

# PAINTINGS FROM THE MIND AND HEART

Welcome to the studio of the painter Samia A. Halaby. These four pictures are entries into four sections of the studio.



[KINETICS](#)..... [ABSTRACTIONS](#)..... [ILLUSION](#)..... [PALESTINE](#)

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[ABOUT THE ARTIST](#)..... [ESSAYS BY THE ARTIST](#)..... [A MENU of the SITE](#)

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**A MENU of the entire STUDIO:**

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# SHORT BIOGRAPHY

July, 1996

## Samia A. Halaby

**Samia A. Halaby was born in Jerusalem, Palestine, in 1936. In 1948, Israeli aggression forced their emigration to Beirut and from their her family emigrated to the US. There her art education took place in Midwestern Universities. She taught in American universities for eighteen years ending with ten years at the Yale School of Art. She has lectured as visiting artists at many distinguished schools. In recent years she has added work with electronic media. She programs kinetic computer paintings and performs them live with musicians. Her work has been exhibited internationally and is in many museum collections among them the Guggenheim Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Institute Du Monde Arab.**

**Halaby makes analytically abstract paintings which reflect the cacophony of present reality. this work first developed in isolation along complex geometric lines.**

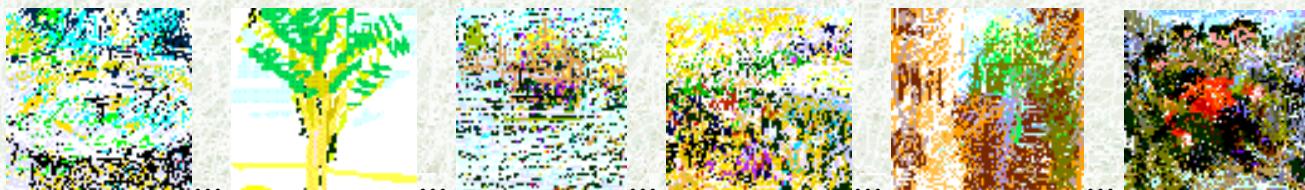
**Afterwards international traditions such as Cubism and Constructivism as well as such American painters as Stuart Davis and Mark Tobey asserted their influence. The themes narrate the motion and speed of our environment. They help us to understand the signals of pleasure and danger of a city or the complexities of modern information. For example one painting titled "One Yard Pas The Shingle Factory" alludes to the jangle of manufacture while it pays homage to Marcel Duchamp.**

**Halaby works with oil on canvas as much as with drawing media on paper. Halaby exhibited some very large works the most sizable of which measure six by twenty-four feet. Halaby has also worked with the print media. As guest artist at the Tamarind Lithography workshop she produced fourteen editions. In recent years she has worked closely with Sheila Marbain at Maurel Studios to develop a method for silk screen monotypes.**

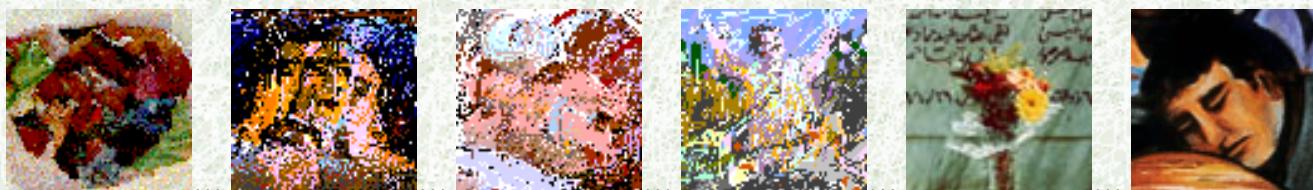
**You've finished reading the "Short Biography." You might want to see the "[Long Bigoraphy](#)" or read "[An Aesthetic View](#)" or peruse the "[Resume](#)."**

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## PICTURES AND WORDS ABOUT OUR HOME IN PALESTINE



[Grandmother](#) .... [Beisan](#) .... [Jerusalem](#) .... [Sabah](#) .... [Yafa](#) .... [Khader](#) ....



[Students](#) .... [Taxi](#) .... [Doctor](#) .... [Hasan](#) .... [Kafr Qasem](#) .... [Artist of Kafr Qasem](#)

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## PALESTINIAN ARTISTS .. Essays and Reviews with Pictures



[Rana Bishara](#)... [Tayseer Barakat](#)... [Sari Khouri](#).... [Abdel Tamam](#).... [Vera Tamari](#)....  
[Adnan Yahya](#)....

