صـــــفير زمـــــلـــــر غـــــاليري
SFEIR-SEMLER GALLERY

Samia Halaby

Born 1936 in Jerusalem, Palestine
Lives and works in New York, US

Samia Halaby (b.1936 in Jerusalem) is a Palestinian-American artist, and scholar living and working in New York.

Halaby is a painter who was educated in the 1950s in the American Midwest, at a time when abstract expressionism was popular. While her work is very much in line with American art movements she evolved with, it is consciously enriched by the history of pictorial expression worldwide. Her oeuvre is today central to the study of abstraction within both global and Arabic visual language.

In her practice, she methodically studies the textures, surfaces, and colors of her surroundings, through the prism of her ongoing theoretical studies. Looking at the effect of light on the aspect of objects around her, or creating illusions of roundness on plane surfaces, she continuously investigates how the human eye records the world: she pays special attention to how we see our surrounding while moving, how surfaces seem to expand and contract as we pass them on the street, or how we react to sudden noises that capture our full attention. In the mid-1980s, her time as a visiting artist at the University of Hawaii marks a turning point in her exploration of motion. The constant flux she tries to capture on canvas pushes her to break free from the traditional rectangular fabric. Playing with time, space, and movement in her work, she produces large installations that extend beyond the canvas edges, shaped and cut-out canvases, three-dimensional mobiles, and unconventionally large paintings that force the viewer to walk alongside them. Using the most advanced tools available to her at the time, Halaby teaches herself coding and starts in 1986 to program kinetic paintings on an amiga computer, even coding sound into several pieces. These experimentations with computer-generated visuals naturally evolve into the Kinetic Painting Program, through which she transforms the keyboard of her PC into a live digital painting instrument.

In over six decades Halaby has produced an immense body of work and is a very particular, innovative figure within her generation of artists. Understanding what parts of a painting the eye will first see, and how our mind will record the visual, she constantly foregrounds works and techniques and, in retrospect, was at the avant-garde of artistic production throughout her career.

As an independent scholar she has contributed to the documentation of Palestinian art of the twentieth century. Her writings on art history, pedagogy, and aesthetics have also appeared in numerous publications over the last three decades. As an educator, Halaby introduced a groundbreaking undergraduate studio art program to art departments throughout the Midwest and was the first full-time female associate professor at the Yale School of Art for nearly a decade.

In 2024, the jury of the Biennale Arte in Venice awarded Halaby a Special Mention in recognition of her longstanding work.

Solo Exhibitions

2025 *Hyundai Card First Look: Samia Halaby*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
Abstract in Motion, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Downtown, Beirut, Lebanon

2024 *Eye Witness*, MSU Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, Michigan, USA
Fragments of time, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg, Germany

2023 *de-coding colors, 1982-2022*, Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Karantina, Beirut, Lebanon
Lasting Impressions: Samia Halaby, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE

2017 *Documentary Drawings of the Kafr Qasem Massacre*, Birzeit University Museum, Ramallah, Palestine

2015 *Five Decades of Painting and Innovation*, Beirut Exhibition Center, Beirut, Lebanon

2006 *A Useful Magnificent Language: The Work of Samia A. Halaby*, Tompkins County Public Library, Ithaca, New York, USA

2000 Sakakini Art Center, Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine

1995 Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan

1983 Housatonic Museum, Bridgeport, Connecticut, USA

1972 Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

Group Exhibitions

2025 Radical Software: Women, Art & Computing. 1960-1991, Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier, Vienna, Austria

2024 *Electric Dreams: Art and Technology Before the Internet*, Outernet and Tate Modern, London, UK
Radical Software: Women, Art & Computing 1960-1991, MUDAM, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
Foreigners Everywhere, 60th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy

2023 *Grounding Light,* Manar Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Small World, Taipei Biennial, Taipei, Taiwan

2022 *Natasha*, Singapore Biennale 2022, Singapore
Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, Block Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, USA

2021 *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World*, Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, USA
Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, Boston, USA

2020 *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World*, 1950s–1980s, NYU Grey Art Gallery, New York, USA

2019 *Intimate Terrains: Representations of a Disappearing Landscape*, The Palestinian Museum, Birzeit, Palestine
Grand Opening, Palestine Museum, Woodbridge, Connecticut, USA
Between two rounds of fire, the exile of the sea, Katzen Art Center, American University Museum, Washington DC, USA
Jerusalem Lives (Tahya Al Quds), The Palestinian Museum, Birzeit, Palestine

Enfolding and Unfolding: Geometric Abstraction in Motion, School of Visual Arts, New York, USA

2016 *This Sea is Mine*, 3rd Qalandiya International Biennial, Palestine

2015 *Rituals of Signs and Transitions (1975 – 1995)*, Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan
Self: Portraits of Artists in Their Absence, National Academy Museum, New York, USA

