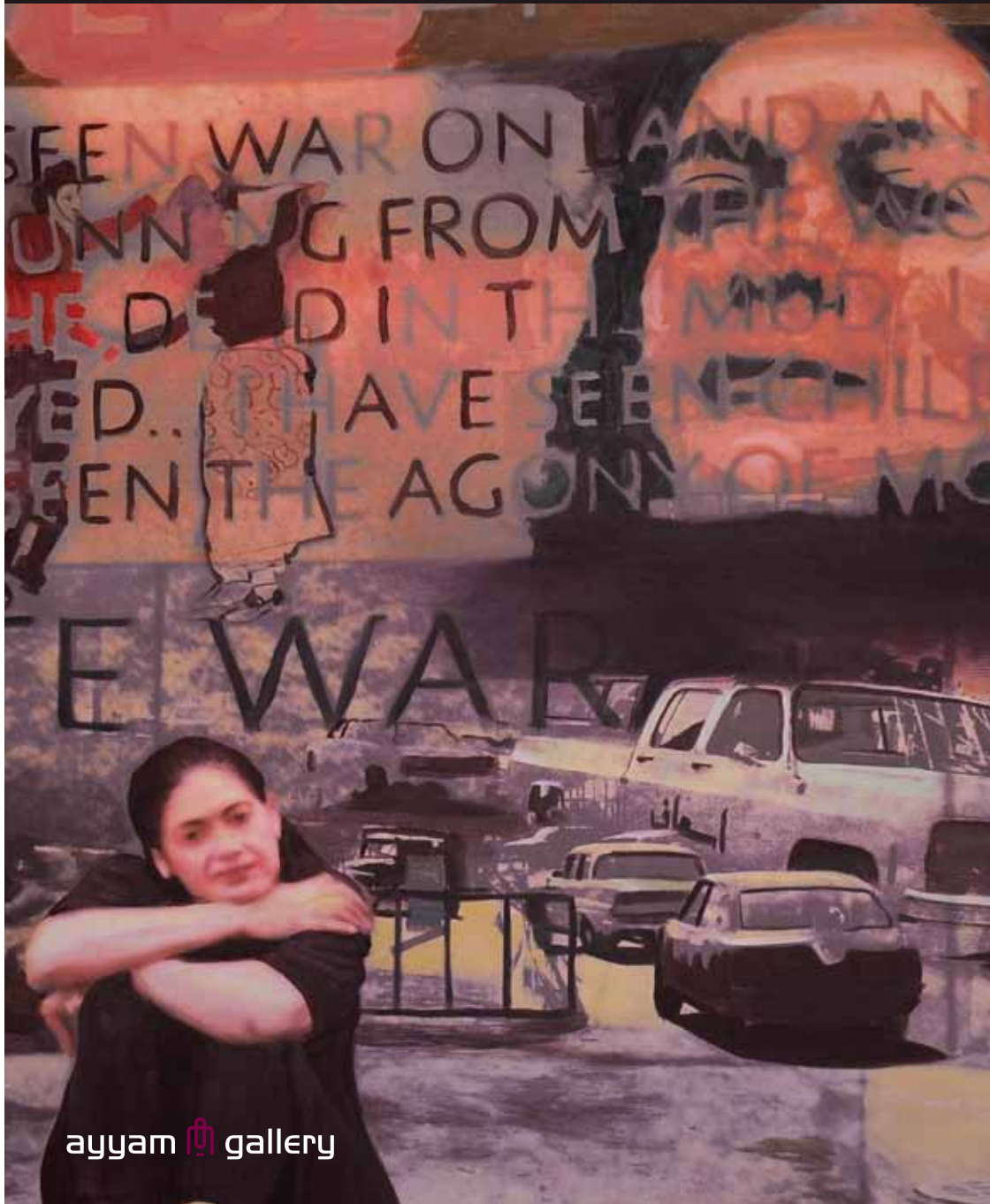


GINANE MAKKI BACHO



ayyam gallery

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AFTERIMAGE

GINANE MAKKI BACHO

Ayyam Gallery Beirut
11 April - 31 May 2013

“Memory is the seamstress, and a capricious one at that. Memory runs her needle in and out, up and down, hither and thither. We know not what comes next, or what follows after. Thus, the most ordinary movement in the world, such as sitting down at a table and pulling the inkstand towards one, may agitate a thousand odd, disconnected fragments, now bright, now dim, hanging and bobbing and dipping and flaunting, like the underlinen of a family of fourteen on a line in a gale of wind.”

Virginia Woolf

In memory of my parents



Ginane Makki Bacho was born in Beirut in 1947, where she currently lives and works. She received a Master's of Fine Arts in Printmaking and Painting from Pratt Institute, New York (1987) and a Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the Lebanese American University, Beirut (1982). Recent solo exhibitions include ArtCircle, Beirut (2010); Agial Art Gallery, Beirut (2004); and a retrospective of her works at the French Cultural Center, Beirut (2005). Group exhibitions include Fa Gallery, Kuwait (2012), Beirut Art Center (2009); the Lebanese Association of Artists and Sculptors in Beirut (2013, 2012, 2010, 2009); the Biennale Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria (2008); and Sursock Museum, Beirut (2006).

Her work is held in a number of public and private collections including the Centre Culturel Francais, Beirut; the Museum of Digne les Bains; Cabo Frio Museum, Rio de Janeiro; the Arab League, Washington DC; the Hariri Foundation, Washington DC., and the Biblioteca Alexandrina, Alexandria. She is also known for her artist books, such as Face to Face, the Artist as Woman and Mother (1985), Ginane, Diary of a Woman (1986), Extraordinary People (1998) and Dichotomie en Blanc et Noir (2009).

Artist Statement

I grew up with the love of the word. At an early age, I drew and wrote stories for myself. I found that the word possessed a pictorial power and I used it alternatively with my images. I discovered early that a word or a sign may stand for that which a picture cannot depict, just as a picture may reflect an image or symbol that is not easily expressed through language.

