

## **“A Feminine Name”- Nasrin Abu Baker**

The Video Art is a new field for Nasrin Abu Baker. She presents her view of the Arab woman using audio-visual symbolism. Her animation film “Ism Alam Muanath” (“A Feminine Name”) has its own rhythm, while revealing her artistic message which sides with women, the pillar of the Palestinian Arab society that remains stifled under the burden of masculine authority throughout the different generations. The place: an old Arab house that was abandoned by its residents. The story: the death of women in their lives since they learned the alphabets until they performed housework. In this film, the message exceeds the limits of the expected. It captures with high symbolism little girls in school uniform singing the alphabet for the words mom and dad, some girls washing their white dresses, that signify purity, men grinding meat with manual metal grinders, and an old lady singing a sad melody to mourn a woman who is lying down and is being at the center of events, as a witness who cannot see or hear. Narrating the story of the Arab women in Palestine, in addition to making choices about the place and characters make the film more than just a video art. The film becomes a statement of high sensibility, in which the sound of the alphabets merges with the sound of cutting meat and the sound of the silent body of the Arab woman that is made unconscious. She awakens only when she hears the sound of the old woman mourning, a sound that provokes alertness and walking towards the skies. And the question remains open:” Does she reach liberty or death after being awake?” Regardless of the interpretation of this film, the clear statement is the necessity of freeing women from traditional societal constraints.

Overall, Nasrin Abu Baker’s artistic world appears wide. In each corner, she uses her vocabulary to deal with her statements about life. The pain of the colors and the simplicity of black are evident in her paintings. The liveliness of ideas in her composition works emerges as a moving, surreal and dreamy world. This world seeks to dispel absolute beliefs about the pre-assigned roles that an Arab Palestinian artist with an identity and a cause can assume.

In her work, Nasrin Abu Baker asks questions about the position of women. She uses the Palestinian dress, the trays decorated with colors, green grass and the soft pillow to present them as an indispensable part of the holistic notion of Palestinian existence. She asks questions, not in order to define answers, but rather to raise rhetorical questions about the organization of human beings in a certain time and place. She practices graceful criticism with extreme acuteness while extracting her images and inspiration from everyday life. She does not intend to make art with fine high language as much as she is interested in making her work accessible and expressive of the weak and the marginalized.

Text by Salim Abu Jabal