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**JERUSALEM ALQUDS:**

**SING THE CHILDREN OF PALESTINE**



**Outside the mosque, as a working teenager passed carrying a heavy load, other boys gave me sagacious hints on avoiding seeming like a tourist. Thus I camouflaged my New York dress, gained access to the mosque grounds now paradoxically guarded by Israelis. Very savvy, the boys had known better than I the implications of this assertion. They encouraged and prodded me. After all this is our home -- theirs and mine. Thus I sat in the light-flooded expanse contemplating this Dome Of The Rock - - this heart of Jerusalem -- which used to be open and free.**



**After the blinding sunshine, first darkness inside the dome changed slowly like dawn into an exquisite orchestra of light and shadow. It is the most beautiful architectural interior in my experience. The quietness of the worshipers accented my sensations of wonder and aesthetic pleasure. How did it feel to be in a place of beauty and order and immediately unexpectedly meet depraved Israeli terrorism that day when Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 Palestinians dead on February 25, 1994?**



**Leaving the Dome to the adjacent Al-Aqsa I saw a man wearing a green skirt and I noticed the unarmed Palestinian guards also in green. Clearly they were under the command of Israeli guards who were dressed in blue, labeled in Hebrew, and very obviously armed. As I tried to enter Al-Aqsa the green guards finally stopped me. They did not want to let this modern Palestinian woman in till tourist time; but then they relented.**



**Later a girl, a daughter of the mosque staff, came and sat next to me and gave me a white rose. I asked her about the Israeli guards and about the soldiers just then coming to formation on the grass. She said yes these Israeli guards are arrogant and the soldiers do go inside the mosque at tourist time and it is deeply resented. She said everyone is afraid of them even though they pretend not to be. I asked about the green skirt. She said skirts are for male tourists who come wearing shorts. We laughed. She invited me to her house.**



Now, autumn 1995, as I touch this rose presses between the pages of my journal I am listening to the mass media tell of a very different memento. It seems that the terrorist Yitzak Rabine was assassinated by one of his own pit bulls, Yigal Amir. This murderer comes from the same settlement as the murderer Baruch Goldstein. There, on land stolen from Palestinians, they have engraved a stone with words saying that he has a pure heart and clean hands. Tell me who eulogizes murderers? The true heroes are the beautiful children of the Palestinian working class -- children of the INTIFADAH. I remember their ethics, solid like rocks, and their precious tenderness like saplings between those rocks.

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[Sabah Told Me...](#) [My Home in Yafa...](#) [Khader Told Me...](#) [Our Students...](#) [A Taxi Ride in Bethlehem...](#) [Written by Doctor Fathihe Saudi...](#) [Hasan Told Me...](#) [A Visit to Kafr Qasem...](#) [The Artist of Kafr Qasem...](#) The Massacre at Kafr Qasem (not yet ready)

- [\*\*HOME IN PALESTINE PART II - On Palestinian Artists\*\*](#)

