

# Tayseer Barakat

By the TWIP collective,  
based on texts  
by Rula Alami Zaki and  
Khalid Horani



Born in 1959 in Jabalia Refugee Camp in Gaza (a place he has not been able to visit for almost 20 years), Tayseer Barakat continues to be heavily influenced by the environment in which he grew up. This is reflected in both his subject matter and the variety of media he works with, including wood, metal, and glass.

Barakat graduated with a BA in oil painting from the College of Fine Arts in Alexandria, Egypt. Since 1983, he has been based in Ramallah, teaching and producing art. He has held numerous solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions locally in Ramallah and Jerusalem, and internationally in

other Middle Eastern counties, Europe, and South America, including the Sao Paolo International Biennial (1997), the Sharjah Biennial (2003), and the Alexandria Biennial (2010), to name just a few. Barakat is a founding member of Al-Wasiti Art Center in Jerusalem; Al-Hallaj Hall in Ramallah, home to the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA); and the International Academy of Arts in Palestine in Ramallah.

Tayseer Barakat is one of Palestine's preeminent artists whose practice has drawn inspiration from the ancient past and from the oral traditions and cultural narratives that are intimately tied to life in Palestine. Working primarily in paint, inks, and dyes, he uses a color palette that is often limited to monochrome



Al-Thara wal Thurayya.



Dialogue.

tones, which imbues his works with a certain soberness. In Barakat's words, the dark colors he uses "reflect the hardships of our time and our present life. I think the pressure on us makes us use dark colors."

With deep yearning, Barakat calls back to this land the divinity of the ancient past; he preserves the radiance of its history, spanning from the Canaanite ancestors to the last of the children now born in Jabalia Refugee Camp. In his attempts to reveal the unknown, Barakat travels far away from the perceived and the intellectual to roam freely within the soul, burning into wood the questions of existence and being. As certainty vanishes into vulnerability, the artist moves away from words, letting his imagination and

dreams express legend in a color that is different from all others. This subtle expression uses logos, abundant with endless symbols that have, since the beginning of time, been used by human beings to overcome worries and concerns through charms and magic. His three-dimensional works, created by fire on natural wood, take us to a new space and to magical horizons that are shrouded in a mystery that is difficult to capture. Around this space, people revolve, waiting for fate. Charms and spells float within a climate not different from that of a spider's web. Barakat embarks on a journey into space, guided by strings that connect heaven to earth.

Mariam.



Bisan.



Haneen.



Yafa.

