

Art on 56th

Rola El Hussein

Born in 1978 in Beirut, Rola El Hussein's approach to painting is subjective, unique, metaphorical and personal. Through her amalgam of experiences in media, writing, communication and publishing, she echoes her stories in her minimalistic canvases, which bear an intrinsic narrative.

Rola El Hussein received her BA in Fine Arts from the Lebanese University in 2005. She then pursued professional opportunities in the Communication and Publishing fields. She has published several poetry books and contributed multiple articles as a freelance writer to various news and media companies. She is expecting to publish a novel with AL SAQI in December 2017.

It is in 2009 that Rola El Hussein began experimenting with the craft of painting. During her stay in Dubai, she conceived artworks in tandem to her writing. It is by focusing on a single phrase that she produced a collection of 13 paintings. The sentence that inspired the series reads: "a lemon grove that stings stomach ache." Instead of directly translating the pain visually, the artist chose to venture into the abstract, the conceptual and the allegorical.

The scope of Rola El Hussein's writing is thus brought to life on canvas, where the literal word is communicated through an expressive visual language. Mirroring the ideas of loss, pain and transit, El Hussein's paintings are raw, layered and enigmatic. She incorporates common iconography, through the use of the symbols of lemons and suitcases. Citrus fruits traditionally signify promise, while travel bags can represent an ephemeral identity, a home in passage, but also possibility for change and progress.

In a journey through the diverse forms of self-expression and self-reflection, Rola El Hussein's paintings resemble her writing in their subjectivity and intensity.