



FOUAD AGBARIA  
**Nostalgia to the Light**

24 October - 7 November 2015



## BIOGRAPHY



Born in the village of Musmus near Umm El Fahm in 1981, Fouad Agbaria is one of the most prominent young Palestinian artists working today. He is part of an important and empowered group of young Palestinian artists who are continually redefining what it means to be Palestinian in historic Palestine.

Agbaria is a fine arts graduate and an award winning student. He attained a bachelor's degree from Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem in 2004 and a master's degree from Haifa University in 2014.

Since completing his undergraduate degree, Agbaria has painted prolifically often experimenting with different styles, techniques and media including charcoal, oil, acrylic and lithography. His catalogue of work to date has dealt with many themes associated with the Palestinian narrative, identity and memory. He has participated in over 20 group exhibitions and has held three solo shows.

*Nostalgia to the Light* is his latest exhibition which will be held at Zawyeh Gallery, Ramallah, from 24 Oct. - 7 Nov. 2015. Agbaria showcases his recent works under three broad themes. In a series of oil paintings, once again Agbaria journeys to his early childhood and life in his home village. Exquisite Post-Impressionist style paintings depict simple rural pastimes, much of which have been lost but

remain foremost in Agbaria's memory. The classic Palestinian symbol of the cactus - or Sabra - is central to Agbaria's work and his latest paintings are homage to Palestinian survival and rebirth.

*Nostalgia to the Light* also showcases Agbaria's latest project celebrating the Arabic script. In this new chapter, Agbaria engages and experiments with script, drawing on this very important part of his cultural inheritance. Darwish's poetry, Quranic verses and personal philosophical meditations adorn each piece. Demonstrating great skill and equilibrium, his innovative use of colour perfectly illuminate his works.

## Fouad Agbaria: Nostalgia to the Light

*"Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."* Søren Kierkegaard

Fouad Agbaria's *Nostalgia to the Light* showcases an impressive set of new paintings inspired by his childhood experiences and cultural inheritance. His home village of Musmus near Umm El Fahm provides the backdrop to his landscape paintings. Broadly grouped under the theme of Harvest, Agbaria journeys back to his early childhood and relives precious memories and experiences of rural pastimes, translating them into unique and exquisite oil paintings. Eloquently capturing the many delicate interactions with nature, Agbaria is symbolically giving thanks to the terrain of his childhood and ancestors.

His artistic maturity is evident in all his works. During his studies and soon after his graduation, Agbaria experimented with different styles, techniques and media including charcoal and lithography. However, it is in his oil painting that he truly excels. Sweeping yellow wheat fields; men and women tilling the land and harvesting their crops form the recurring imagery in his work. Although influenced by the Post-impressionists - especially greats such as Van Gogh - Agbaria has developed his own unique style that is intrinsic to his cultural influences and heritage. His unrestrictive approach is characterized by fine and broad free brush strokes of brown and black applied over domineering yellow plains. Such artistic endeavors are fast distinguishing Agbaria as a special Palestinian artist.

Agbaria's artistic talents are best reflected in his study of the cactus tree -sabra - the classic Palestinian symbol of patience and survival. Sabra fences in destroyed villages painted in a near realist style also portray loss and tragedy. Yet at the same time, these fences are often laden with sweet fruit indicating hope and longevity. The sabra as a visual motif has provided Agbaria with ample room for creativity and this is evident in a selection of still life paintings. The multi-coloured depiction of sabra fences indicate an artist who is at ease with subject and method. Quite critically, Agbaria, along with a number of his contemporaries have re-appropriated the sabra as a potent Palestinian symbol and metaphor.

*Nostalgia to the Light* also showcases Agbaria's latest project celebrating the Arabic script. A new chapter in Agbaria's catalogue of work, he engages and experiments with script, drawing on this very important part of his cultural inheritance. Darwish's poetry, Quranic verses and personal philosophical meditations adorn these pieces, reinforcing Agbaria's influences and identity. Many of the words and letters are turned into beautiful abstract patterns to furnish his style. Demonstrating great skill and equilibrium, his innovative use of color perfectly illuminates each painting.

