

**Abed Abdi:**

Born in 1942 into a long-standing Haifa family.

During his high school days he learned painting and sculpting at the workshops of art teachers Yaskil Avraham, Meirovitch Zvi, and sculptor Kafri Mordecai. In 1962 Abdi was accepted for membership in the Haifa branch of the Israeli Association of Painters and Sculptors, becoming its first Arab member, and held his first exhibition in Tel Aviv, at the age of 20.

He then pursued academic studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Dresden (Germany). His professors were Lea Grundig, G. Bondzin and G. Kettner. His masterwork at the Academy received the 2nd prize, which allowed Abdi to spend another year at the Academy and specialize in murals and environmental sculpture.

In 1970 he received his M.A diploma, and was then selected by his academic supervisor Prof. Gerhard Bondzin, along with a group of other graduating students at the Academy, to participate in the erection of a huge mural at the Cultural Palace (Kulturpalast), built in 1968 in the center of Dresden, a mural which still remains a cultural landmark of this part of unified Germany .

### **From Haifa to Beirut – The Hope of Return**

From Haifa, through the south coast, to Beirut, greetings, peace and love. Beirut is the city of support to Haifa and its people. The initiative for this exhibition, which brings together diverse Palestinian talents and generations together after the fleeing of 1948, is a blessed event. It chronicles the stories of displacement and of refugees, which have become so prominent in Palestinian history. This is the art of liberation of Palestine and is a homage to the ongoing struggle and immortal hope of its people. We appreciate and are thankful for the people that have organized the show. This is a big step in the resurrection of Palestinian artistic heritage.

For me, being part of the exhibition has a special emotional meaning, which brings me back to 1948, when we fled from our country to refugee camps, when we left Haifa to settle in the land of dispersion – Beirut. Throughout our times at the port, at the carantina of Beirut and the Miamia, we clung to the hopes of going back to our homeland. Haifa was a memory that kept us united for three years in hopes of returning to the place that we once called home. We were living together in a bond. I was with my family, with the exception of my father, who stayed in Haifa in order to protect and preserve the land. Many generations went by, yet the hope remains and continues to reunite our people.

Respect and thanks to the organizers of this exhibition. The show will transcend our message through visual art and will take us back in time to Haifa from Beirut.

- *Sincerely, Abed Abdi.*

### **Awards and honors**

- The city of Haifa awarded Abdi the “Herman Struck Best Artist of the Year” prize in 1973.
- That year, he also obtained the Yong Artist’s award at the Berlin International Youth Festival.
- Abdi was awarded the “Herman Struck Best Artist of the Year” prize for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 1999.
- In 2008 he was awarded The Prize in Art and Design by the Israeli Minister of Culture and Sport. (He is the first Palestinian artist to get this prize.)
- In 2008, Abdi received an honorary mention by the Anna Lindh Foundation for his activities in fostering Euro Mediterranean dialogue through the arts.
- In 2010 was awarded The Notable of Haifa sign of appreciation medal by the mayor of the city of Haifa.

### **Exhibitions and Activities:**

Over the years, he has participated in over 50 group exhibitions, among them the joint Palestinian-Israeli exhibition titled "It's Possible" which toured the USA and Germany between 1988 and 1990. In 1995 he participated in the second joint exhibition for Palestinians and Israelis in Germany. His works appeared in the "Solidarity with the Palestinian People" exhibitions in Tokyo, Berlin, Brussels, Belgrade and Athens.

He held personal exhibitions in Belgium, Bulgaria, Mandate Palestine and Palestine "Al-Dakhel". In 1996 he held an exhibition in the Jordanian National Gallery in Amman.

In 2008 he exhibited in Schallstadt in Germany.

In 2009 "Wama Nassina" Retrospective Exhibition of his illustrations, in Tel Aviv.

In 2010 he held his "50 years of Creativity" exhibition in Um El Fahem (Israel).

In 2016 "Roots of identity" Collective exhibition, Art On 56 th, Beirut- Lebanon

Abdi is the Founder of 'Ibdaa' Association (1994) for the Advancement of Visual Arts among Israeli Arabs, and of 'Arabelle' Association (2006) for deepening the dialogue between Arabs and Jews through Arts, and was one of the Founding Members of the 'Khalil el Sakakini' Cultural Center in Ramahalla (1998).

From 2004 to 2009 Abdi served as President of the Al Maidan Theater in Haifa, and from 1996 to 2000 was a member of the Committee for Arts and Culture, run by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Palestine.

### **Public Art: Monuments and Environmental Sculptures**

1976 – A sculpture to commemorate Land Day together with artist Gershon Knispel in Sakhnin.

1984 – The memorial to commemorate 75 years for the existence of the Galilean municipality of Shefa Amr. More recently he erected the martyrs memorial monuments in Kufor Kanna and in Kufor Manda.

1998 – Environmental sculpture 'Homage to Amman' at the piazza of the Jordan National Gallery of fine art in the city of Amman.

2007 – He participated in the erection of the Pillar for Friendship in the United Kingdom, organized by the British Blacksmiths Association.

Abdi has painted a number of murals in Haifa, Jaffa and Nazareth and dozens more environmental sculptures in various locations and schools.

He also created the mosaic at the front the House of Grace church in Haifa.

### **Artist Collections:**

Academy of Fine Arts, Dresden, Germany

Archives of Israel Museum

Archives of the art collection of the Presidential Palace, Republic of Hungary

Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali, Amman

National Museum, Amman, Jordan

Ministry of Culture, Palestinian Authority

Ministry of Culture, Sofia, Bulgaria

Municipality of Oldenburg, Germany

Municipal Museum of Győr for Contemporary Arts, Győr, Hungary

### **Private Collections:**

Israel, Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, France, Russia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, USA, Australia, Belgium.