



Boulder Museum of
Contemporary Art

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BMOCA.org

For Immediate Release

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA) Presents
Helen Zughaib: *Stories My Father Told Me*
Guest curated by Jennifer Heath

BMoCA at Macky

Fall 2019 Exhibition

Helen Zughaib: *Stories My Father Told Me*

August 21 – November 24, 2019

BOULDER, CO – August 19, 2019 – Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA) announces its Fall 2019 BMoCA at Macky Exhibition: Helen Zughaib: *Stories My Father Told Me*. Helen Zughaib is one of the most renowned Arab-American artists in the United States. Her work is exhibited in the White House, the Library of Congress, the World Bank and in hundreds of collections, museums and galleries across the globe. President Barack Obama presented a painting by Zughaib to Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave one of her paintings to Morocco's King Mohammad VI. Zughaib is an ambassador for peace, whose art illuminates the commonalities of all people, bridging what often seem to be insurmountable cultural divides.

Artist Talk with Helen Zughaib

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

6:30-8:00pm

Free

Join Helen Zughaib as she discusses and describes her artwork, its genesis, and the content of her father's stories. In addition, she will introduce her new book, *Stories My Father Told Me*, newly published by Cune Press, and available for sale at the event.

Presented in partnership with the Jaipur Literature Festival

Full details of the exhibition are below. For more information please contact Sarah Braverman at 303-443-2122 or sarah@bmoca.org

Helen Zughaib: *Stories My Father Told Me*

Helen Zughaib is one of the most renowned Arab-American artists in the United States. Zughaib is an ambassador for peace, whose art illuminates the commonalities of all people, bridging what often seem to be insurmountable cultural divides. She does this through rhythms of pattern and color, with a sensitivity that perhaps only one who occupies both East and West can achieve. She sees beauty – aesthetic *and* soul beauty – where others find strife. She grounds the viewer in history, tradition and humor. She eschews blunt politics, nevertheless clearly illustrating today's ongoing, increasing tragedies – the unbearable pain of war, diaspora and migration – with visual compassion so profound it carves a path to dialogue.



Image: Helen Zughaib, *Coming to America* (detail), 2003, gouache on board, 15x20".
Courtesy of a private collection.

Helen Zughaib was born in Lebanon and grew up in the Middle East and Europe, before coming to the U.S. to study art at Syracuse University. (She herself was twice forced to flee conflict – the 1967 Israeli Six-Day War and the 1975 Lebanese civil war.) After 9/11, Zughaib persuaded her Syrian Lebanese father, Elia Zughaib, to recount his life as a boy, which culminated in his own migration to the United States. Zughaib translated his tales into art and the result are these twenty-five wondrous *Stories My Father Told Me* in this exhibition. They have become a prologue to the long conversation Zughaib is now conducting with her *Syrian Migration* series currently traveling the country.

Thirty-five years after she fled Lebanon, Zughaib took *Stories My Father Told Me* back “home” to be displayed in Beirut’s Agial Gallery. And this year, at last, the exhibition has been shaped into a book, published by Cune Press, where the abridged tales displayed in her exhibition can be read in full.

Stories My Father Told Me is a work of exquisite love, an urgently needed gift of memory within reach of those whose pasts are buried.

About Helen Zughaib

Helen Zughaib was born in Beirut, Lebanon, living mostly in the Middle East and Europe before coming to the United States to study art at Syracuse University, earning her BFA from the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Zughaib currently lives and works as an artist in Washington, D.C. She paints primarily in gouache and ink on board and canvas. More recently, she has worked with wood, shoes and cloth in mixed media installations.