Agbaria's nostalgic reflections and cherished memories help us understand and treasure our glorious heritage.

Sulieman MLEAHAT  
October 2015

## Artist Statement

In my new exhibition *Nostalgia to the Light*, words, colours and thought merge within a singular intellectual and emotional framework. My works utilize connotations and various techniques to help me in my search; conjuring up recollections and obsessions that have ravaged my subdued and deepest memories. It is an attempt to recall and revive beautiful memories; lighting oil lanterns to illuminate their dimensions: land, soul, and body cradled within the sky.

In this day and age, time rushes by and events travel in a flash of light, leaving us at a loss. With the recall of childhood memories and recollections that refuse to budge and wither, such as letters and words that make up the story of a nation. Words sway between good and evil, love and hatred, and devastation and hope in their journey in search of light. Within cactus fences lies a fable that tells the story of a struggle between right and wrong, containment and safety, and a memory shedding light on an abandoned home and an assaulted land, refusing to be defeated, with all its sweetness and thorns/bitterness.





The Mill, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
150 x 200 cm



The Yield, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
113 x 150 cm



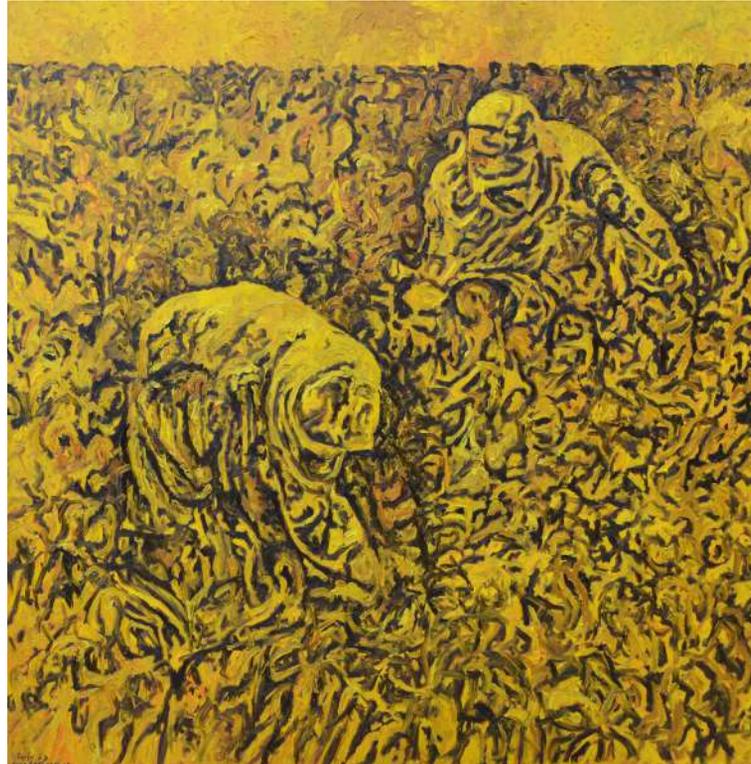
Harvest, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
150 x 200 cm



Woman in the Harvest II, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 180 cm



Jerusalem, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



The Family Field, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



In Earth's Embrace, 2012  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 160 cm