As the years passed, I graduated with a degree in Literature and began to write. Yet I was disappointed in the lack of color in my writings. It took many years to gain the courage to return to university and study Fine Arts and satisfy my longing to marry words and images, what I intuitively experimented with in my formative years.

As my eyes replay past memories, I see myself as a small girl dreaming of stories and tales that harbor no barriers between reality and fiction. In fact, my plastic vocabulary stems from my first visual memory. Proust said that the task of Art is to travel back in the direction from which we have come, to the depths where what really existed lies unknown within us. But my memory is not a constructive one like Proust's. I am not in search of a taste or the truth which lies behind an association. My memories emerge from a note, a color, a line; they evolve through association and truth, whether in an impressionistic or realistic way. I feel more related to Virginia Woolf's memory than to Proust's.

My imagination stems from the essence of experience within my own biography, whether truly lived, heard, or merely dreamt of. Conjuring these deeply rooted experiences unveiled the remote, hidden facets of my memory, yet they arose without excessive search or exploration. My imagination renders my behavior childlike, and though I was a young mother, this role created a storyteller. The tension in the relationship of artist and storyteller has

defined my art. It sharpened my artistic imagery, pointing beyond the production of images to a vivid pictorial stream, flowing consciously and unconsciously from my dreams and childhood.

Life, however, is not always a dream. There is war, violence, and hatred. In my native city of Beirut, I experienced all the disasters of war. Throughout my life, my dreams of hope, peace, love, joy, and happiness were threatened. What remained was the necessity to work, to be accepted as an artist, to be treated as a human being; yet this too vanished, and I was forced to leave my country for survival. Survival is the word I have used to describe myself since my early childhood. Leaving one's country is not a simple decision. It requires a break with the familiar, your roots and culture. Though given this dramatic situation, it became an imperative. And so I left Lebanon with its expansive blue sky that makes you outspread your wings with ecstasy, its golden sun and beaches, its cool sea and rocky mountains, abundant trees and scent, and moved with my family to New York.

In New York, I was overwhelmed by all the changes. I turned inward to try to find something more authentic, more related to me, in this foreign city. With laborious retracing of my steps, I sought a way of life, of adjustment and of understanding. I needed to reorient myself to my culture, as one must revise his own view retrospectively when acquiring some new knowledge. By reviewing where I had been, by determining where I am, I had to decide where to go.

This longing to discover what I am and understanding that which I am not is the process and the substance of my work. It was in New York, exhilarated by a new sense of freedom and obsessed with the revelation of my own country, my own individuality, that my work evolved. I wished to understand how I fit into the stream of my cultural history. Consequently, the development of a visual language based on personal myths, childhood experiences, memories and dreams, was born. Connected to a deep past, I strive to create contemporary works that fulfill a personal vision derived from personal concerns while representing the time in which I live.

Ginane Makki Bacho

Mapping Memories

An Introduction to the series “Afterimage”

Like Virginia Woolf’s sentiments on memory, Ginane Makki Bacho has fabricated an intricate web of memories in which several decades overlap and collide in one painting, relaying her experiences as a child, and the many ways it has shaped her in the progressive stages of life. If memories do indeed create the tapestry of our lives, then Makki Bacho’s is reminiscent of a patchwork quilt, the needle jumping through time, stitching various memories together to create a new, enlightened history of her life. Makki Bacho’s layered history, with its turmoils and successes, is one which will indelibly mark our memories long after the close of her exhibition.

Though the compositions of this series are derived of personal memories and photographs, the locations and experiences will be readily felt by all who lived in Beirut during the Seventies and witnessed the subsequent Civil War and Israeli invasions. Yet, the subjects of these paintings are not exclusive to Lebanon and will resonate with any whose life has dramatically changed since a war interrupted their peaceful existence, altering their lives, whether by the trauma of the experience or by a necessitated relocation.

War and time both have a particular way of transforming the landscape of a city and the geography of an individual’s life. War has a notable detrimental affect on permanence, industry, family, cityscapes, and human spirit. Time can also dwindle these same features, yet a natural evolution is understandable, unlike the swift changes imparted by the devastating affects of war, which will always remain

incomprehensible to those who have lost part of their lives and themselves.

Though set against the wider narrative of the changing face of her country, the subject of loss and war is not the sole ambition of this series and themes of family, innocence, struggle, survival, self discovery, motherly love, and persistence pervade. Her works notably speak of the perseverance of life.

Makki Bacho’s history is one of survival, strength, determination, and passionate love. Always embracing her sons in her arms, even set against a bombed facade and sand-packed barricades or under the watchful eye of armed militia, the hope is palpable. Birds fly on the wind of blue skies and the colors of her palette remain soft and full of light -- true to a memory where the sweetest of sensations is retained, even in the most abject of circumstances.

The artist allows the audience to journey through her intimate memories, reliving each experience alongside her, partaking in each emotion. Her multilayered handling of these powerful subjects, much like her life, are tempered with ease and grace. From Makki Bacho’s portrayal of tender moments spent with her children, the hope for a bright future, fond memories of time spent with family, self discovery during young adulthood, difficulty in the face of illness and injury, and trying moments in a young child’s life, we parallel our life experiences with hers. The personal becomes universal in her paintings and they speak of all our lives, standing as a testament to her fortitude, and moreover, humanity’s strength in the face of adversity.

The following catalogue groups Makki Bacho’s paintings according to time: Childhood, Adolescence, Marriage and Motherhood, War, and Relocation. These classifications, though removing the chronological order of her life story, elucidate the universality of the themes present in her paintings.

CHILDHOOD



The paintings in *Childhood* portray the absence of a loved one. In these works, the absent person is the father of a young girl.