2014 *Seeing Through Light: Selections from the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection*, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2009 *Palestine: La création dans tous ses états (Palestine: Creativity in all its Generations)*, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France

2007-08 *Keep Hope Alive, The Olive Project*, traveling exhibition: Ethnographic and Art *Museum*, Birzeit University, Palestine; Al Hoash Gallery, Jerusalem, Palestine; Japan Bank Building, Hiroshima, Japan; Maruki Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

2003 *Made in Palestine*, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, Texas, USA
Breaking the Veils, traveling exhibition: UNESCO, Paris, France; Rhodes, Greece; Athens, Greece

2001 *Couleur Palestine (Rhythms from Palestine)*, Le musée du Château Dufresne, Montreal, Canada

1998 *Palestinian Art*, The Royal Academy of Art, Stockholm, Sweden

1994 *Forces of Change*, National Museum of Women, Washington D.C., USA

1991 *Digitized and Manipulated*, Sangre De Cristo Arts Center, Pueblo, Colorado, USA
Art And Algorithm, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, USA

1990-91 *Hilo International Exhibition Works on Paper*, University of Hawaii, Hawaii, USA

1989 *Tercero Bienal de la Habana '89*, Havana, Cuba

1985 *TAMARIND: 25 Years 1960-1925*, traveling exhibition: University Art Museum, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, USA

1982 *Palestinske Kunstnere (Palestinian Artists)*, Kunstnernes Hus, Chiristiansands Kunstforening, Christiansands, Norway

1981 *Palestinske Kunstnere (Palestinian Artists)*, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo, Norway

1979 *Contemporary Arab Artists II*, Iraqi Cultural Center Gallery, London, United Kingdom

1977 *Contemporary American Printmaking*, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, Indiana, USA
Contemporary American Prints, Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

1975 *Tamarind Prints*, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA

Recent Acquisitions, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

1974 *Nine Connecticut Artists*, The Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, Connecticut, USA

1973 *American Drawing*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

1969-70 *Six Faculty Artists*, Indiana University Museum, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

1966-71 *Art in The Embassies Program*, Department of State & The National Gallery, Washington D.C., USA

1965 *Art of Two Cities - Kansas City and Minneapolis (Purchase Award)*, traveling exhibition: Time-Life Gallery, New York, USA

Performances and Screenings

2025 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group with Samia Halaby, Museum Tinguely, Basel, CH

2024 Performance, Kinetic Painting with Samia Halaby, in collaboration with Amir ElSaffar, e-flux, New York, USA

2023 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Manar Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Performance, Kinetic Painting Jam Session: Samia Halaby and Julian Abraham "Togar", Taipei Biennale, Taipei, Taiwan

2019 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Bernie Wohl Auditorium, New York, USA

1998 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, The Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, Brooklyn, New York, USA
Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Lincoln Center, New York, USA

1997 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, USA
Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan

1994 Performance, Kinetic Painting Group, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, USA

Awards

2024 La Biennale di Venezia Special Mention
Takreem Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award

Institutional Collections

Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Mellon Foundation, New York; Lenbachhaus, Munich; Art Jameel Jeddah/Dubai; Alternative Museum, New York; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; Dalloul Art Foundation, Beirut; Darat Al Funun - The Khalid Shoman Foundation, Amman; Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit; Center for the Arts, Vero Beach; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland; Fine Arts Museum of Long Island, Hempstead; Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi; Honolulu Academy of Arts, Honolulu; Indiana University Museum, Bloomington; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Kalamazoo Institute of Art, Kalamazoo; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Mead Art Museum, Amherst; Memphis State University Art Collection, Tennessee; Michigan

State University Museum, East Lansing; The National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; The National Museum of Jordan, Amman; The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Nelson Rockhill Gallery of Art, Kansas City; Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs; Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City; Speed Art Museum, Louisville; Tamarind Lithography Institute, Albuquerque; The Jane Voorheese Immerli Art Museum, New Brunswick; The University Gallery - Memphis State University, Memphis; University of Michigan, Kalamazoo; Yale University Gallery, New Haven

Publications

2024 *Samia Halaby: Eye Witness*, [exhibition catalogue] MSU Broad Art Museum, Michigan State University, Michigan, USA

2023 *Lasting Impressions: Samia Halaby*, [exhibition catalogue] Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE

2014 *Samia Halaby: Five Decades of Painting and Innovation*, Edited by Maymanah Farhat, Booth-Clibborn Editions, London, United Kingdom

2006 *Samia Halaby*, Inea Bushnaq and Samia Halaby, Fine Arts Publishing, Beirut, Lebanon

Education

1963 MFA, Painting, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA

1960 MA, Painting, Michigan State University, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

1959 BS, Design, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA