



كليم بشارة
KALIM BECHARA
ART GALLERY

Holiday Inn Beirut

Mira El-Khalil







Holiday Inn Beirut

Mira El-Khalil

Exhibition

Opening **Thursday** 18 December 2025
6PM

Kalim Bechara Gallery

Noor Gardens 1 building, Omar Daouk street, Downtown
Lebanon

Gallery Open Hours

Friday	11 am–7 pm
Saturday	11 am–5 pm
Sunday	Closed
Monday	11 am–7 pm
Tuesday	11 am–7 pm
Wednesday	11 am–7 pm
Thursday	11 am–7 pm

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Scan to view Artist Profile



كليم بشارة
KALIM BECHARA
2017

HOLIDAY INN BEIRUT

Mira El-Khalil

Since 2019, Mira El-Khalil has been quietly constructing a visual language rooted in the emotional geographies of Beirut, her imagination, and memories. Her practice began with a singular, unwavering subject: the burnt, war-scarred Holiday Inn Hotel in Beirut, a monolithic witness to the Lebanese Civil War and an unavoidable landmark of the artist's childhood memory. For years, El-Khalil painted the building as an isolated figure, an architectural self-portrait; a site that held her sense of origin and the fragility of belonging.

The works gathered in this exhibition reveal a profound shift. The Holiday Inn does not disappear; instead, it becomes part of an expanded psychological landscape. It moves from foreground to background, from trauma-site to memory-furniture, from symbol to participant. The building now sits behind conversations, floats above gardens, rests beside cups of coffee, or hovers at the edge of a shared moment.

The paintings no longer circle solely around the building's history. Instead, the Holiday Inn becomes part of a broader emotional vocabulary shaped by diaspora, friendship, nostalgia, and the search for intimacy across distances. The figures, whether symbolic, imagined, or inspired by people in El-Khalil's life, are now central. They converse, walk together, negotiate space, look outward, look inward, or rest in contemplation. Objects become characters; spaces hold memory; memory becomes a stage.

In El-Khalil's world, her mother's cup of coffee, can speak to a war-scarred façade. The symbolism is personal, but its resonance is communal.

After years living and working between the UK and Europe, and after close exposure to art fairs, museums, auction houses, and the textures of the Western art market, El-Khalil's palette has evolved dramatically. The works carry echoes of: David Hockney, in the carefree blues, the sunlit architecture, and the calm, confident textures that treat everyday scenes as portals; Joan Mitchell, in the layered chromatic movement and the electric collisions of color; René Magritte, in the poetic slippages between reality and symbol, and the way objects maintain the quiet authority of dreams; Henri Matisse, in the liberated brushwork and sensuous paint handling; Brazilians such as Manoel de Oliveira Monteiro, in the sense of movement, figures caught mid-gesture, scenes alive with subtle cinematic dynamism.

Running parallel to her European influences is a strong anchoring in Lebanese artistic heritage. The experimental softness of Aref El-Rayess, particularly his daring use of pinks in landscapes, echoes through El-Khalil's skies and façades. Willy Aractingy's architectural rhythm is perhaps the closest cousin to her visual world, shaping an aesthetic bridge between memory and reconstruction.

These influences do not appear as quotations but as absorbed lessons. They have expanded El-Khalil's sense of composition and symbol: the placement of objects, the confidence in color, the willingness to let mundane items as tables, cushions, and plants, speak with the weight of memory.

The printed works created by the artist absorb yet another influence: fashion.

El-Khalil is deeply attuned to the chromatic fantasies of Miu Miu, Prada, and the playful spectacle of collaborations like Louis Vuitton x Yayoi Kusama. In her prints, the building becomes a fashion object as a pattern would be, or a motif, a wearable memory. Fashion's palette offers her a way to re-imagine the Holiday Inn not as ruin but as alive, evolving, and a desirable lesson, that **should not be ignored**.

Perhaps the strongest non-visual influence on the exhibition is music.

Arabic classics like Fairuz's Kifak Inta and Sanarji'a, provide a vocabulary of longing, friendship, and tenderness that shapes how El-Khalil paints human connection. These songs are themselves a cultural meeting place for the Lebanese diaspora; they remind listeners of shared values: loyalty, partnership, the intimacy of friendship across distance.

In counterpoint, Western music offers a different emotional temperature: Claudine Longet's carefree softness, the upbeat optimism of "Build Me Up Buttercup" by The Foundations, and the dreamy melancholy of Al Stewart's "Year of the Cat" (1976) all infuse her scenes with nostalgia, playfulness, and a sense of cinematic wandering.

In this exhibition, the Holiday Inn remains an ever-present witness, but no longer the sole protagonist. El-Khalil's world has grown larger, warmer, and more inhabited. Her paintings now hold moments of laughter, gestures of care, shared secrets, soft arguments, wordless companionship, and the quiet power of solitude. All of it unfolds beneath skies that could be Beirut or London, or somewhere in the collective imagination.

Through this shift, the artist would like to share: that memory does not freeze us in place; instead, it travels with us, transforming as we transform. And that even ruins, whether architectural or emotional, are sites of connection.

Her work invites viewers into a world where the past is not erased, but re-colored; where trauma is neither denied nor romanticized; where the symbols of history can coexist with fashion's whimsy, music's tenderness, and the fragile beauty of human relationships.

