

Old Stones

By Ihsan Al Bandak

April 25 to May 30, 2019

Bab idDeir Art Gallery, Bethlehem

Old Stones an exhibition that includes a series of artworks that depict everyday city life in nineteenth-century Palestine: the old quarters, gardens, narrow streets, markets, and alleys. The artist's lush paint strokes, sensuous treatment of surfaces of stones, sheep, or skin, and pleasure in the details of everyday life make his paintings an invitation to re-enter a past now lost but not forgotten.



City of Jerusalem 1920.
Acrylic on canvas. 120 x 100 cm.



City of Bethlehem 1936.
Acrylic on canvas. 80 x 80cm.

Old Stones will be exhibited at two locations in Bethlehem, Bab idDeir Art Gallery and the new exhibition space of Al Bad Museum (located in the heart of the Old City of Bethlehem in a traditional building that dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). This exhibition is part of an initiative by the Alliance Française - Bethlehem to implement activities in Al Bad Museum in order to attract more visitors and to shed light on the museum and its importance.

City of Jerusalem 1938.
Acrylic on canvas, 180 x 50 cm.



The artist began this project by studying archival material and historical photos of Palestine, and more specifically, Jerusalem. He started with 200 pencil and ink sketches that he then developed into grisaille paintings – a technique of painting in greys and whites – which show buildings and humans merged together to form an unbreakable bond. Minimal color was added to represent life and emotions.

In his work, Ihsan attempts to restore the physical existence of long-gone generations, trees, animals, and historical monuments through embedding his own emotions as a refugee from Bethlehem. In addition, his works aim to convey the issue of Palestinian and Arab Jerusalem to younger generations, particularly to Palestinians who live in the diaspora, so that they do not forget their land, history, or heritage. Some of the ancient city quarters remain intact, while others are affected by both recent urban development as well as the Israeli policy of house demolition and ethnic cleansing of the Arab communities, especially in Jerusalem. During the past two years, the exhibition has been displayed in Jordan and the United States.

Ihsan Al-Bandak (1957)

Ihsan is a Palestinian artist from a Bethlehem family that migrated to Amman. In 1990, he obtained a PhD in fine art from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He has participated in more than 35 local, regional, and international exhibitions as well as in various art projects (graphics, paintings, drawings, ceramics, and sculpture) in Jordan, Qatar, Lebanon, and the United States.

City of Bethlehem 1934
Acrylic on canvas, 40 X 40 cm, 2017



City of Bethlehem 1936.
Acrylic on canvas, 40 X 40 cm ,2017.