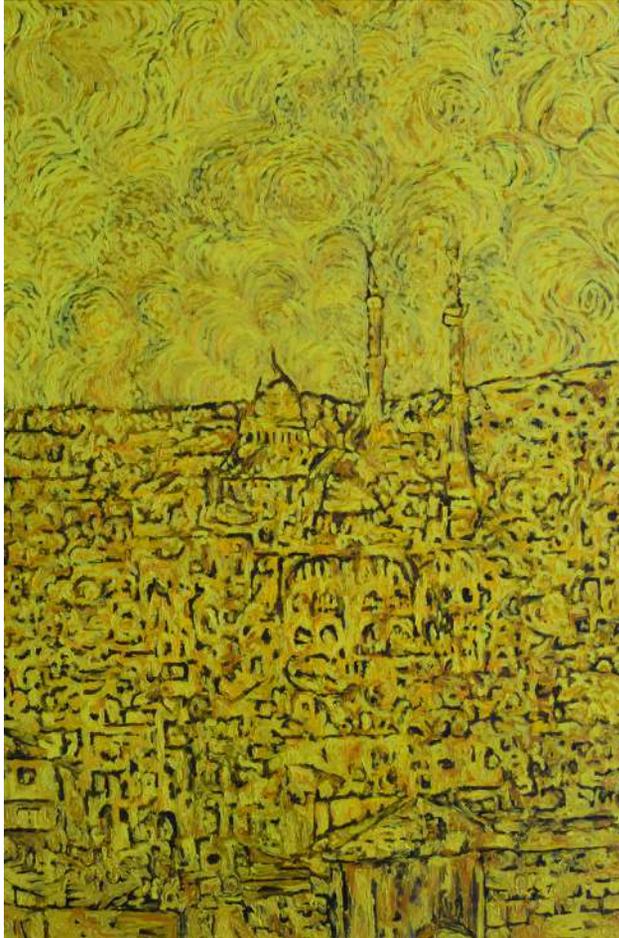
In Unison, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 180 cm



Journey Home, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



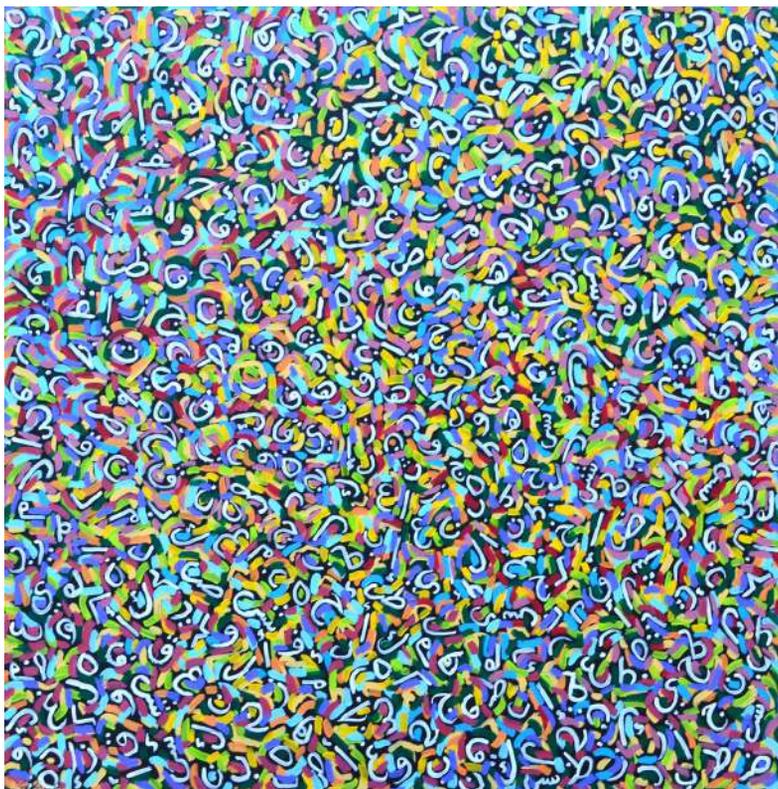
Grandfather, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
90 x 110 cm



New Home, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
200 x 140 cm



Woman in the Harvest I, 2012  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 120 cm



