

By Rula
Dughman

Nus Nsaïs (A Palestinian Folk Tale)

By Reem Al Natsheh

Bab IdDeir Art Gallery, Bethlehem.

*Open Wednesday to Saturday from 10:00
to 17:00 until November 20.*

During the lockdown, while people stayed safe from the coronavirus by engaging in social distancing, Palestinian artist Reem Al Natsheh chose to challenge herself to rebuild the social connections that were prohibited by the COVID-19 pandemic. While isolated in a studio, she expressed her resistance to social distancing through her artwork, creating exaggerated intensifications of crowded elements in tight spaces, using materials such as acrylics, watercolors, charcoal, pastels, inks, pigments, and mixed media. Inspired by mythological and traditional Palestinian folk stories, Reem deconstructed the elements and characters from their typical stereotypes into new visual, contemporary, aesthetic templates that are influenced by the collective visual memory.

Most traditional and folk stories tell of a world and characters that are significant because of their strangeness and excessive wonder, featuring an awaited hero who embodies the dreams and hopes of the poor. The story unfolds through the myth of the beast that carries out acts of threat and predation, causing the sequence of events that oblige the hero to confront this force of evil and resist it through various adventures. The inevitable logic comes with the turn of the tide, when the weak manage to beat the strong.



*Greetings to the Hero, mixed media on
canvas, 200 x 150 cm.*



Nus Nsaïs, mixed media on canvas, 120 x 70 cm.

Nus Nsaïs, through all its means, is a symbol of Palestinian existence that rejects its crushed reality and suppression, and overcomes the experience of displacement and demolition. Reem, however, constructs a tale that will never be subject to destruction but rather thoroughly enforces the sense of existence, power, and eternity.

Reem holds a bachelor's degree in fine arts from An-Najah National University. She has participated in many local and international group art exhibitions, and in 2019, she was awarded third place in the Ismail Shammout Competition organized by Dar al-Kalima for Art and Culture, Bethlehem.

The exhibition is funded by the Palestinian Cultural Fund/Ministry of Culture.

Happy Crowded World, mixed media on canvas, 150 x 200 cm.

