

# ARAB NEWS

Talass, Rawaa, “The Breakdown: Hiba Kalache – ‘the trouble with dreaming is that we eventually wake up,’” *Arab News*, January 9, 2021

## THE BREAKDOWN: Hiba Kalache — ‘the trouble with dreaming is that we eventually wake up’



Hiba Kalache is a Lebanese artist. (Supplied)

*DUBAI: The Lebanese artist discusses her latest body of abstract work, available to view online at Beirut's Saleh Barakat Gallery's website.*

The title of my exhibition — “Our Dreams are a Second Life” — is loaded with layers. There’s this notion of exploring the concept of dreams and hopes throughout the trajectory of my work over the past 15 years. I think it’s quite impossible to separate the geopolitical, sociopolitical context we live in and belong to from the process that happens inside the studio.

The work is autobiographical, because it reflects daily life and how we go on through trauma and what we hold on to as humans or as an individual female artist — being a mother and a daughter — coming from this specific descent.

Books, psychoanalytical texts and the daily news all end up feeding into my work. When the protests began in Beirut in October 2019 we were all thrown into uncertainty and somehow I fell on Patti Smith’s 2017 book “Year of the Monkey,” which deals with existential questions.

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The artist's abstract work is on view at Beirut's Saleh Barakat Gallery until January 16.  
(Supplied)

Going through lockdown in the last few months, I was in this space of high awareness of the present that took me back to this book. I had a very strong memory of it. I decided these fragments of sentences from the book would be most fitting, so this is where the title comes from.

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These canvases started by unfolding them on the streets of Beirut when the revolution began. I would follow spots in Downtown, where they were burning wheels. I would rub the canvases on the ground and it was as if the stains on them were a witness of this moment. Then I would go back to the studio and working on them with layers of watery acrylic inks.

I aim for the work to hold this kind of binary world where opposites can coexist fluidly on the surface of the canvas. If you get closer, there are visual, defacing elements that are a bit shocking to the eye: fragments of the body or bursts of color and tension. And then there's the empty, left-out spaces that the hand doesn't interfere with. I've put you more in a floating space where you can breathe.