

Press Reviews

A RETROSPECTIVE IN HAIFA: "THE STRUGGLE TO SAVE LUTFIA" BY ABED ABDI

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A retrospective exhibition of well-know Arab painter Abed Abdi, "Secrets, Drawers and Identities: Homage to My Sister Lutfia, Yarmouk Refugee Camp," will be open on Saturday evening, May 18, at the Beit Hagefen Arab-Jewish Cultural Center in Haifa.

Abdi was lucky, he spent only three years as a refugee. Lutfia, on the other hand, has been a refugee for the past 65 years. She was recently

forced to flee from her home in the Yarmouk camp and seek shelter from the Syrian civil war's atrocities in her daughter's Damascus apartment.

At 71, Abdi is still energetic, appearing considerably younger than his age and he is an active member of the Communist Party of Israel. Abdi had spent seven years studying at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts; his teacher was Lea Grundig, who, like her student, was also a refugee. She was a German communist who had fled with her Jewish husband from the horrors of Nazi Germany to Mandatory Palestine, where she remained for six years, before returning to what was now East Germany. He had fled from Palestine, in the wake of the Zionist conquest, subsequently returning to his native land before setting off again as a young man to study in Germany. For 11 years, Abdi worked as an illustrator and graphic artist the Arabic-language communist newspaper "Al Ittihad" as well as on some of writer and leading Communist Party member Emile Habibi's books.

He has taught art at many educational institutions in Israel and has held solo exhibitions both here and overseas. In 1978, in the Western Galilee town of Sakhnin, he and artist Gershon Knispel erected a Land Day memorial, marking the day in 1976 when Israeli security forces shot



and killed six Arab-Palestinians who were protesting Israel's expropriation of Arab-owned land in the country's north to build Jewish-only settlements.

Abdi is the first Arab artist in Israel to be awarded a prize, in 2008, from the Culture and Sports Ministry. Recently, an exquisite catalog - published by the Umm al-Fahm Art Gallery and edited by Tal Ben Zvi - has appeared, encapsulating Abdi's 50 years of artistic work.

"Refugees" by Abed Abdi, 1974

Zu Haderech, Friday, 17 May 2013 15:54

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