

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

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Talass, Rawaa, "10 Middle Eastern Artists to Discover," *Artsy*, March 8, 2021

Art

10 Middle Eastern Artists to Discover

Rawaa Talass

Mar 18, 2021 10:12AM



Yasmine Nasser Diaz
Thick as Thieves, 2020
Ochi Projects

For over 15 years, the prominent New York-based nonprofit ArteEast has prioritized its mission to promote the artistic scenes of the Middle East and North Africa. In doing so, it has organized artist residencies in the United States, hosted on-site professional workshops, and maintained a growing archive of film hailing from the Arab world.

In partnership with Artsy, ArteEast's newest initiative is an ongoing fundraising exhibition that features more than 50 artists associated with the region. Under the title "Legacy Trilogy," it uniquely pays tribute to a wide breadth of established and rising contemporary talent through three separate sections: Past, Present, and Future. The funds raised will be used to preserve the organization's film archive, including supporting the participating artists.

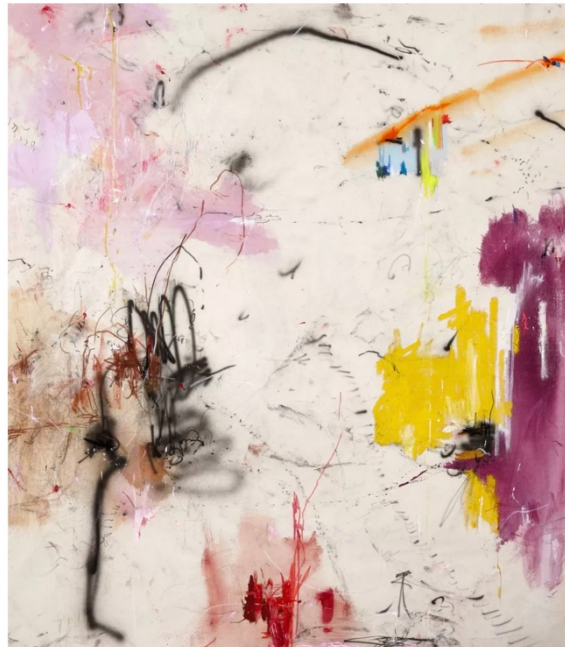
The question of "What is Middle Eastern art?" has surfaced from time to time in recent years, leading to discussion and debate in the art world. Given the contentious and geographically constrained nature of the term "Middle Eastern art," the answer varies and is rather subjective. But as evidenced by the diverse works of the 10 artists below from the ArteEast exhibition, it stretches far beyond the typical realms of pure calligraphy and ornamentation. By looking within and connecting with the events of the world at large, artists from the region and its diasporic communities have developed a compelling approach of producing art that proves to be thought-driven, socially engaged, personal, contradictory, and experimental.

Hiba Kalache

B. 1972, Beirut, Lebanon. Lives and works in Beirut.



Hiba Kalache
some dreams aren't dreams at all, just another angle of physical reality, ...
ArteEast
Sold



Hiba Kalache
and there was the future that came and went, 2020
Saleh Barakat Gallery and Agial Art Gallery

One can liken the San Francisco–educated painter Hiba Kalache’s poetic compositions to the contradictory nature of life itself: Where there is beauty, there is pain. In her abstract paintings, Kalache applies a soft palette as a background, passionately covered with bursts of color and thickly contoured scribbles, almost acting as open, fresh wounds.

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Looking closely, there are visual hints of floral and erotic elements, evoking an atmosphere of violence, tension, and a glimmer of delicateness, where everything seems to coexist. The more one looks, the more one discovers intriguing details. Influenced by her geographical and sociopolitical surroundings, she claims her work to be autobiographical, reflecting occurrences of everyday life and how a human endures trauma.



Hiba Kalache

i try to be more aware of the passing hours, that i might see it happen, that cosmic shift from one digit to another, 2020

Saleh Barakat Gallery and Agjal Art Gallery

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Literature has served as a vital source of inspiration to Kalache's artistic process. The words of acclaimed writers Georges Bataille, Clarice Lispector, and Patti Smith have informed her work, notably the long, multilayered titles of her canvases, like *the trouble with dreaming is that we eventually wake up*, *the inexplicable love makes the heart beat faster*, or simply, *as it goes, so do we*.