotions, changing as you feel joy, sadness, or wonder.



## Metaverse & AR Arts

In this new era, art will be more accessible than ever before. The Metaverse and AR have the potential to democratize art, giving everyone the chance to create, appreciate, and share their unique artistic visions. Virtual studios and collaborative spaces can bring artists from all corners of the globe together to collaborate, transcending physical boundaries.

As art continues to evolve in the Metaverse and AR, it is essential that we preserve the timeless essence of traditional art while embracing the opportunities that the digital age brings. The marriage of the two can create a harmonious artistic symphony, where history meets innovation, and the possibilities are endless.

To conclude, we are witnessing an extraordinary moment in the history of art. The transition from traditional to digital art, and now the integration of art into the Metaverse and AR, is a testament to human creativity's boundless nature. As artists, technologists, and enthusiasts explore these uncharted territories, the future of art holds promise and excitement, ensuring that the creative spirit continues to flourish in the ever-changing landscape of the digital age.



*Design and layout by Hala Al Darbasi*