

RITA ANDRADE

Born in 1998 in Lisbon, Portugal,
where she is currently based

Identity & Land

“Art is a non-violent way of expressing myself, of spreading a message, and of making a statement. I believe that art can play an important role in social change, and I hope I can do just that.” (Rita Andrade, 2023)

Rita Andrade has already presented her work in support of Palestine in 2021, in a solo exhibition named “I Can’t Breathe Since 1948”. Most of the paintings were sold during that event, but there are still many artworks, and they must be shown, as a way of empathising with our brothers and sisters in Palestine, and as a way of raising awareness.

In “Identity and Land”, painter and activist Rita Andrade shares what she experienced during her trip to Palestine in 2019. The artist uses a nonviolent way, which is art, as a way of protest against the illegal occupation of Israel of Palestine.

One of Rita’s main focuses is to stand for human rights, and that includes Palestinian rights. For example, the respect, protection, and promotion of the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties (as stipulated in UN Resolution 194).

Rita has been saying that it was since her trip to Palestine that she acknowledged her duty as an artist: the duty of spreading important messages, raising awareness, and trying to make people see what the world is like beyond the TV screens. Rita realised that there was a whole part of the world whose struggles are being left out of the discussion. The artist feels that what happens outside Europe doesn’t have any importance, unless it affects its countries directly

Rita feels that now she has another opportunity to continue with her project in support of Palestine. As she stated, “Israel’s oppression over Palestinians has not ended, and us who believe in Palestinian rights must continue to speak for the voiceless”, and that “art is a non-violent way of expressing myself, of spreading a message, and of making a statement. I believe that art can play an important role in social change, and I hope I can do just that.”



“Burnt”

Acrylic and oil pastels on canvas
90cm x 70cm

This is a painting representing the olive trees that are burnt by the I.D.F. (Israel Defence Forces). The olive trees are Palestinians main source of income, and the cruel act of burning them is a way of displacing Palestinians. The woman hugs the olive tree in despair, with a feeling of loss, while the truck with the ones who burned it are just there watching. Her veil is white, as a request for peace, while the rest of the canvas only has the colours of dir.



“Free Palestine”

Acrylic on canvas
120cm x 100cm



“Hope Against Hope”

Acrylic on canvas
80cm x 50cm

A homage to Ahed Tamimi for her bravery, a Palestinian activist that was arrested and tortured at the age of 16 for protecting her family and confronting an I.D.F. member, after they invaded her house



"Home or Prison"

White charcoal and acrylic on canvas

40cm x 150cm



“I.O.F”

Acrylic, collages, and oil pastels on canvas
120cm x 80cm

In the background of this painting, you find dozens of collages of the current news in Palestine. A violent red layer of paint covers them, making it harder to read. Who made that layer was Israel and their military, the so called “Israel Defence Forces”. As a criticism to the military name, the artists hanged if for “I.O.F.”, meaning “Israel OFENCE Forces”.

Rita chose the woman figure in a sexy pose as a way of distracting the viewer but challenge him to read what is in the background, what reality is like in Palestine.



“We are Watching you”

Acrylic and oil pastels on canvas

90cm x 120cm



“Pole Star”

Acrylic and oil pastels on canvas
120cm x 100cm

“Pole Star”, as the name says, is the star that guides us. In this painting, the pole stars are the powerful ones, the ones that have the money and control over Palestine. The powerful ones are represented in these giant two figures. The feminine figure is the military member represented in the painting “I.O.F.”. This time, she has no clothes on. She is being touched by a man in a suit, as if nothing was happening underneath them. What is underneath them is the city of Jericho. In pink clothes, you find Rita.

The person travelling with her took a picture of her standing at the city. Rita was crying of emotion. So she decided to point her finger at those who are guilty for that misery she was facing: Israel (the woman), and the US (the man).



“Daily Life”

Acrylic on canvas
80cm x 50cm (2x)



“Nightfall in Gaza”

Acrylic and oil pastels on canvas
100cm x 120cm

This painting is a common image of Gaza. Rita calls it a nightfall in a way of mentioning the lack of electricity in the region, and that all you can see when the sun goes down, are the light of explosions from rockets launched by Israel.



"Voiceless"

Acrylic and oil pastels on canvas
100cm x 80cm



“The Last Supper”

Oil on canvas
60cm x 120cm

This painting represents the end of the “conversation” we have been having. It doesn’t mark the end of the subject though because the fight for freedom for Palestinians must go on. But it is the beginning of change, hopefully. At the table you can find all characters that were represented in the canvases. But it is not just a table. Jesus is not there, the only figure that the artist maintained was Judas. In the centre, facing the desert, you find Rita again, as in “Pole Star”, replacing Jesus in an attempt to challenge both sides (Israel and Palestine) to talk.

When you are at the table, having a drink or having dinner, it is the moment when people talk and may or may not find solutions, may or may not agree with everything. But if there is no talk, there is no way of ending Israel’s violations on Palestinian’s rights.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Academic Qualifications

- 2021 – 2022, August – **Master’s Degree in Art and Politics at Goldsmiths, University of London.** Got a *Distinction* in the final dissertation, the highest grade on the grading scale.
- 2022, June - **Fieldwork research** in Honduras with the collaboration of grassroots NGOs for the development of my master’s dissertation by practice.*
- 2016 - 2020, July – **Degree in Painting**, from the **Lisbon Faculty of Fine Arts.**
- 2017, July – **Barcelona Academy of Art**, Spain – **Fundamentals of Drawing Course**, Intensive Summer Edition.
- 2016, September – **Graduated High School** with a 17.6 (/20) and enrolled in the **Lisbon Faculty of Fine Arts.**

Exhibitions and important projects (not all exhibitions and projects are mentioned here, only the most relevant ones)

- 2022, November – 2023, January – **“Hope in The Shadows”** – The final result of my master’s dissertation by practice as a MA Art and Politics student at Goldsmiths, University of London - **Individual painting exhibition in support of Honduran children** across different cities of Honduras, namely El Progreso, Santa Bárbara, San Pedro Sula, and Tegucigalpa.
- 2022, March – **“Fundraising for Ukraine, Art Exhibition”** – **Group exhibition** in support of Ukraine at Unobvious Lab, Portugal.
- 2021, September – **“I Can’t Breathe Since 1948”** - **Solo painting exhibition** in Palácio Estoril Golf & Wellness Hotel, Cascais, Portugal.
- 2021, October – **Interviewed** by the Portuguese newspaper *O Jornal Económico* who then wrote an article about my solo exhibition **“I Can’t Breathe Since 1948”**.
- 2021, February – **Humanity on the Move** – **“Breaking Borders Through Art”** - Selected to participate in a project that consists in creating a painting together with a refugee in Greece via Video Call. The Artwork is inspired by his history and experience in the refugee camps.
- 2020, November – **Co-Author of the book “I Have a Dream”** – **World Dream Project**, representing Portugal with a two-page essay entitled **“Artists Have a Mission”**. A book about people’s dreams related to **SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)** for a better world published in April 2021.
- 2018, February – **“Anger”** – **Individual painting exhibition** in Pappamassa Restaurant, Estoril, Portugal.