

INSIDE THE ARTIST'S STUDIO

FEATURE: MICAH MCGEE.
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HILDA HIARY

Organic, graceful and warm, artist Hilda Hiary discusses her movements over the past year and the opening of her new exhibition, *Faces Opposed to War*.

- **Place of birth:** Amman, Jordan in 1969
- **Studio Location:** Amman, Jordan
- **Years of experience:** 20
- **Type of art:** With expressive canvas paintings and murals, powerful video art and installation, Hiary considers herself an ever-evolving artist. No medium or type of art is to be left out of consideration.
- **Formal Education:** Hiary received her first BA from the University of Jordan in sociology and political science. "Politics were all around me as my parents discussed them at length at home. At that time there was not a fine arts major, so I chose political science." Nevertheless, Hiary's work was popularly received in the art world, and in 2003 she completed her desired BA in Fine Arts (Print-making) from Zitouna University.
- **Art Career:** Featured in myriad individual and group exhibitions, Hiary is now a well-established international artist. Her art reflects her boundless spirit of experimentation, influenced by tentative feelings and emotions. "I do not define myself by a certain art or colour set. I don't know how I will feel tomorrow, and I simply can't limit myself to one thing," she tells. In many of her 2004 works, Hiary cast together colourful geocosmic circles and ever-flowing lines, while for the canvases in her 2014 acrylic-on-canvas collection, she utilised clashing patterns to emulate the feelings represented by abstract figures.
- **Purpose of Art:** Hiary has visited Syrian refugee camps to uplift and encourage the women there. Several of her artworks are results of the impression left by these women. This past year she took part in an extraordinary travelling art collection known as *The Bridge*, which brought together 47 artists of Muslim, Christian and





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Jewish backgrounds. Her featured painting, *The Straight Line* dealt with perspectives on religion. “It is the clear straight line....the way most people in my homeland Jordan were raised to respect all religions. However, now we are living in a complicated and incomprehensible time that is attempting to bend this line.” Exposing the lack of sensitivity in the area, Hiary uses her art as a visual message to the world in a call for peace.

- **Experience Abroad:** Earlier this month Hiary joined 25 international artists in Tunisia to take part in a new art symposium, *The Place*, which aims to support the local art scene and foster young Tunisian artists. Additionally Hiary travelled to Tunisia to make a stand in solidarity with Tunisians against the horrific Bardo National Museum attack that took place in March of this year.
- **Place of inspiration:** Her own mind. Hiary is not a “beach artist” who needs to be surrounded by beautiful settings in order to work, but rather she finds these places a distraction from the art she can create from within herself. Her studio, where she conceives most of her works, is a windowless, four-wall room full of canvases, paint, frames and brushes that offer a world of possibilities. “I do not know the ending of my painting. I start and it talks back to me; this is how I know what it will become.” Her work is a transcendental cycle of communication tethered between the artist and the artwork.
- **Latest Exhibition:** *Faces Opposed to War*. “It’s inspired by everything around us, the [political] situation – no one wants war anymore.” Created from an extensive overlay of various patterns and colours, tired figures stare out of Hiary’s expressive canvases and ink-on-paper works. They are silent. They have no more words for the painful and staggering atrocities they have witnessed. Yet the artist says they are hopeful, hungry for life, love and foremost, peace. Hiary’s prolific collection will make its premiere at Orient Gallery on September 1.
- **Local Art Scene:** Hiary travels often for her many exhibits and symposiums and thus has seen much of the art world. Compared to other countries, she views Jordanian art as real. She suggests that this might be due to the lack of international media coverage or overexposure to the standards of “good” art. She believes this actually has a positive influence; Jordanian art has remained original, untainted by imitations of the supposed ideals of art. Here, artists are empowered by the local culture. And if they choose, they too can rise like Hiary – an original, unlimited and artistic voice for the Arab world.