SAMRA

Brunette

Oil on canvas
165 x 140 cm
Executed 2025





COMPLICITÉ

A deep sense of mutual understanding

Oil on canvas

64 x 44 cm

Executed 2025





AHWET MOM

قهوة ماما or Mom's coffee

Oil on canvas

64 x 44 cm

Executed 2025





Untitled

Oil on canvas
90 x 60 cm
Executed 2025





ELLI TA ELLAK

قلبي تقاك or Let's share

Oil on canvas
76 x 60 cm
Executed 2025





COMMENT ÇA VA?

Or كيفك إنت

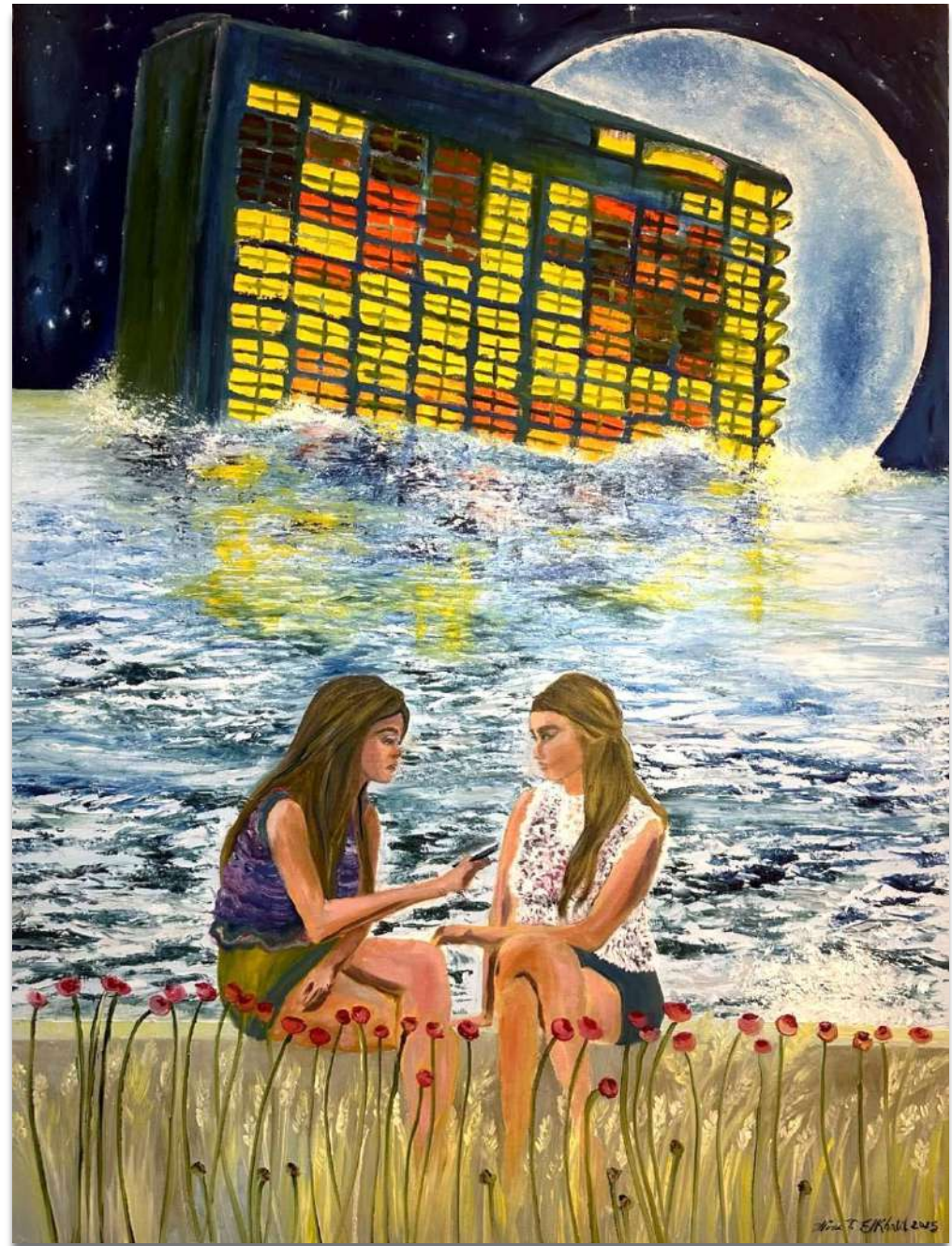
Oil on canvas
75 x 100 cm
Executed 2025





SUMMER TIME, READING TEXT MESSAGES

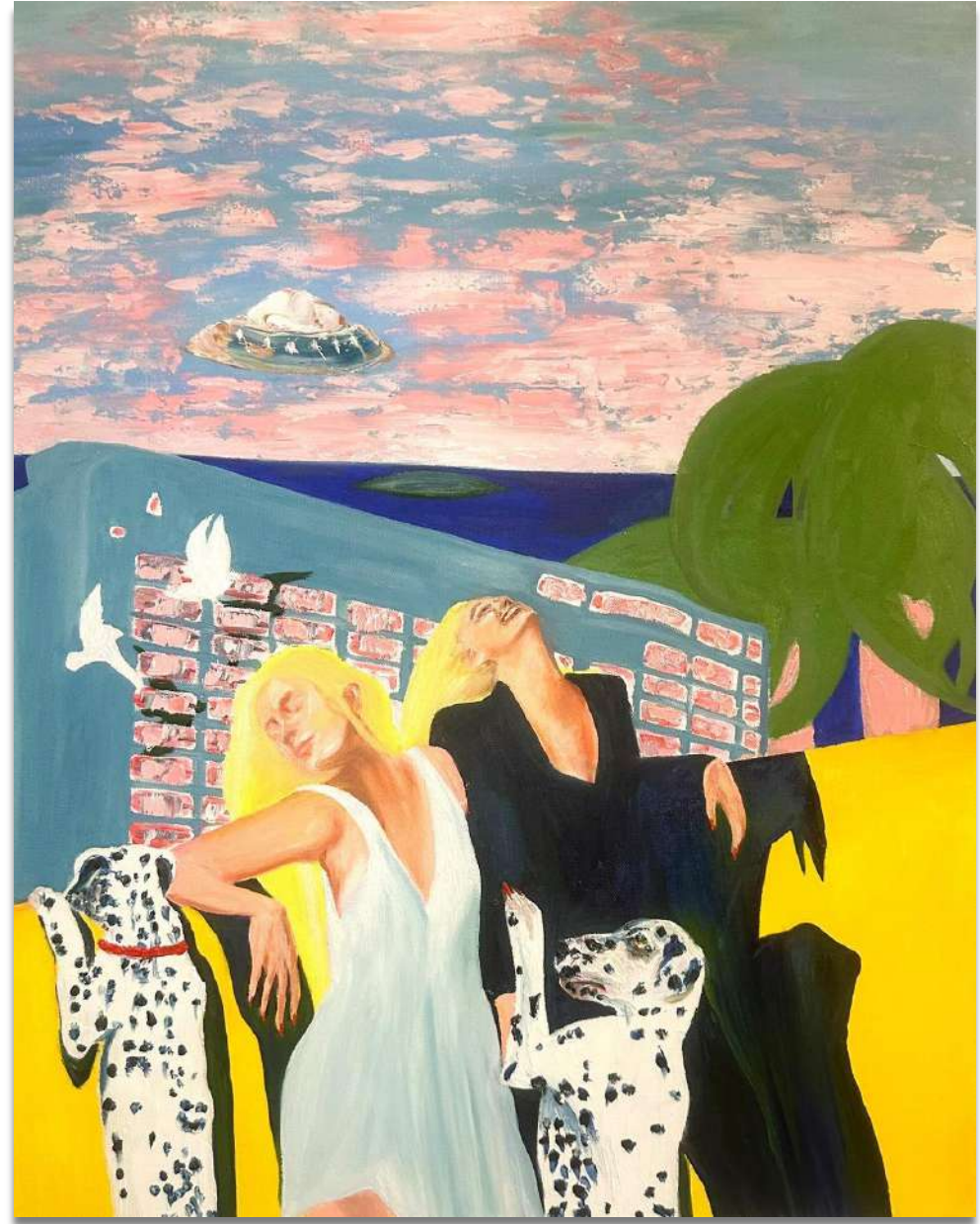
Oil on canvas
100 x 75 cm
Executed 2025





LUCKY

Oil on canvas
75 x 61 cm
Executed 2025





TOGETHER

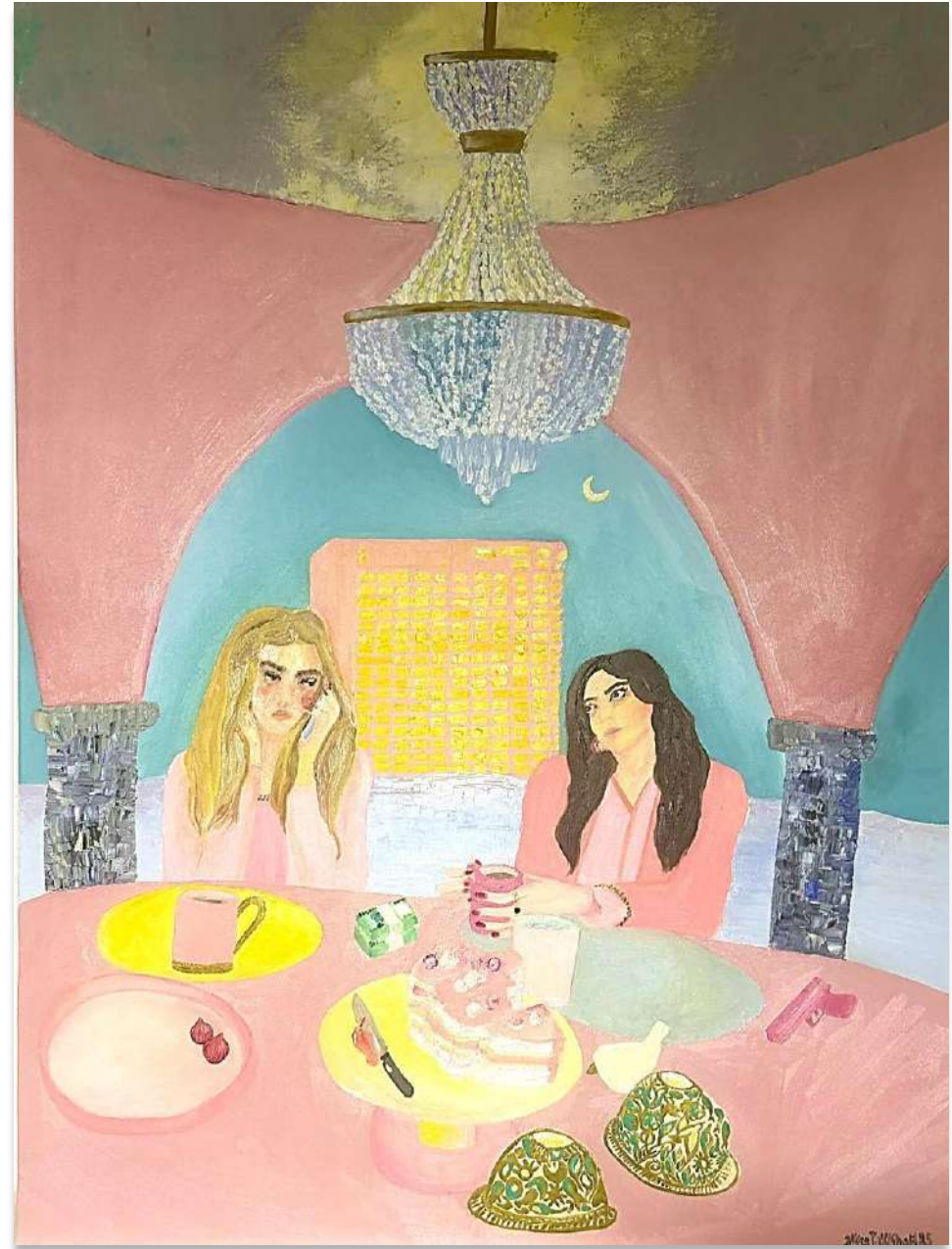
Oil on canvas
134 x 155 cm
Executed 2025

