

HIND NASSER HONOURING A LEGACY

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Sultan is also the founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation, an independent initiative established in 2010 to contribute to the intellectual development of the art scene in the Arab region by building a prominent and publicly accessible art collection in the United Arab Emirates.

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It was only in 1946 when Hind Nasser was only a little girl that Jordan became an independent sovereign kingdom. Prior to that it had come under the mandate of Britain shortly following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Life was rife with challenges in the almost landlocked country with scant resources and educational opportunities beyond secondary school. At 18 years old the young Hind left her home country of Jordan to study (and travelled to) Lebanon where she attended the Beirut College for Women, later renamed the Lebanese American

solo exhibition that was held in 1984 in Amman's Royal Cultural Center and many others that followed.

Her presence in Jordan marked the beginning of an active art scene in the country. Earlier the Jordanian government sent students on scholarships to study art abroad.

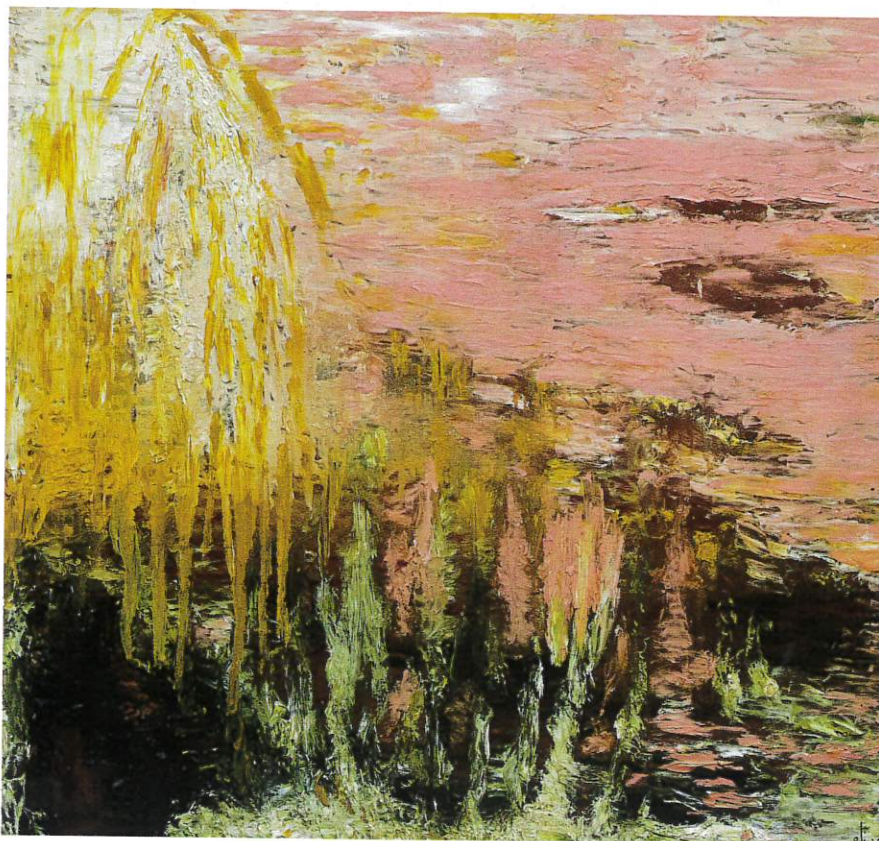
In 1980, The Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts was established to showcase works from the Islamic and developing worlds including Jordan.

In 1988 Darat Al Funun, home of arts and artists from the Arab world was established by Suha Shoman, one of the students of Fahrelnissa Zeid.

Hind continued working and holding solo exhibitions in her home country as well as abroad, including Jordan, London, Abu Dhabi, New Delhi and Dubai, and participated in many group exhibitions in Paris, (salon d'automne) Moscow, Tehran, among others. Hind's paintings were twice included in major traveling exhibitions that sought to showcase women artists from the region. The first iteration in the mid 1990s was held under the title *Forces of Change: Arab Women Painters*. That exhibition travelled across the USA beginning with the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. and continued to Chicago, Atlanta, Boston and Miami. (One of Hind's exhibited works was printed as a post card to be sold for the benefit of the museum) A few years later, Hind's work was included in *Breaking the Veils: Women Artists from the Islamic World* and toured major European cities including Paris, Athens and Milan.

Hind's work has seen several stages of development, however there are certain threads that tie her decades long career together including an awareness of nature and the rich topography of Jordan. Furthermore, it was in the 1970s that Hind worked closest with her mentor Fahrelnissa, and one can just about notice the influences of the latter on her student's abstract work. Other influences include Jordan's Wadi Rum with its dry and arid climate that has long offered an unobtrusive view drawing stargazers from across the world. In paintings dating back to the 1970s such as *Solar Explosion* and *Pink Aurora* Hind's ethereal imagination is awakened.

After experimenting with figurative paintings in the 1980s, Hind once again draws inspiration from the natural surroundings of Jordan including the deserts and mountains that are laced with an intricate network of caves. In her painting *The Desert* we see vivid colours arranged in a vertical formation that almost reflect the waters of the streams of Jordan's famous Wadi Mujib. There, a trail of five kilometers snakes through mountains surrounding a narrow gorge that is often compared to the Grand Canyon. However, perhaps Hind's strongest works emerge in the series where she employs a yellow background to accentuate the figure-like drapes that she paints in luminous blue-violet such as in *Light Cracking The Rocks II* and *Mother Earth*. Occasionally we see a deep



Ayla, 1975. Oil On Canvas,
85 x 80 cm. Collection of
Barjeel Art Foundation

red color protruding through the flowing blue violet drapes giving an appearance of lava emerging from the mouth of a volcano. It is in these works that Hind's true strength of talent emerges.

Also from that period is the *Siq of Petra* where Hind captures the shaft that serves as the entrance gateway to the elaborate Nabatean temple known as *The Treasury*, which has now become an iconic image instantly recognisable the world over. Although painted using oil on canvas, that work's fluidity gives the impression of a watercolour perhaps due to the soft and light colours that the artist employs. Such effects echo the words of her long time mentor Fahrelnissa who once said to her student, "My Hind, how did you manage to capture the light, the form, the strength and the dream? Ah! What a romance you have created to all of us."

Almost half a century since she was mentored by Fahrelnissa, Hind has come full circle not only producing unique works of art, but also carrying forward the sense of social responsibility instilled in her by her love of Jordan.

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