

Nermine Hammam

Biography Statement

Born in Egypt in 1967, Nermine Hammam is an Egyptian photo artist, living and working in Cairo. As an artist, she photographs the world and then alters the images she captures: her works are intricate composites of layered images and symbols, transformed through the prism of an aesthetic that combines digital manipulation and painting to form a rich and highly personal tapestry.

Hammam obtained her BFA in filmmaking from New York University's Tisch School of Arts, going on to work with Simon & Goodman and renowned film director Youssef Chahine. In images that pay homage to artists such as Diane Arbus, Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergmann and the Russian filmmaker, Tarkovsky, Hammam seeks out individuals in states of abandonment, marginalization or altered states of consciousness, relentlessly uncovering the vulnerability behind the mask, the frailty behind the gun and the hidden power structures within the family unit. Strongly influenced her background in filmmaking, her images form sequential narratives, like the stills of a film, related in time and space.

Concerned with the subjective nature of reality, Hammam subverts the stereotype, unmasking it, in all its two-dimensionality, forcing us to question the limits of images we hold in our minds and mistake for truth. She forages the belly of our collective subconscious, playing with the shared symbols from which we draw sustenance and comfort. Stereotypes of gender or military might become meaningless signifiers in images that trace the source of true power to a careful balance between the opposing energies of the universe. She is interested in archaic symbology that points to ancient truths concealed just beneath the thin veneer of politics, ideology and religion. In all her work, she engages with that constant state of flux at work within us and around us, representing 'stasis' as a beguiling but impossible utopia.

Over the past decade, her work has been shown in more than fifty international exhibitions, both solo and collective. She has been invited to exhibit at a variety of prestigious global forums including the Bamako Biennale for Photography, in Mali (2011), X Biennale, Cuenca, in Ecuador (2009) and Photo Biennale, Thessaloniki (2009). In July 2012, Hammam will show her works, in London, in a solo exhibition with Rose Issa Projects and the Qatan Foundation. She was also featured in 'Arab Photography Now' published last year by Rose Issa and Michket Krifa.