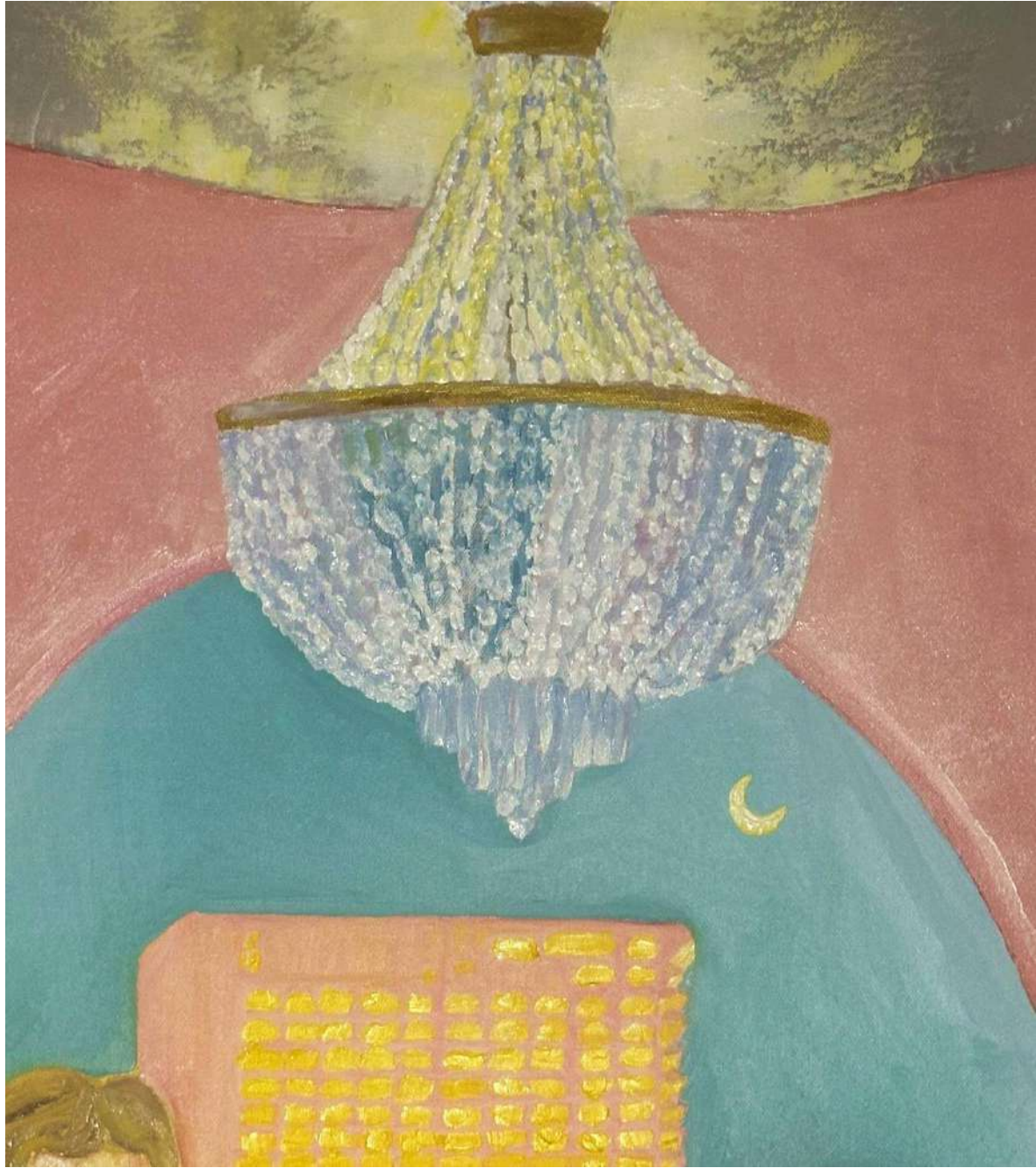




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Oil on canvas
100 x 75 cm
Executed 2025

