

**I CONTAIN MULTITUDES**

January 18– March 19, 2019

Fedrick Layton Gallery

**Fri., Jan. 18, 5 – 9 p.m.****Opening Night** - during Winter Gallery Night in the Historic Third Ward**Sat., Jan. 19, 2 p.m.****Opening Reception & Artists' Discussion** - Meet the 10 artists participating in the exhibit and view a documentary created about the making of this exhibition.**Thurs., Feb. 7, 7 p.m.****Navigating Between Cultures: Artists' Talk and Panel Discussion** - Fawzia Khan and Hend Al-Mansour lead a discussion on challenges of simultaneously being part of two cultures.**Wed., Feb. 27, 7 p.m.****Talking Suitcases** - Susan Armington discusses her project and workshops to fill a suitcase with handmade objects that tell stories and help participants gain insights about themselves, touching on topics such as immigration, racism, grief, personal loss and life transition.

For the exhibition *I Contain Multitudes* artist and curator, Nina Ghanbarzadeh, brings together ten prominent women artists living in the United States who in various ways express the complexities of living between cultures.

For these artists, living between cultures is a way of life, moving back and forth between two or more social spaces. Several of the artists have lived in many places before transplanting in the U.S., while others were born here and raised in families embracing both their current and original ethnic culture. Their backgrounds nurtured a sense of exploration of their cultures and upbringings, reflected in their work through juxtapositions of visual languages, cultural icons or symbolism, and experimentation with media.

These artists explore memory, heritage, human experiences, and language, often using labor-intensive processes to show the impact of change and transition in their lives. These paintings, drawings, mixed media objects and installations collectively speak about cultural negotiation, memory and nostalgia. *I Contain Multitudes* invites viewers to examine not only how multiculturalism and navigating in between different social norms affects the artists but also how it relates to the issues of immigration and diversity in our contemporary society.

**WHY DOES THIS EXHIBIT MATTER?**

*I Contain Multitudes* provides a rare opportunity to view work by prominent contemporary women artists from around the country who have responded in visual and visceral ways to current issues of immigration, the global refugee crisis, gender inequality, and challenging cultural norms.

This exhibition affirms in a unique and inspiring way what we already know: that art matters, and art can change lives. Several of these individuals changed careers, becoming artists as a response to changes in their own lives. As they moved from one definition of themselves to another, visual media became the most direct form of communication, transcending language, to express the multitudes within themselves.

As personal as each work is within this exhibition, *I Contain Multitudes* also addresses the universal human condition - every person is multi-faceted and multi-dimensional. We are the sum of our personal histories, cultures, languages, genealogy, and unique experiences. Through participating in this exhibit, we are encouraged to examine our own "multitudes."

**Gallery Hours**Monday through Saturday,  
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.MIAD's galleries are free &  
open to the public.  
To schedule a tour, contact  
[miad.edu/gallerytours](http://miad.edu/gallerytours).

**PROMPT QUESTIONS**

- The works of the artists in this exhibition feature themes of memory, heritage, change, and transition. Identify one or two pieces which feature the themes of change and transition. What “story” is each piece that you have chosen telling you – what are you learning about “change” or “transition”? HOW?
- How do the works in this exhibition call to the viewer to move beyond one interpretation of the work? On what levels are the individual pieces communicating to the viewer? What message do you perceive? How does the form enable or enhance the message?
- Many of the pieces are very labor-intensive in terms of construction. Which pieces call to you as a maker? How so? What questions do you have related to how the works were created?
- The work in the exhibition invites viewers to examine not only how multiculturalism and navigating between differing social “norms” affects the artists. What “norms” do you see represented? How are the artists investigating, pushing back against or complicating our understanding of social norms/ expectations through their work? Identify specific and discuss what you see. What discomfort or connections do you feel?
- Several of the artists in this exhibition abandoned their first chosen professional careers in order to embrace working as artists upon arriving and settling in the United States. For example, Hend Al- Mansour was a physician before getting her masters in Art History. Nina Ghanabzadeh had a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry but decided not to pursue that career. View their work and make notes on what you see and identify what questions you might have for them as professionals who made such profound changes in terms of where they lived and who they are as artists.
- How do the works in this exhibition challenge our thinking about defining who and how we are as human? How does art enable us to explore our humanity? To deepen the understanding of others? How can art be an action, enacting social change? Identify specific pieces that open up your thinking and pose new questions or deepen your sense of the complexities of the human experience.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Daher, Natalie. “Minneapolis artist sews new Somali history that crosses generations.” Star Tribune. 20 October, 2018,  
<http://www.startribune.com/a-minneapolis-artist-is-sewing-a-new-somali-history-that-crosses-generations/334675481/>

## Artist Websites:

Hend Al-Mansour <https://www.hendalmansour.com/>  
 Susan Armington <http://www.thesusanarmington.com/>  
 Nida Bangash <http://www.nidabangash.com/>  
 Roya Farassat <http://royafarassat.com/>  
 Nina Ghanbarzadeh <http://www.ninaghanbarzadeh.com/>  
 Farida Hughes <http://www.faridahughes.com/>  
 Fawzia Khan <http://www.mnartists.org/fawziakhan>  
 Ifrah Mansour  
 Kimberlee Joy Roth <http://kimberleejoyroth.com/>  
 Helen Zughaib <http://hzughaib.com/index.html>