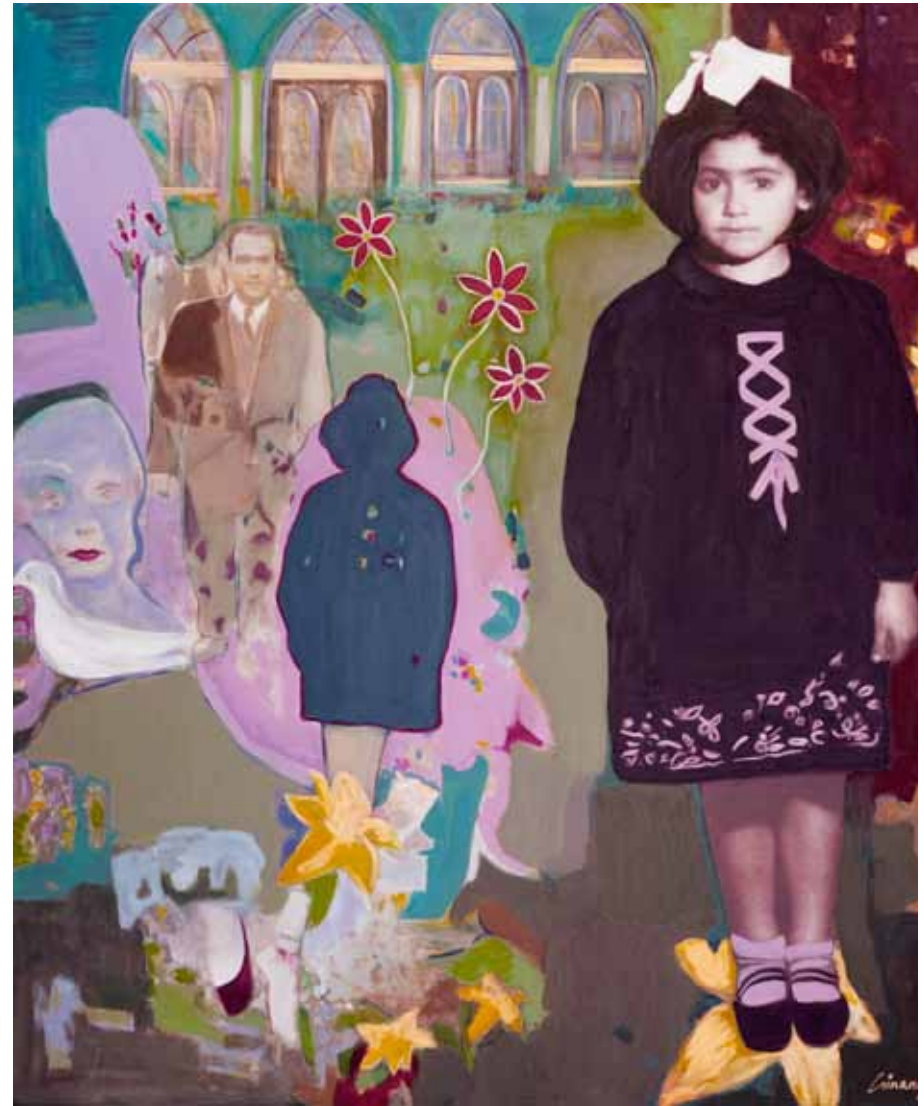
Flashback I and *Flashback II* reference the day the father left. Standing on a pier, a young girl watches her father board a ship destined for another country. The image of her father on this pier recurs to her time and again, and in *Flashback II*, her innocent attempt to make him return is detailed. As Cinderella's lost glass slipper returned her loved one to her, this young girl leaves her shoe at the end of the dock, hoping it will bring her father back.

The divided figure of the little girl in *Flashback I* prominently portrays her emotions. While her father may be away, as depicted in the photographs of him in *St. Germain de Près*, a part of her clearly resides on that pier, awaiting his return. In the middle of the painting, the word 'Me' is clearly visible above which the little girl stands, still missing one shoe.

Icon I and *Icon II* are thus named for the framed image of the father which has become sacred to the young child. She sits before it praying for his return and finding solace within the mirrored reflection of herself beside this picture frame, as if father and daughter are reunited.



Flashback I
2012
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Flashback II
2012
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



The Icon I
2012
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



The Icon II
2012
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm

ADOLESCENCE



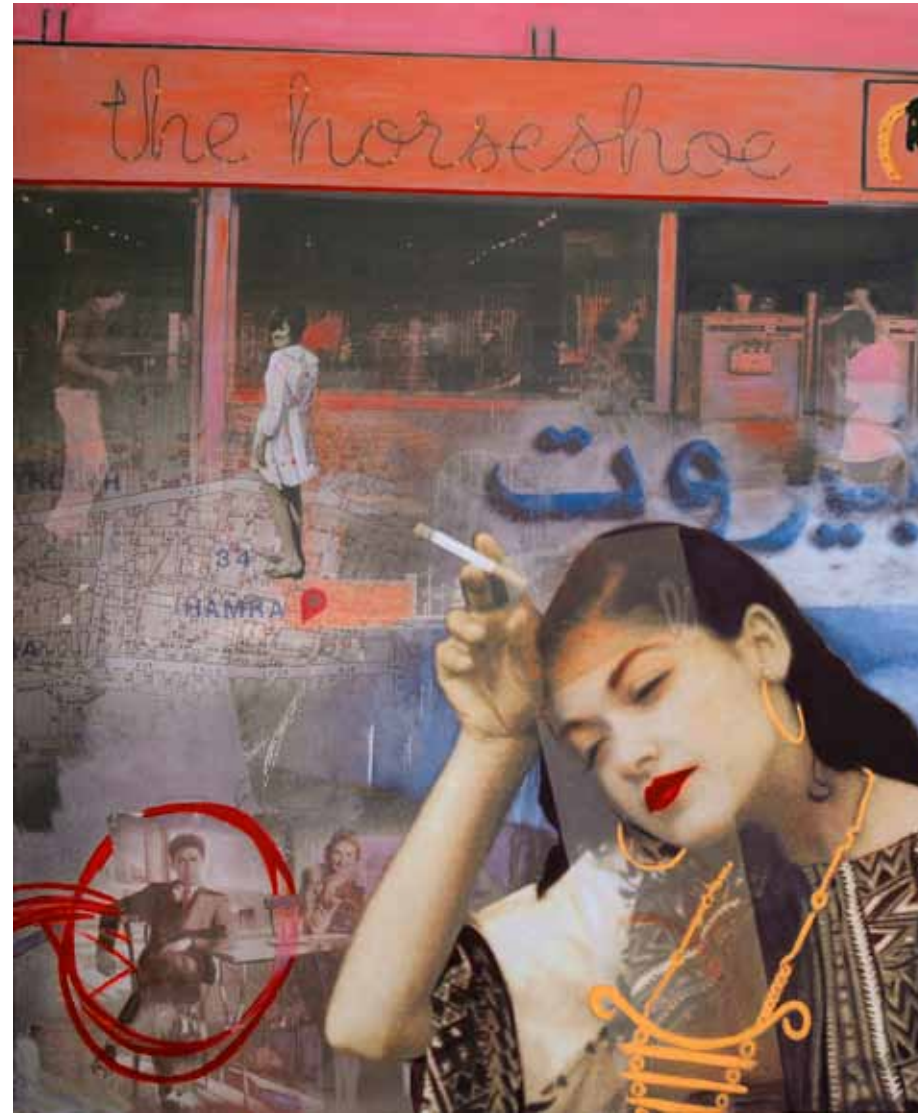
Adolescence harkens back to a time long gone. To vanished holiday spots, favourite restaurants, and family homes.