Her work has been widely exhibited in galleries and museums in the United States, Europe and Lebanon. Her paintings are included in many private and public collections, including: the White House; World Bank; Library of Congress; US Consulate General in Vancouver, Canada; American Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq; and the Arab American National Museum in Detroit, Michigan. Her paintings are included in the DC Art Bank Collection and she has received the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Fellowship award in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. Her paintings have also been in Art in Embassy State Department exhibitions abroad, including Brunei, Nicaragua, Mauritius, Iraq, Belgium, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Her paintings have been gifted to heads of state by President Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

“As an Arab American, I hope through my work to encourage dialogue and bring understanding and acceptance between the people of the Arab world and the United States, especially since 9/11, our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the more recent revolutions and crises in the Arab world, resulting from the “Arab Spring” that began in late 2010, leading to the civil war in Syria and the massive displacement of people seeking refuge in Europe, the Middle East and America.



Image: Helen Zughaib, *Charity and Compassion* (detail), 2003, gouache on board, 15x20”.

About Jennifer Heath, Guest Curator

Jennifer Heath is an independent scholar, art curator, award-winning activist and cultural journalist. She is founder-director of baksun books & arts. Heath is also the author or editor of thirteen books of fiction and non-fiction, including: *On the Edge of Dream: The Women of Celtic Myth and Legend* (Penguin), *The Echoing Green: The Garden in Myth and Memory* (Penguin), *The Scimitar and the Veil: Extraordinary Women of Islam* (Paulist Press), *A House White With Sorrow* (Roden Press), *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore, and Politics* (University of California Press), *Land of the Unconquerable: The Lives of Contemporary Afghan Women* (University of California Press, co-edited with Ashraf Zahedi) and *Children of Afghanistan: The Path to Peace* (University of Texas Press, with Zahedi). Forthcoming are *Two Forevers Nowhere Yet: A Meditation on the History of Death* and, with Zahedi, *Book of the Disappeared: The Quest for Transnational Justice*.

Heath's many art exhibitions include: *Murmurations: Wingéd Beings Sacred and Profane* (2019), *Imaginary Maps: Expeditions to Uncover Apocryphal, Unsubstantiated and Forbidden Places* (2018), *Black Velvet: The Art We Love to Hate* (1992-1997), *The Veil: Visible & Invisible Spaces* (2008-2013), *Water, Water Everywhere: Paeon to a Vanishing Resource* (2012-present), and *The Map is Not the Territory: Parallel Paths: Palestinians, Native Americans, Irish* (2013-2017), *Perilous Journeys* (2018) and *Origins* (2018). In 2016, she conceived and directed a massive Boulder County-wide exhibition: *Celebration! A History of the Visual Arts in Boulder*.



Image: Helen Zughaib, *Subhiyyi at Teta's House* (detail), 2009, gouache on board, 15x20".

About BMoCA @ Macky

BMoCA @ Macky is a collaboration between BMoCA and The Andrew J. Macky Gallery, located in the foyer of the [Macky Auditorium Concert Hall](#) at the University of Colorado Boulder. This series of exhibitions is curated by BMoCA as an extension to its rotating exhibition schedule.

Admission to the gallery is free and open to the public, Monday–Friday, 10am–4:30pm and to ticketed patrons during Macky Auditorium performances and events.

About BMoCA

The mission of Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA) is to be a catalyst for creative experiences through the exploration of significant art of our time. As a non-collecting institution, BMoCA presents rotating exhibitions and programs that stimulate active participation in the global dialogue about contemporary art.

The museum annually serves over 114,000 people each year with 9+ exhibitions and over 500 programs presented for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. In 1976, the organization moved to its current location in downtown Boulder's Civic Area. BMoCA's 7 unique education outreach programs engage audiences of all ages with creative and contemporary art experiences with a focus on ensuring participants gain knowledge about the themes and techniques of contemporary art, as well as appreciate their own unique abilities to create art. These free access programs serve over 7,500 people.

BMoCA is located at 1750 13th Street in downtown Boulder, Colorado. The museum's hours are Tuesday–Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; closed Monday. Museum admission is \$2 for adults; free for youth under 12 and BMoCA members. Free admission to the museum is offered every Saturday year round and on Wednesdays from 4–8 p.m. during the Boulder Farmers Market season. BMOCA.org / 303.443.2122.

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