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# On The Leading Edge

## The Kinetic Painting Group

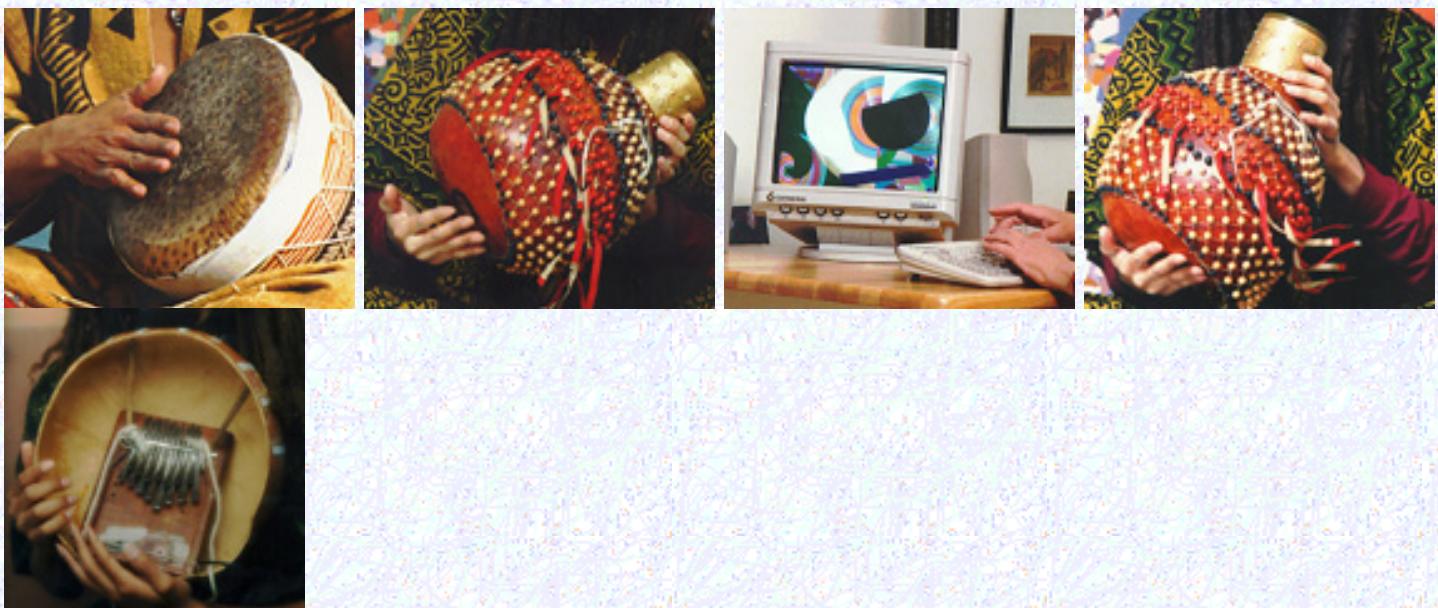
### Performance of animated painting and percussive sound

Two Musicians and one painter



[Hasan Bakr, multi-percussionist](#) .. . [Kevin Nathaniel, multi-percussionist](#) .. . [Samia A. Halaby, painter](#)

The Kinetic Painting Group improvises animated computer painting with sound. The moving abstraction is projected onto a theater-size screen while the painter plays the keyboard which creates the painting. Musicians react to the visual signal as the painter reacts to the sounds. Each work is an improvisational jamming of sound and image. The interaction is spontaneous and free within a chosen theme.



This is neither a pictorial accompaniment to music nor a musical accompaniment to an animation. The two media interact to create the new formal ideas. You may read a brief description of the themes.

The computer **program** which makes this possible was written by the painter Samia A. Halaby. It converts the computer keyboard in such a way that pressing the keys creates the moving images in the similar way as the keys of a piano create sounds. This allows the painter to create an abstract painting intuitively and spontaneously in live performance with musicians.

A video was recorded during performance. The visual material is recorded directly from the computer signal while sound is recorded from the sound system.

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If you wish to know more about performances of the Kinetic Painting group write to Samia A. Halaby at [samia@interport.net](mailto:samia@interport.net) or click -» [HERE](#)

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# **Art Students in Palestine**



**During the spring of 1996, I spent several weeks collaborating with Professor Vera Tamari in teaching art at BirZeit University. Our project provided all of us with a level of aesthetic satisfaction permeated by love of our land.**



**Student artists:**  
**Fida AbuAllatif**  
**Sana Alawi**  
**Yousef Samara**  
**Rowan Sharaf**  
**Fida Touma**

**On the first day I told the students about my life and asked them to tell about theirs. One student told about his internment and torture in an Israeli prison. At the end of my stay with them I had occasion to visit another student in a PNA prison taking him some paper mache so that he might make-up his class-work.**



