



Hani Zurob

"He is a typical Palestinian from the class that has suffered the most. His most recent paintings have been made up of bitumen and not paint. I find this very symbolic. Bitumen is the dirtiest of all materials and yet out of this he creates art, producing human faces that look illuminated. He is a guy to watch as he connects with all generations of image-makers."

This guy, whom Kamal Bouallata (2009) describes in these words, is the artist Hani Zurob. He was born in 1976 in Rafah Refugee Camp in Gaza, and he left Gaza in 1994 to study fine arts at Najah University in Nablus. From there he went to Ramallah where he settled and worked until 2006.

He is well known as a painter, but recently he has been exploring other media, such as photography, and has proved to be a promising and creative young artist on various levels. His art works are appreciated by viewers, critics, and art collectors in Palestine and abroad. In 2002, he was granted the Young Artist Award by the A.M. Qattan Foundation in Ramallah. He was also the first Arab to win the Renoir Association prize and grant in France in 2009.

Zurob belongs to a young generation

of Palestinian artists born into the harsh reality of occupation, exile, and displacement that has affected all aspects of their lives. He considers his art a reflection of this reality through his individual personal experience and away from politics and clichéd slogans. For Zurob the subject of his research is his life which has been, from the first moment, under occupation. He also says that he paints for the sake of finding visual lines that are parallel to his days.

In 2006, he travelled to France as a grantee of the French Consulate. The grant included Artist-in-Residence at the International City of Arts in Paris. Due to the Israeli siege on Gaza and since Israel refused to deal with Hamas after the Palestinian election, Hani faced enormous difficulties, as many other Gazans, when he tried to return to Ramallah and to Gaza where his family is still living. Currently he lives and works in Paris.

Despite his young age Hani Zurob has had many worldwide, successful solo exhibitions in Palestine, France, the United States, and Morocco. He participated in group exhibitions such as Made in Palestine, which toured in the United States in 2003; Colors of Freedom and Life, Gallery UNESCO-Paris 2005; Paris, Damascus: regards croisés, The Arab World Institute – Paris 2008; Gaza 61 – Seoul 59, South Korea 2009. Recently he exhibited at the World Arab Institute in Paris as part of a major exhibition on Palestinian Contemporary Art, Palestine, la création dans tous ses états, where he participated with his seven fairly large "Standby 60" paintings. Quoting *Le Monde/Paris* on this exhibition: "The artist reveals an unfinished story, illustrated by the paintings of Hani Zurob and his sitting men, painted with a mixture of tar, henna and pigments, endeavouring to delay death."

Courtesy of: Palestinian Art Court – al Hoash.