



Tale of a Rebellious Body



Untitled by Magid Abdullah. Charcoal and pencil on paper, 2020.

By Nadja Shkirat, Lubna Araj, and Magid Abdullah
Bab idDeir Art Gallery, Bethlehem

Open Wednesday to Saturday from 10:00 to 17:00, from March 11 to 30

As we commemorate International Women's Day, we are starkly aware that we must overcome numerous challenges to achieve women's rights. Last year, among the many consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, incidents of violence against women increased in Palestine. This situation coincided with the general public's rejection of the proposed Family Protection Law that aims to eliminate discrimination against women. This rejection can be attributed safely to the patriarchal society in which we still live, even in the twenty-first century.

Discussions and questions about "women" have been ongoing for decades among artists worldwide and in Palestine. Palestinian young artists are no different from their predecessors, and Nadja Shkirat, Lubna Araj, and Magid Abdullah have continued the path of older-generation artists. Focusing on the woman's body, they question and criticize its relation to the social powers, challenge the stereotypical idea of a woman (the beauty of her skin and body) as seen in advertisements and media, and express visually how our society exploits women's bodies as sexual objects.

Through their multimedia artworks, these artists provoke the viewer into questioning the social powers with their negative impact on women, on the one hand, and the relationship of the stereotypical roles that are imposed on women and their relation to the prevailing social and cultural conditions that surround them, on the other. This reality is best summed up by French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir's statement: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."

These three young female artists have joined others through their art in the struggle for women's rights. Through the exhibition *Tale of a Rebellious Body*, they have seized the opportunity to place this issue in an interactive framework and context through their art, which allows them to experiment and instigate a conversation and discussion with all that surrounds us. But in the end, this exhibition does not provide answers but rather a platform for ongoing dialogue.

Finally, we remain standing in front of the same, often-repeated questions that ask what an artist can achieve through his/her exhibition and artistic production – What is required and what is expected of the audience? In fact, there are no specific answers, only ongoing discussions.

Rula Dughman



Screenshot by Lubna Araj. Video art, 2018.



Bon Appétit by Nadja Shkirat. Still life, analogue photography, 2019/2020.