Placing the context of these works in the Seventies, before the face of Lebanon was drastically altered, when freedom and self expression were available to all, Makki Bacho's compositions reflect a peaceful time when her country was not plagued by continuous waves of violence. Beirut stood then as the banking and cultural centre of the Middle East, a cosmopolitan city openly embracing both Eastern and Western values, fashion, thought and literature.

Stairs are a metaphor for Makki Bacho's quest to locate where her favourite restaurant Automatic with its famous Chocolat Mou and patisserie would be placed in present-day downtown now that the area has dramatically changed in the aftermath of the wars. Maps invade her compositions and this striving to place her past in the context of her present is apparent throughout all her layered compositions by the juxtaposition of several decades of her life within a single memory.



Nostalgia
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Horseshoe
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Automatic
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Sofar
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



MARRIAGE & MOTHERHOOD
A BRIGHT FUTURE



The Doll
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



The Pigeon
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



WAR

After fleeing Beirut to Sofar with the seven months of successive invasions by the Israelis, Makki Bacho and her husband returned to Beirut to see what remained of their belongings. Both her home and studio were reduced to rubble, burned and looted. Yet in these paintings, she holds her children affectionately, grateful that this war has spared all their lives and she acknowledges it was this will to live for and protect her children which allowed them to overcome such turbulent times.

Throughout the civil war, car bombs became a regular occurrence, mindlessly killing with the intention of instilling fear in the hearts of the people. In Wasteland, a bombed car is strewn with flowers, honoring the death of the innocent while countering those who would rejoice in causing such pain and destruction.

Times of war are characteristically chaotic and they have a lasting hold on the lives of those who experienced the atrocities, as revealed in the text of the painting I Hate War.