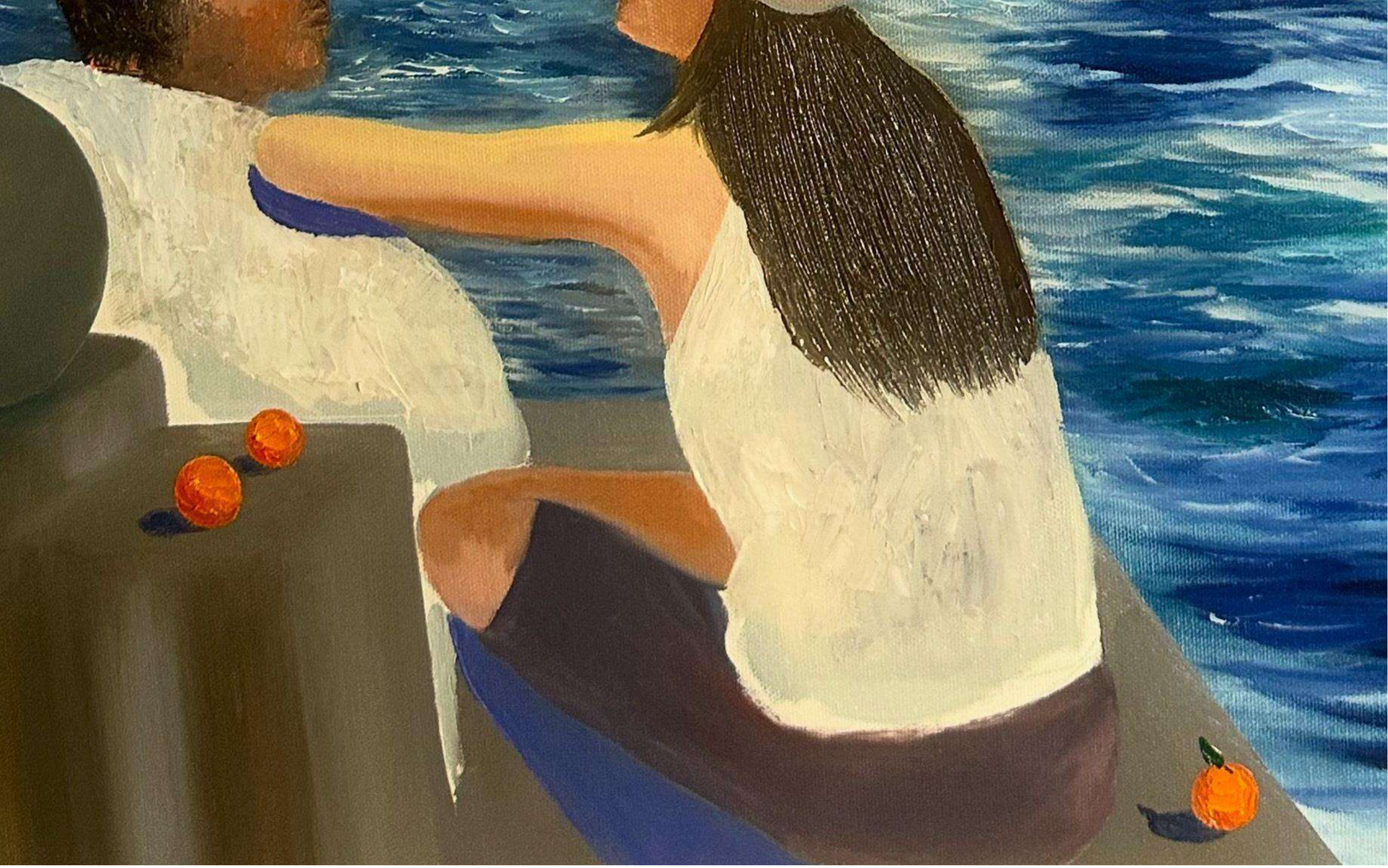




2020

Oil on canvas
75 x 100 cm
Executed 2025



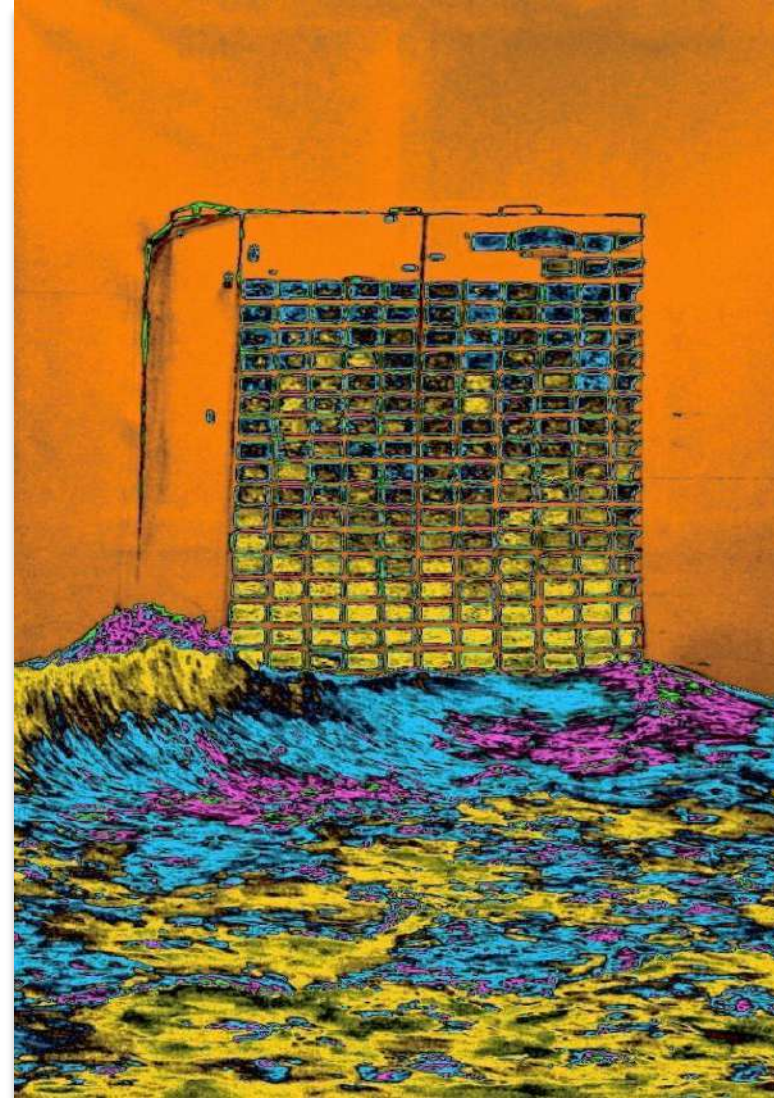


Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm
