



# December Happening A Collective Art Exhibition



November 26, 2022 to January 30, 2023

**D**uring Christmastime and the holiday season, special festive and traditional celebrations are held in Bethlehem, reflecting the city's religious and historical significance and rich heritage that attract thousands of local and international visitors yearly. To cherish the season and celebrate the city, Bab idDeir Art Gallery has

organized *December Happening*, an exhibition that brings together inspirational works by more than 30 artists of different generations and backgrounds. The collection includes selected paintings, sculptures, and photographs, some of which were produced specifically for the exhibition and others that are featured for the first time.

The exhibition embodies the Palestinian spirit as the works reflect Palestinian identity, symbolism, and the political, social, and cultural contexts, most of which focus on landscape-related themes. Landscape painting tends to be associated with natural scenes that feature hills and valleys, plants



and trees, and many other natural elements. Yet in Palestinian art, landscape is an inclusive subject that, beyond the terrain and its plants, depicts the family and the home, represents memory and belonging, tells stories, recollects history, and celebrates culture.

More importantly, landscape paintings fall within an ongoing legacy that has been established by artists who, regardless of their age and experience, reflect on the Palestinian landscape in unique, authentic, and creative styles. While some artists have chosen to depict landscape scenery with a very emotional and historical purpose, others have used landscape art to talk about the occupation and its impact on the ecological environment. Among the many, diverse works, some depict urban scenes and the local architecture of historical sites, while others represent iconic symbols such as olive trees and cactus plants in new mediums and styles.

## Historical Palestine

The location of the gallery in the old city of Bethlehem, only a few meters away from the Church of the Nativity, allows many internationals to visit the exhibition. The focus on this theme and the selection of works is intentional because Palestinian land and identity have long been provocative matters, especially for international visitors. The themes and symbolism of many of the artworks present a new and different perspective on the Palestinian narrative, history, and culture.

*December Happening* joins artists in one voice to counteract what Edward Said once asserted in an interview: "Nothing in the world seems to sustain the Palestinian story. In other words, if you stop telling it, it will simply be dropped and disappear."



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