

By Elias  
Tannira

## IBRAHIM AL MOZAIN

Ibrahim Al Mozain, born in Rafah Refugee Camp in 1961, holds degrees in fine art and theater performance from the School of Visual Theatre in Jerusalem. During his youth, he experimented with watercolors and oil, creating posters that raised awareness of Palestinian issues. In addition to painting and creating installations, he has worked as a stage designer, director, and writer of plays at Al-Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque in Ramallah, and as director of the exhibition department for the Palestinian Ministry of Culture.



Ibrahim's frequently larger-than-life paintings tackle themes related to freedom and social and political dynamics. Together, they tell a complicated story of loss and collective transformation. Layered symbols bring together poignant Palestinian imagery in bright, sometimes screaming, colors. At times weaving in themes of Ancient Greek mythology, he creates objects that include women in traditional robes or modern dress, mothers, martyrs posters, beautiful landscapes, and hints of village scenery, many of which allude to enduring symbols in Palestinian art. Other works question gender and identity (showing mustachioed women, for example) in paintings that explore the human body and sexuality, aiming to break cultural and societal taboos. Yet Ibrahim stresses that his art is open to whatever interpretation the viewer may choose. He names as his inspiration surrealist artists as well as Henri Matisse and Claude Monet, from whose works he has carved a personality of his own.



Unusual resources are the materials of Ibrahim's installation works; he used 3 tons of concrete mixed with shoes to create a work that measures 8 meters by 2 meters and represents the *Nakba*. The installation was exhibited at the Yasser Arafat Museum.

Ibrahim's work has been exhibited in countries around the world, including France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Austria, and Indonesia and in venues that include the Tal Al Fukhar Theatre in Acre (1993), Rashad Al Shawwa Centre in Gaza (1998), and Zawyeh Gallery in Ramallah (2012 and 2016). His installation works were exhibited on the Gaza beach in 2001.

Ibrahim Al Mozain lives in Ramallah, where he works in his art studio and serves as coordinator of artistic activities at the Yasser Arafat Museum.

*For more information, please visit Nora Parr's review of the solo exhibition The Loud Silence, titled "A vivid reimagining of Palestinian symbols," available at <https://electronicintifada.net/content/vivid-reimagining-palestinian-symbols/17106>.*