Executed 2020



Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm
Executed 2021



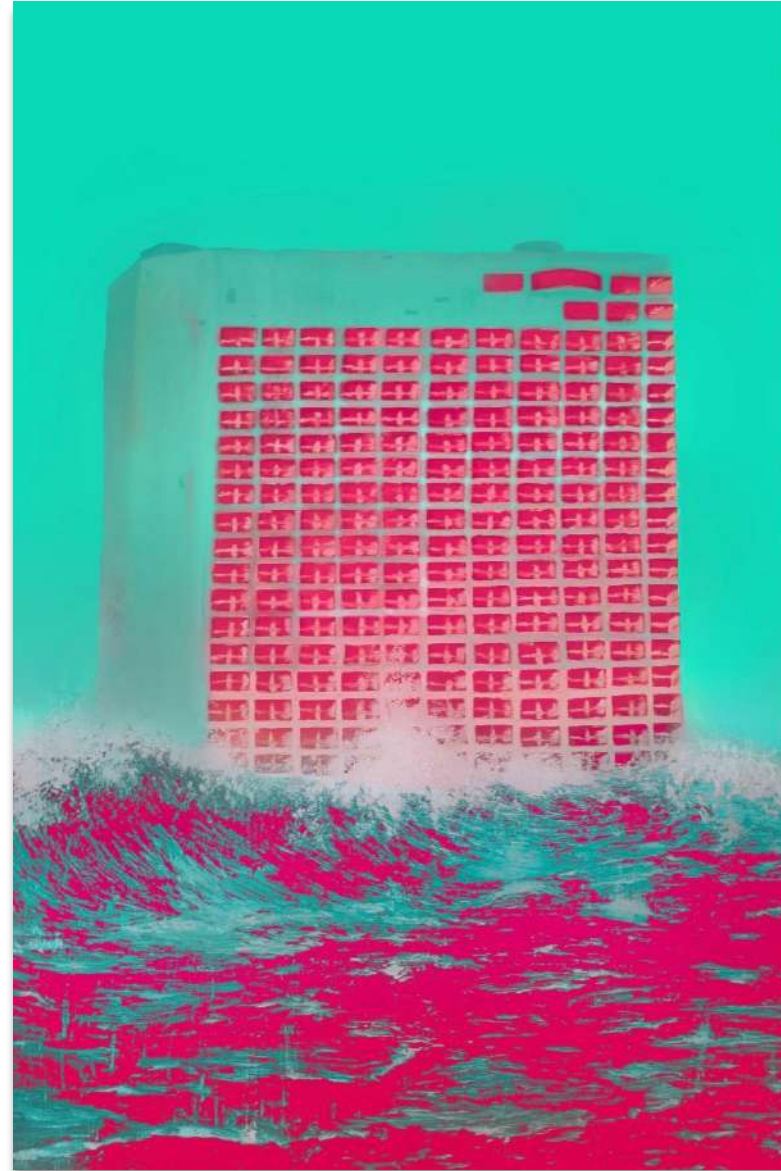
Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas
Executed 2021

