

VIEWING PALESTINE 2011

ARTISTIC VISION

by Said Murad

Palestinian artistic resources are very positive to the principles of developing the project in close collaboration; that is with strong influence of the Palestinian partners in selection and focus of the program. Said Murad responded with the following vision for the project: Time has come – and the right project has finally found its way – where Palestinian arts and culture are in a position to be exhibited and presented in a different way: This project is special because it engages in projects and artists with high standards, without any direct political influence, or due to emotions of sympathy involved. Palestinian art today is important and effective because it's being organized and run by creative artists. It is great because it is built on dialogue not sympathy, built on jamming and fusing more than one type of art – in order to create a new international language, new character and new culture based on mutual efforts for a brighter future for all; not based on sympathy and donations.

Palestinians have lots of creative powers to display, and have been imprisoned for a long time. Some artists have actually used their art to get out of the box, and have used this experience to create a new window of hope, and it is my wish to spread this hope and share it with the world.

Since the media have not been fair in introducing the real pain; the real energies behind artistic production, this project actually gives the opportunity to show the real emotions behind the creativity of Palestinian artists, the real Palestinian spirit and courage.

This project, if anything, gives the real opportunity to escape the physical and emotional prison Palestinians live in, and help them pin their art on the cultural world map and blend in and contribute in the human civilization. It will also give them the right encouragement and motivation for those who have escaped the ordinary. It's important to strengthen the role of these remarkable artists, and boost up their brave energies to produce more and create more.

PALESTINIAN ART AND CULTURE

Said Murad – May 2010

Art has played a major and significant role in the history of Palestinian modern development through music, folk singing, visual arts, drama, theatre and dance.

Palestinian art took a very traditional and popular form in its infancy, although it was an honest representation and direction of a certain phase. With the passage of time and the evolution of technical performance, global interaction and education, all led into the emergence of individuals or teams that surpassed the local dimension and created an individual state of art that has proved itself locally and globally – and it tended to take an independent and professional orientation. Despite that, a common lobby that unites these artistic efforts was not formed, and Palestinian art has not been invested in properly.

Now, however, after artists have been introduced to the world heritage and music, after the participation in many global projects and international relations – and after the declination in the political project – it has led to the formation of strong associations and companies that are effective and powerful. It became necessary to work on investing in this development for the benefit of art and the humanitarian message that it conveys, as well as to highlight the humanitarian aspect of the Palestinian culture and heritage.

Art can play a substantial role in change and development. In this very particular phase, there is a substantial support for development and education, and this is crucial. The world needs to see the modern and developed Palestinian art, which in many cases is equivalent and comparable to a lot of what is being produced globally, if of course the right circumstances were available.

It is important for any form of art, in order for it to develop, to form a relationship with other arts and be open to the experiences of others. To produce art means breaking boundaries and surpassing taboos and obstacles. It is impossible to produce art without the right support and guarantee of persistence for the artistic and creative projects.

It is apparent that the Palestinian society is undergoing a significant transformation period, and the difference between the old and the new, the significant and the trivial, becomes clear. The division between Gaza and the West Bank, between hip-hop/rappers and folk singers is evident. It was not as clear in the 70's up until the millennium. It is noticeable that some cling to the past while others call to move ahead so that Palestine can actually take its position among nations.

It is crucial to form a strong and firm lobby to unite all creative Palestinians both locally and internationally and then connect them to the international network of artists; to construct an artistic revolution that can efficiently contribute to the dissemination of Palestinian art, so that Palestine can take a place in the world art.

Although the Palestinians have made great strides in the world of culture and music, much remains to be done. Progress can only happen through a comprehensive national strategy that includes coordination among all governmental and non-governmental organizations, appropriate and fair distribution of roles, and the cooperation and partnership of stakeholders – including schools, universities, cultural centres, and publishing and distribution companies. Educational, media, and production institutions must be set up, and there should be a mechanism in place to encourage and develop communication and interaction among these institutions in order to ensure a common vision and to overcome whatever challenges may arise.

Despite the importance of talent and creativity, the question remains: Are these sufficient for creating a broad, successful artistic movement? It is well known that such a movement could not be created without a strong artistic circle that includes adequate infrastructure. Talent, educational facilities and resources that include teachers, books, and venues to experience and express this talent are only the beginning. The next step is to provide the infrastructure necessary for production; publishing houses and possibilities for recording and organizing performances. The role of the print, broadcast, and electronic media is no less important. Also, outreach and communication with other Arab and international cultures, through joint festivals, meetings, art exhibitions, and recordings, are needed as well, along with the existence of laws and an institution that protects the rights of writing, publishing, and distribution. The above are preconditions for a complete artistic circle, with art production forming the backbone for the renaissance and spread of art.

With regard to music – on the international level, Palestinian music is limited to political songs and lacks the breadth that is needed to be considered part of the world music scene. In addition, due to lack of communication and cooperation between Palestinians involved in the field of music, musical production is often duplicated, thus decreasing the energy and creativity available for strengthening and broadening the possibilities to enter the world music arena.