

Inner Sanctuary



Rana Samara, *Untitled*, 2021. Acrylic and spray paint on canvas
161 x 201 cm | 63" x 79".

By Rana Samara

Zawiyeh Gallery, Dubai

The exhibition runs until August 28, 2022

Open daily from 11 am to 7 pm

In the new exhibition titled *Inner Sanctuary*, Rana Samara presents her personal, intimate space, revealing a layer of deep emotions that are connected with these places. Ranging from her comfortable lounge to a corner in her favorite café, she explores the settings that embrace her daily life. Along the way, she portrays an inner visual and sentimental sanctuary, depicting the inside of her world with fine details that incorporate daily objects and furnishing. She uses her usual signature of charming colors and stunning decorative motifs to illustrate familiar locations on her daily map: a lively studio, a neat kitchen, a colorful bedroom, corners of several cafés and bars, and even a calm abandoned swimming pool. Colors, motifs, and shapes convey her sentiments and express her content, calmness, anxiety, or frustration.

The painting of a hospital room with an empty bed covered by white sheets and an air conditioning system on the wall indicates coldness despite the colorful motifs on the walls. A bedroom with peacock feathers and several ladders standing around the walls transmits a feeling of lightness and weightlessness and a connection with the skies. Rana depicts rooms and spaces – that range from what seems to be a studio to bathrooms, seating areas, and windowsills – with warmth, full of love and colors. The way she executes floors hints at her sentiments towards



Rana Samara, *Untitled*, 2019. Acrylic, crayons and spray paint on canvas, 200 x 490 cm | 79" x 193".

the rooms she paints: Sometimes they are full of vibrant motifs, whereas at other times they look like glass, fragile and colorless. In some paintings, she uses sharp and edgy squares that enhance a disquieting feeling.

Yet, except for one artwork, Rana leaves out one central aspect: humans. However, while they seem inessential, their evidence is not. Hence the subtle focus on their traces. Their imprints can be found in every corner: a suit hanging over closed curtains in a bedroom; a kitchen with a slipper in the middle of the floor; another

kitchen with plates and food leftovers; a windowsill with plant pots framed by cozy chairs with cushions that, however, are not facing the world outside. This erasure could be a way to capture moments that people leave behind or an attempt at emancipation from the restraints imposed by their presence, an opportunity to reveal concealed feelings and deep sentiments, whether joyful or gloomy.

In the one work that shows humans, Rana paints a young woman sitting on a sofa, facing the viewer. Wearing a training suit, she rests comfortably on a small blanket while holding her head as if immersed in thought or contemplation. The repetition and overlay of pattern let the figure blend in with the room, rendering her insignificant, almost ephemeral.

A painting of a landscape dotted with trees is most joyful, the sky swirling with clouds and with playful, upward-leading traces of gold. It is one of the three landscape paintings in this series and expresses the artist's conviction that intimate spaces exist in nature as well.

Rana Samara, *Untitled*, 2022. Acrylic and spray paint on canvas 203 x 187 cm | 80" x 74".



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