



Palestinian artist Samia Halaby exhibits work at

15th Havana Biennial

This exhibit comes after over a year of Israeli genocide in Gaza, continuing the tradition of Cuban solidarity with Palestine

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Photo via Artists Against Apartheid

The 15th Havana Biennial opened on November 15 with an exhibition of the artwork of world-renowned Palestinian painter, scholar, and educator **Samia Halaby**, returning for her second Havana Biennial after exhibiting at the Third Havana Biennial in 1989. The Havana Biennial has historically championed artists from the Global South, and artists who are often left out of a Euro-centric art world. “Our event has been defined as a space for confrontation and reflection of singular importance in the international art scene, with the essential purpose of contributing to the research, dissemination and recognition of the visual arts of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin

America and the Caribbean,” **states** the Biennial Foundation.

The exhibition of Halaby’s work is especially noteworthy given that her artistic practice was censored by her own alma mater, Indiana University, due to pressure from Zionist political forces. In February of 2023, Halaby’s planned exhibit at the university was suspended over her outspoken support for Palestine. The showing of Halaby’s artwork in Cuba underscores Cuba’s historical tradition of **deep ties of solidarity** with Palestine, which includes its training of Palestinian doctors at Cuban medical schools.

Halaby's submission to this year's Biennial includes a new painting titled "Organize, Reorganize, Build, Win," as well as four other iconic works of art: "Brass Woman" (1996/2019), "Yafa" (1996/2019), "Folding 8" (1987), and "Lines 4" (1987). Halaby's final submission to the exhibition is a film documenting her painting, "Worldwide Intifadah," (1989), which she brought to Havana for the Third Havana Biennial of 1989, but was not exhibited.

"There's a lot of interest in having the working class participate in art. For me, I discovered that instead of the artist taking their work to the working class, the working class

brought their art to me through their revolutionary movements,” says Halaby. “For me, art is the creativity of the community inspired by the most revolutionary workers that have created their future. And the Cuban Revolution very much taught us that in the artwork they produced.”



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