

ART GALLERY NEWS RELEASE

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(press & tour inquiries)

Tufts University Art Gallery

at the Aidekman Arts Center

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CONTRAPUNTAL LINES: **LANIA MATAR AND BUTHINA ABU MILHEM**

September 11, 2008–December 21, 2008

Public Opening Reception: Thursday, September 18, 5:30-8:30pm

MEDFORD, MA – The Tufts University Art Gallery proudly presents the work of Rania Matar and Buthina Abu Milhem from September 11 to December 21, 2008 in the Koppelman Gallery. *Contrapuntal Lines* was conceived as a companion exhibition to *Empire and Its Discontents* and is presented concurrently with a fall symposia series on humanities and human rights at Tufts.

The musical phrase “contrapuntal lines” refers to polyphony, or contrasting musical voices juxtaposed harmoniously. The phrase was invoked by music critic and comparative literature scholar Edward Said (1931-2003) to describe his vision of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Arabs. In addition to his scholarly work and criticism, Said was a vocal agitator for change from the 1970s through the 1990s in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Rather than addressing political themes explicitly, Matar and Abu Milhem emphasize the fundamental dignity and humanity of individuals caught up in fractious political conundrums.



Boston-based Lebanese photographer **Rania Matar's** series *The Forgotten People* (2002-2006) focuses on what she describes as “ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances.” Matar investigates the everyday living conditions at several Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon. She is one of the few independent photographers to have visited and documented life in these camps.



Arab-Israeli sculptor **Buthina Abu Milhem's** mixed-media textile objects weave together themes of tradition, heritage, gender, abstraction, and Palestinian identity. They are metaphors for the coexistence of seemingly contrasting notions of tradition and heritage, on the one hand, and a progressive, feminist notion of Muslim identity, on the other. Her series *The Needle Vanquishes the Sewer* celebrates a variety of traditional Palestinian regional embroidery designs. However, they are treated as abstract design elements juxtaposed with graffiti-like texts, expressive needlework, and a painterly use of threads.

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The **Tufts University Art Gallery** animates the intellectual life of the greater university community through exhibitions and programs exploring new, global perspectives on art and on art discourse. The Gallery is located in the **Aidekman Arts Center** on Tufts University's **Medford** campus. The Gallery is fully accessible and admission is free. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00am to 5:00p.m; Thursdays until 8:00pm. **Free** daytime visitor parking is available in the two parking lots off Lower Campus Road. Parking passes must be obtained at the front desk of the Tisch Gallery and displayed on your dashboard. Free event parking is available without a pass in the lot behind the Aidekman Arts Center, off Lower Campus Road. Call **617-627-3518** for more information or visit www.ase.tufts.edu/gallery.