Break of Dawn, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm



Summer Wind, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm



Nostalgia, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm



Akka, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm



Across the Borderline, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm



Break the Silence, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



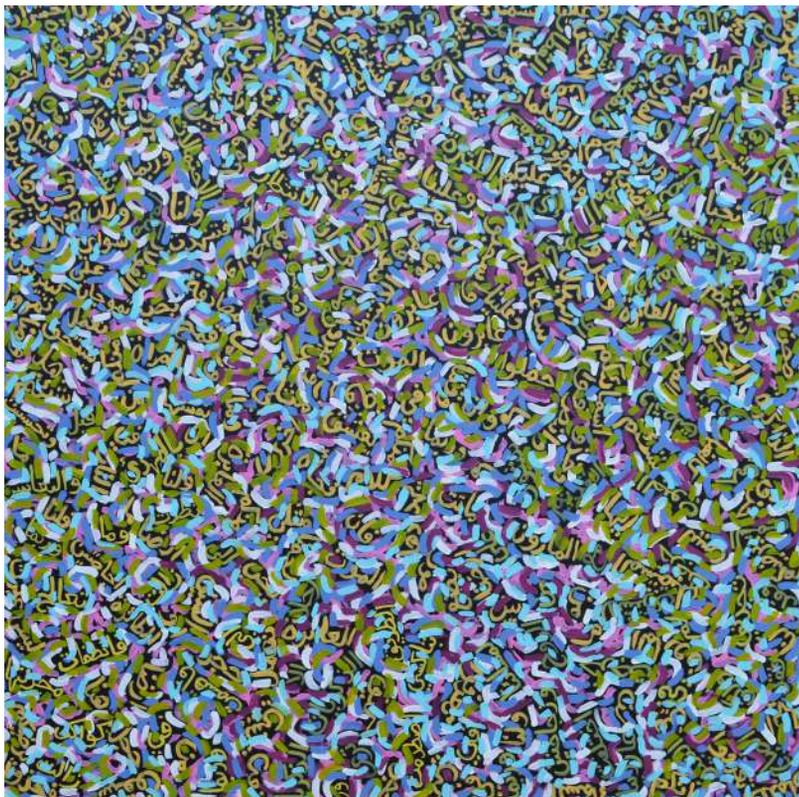
Passport, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
150 x 150 cm



Write Down I am an Arab, 2015

Acrylic on canvas

200 x 200 cm



Transience, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
120 x 120 cm



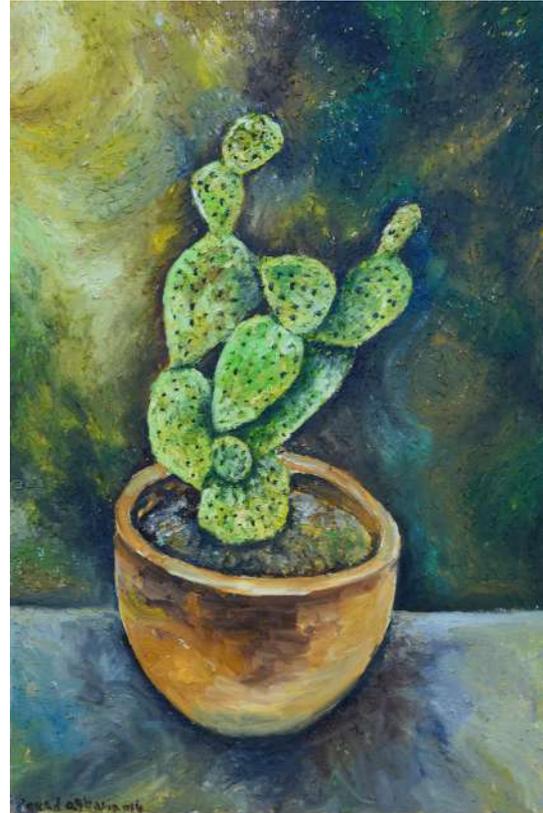
In the Presence of Absence, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas  
100 x 100 cm



Cactus in the Village, 2010  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 180 cm



Cactus Blossom I, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
90 x 80 cm



Cactus on my Window-cill, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
90 x 60 cm



Stork in the Cactus, 2014  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 300 cm





