

*Still*

**Huda Lutfi**

November 12, 2018 – December 27, 2018

The Third Line is pleased to present *Still*, Huda Lutfi's third solo exhibition at the gallery. Featuring new works produced over the last year and a half, the exhibition presents a different approach to Huda's practice as she turns to minimalist and calligraphic abstractions to create compositions she calls 'paper sculptures'.



Huda Lutfi, #4, 2018, acrylic, oil pastels, collage, 25 x 18.5cm

Using recycled materials or her own discarded artworks, Huda employs a process of assemblage using paper cut outs – a signature technique in her artistic practice. Organic and geometric shapes of bold or muted tones are meticulously juxtaposed to create compositions that allow the shapes to co-exist and achieve a kind of visual balance. As she says, each of these creations works like a puzzle or a game of problem solving.

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Cairo's urban complexity has always been at the heart of Huda's work. She manipulates disparate images and objects to re-invent a personal vision of the city in which she lives, its histories and on going events. In doing so, Huda simultaneously comments on the political relevance and social context through both metaphorical and literal visuals. In this series, however, Huda's usual commentary takes a quieter approach; while her abstracted works may seem to lack social and political avowals, they reflect a deeper and more personal, introspective state.

Accompanying the collages are four new sculptures: *Difficult to Unravel*, *Fan*, *Hanger*, and *Silent Journal*, which display a tantalizing intersection between resilience and fragility. In *Difficult to Unravel*, multiple rolls of flax thread are painted in metallic silver, stiffening the threads and making them difficult to untangle. Concealing their original physical associations, the artist manipulates the recycled materials to render them as a renewed sense of play and strength.

Where it may appear like one has run out of things to say, Huda considers this series a loud stance of silence; a reaction to the world around her that manifests in reflection, and the unyielding practice of self-soothing.<sup>1</sup>

### About Huda Lutfi

Huda Lutfi works like an urban archeologist, constantly digging up found objects as loaded fragments of history. She then re-packages them using bricolage and collage as interceptive strategies. Thus recognizable objects, figures, icons are hijacked, re-contextualized and made to tell a different story. Playing on public memory and a shared iconography, Huda somehow flattens cultural timelines by coming up with such figures as a mummified Umm Kalthum or a Pharaonic Mona Liza. One of her focal points has been the representation of gender, more specifically the female form, and how it translates into the everyday. Working with the form of dolls in their various urban contexts, Huda explores the multiple roles of women within visual culture: as active producers of it and depicted symbols within it.

Huda's solo shows include: 'Still', The Third Line, Dubai (2018); 'Dawn Portraits', Gypsum Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2017); 'Magnetic Bodies: Imaging the Urban', The Third Line, Dubai (2016) 'Magnetic Bodies', Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2015); 'Cut and Paste', Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2013); 'Huda Lutfi: Twenty Years of Art', Tache Art, Cairo, Egypt (2011); 'Making a Man out of Him', Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2010); 'Zan'it al-Sittat', The Third Line, Dubai, UAE (2008); 'From Egypt with Love'; The Third Line, Dubai, UAE (2005). She has been part of eminent group presentations internationally including: 'Feedback: Art, Africa and the Eighties', Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth, Germany (2018); 'Tell me the Story of all These Things', Villa Vassilieff, Paris, France (2017); 'The Turn: Art Practices in Post-Spring Societies', Kunstrraum Niederoesterreich, Vienna (2016); 'Something Else', Off Cairo Biennale, Egypt (2015); 'La Bienal del Sur', Caracas, Venezuela (2015); Fotofest Biennale, 'Contemporary Arab Video, Photography and Mixed Media', Texas, Houston, USA (2014); 'Alexandria Biennale for Mediterranean Countries', Alexandria, Egypt (2014); Fotofest: View from Inside Contemporary Arab Photography' Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); 'Homage to Moustapha Hasnaoui', Frederic Moisan Gallery, Paris, France (2013); 'I am not there' Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2012); 'Dak' Art-African Contemporary Art Biennale', Dakar, Senegal (2010); 'Icons Reloaded', Elysee Arts Gallery, Liege, Belgium (2009).

Her work is part of major collections including Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman, Jordan; Museum of Modern Art, The Hague, Netherlands; The World Bank, Cairo, Egypt; The American University in Cairo, Egypt; The British Museum, London, UK; Indianapolis Museum, Indianapolis, USA; Muscarelle Museum, University of Virginia, USA and Jean-Jacques de Fleurs, Paris, France.

Huda Lutfi currently lives and works in Cairo, Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from an essay by Sara El Adl

## About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamya Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Poursan Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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