

## Inshallah , 2005

Acrylic on a wall

1.90 x 3.20 m

From the exhibition: "Not for Sale" Art Project

Bayit Banamal, Tel-Aviv's old Harbor, Tel-Aviv

Curator: Tami Katz-Freiman



The work is based on a photograph taken from the artist's family album, featuring her grandfather in a prayer shawl, a skullcap and a hat, blessing her. The grandfather's large hands are placed on her lowered head for a single blessed moment.

The figurative image in the work is incorporated in and assimilated into various eastern decorations that unite to generate a uniform texture recalling an eastern rug. The decorative rug contains ostensible contrasts, intertwined to form a rich integrative cultural, religious, ethnic, and linguistic discourse.

The eastern ornamentalism functions as a camouflage net; a grid intermittently revealing and concealing the ritual objects (prayer shawl, skullcap), at times hiding the figures' faces, at others - being hidden by them. Oriental (Near Eastern) Judaism and Arabness are inseparably linked in partnership, or possibly in inter-dependence.

The image is surrounded by an incorporated Arabic-Hebrew script spelling the Arabic word Inshallah rendered as Arabic calligraphy taken from the Quran. The word Inshallah encapsulates everything embodied by this blessing, expressing a yearning for the fulfillment of the plea inherent in it.

The Arabic Inshallah has struck roots in the Hebrew language being renewed in Israel, symbolizing the combination of Mizrahi (Eastern) and Ashkenazi (European) Hebrew. It is the language of the second and third generation of Jewish immigrants from North African in Israel, a Jewry that has taken a place of honor in Israeli culture, forming an important layer in the joint project of ingathering the exiles and building the Israeli nation.

The combination of Hebrew and Arabic conveys the ambivalence, oscillating between some of the North African immigrants' ("the Mizrahim") denial of their Arab background, and the need and ability of their children and grandchildren to combine the new Israeliness with Eastern traditionalism.