65 x 45 cm

and
90 x 70 cm

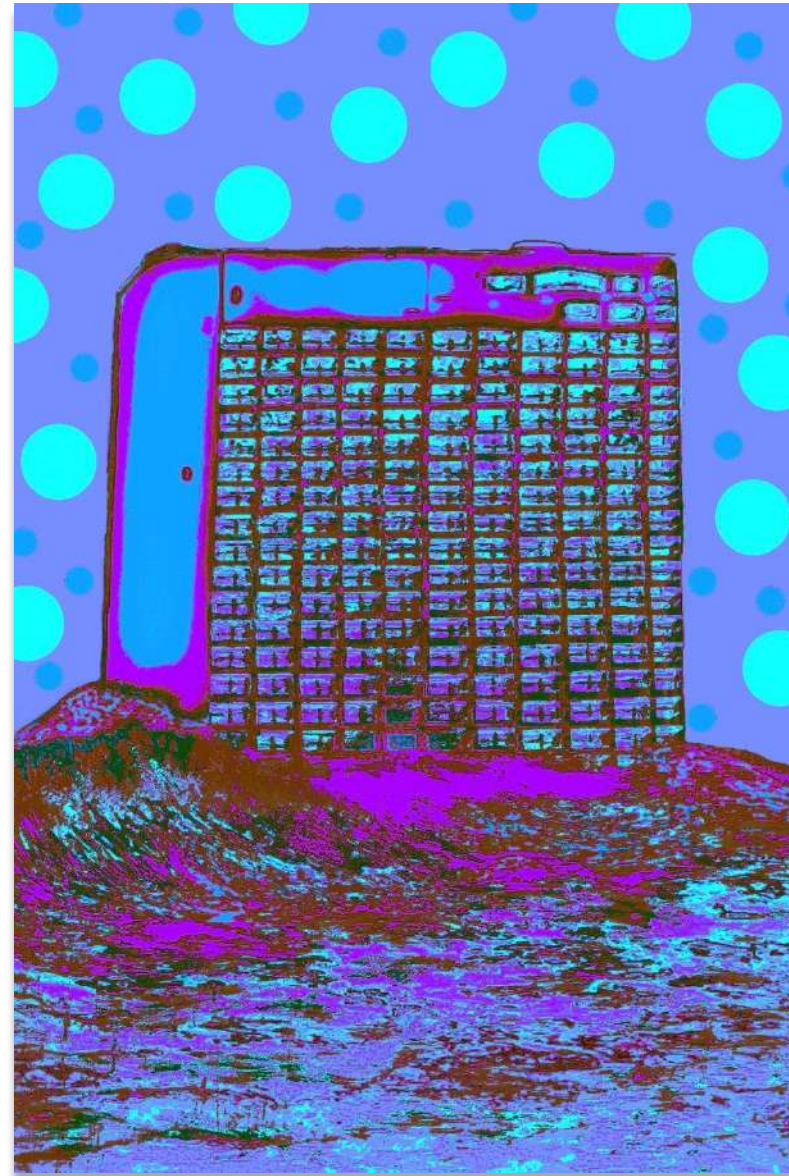


Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm
Executed 2022



Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm

Executed 2022



Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm
Executed 2022

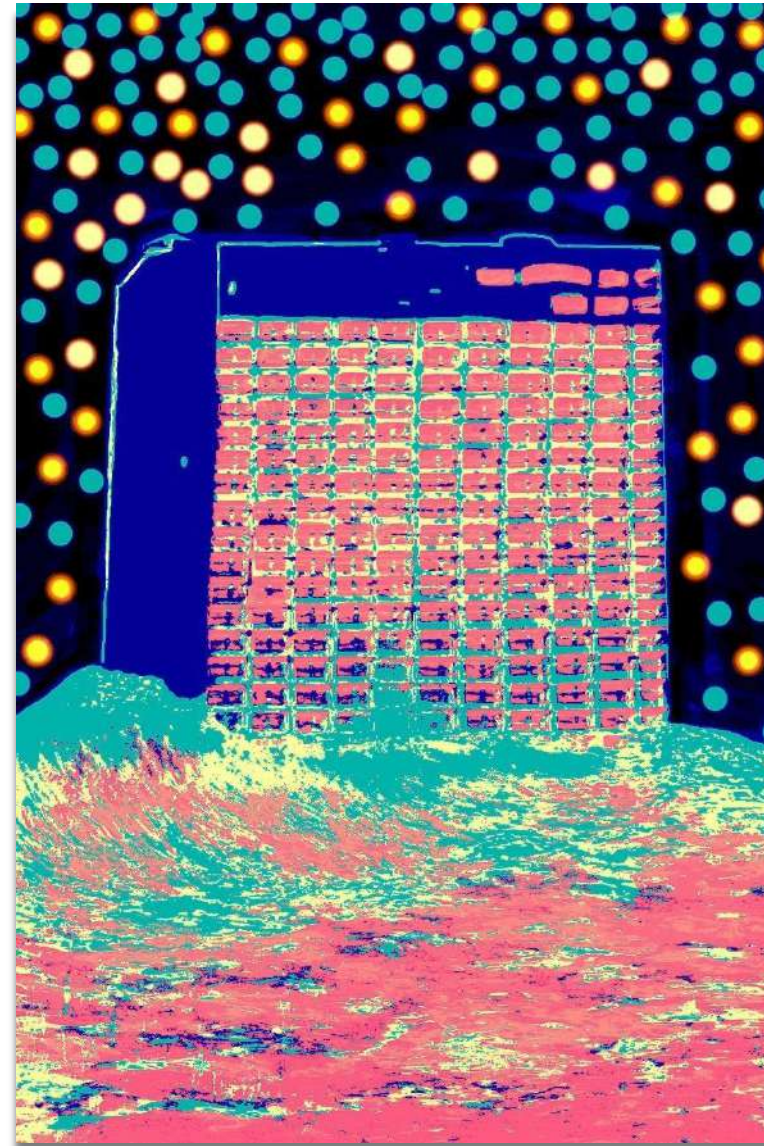


Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

65 x 45 cm
Executed 2022



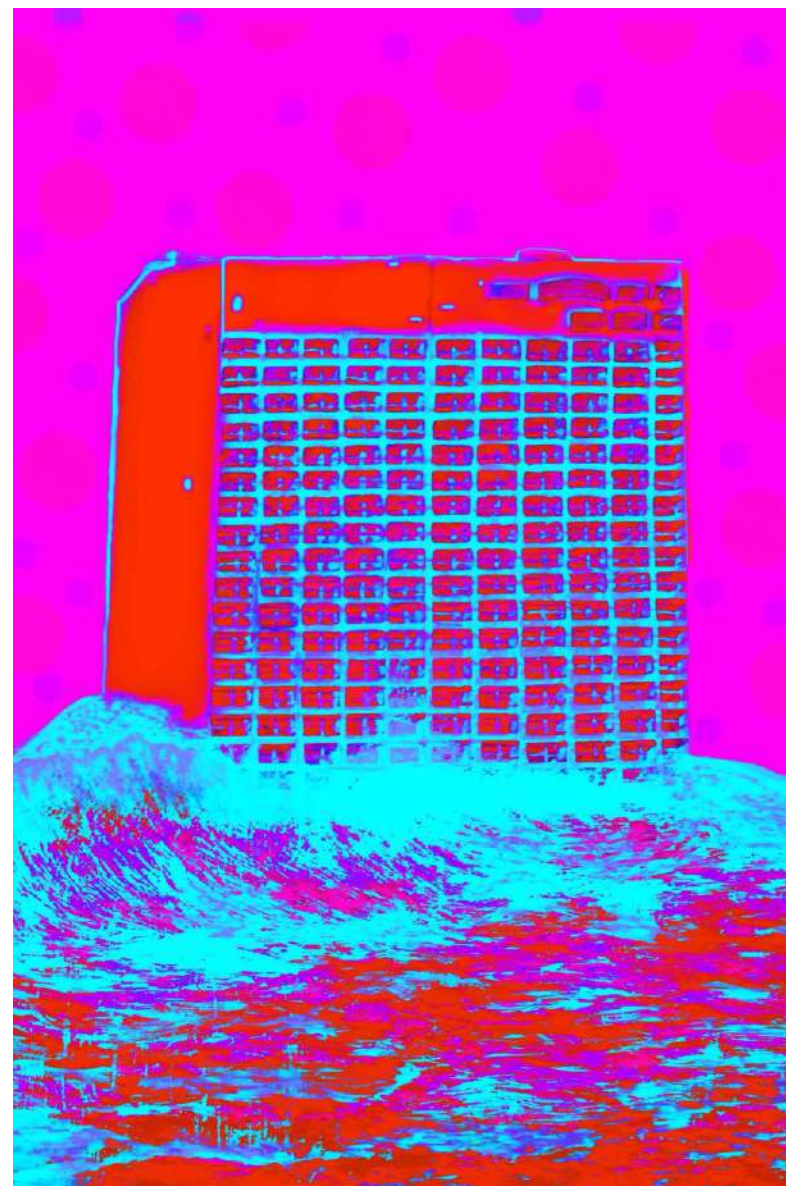
Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

90 x 70 cm

Executed 2022



Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

90 x 70 cm
Executed 2022



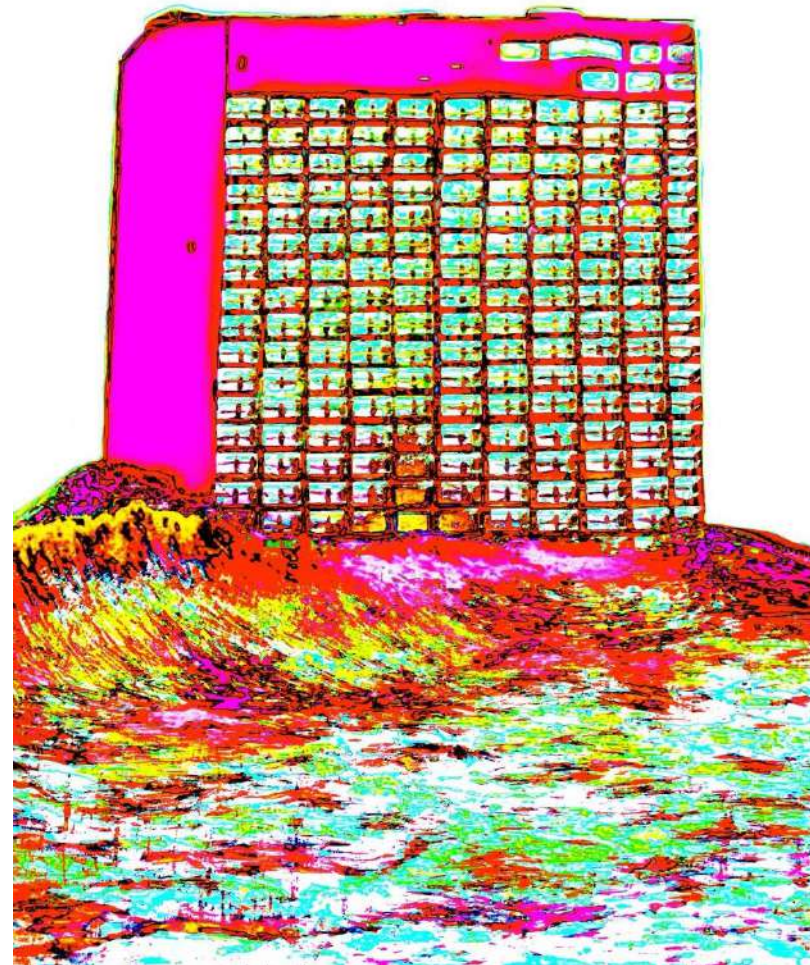
Holiday Inn Beirut

Print

Ink and Acrylic
on Canvas

90 x 70 cm

Executed 2022





Alaraby TV 2020

Mira El Khalil is an art professional whose practice explores socio-cultural narratives through painting. She holds an MA in Art Business with Distinction from Sotheby's Institute of Art and a BA in Media and Communications from the American University of Beirut. Alongside her artistic work, Mira currently serves as an Associate at Christie's Auction House, engaging with global art markets. Her exhibitions reflect a deep interest in modern origins, belongings, and contemporary identity influenced by the practice of European and Lebanese artists and her previous solo shows were in 2019 (Lebanon) and 2022 (London). El-Khalil's paintings are included in several private collections, including the MAC by Nadine and Johnny Mokbel.