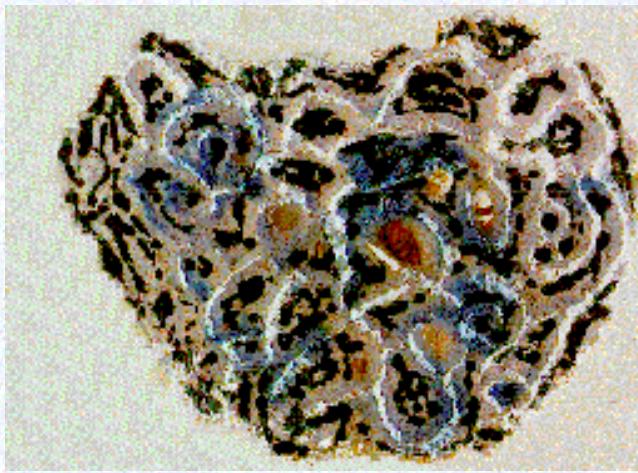
**Student artist:**  
**Omar Shalhoub**

**Two weeks before my arrival, there had been a surprise Israeli raid on these university students during the middle of the night. They were pulled out of their beds, then made to stand for over four hours in the cold night air wearing only their bed clothes. Those from Gaza were kidnapped and sent back to Gaza without legal permission to return. This would be called a pogrom if done in Europe against Jews. It would be shocking if done in the US or in Europe; but here the Israeli Jews call it a 'security check' and the mass media seems to implicitly approve through its silence.**



**Student artist:  
Iyhab Hadrab**

**Because the Palestinian Arab society and land are under so much attack by Israel, it was important to use materials that did not pose a burden. We settled happily on paper mache. We called it majoun al-warak -- kneaded paper. And we kneaded and kneaded. The students worked in social groups and converted the work into fun.**



**Student artist:**

**Before my arrival the students collected paper waste from all the university departments. Thus the project had an environmentally useful dimension. Vera and I discussed the project as we commuted to the university in the shared taxi called the 'service' used by students and faculty alike. One morning, squeezed between students and admiring the sight of our mountains adorned with rows of rocks, we arrived at a**

**final definition of our project. I love the way peasants clear these stones by hand using them to terrace and divide mountain sides; and I love how they plant olive trees. It is a sight to elicits pleasurable nostalgia and simultaneously all the pain of seeing it being destroyed -- a very symbol of Palestine.**



**Student artists:**  
**Rustum AlKhalayle**  
**Muhammad AbuRub**  
**Nina Habash**  
**Husein Sawada**  
**Samer Zabana**

**I looked forward to that ride each morning and each evening. My hungry eyes opened to its beauty and my mind raced to memorize those principles which underlay such beauty. I knew that the distribution of those rock and those trees will make themselves visible in my paintings. And further lessons came when I saw them manifested in the visual expressions of our students.**



**Student artists:**  
**Rula AbdilRahman**  
**Nuha AbuHantash**  
**Niveen Nusseibeh**  
**Marlene Sabat**

**We asked the students to look at the reality surrounding them, natural or social, then discern general principles which govern such a reality. We asked them to then apply these principles to abstract bas-relief sculptures made with paper mache. It was an extremely advanced and difficult project. When they complained or when they stumbled we threw them into the joys of kneading the squooshy paper pulp. We made them get into the work and rebuild it repeatedly until practice and discourse helped them find answers.**



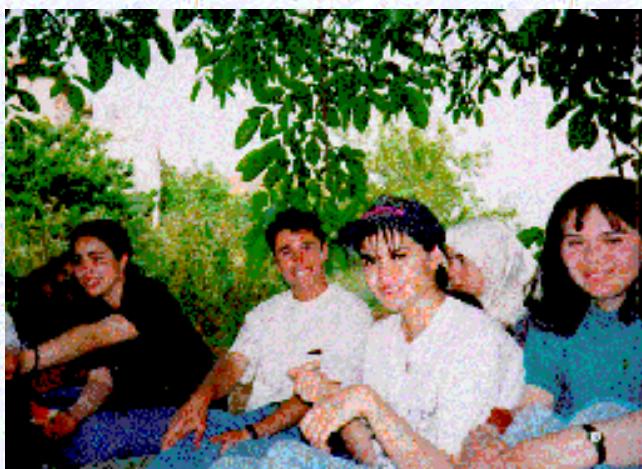
**Student artist:  
Nahla Mseeh**

On afternoon as they struggled to feel out the possibilities of paper mache we suggested they use rocks as a base on which to mold this difficult material. A few hours later four of them struggled into the classroom with a enough stones for everyone. And they looked at me and said: "Miss, these are the stones of our land." They are so beautiful.



