

## Bethlehem Museum

### A Journey in Time

By Suheir Jaouni

There is one place on earth where time completely stops, where we are filled with a poignant nostalgia every time we cross its threshold: a museum, and more precisely, Bethlehem Museum. As a unique witness to love and war, Bethlehem Museum sheds equal light on the struggles of a farmer from Beit Jala, on the shepherds who witnessed the birth of a star in Beit Sahour, and on the silk embroidery that adorns the magical fabrics of Bethlehem dresses. Amidst the silence of the decades, we can hear water purling through a Roman stone pipe, which a once-upon-a-time king built in order to water the gardens of his beautiful lover.

Bethlehem Museum is not only a place to exhibit antiques and antiquities, it is

a journey in time, steps that we take as we travel along the path of existence in ancient times. Its beautiful paintings depict the struggles of people and their most intense love affairs. A huge wall displays a parade of photos of men and women who lived and reveled in days gone by. Folk and traditional garments of both women and men who lived in the cities and villages of Bethlehem are displayed in a most romantic manner, showing us the difference in dress code from region to region. Every piece of stone that unreservedly resides on the timeless shelves carries a story within. And all the stories that are hanging by the thread of time exhibit the past, present, and future frames of our thriving culture.

And as the journey in the alleys of time ends, visitors are left hungry for more, only to find a beautiful restaurant and coffee shop right above the museum that serves traditional dishes, both light and more substantial, that have survived the test of time and kept their place on the Palestinian table. Drinks that quench the thirst of the soul are served while soft music plays in the background. Shisha lovers are welcome to enjoy a peaceful smoke after having traveled back and forth in time, witnessing the rise and fall of empires, with the steadfastness of the Palestinian people shining through.

Bethlehem Museum is a slice of time cut from the past to intrude with dignity

and intrigue into the present moment of our lives as we fight for our land, our culture, and our identity. Here we are, heroes and ordinary people, with lives that line the walls and corners of this mystical place, proving yet one more time our unwavering existence in our beloved Palestine.

Come visit.

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*Jerusalem Hebron Street*  
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Bronze-Age pottery jar.



Bronze-Age pottery vessel and Palestinian traditional thobe.



Shoe-repair tools from the beginning of the last century.



Bethlehem "Shatweh" headdress, early 20th century.



A handwritten Bible from the beginning of the last century.



Bedouin jewelry made of silver.



Roman aqueduct that supplied Jerusalem with fresh water from Arroub.