

# Northward... Southward

## Displacement into the Unknown

**A solo exhibition by Yousef Saadeh**

October 25 to November 22, 2025

*Bab idDeir Gallery, Ramallah*

Bab idDeir Gallery in Ramallah presents the solo exhibition *Northward … Southward: Displacement into the Unknown* by the artist Yousef Saadeh. In this exhibition, the tragedy of displacement is revealed as a forced, unstable movement, as if directions have lost their meaning. The displacement occurs repeatedly between north and south, crossing through stations of pain that are now united by human suffering rather than separated by geography.

Here, in the artist's paintings, color becomes testimony, and lines a trace of passage. Bodies lie motionless, as if rooted in a moment of utmost chaos, the climax of the event when time stops and movement transforms into intense silence. The faces disappear, leaving only the collective features, as if to say that the individual has melted into the collective and that the tragedy has transcended personal boundaries to become collective in passion, features, and destiny.

The white color in some works is not pure light but rather a shroud preparing to depart from life, while patches of red and blue seep in behind it, colors undulating between life and death, between memory and disappearance. It is the duality of existence versus annihilation and the duality of homeland versus disorientation. Despite the apparent stillness of the scene, there is an internal tension in the lines, as if the painting is breathing from its depths and resisting being reduced to tragedy. This contrast between stagnation and subtle movement reflects resilience, where survival itself is transformed into an act of resistance.

When we contemplate the works, we see them as a documentation of the status. The first group appears to be the first stage of displacement: several groups, young and old, bags on the ground and bundles carried on shoulders. Then, the groups are fewer, bodies and faces appear more abstract, with no bags or bundles visible. At times, we see two figures in the artwork amid overlapping colors, or perhaps a single figure engaged in dialogue with itself: a body and its reflection, representing presence and memory, as if the artist is reenacting the duality experienced by an exiled person within their homeland – half present, half lost.



From the *Northward ... Southward - Displacement into the Unknown* solo exhibition by Yousef Saadeh.



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Displacement continues: Where can we return? And in what direction shall we go when the compass is lost?

Yousef Saadeh, born in Al-Qubeibeh (Emmaus), is a dedicated self-taught artist. Although originally educated as a lawyer in Syria, Saadeh's passion for art has remained a constant driving force in his life. He lived in various European countries before returning to Palestine, which has influenced his exposure, vision, and art techniques.

In addition to holding many solo exhibitions, Yousef has participated in numerous collective exhibitions both locally and regionally and in collaborative projects led by acclaimed international artists and curators. In 2006, he was awarded the Cité internationale des arts residency award. He also was selected to participate in the Zaher project, curated by Pierre Muylle.

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