Texture of Sabra Panel I, 2011  
Oil on canvas  
70 x 170 cm



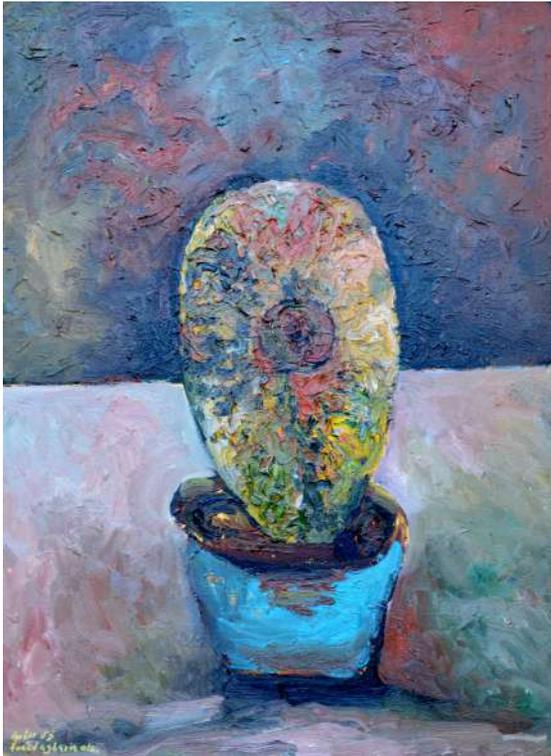
Texture of Sabra Panel II, 2012  
Oil on canvas  
80 x 120 cm



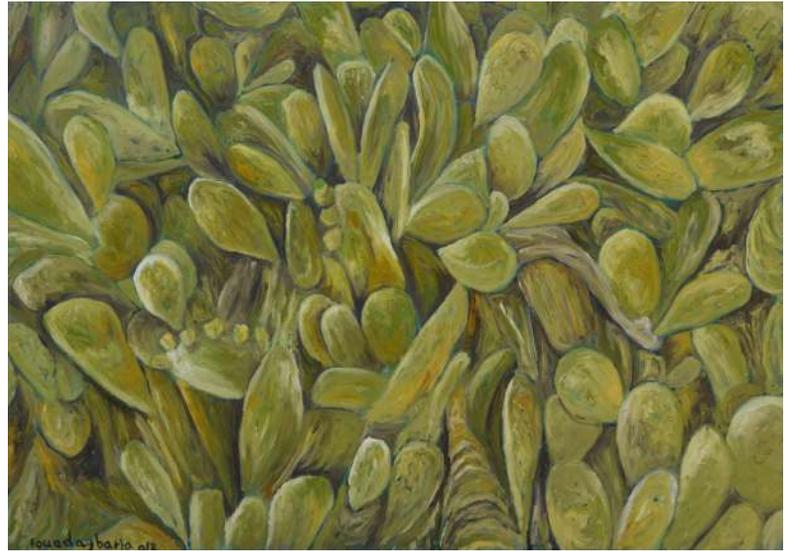
Cactus Blossom II, 2015  
Acrylic on canvas (set of two)  
140 x 100 cm



Cactus Blossom III, 2015  
Acrylic on paper  
100 x 70 cm



Witness, 2015  
Oil on canvas  
60 x 80 cm



Cactus Wall, 2012  
Oil on board  
70 x 100 cm



Horizon, 2011  
Oil on canvas  
120 x 180 cm



**Zawyeh Art Gallery** is an independent visual art gallery in Ramallah, Palestine. It was founded by Ziad Anani in 2013. In addition to presenting local artists to an international audience, the gallery's mission is to promote established and emerging artists from Palestine through various thematic exhibitions. Zawyeh exhibits artworks in a large variety of media including painting, sculpture, photography, and video.

This catalogue is published in conjunction with `Nostalgia to the Light` exhibition held at Zawyeh Gallery, Ramallah, Palestine from 24 October until 7 November 2015.

Published in 2015

Fouad Agbaria  
Zawyeh Gallery

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