**Student artists:  
Ula Adnan  
Wisam Azar  
Nahla Mseeh  
Umar Shalhoub**

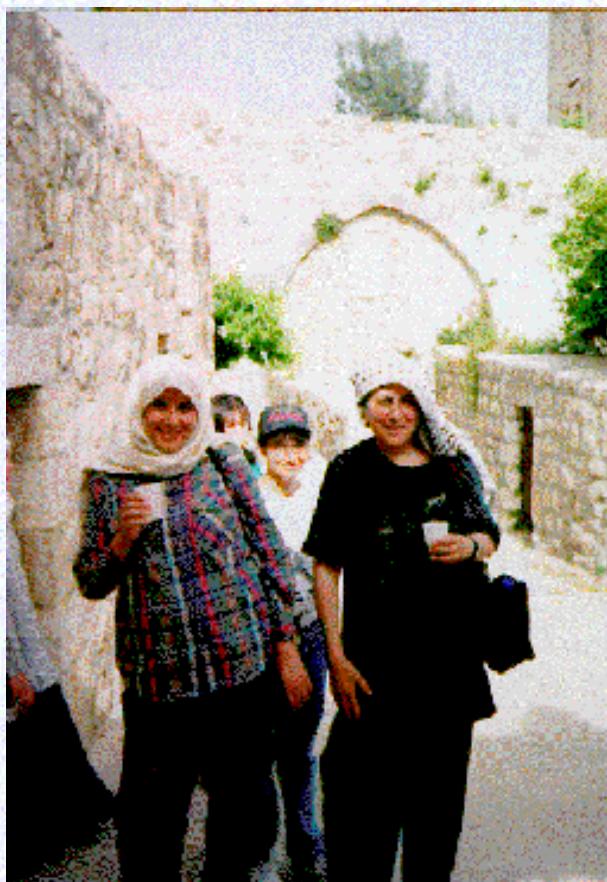
Each student participated in one joint project but was also responsible for three individual works. Some of the group projects dealt with the development of the Intifadah and the oppression which caused it. Some dealt with the relationship of Mediterranean sea and Palestinian land. Some dealt the seasons of the year; while some dealt with the rocks and trees surrounding the town of BirZeit.



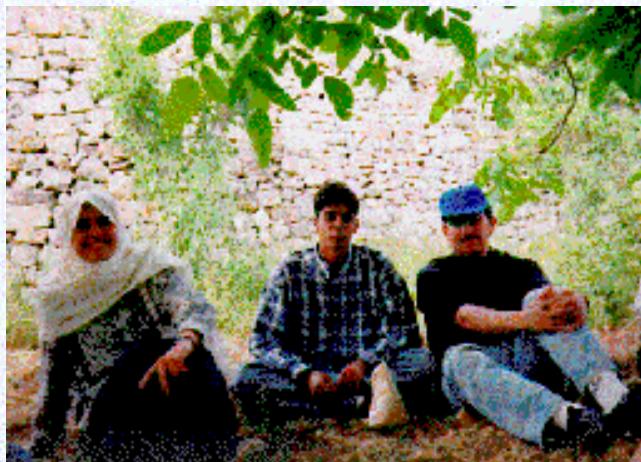
**These students all get the highest grades in my professor's book. Their visual acumen is as substantial as their character. I was and still am impressed with their accomplishment and that of their teacher Vera Tamari. I look at this work and see its innate value. I take note that its genuine substance looks good even when compared to work that I have seen in the world's most sophisticated museums of modern art.**



**Those three weeks with them were joyful days of teaching. They are brilliant in memory. They brought a small measure of healing to the forced exile from Palestine. Other teaching days which matched them were those of teaching Asian and Pacific students at the University of Hawaii during one particular semester in 1985. Like my Hawaiian students, our Palestinian students felt that an appropriate ending to our collaboration must be an outing.**



**For this outing we were invited by one student to his home village of Jifna and the day was exquisite. We entered into the fabric of family relations in this one of the few remaining Palestinian villages. We were met by elders and told of how after the occupation the Israeli settlers arrived one day with a detachment of soldiers and openly stole the ancient stone carvings from within the old fortification. This fortification is in essence a tiny medieval town from which the village had grown. Our hosts also walked us through some of the ancient ruins which the villagers proudly protect while waiting for proper excavation. Later out in the surrounding fields as we strolled beneath olive trees and jumped over rock walls the students sang an old peasant song of Palestine and I felt angry regrett for all that might have been in Palestine and for all the pain that has been in Palestine.**



**At the end we sat in a stepped field on the broken soil or on stones under the protection of a huge tree. The students sang and played games with a youthful innocence starkly contrasting the harshness of Israeli occupation on their lives. Our hosts served us drinks and sliced melon on a silver tray. I felt honored.**

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