

Rawan Asaad

Rawan was born and raised in East Jerusalem. Growing up in the alleys of Qalandia Refugee Camp, she acquired a passion for and compassion towards her surroundings. Because she sees the world's potential for beauty, she decided to study arts. She wanted to add color and identity to her surroundings. Having obtained a degree in applied arts from Palestine Technical College (now, Palestine Technical University—Kadoorie) in Ramallah, Rawan embarked on a career in design. As she gradually rose within the design community, she moved from one position to another, meeting new challenges each time. This led her to work with Saudi, Egyptian, and even Iraqi companies that hired her to work from Palestine.



But eventually she felt that the time had come to return to her paints and brushes. She started Canvasati.com to market the paintings that she produced for Palestinian society and culture, making them affordable and thus accessible to anyone. After some research, Rawan found that a good number of her fellow young artists were unemployed and struggled to make a living while staying in the creative field. So Rawan transformed Canvasati into a website for all young Palestinian artists, offering them a platform in the hope that they would not give up on their dreams.

In 2016, Rawan entered a regional TV competition under the name “Queen of Social Responsibility.” With determination and hard work, and with the full support of her local community of friends and family, Rawan became one of the top-five finalists in a competition in which 25,000 women from all over the Arab world had applied. After nine

months of nonstop community work through art, Rawan was able to represent Palestine in the finals with a speech in which she spoke from her heart. She admits: “I will never forget how hard my heart beat when I went on stage in front of the audience and the judges to tell my story to the world and let it know that Palestine has life.”

After the competition, Rawan discovered a part of her that she had never realized existed. Tapping into her media and communication skills, and with the support of President Mahmoud Abbas, Rawan was hired as a TV presenter on Palestine TV and thus took up a career in television broadcasting two years ago. She realized that art is not only about painting or music, art is all around us, in everything we do. Rawan found a magical balance between art and media, and over three seasons presented programs that shed light on Palestinian identity. She started with *Ana Falasteeni (I am Palestinian)*, a program that focuses on Palestinian culture and identity, and most recently launched *Abaq al-Badeya (Fragrance of Bedouin Life)*, a program that focuses on the role of the Bedouin community in Palestinian culture. “Discussing deep societal issues with the Bedouin community leaders in Palestine was quite a challenge, but somehow I managed to make it happen,” Rawan confesses.

Currently, Rawan presents the early morning show at Nisaa FM (Women FM), called *Sabah Watani (Good Morning, My Homeland)*. This program aims to bring a smile to the hearts and faces of Palestinians in the early hours of the day. Defying all rules regarding regular morning shows, it presents no news or politics but rather stories that all Palestinian people can enjoy. “I still have much to give to my society,” Rawan asserts, “and I will work as hard as I can to make sure that I am the reason someone smiles every day”.