I HAVE SEEN WAR

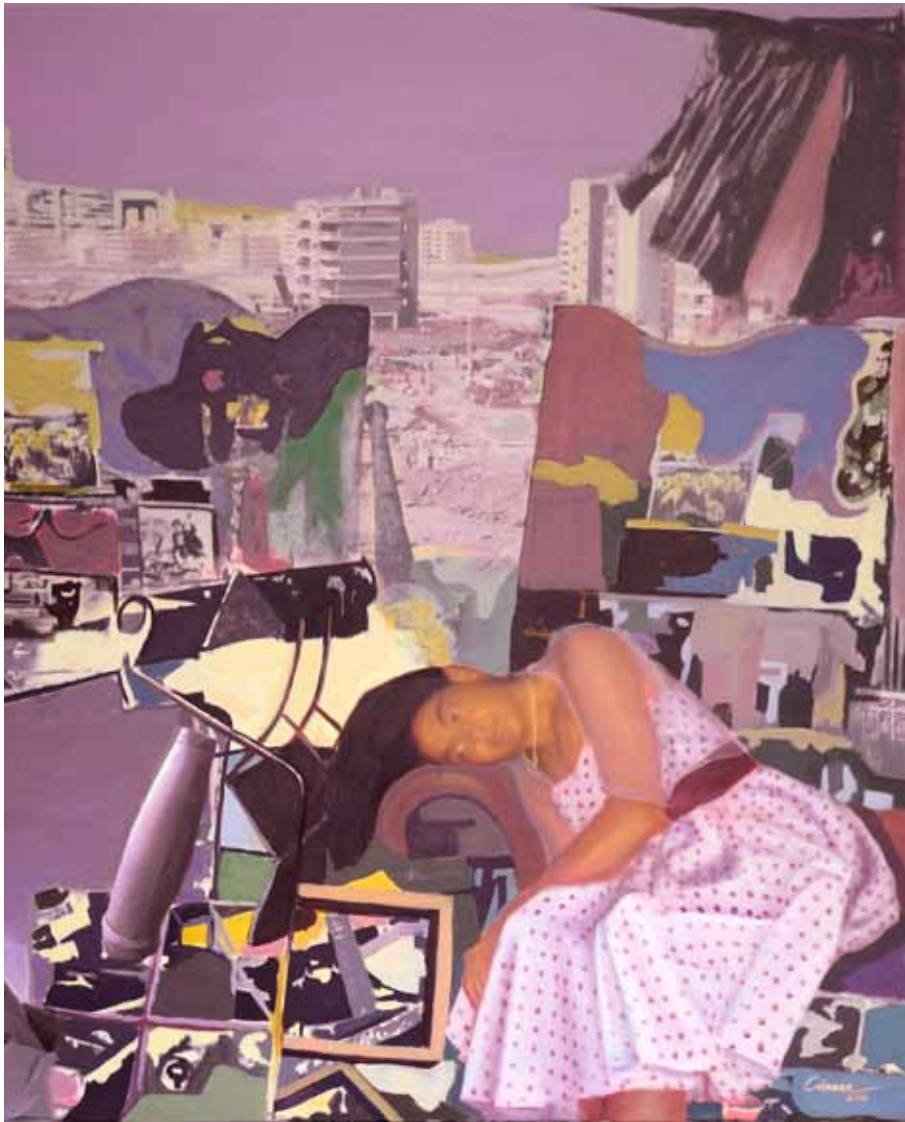
I HAVE SEEN WAR ON LAND AND SEA

I HAVE SEEN BLOOD RUNNING FROM THE WOUNDED

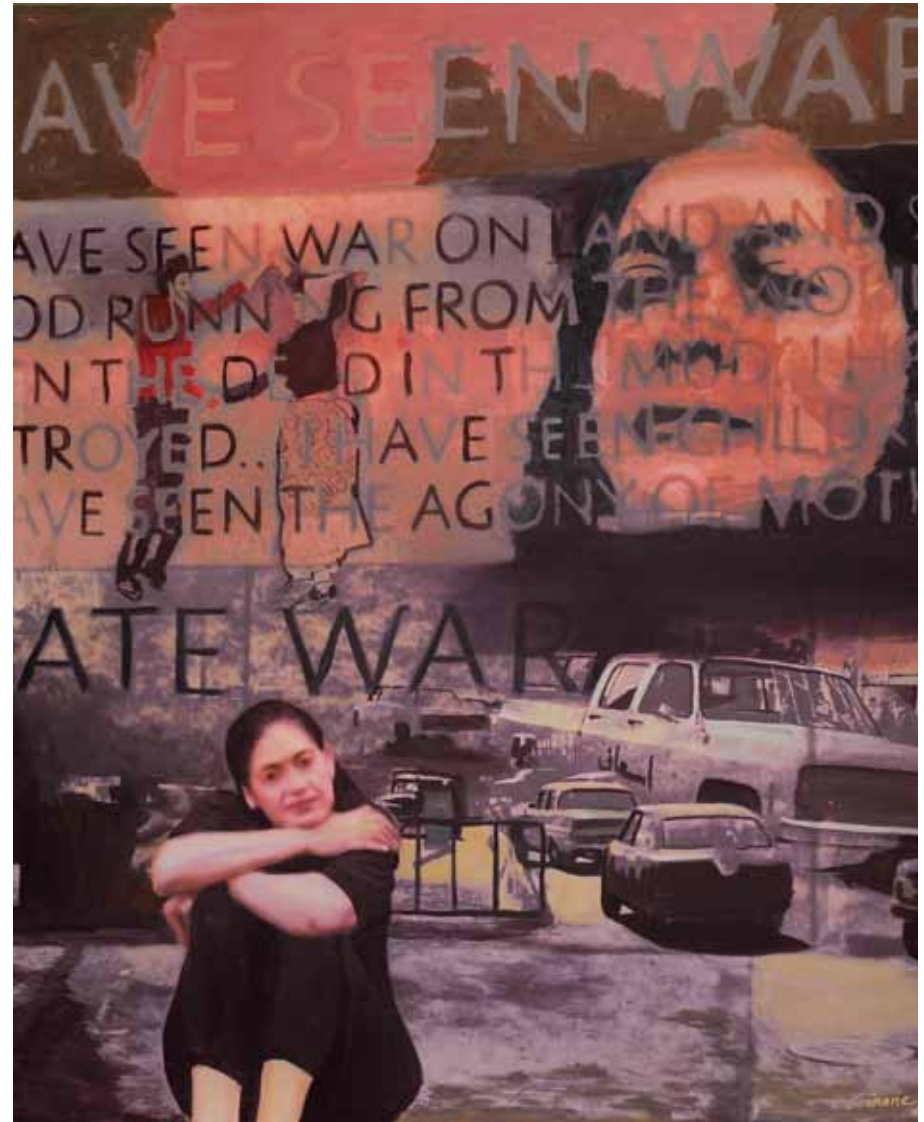
I HAVE SEEN THE DEAD IN THE MUD

I HAVE SEEN CITIES DESTROYED...CHILDREN STARVING I HAVE SEEN
THE AGONY OF MOTHERS AND WIVES

I HATE WAR



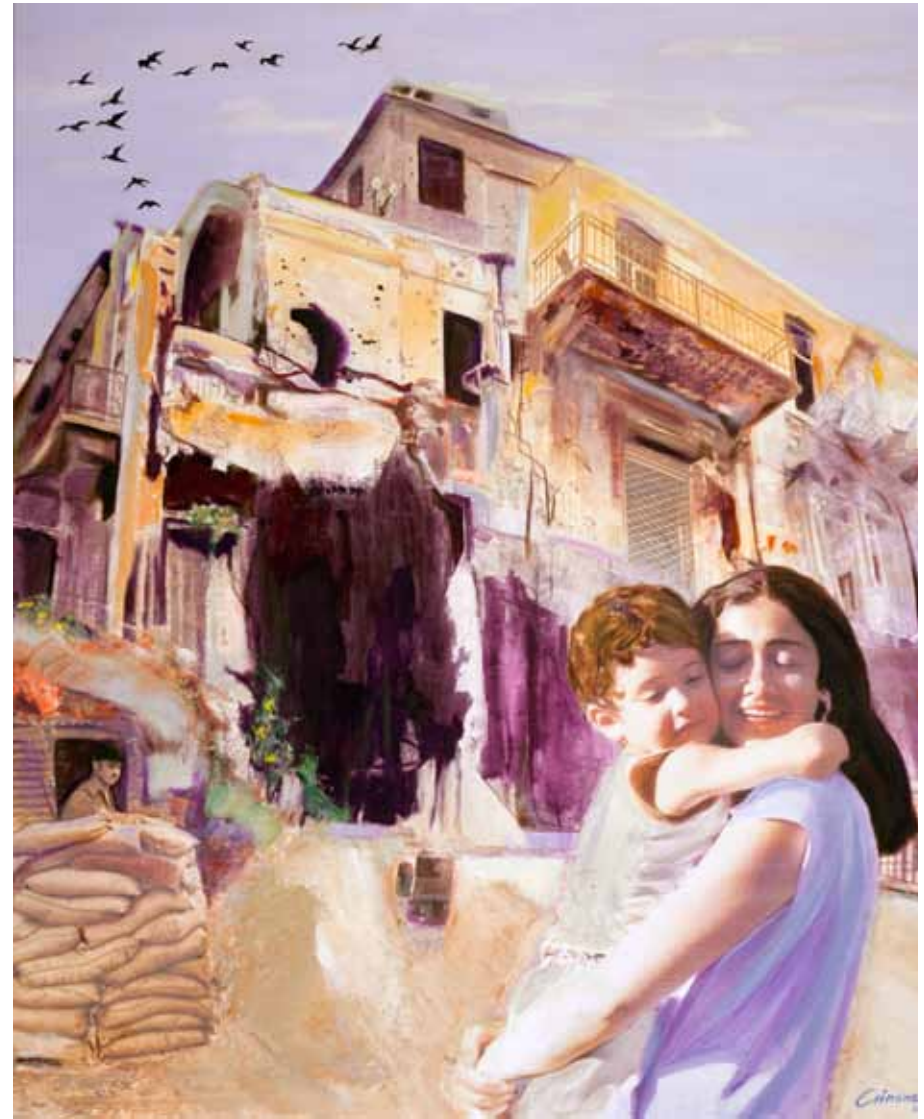
Midday Summer Memory
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



