

## ***"Flying Lesson" and "Waiting"***

series", 2009 – ongoing

The idea for this project occurred when my son Qoudsi began to speak. In 2009 when I accompanied him and his mother to Charles De Gaulle airport, he surprised me with the question, "Daddy why don't you come with us to Jerusalem?" I knew my answer to this question would be hard for Qoudsi to grasp. I would never be able to travel with him and his mother to Jerusalem because I possess an identity card from Gaza.

Qoudsi, like all children his age, is selective when it comes to the toys he chooses to play with. He subconsciously uses them to express his thoughts and concerns. I have noticed, he chooses to play with his transportation toys more and more. This must be rooted in his search for and belief in a form of transportation that can bring us all together to his grandfather's house in Jerusalem. Once, he offered to pack me in his suitcase; on another occasion he suggested we drive together in his small play car, and yet another time he asked me to ride on the back of his bicycle. In the end, he always chooses the plane, which is also his preferred seat on carousels when he sees one. His search is relentless, and every time he travels to Jerusalem, I feel he matures and his thoughts become more sophisticated.

Through the use of oil and acrylic paints and other mediums, I try to create an imaginary world composed of three realms. The first realm is exile, where the father/artist lives, absent from the paintings. This is presented in contrast to the depiction of the son; the only living human in the work and portrayed as minute in comparison to his surroundings. The second realm is Qoudsi himself, as he appears visually and in the act of showing his feelings through the use of and interaction with his toys. The third realm is one of space, where we come from, which is depicted through walls and multilayered backgrounds; symbolic traces of the complex life that does not allow Qoudsi and I to embrace. It is in my construction of an imaginary world where a space for such a meeting occurs.

After each trip to Jerusalem, with each new toy he adds to his overfilled cupboard, and as we try to find our own ground in each painting; Qoudsi will continue to wait for our trip together and so will I. Until he comprehends the reality forced upon us, we will keep playing the waiting game and learning the flying lessons.