

On the occasion of Universal Children's Day, a UNICEF, UNESCO and Dar Al-Tiffel Al-Arabi Benefit for the Children of Gaza

With the Children of Gaza...There is Hope

New oil paintings by Dr. Ali Qleibo



I have a soft spot in my heart for Gaza.

Standing by the seashore one feels a mysterious sense of freedom.

Until the second Intifada we often went to Gaza where we would promenade by the beach inhaling the fresh saline sea breeze. We would stare nostalgically into the distant horizon to where the sea and sky dissolve into one blue line.

Whenever I think of Gaza, the image of its turquoise-color sea immediately comes to mind. And it is not an empty yellow coast: Gazans love their sea, celebrate it, and have a special friendship with it. Along the sea shore I glimpse a special aspect of their humanity, their warm tenderness with their children.

The children have sustained great stress, deprivation, loss, and grief. We have watched and read about the traumas they and their families have sustained in the successive wars, the massive destruction and carnage they were victims to. Against all odds, in their pictures they project a brave and courageous image of resilience. These children are the future of Gaza. They are the future of Palestine. Their flexibility, their adaptive power to survive destructive wars, carnage, hunger and thirst, and their dignified stoicism inspire us.

Children represent the future. Because of their innocence and their potential as future citizens, children are perceived as agents of future promise: Children represent hope.

This exhibition *With the Children of Gaza...There is Hope* is a benefit event. The proceeds of the auctioned paintings will be channeled through UNICEF to help our children in Gaza. Under the initiative and auspices of UNICEF and in partnership with UNESCO and Dar Al-Tiffel Al-Arabi, the event is a token of caring. By engaging art in social action, we want each child to know that people are working, trying to assure that she/he, a child of Palestine, can have a dignified, secure life. As a gift and a symbolic act of human compassion, the proceeds carry a personal message:



“It may seem like Jerusalem, embroiled in its own turmoil, has forgotten you. But we have not! There is a place for you in our hearts. We care about your security and dignity and your need for a home. Even if it is not your home, the one that you remember, you will build a new home with new friends, you will grow up to rebuild Gaza and help build a great country. You are in the prime of your life. Be strong and know that a strong mind can lead you out of any circumstance and into a better life.

Dear children of Gaza, I am painting to tell you that you are not alone and forsaken in the world, that someone out there remembers and loves you. The future is bright because it is brimming with great expectations.

You are our hope. You are our promise.”

With the Children of Gaza....There is Hope comprises thirty new oil paintings by Ali Qleibo. In this new collection the artist travels with his lyrical colour palette between Jerusalem and Gaza, Jericho and Tarqumia, inspired by the evocative landscapes of Palestine. The launch of the exhibit will take place on 19 November at 7 p.m., at Dar Isaf Al-Nashasibi, Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, where the paintings can be seen till 30 November

Ali Qleibo