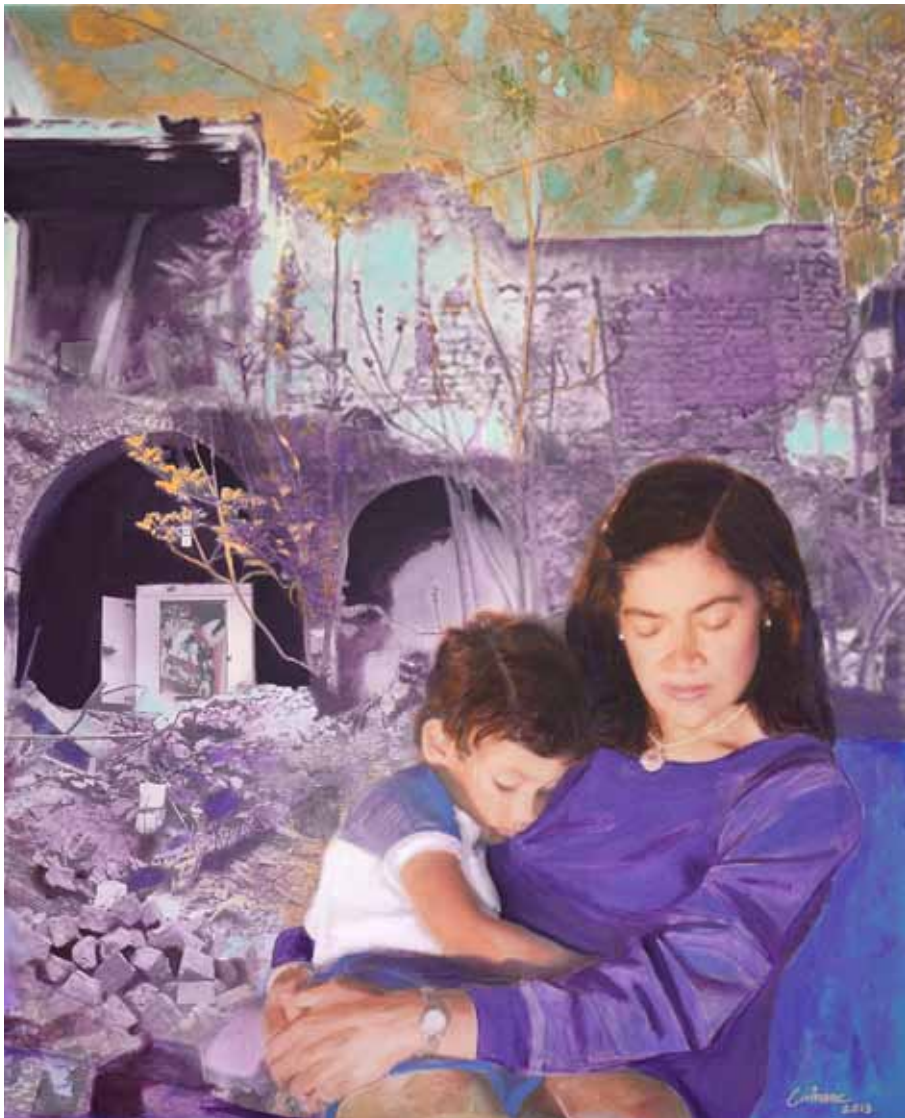
I Hate War
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



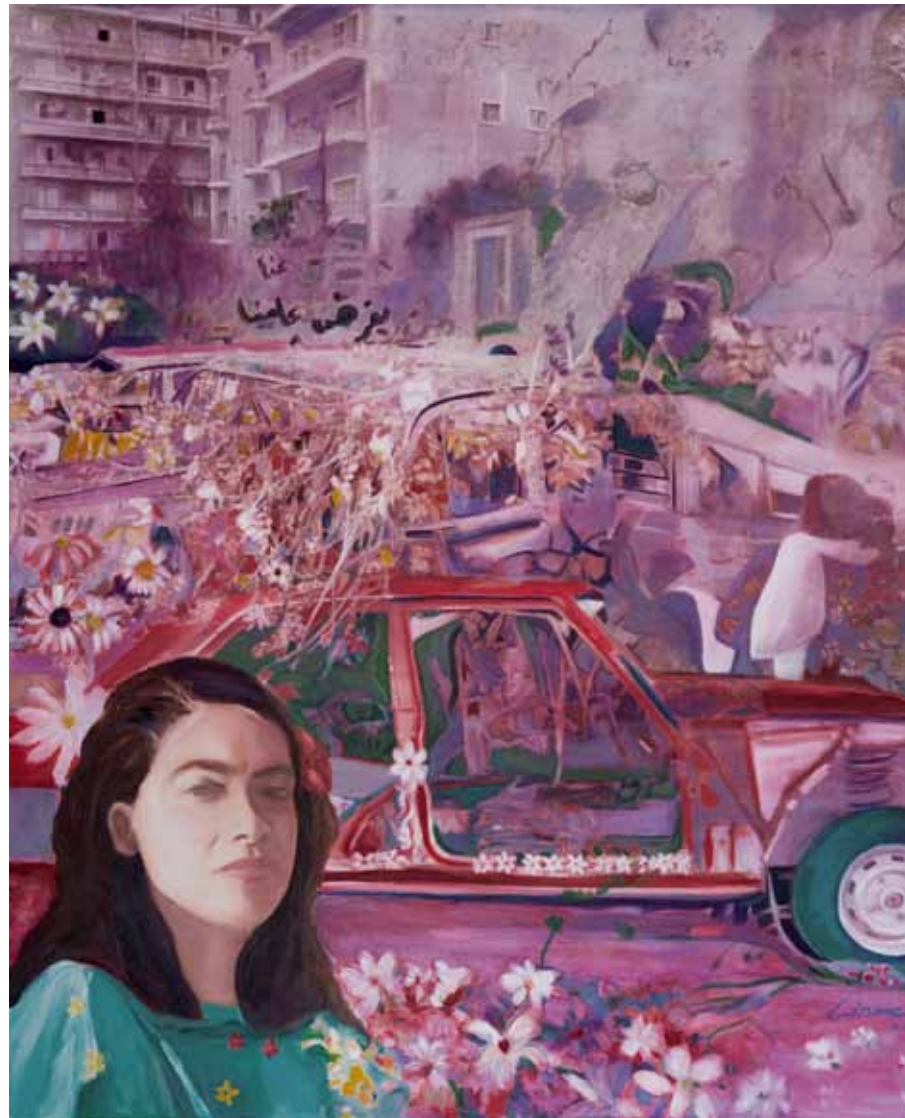
Look the Other Way
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



The Story of the Flower
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



At Peace
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Wasteland
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm

In Martyr's Square, a young woman carrying her school books is torn between the past and present. Head down, ignoring the chaos and catastrophe that surrounds her, she remembers the square before the violence. On the right side of the painting, her memories return of a bustling metropolis square lined by palm trees, with a large souk and cinema.

Yet amidst the rubble of caved buildings on the left, the central bronze sculpture comes to life. The fallen man at the base of the statue reaches up for assistance to the symbol of liberty, though she, too, is covered in blood. A man on the street reaches his hand in a mirrored gesture towards the liberty figure, as if to take the torch of freedom from the people. Even the fronds of the palm trees drip with blood, signifying the destruction of the land and its people in a country warring with itself.

This famous sculpture, though bullet-ridden from the fighting, remains standing with the loss of only one arm, reinforcing the Lebanese saying, 'one hand alone cannot clap.'



Martyr's Square
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm

RELOCATION



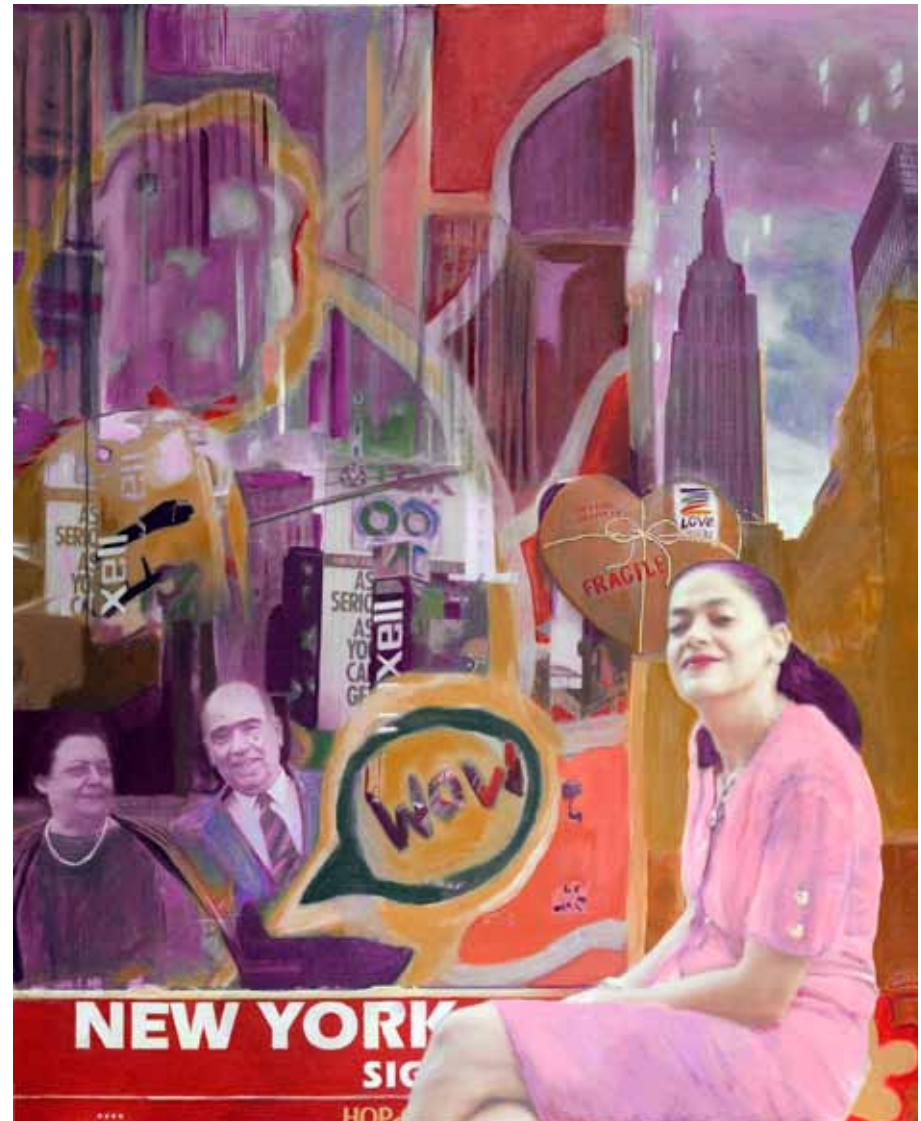
As a result of years of civil war and invasions, over one million Lebanese were displaced from their country. Makki Bacho moved from Lebanon to France, and then to New York City, and later to Virginia.

While trying at first, as relocating and finding oneself in an unfamiliar place with different cultures and lack of a support system usually is, these experiences came to define the artist. It was in New York City that she came to know herself. The rough streets of the city posed little threat to her after all she had witnessed during ten years of war, and she grasped the opportunity to learn from the vibrant city, the people, spirit and streets all serving as her teacher. Makki Bacho enrolled in an MFA programme in Printmaking and Painting at Pratt, worked as an assistant to the head of the Printmaking department, and widely exhibited her own works to much acclaim.

For the sake of her children's education and her husband's work, her family relocated to Great Falls, Virginia. Virginia also held many challenges for the artist and her family once the recession of the 1990s struck America. Home is Where the Heart Is depicts the joyous unification of her family in overcoming these challenges. Her sons, now grown, play together in the garden of the home they fought to maintain while the artist sits in the grass with her youngest child. Regardless of elapsed time, Makki Bacho is always seen embracing her children, holding their welfare most dear to her heart.



Carte Orange
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Rainbows
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm



Just Paint
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm

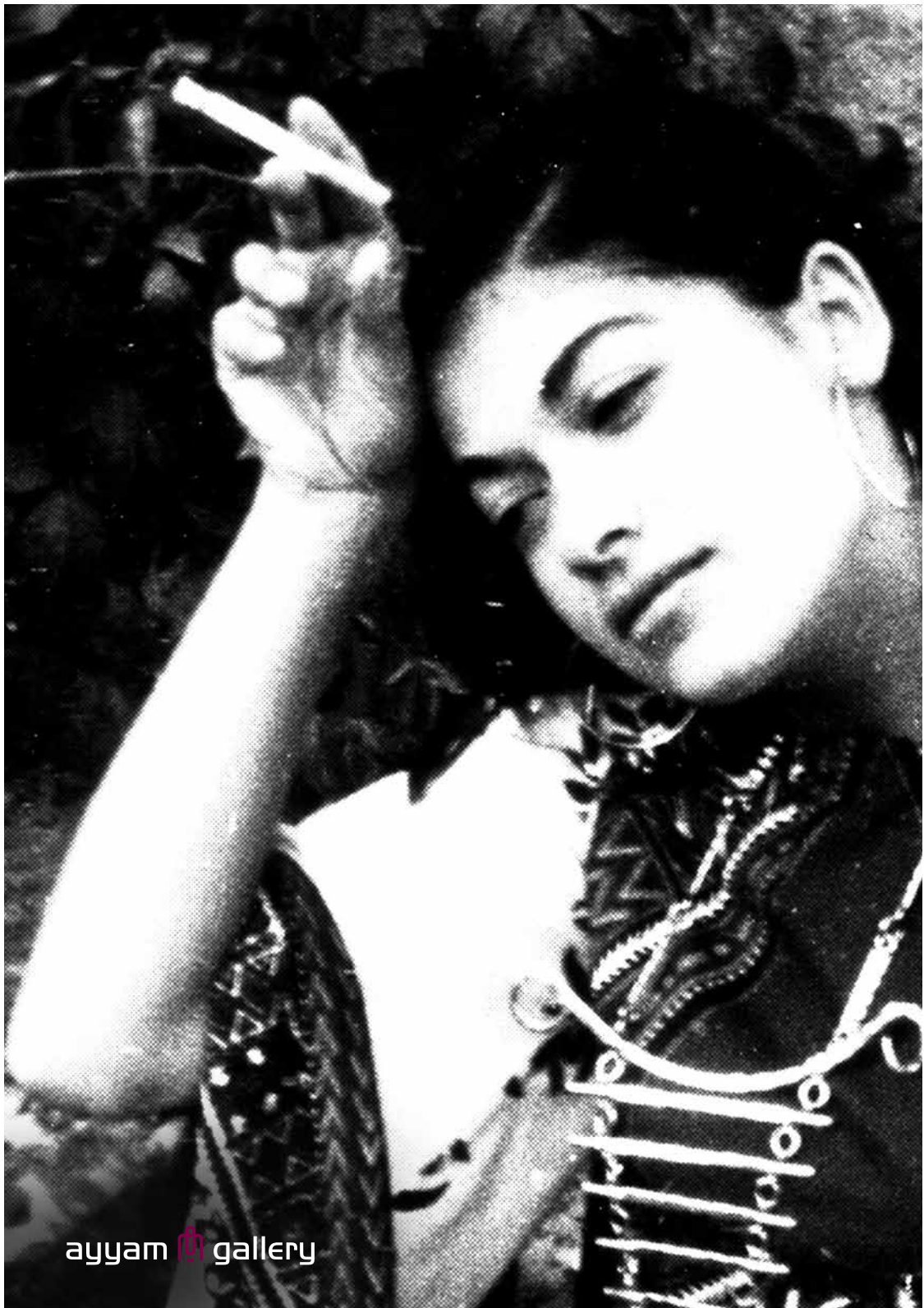


Home is Where the Heart is
2013
Print and Acrylic on Canvas
150 x 130 cm

Ayyam Gallery

Founded by collectors and cousins Khaled and Hisham Samawi in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery sought to nurture Syria's burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through landmark non-profit initiatives such as the Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator for emerging artists. Expansion into Beirut and Dubai enabled Ayyam Gallery to broaden its scope from the promotion of work by Syrian artists to those from the wider Middle East region. In doing so, Ayyam Gallery has established itself as one of the foremost exponents of Middle Eastern contemporary art to the international community.

Today, Ayyam Gallery is recognized as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Arab and Iranian artists with an international profile and museum presence, such as Nadim Karam, Safwan Dahoul, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhashemi and Khaled Takreti. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, Ayyam Editions, and The Young Collectors Auction, have further succeeded in showcasing the work of Middle Eastern artists with the aim of educating a wider audience about the art of this significant region. Ayyam Gallery Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city. In early 2013, Ayyam Gallery launched new spaces in London and Jeddah.



ayyam gallery