



Lalla Essaydi's *Bullets*
Revisited #15, 2012.
Chromogenic print.
101.6x76.2cm

ON THE ROAD TO CHANGE

CARAVAN takes group exhibition *I AM* to Seattle as it continues to blaze the trail with its all-women show of Middle Eastern art, writes Irene Promodh

representations and reveal, as Chandler says, the "vital and particular roles that Middle Eastern women inhabit in the regional context, their tireless work to provide stability, harmony, peace and progress." He adds, "More often than not, it is the commonly held stereotypes that people buy into without ever challenging such simplistic and generalised views of a very large and diverse population of women who are successful and global in their influence." With Yemeni artist Alia Ali opening the exhibition, *I AM* is a compilation of works by established and emerging artists of both Christian and Muslim faiths. Each will present a two- or three-dimensional work in their medium of choice, ranging from oil, acrylic, ink, mixed media, collage, photography, photomontage, scanography, and Plexiglas.

Vulnerable yet powerful, every piece presented "reflects the personal view of each artist, their concerns, aspirations and thoughts on the exhibition's theme," says Chandler. "Visitors get a real sense of the various "voices" of each woman, their creativity, dynamism, strength, and we hope that visitors resonate with the enduring role of Middle Eastern women as guardians of peace."

The exhibition, guest curated by Janet Rady, hopes to stimulate discussion among viewers through panels, talks, workshops, film screenings, literary readings and forums. Serving as a bridge between cultures, faiths and beliefs, *I AM* provides a platform. "What really stands out is how the audience reacts to the works, how transformative they have proven to be, and how enthusiastically they have been received in each place." *I AM* is not merely an art exhibition; it is a gathering of people eager to learn, be inspired and, eventually, change the world.

I AM runs through 7 August at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Seattle. Oncaravan.org

CARAVAN, A GLOBAL PEACE-BUILDING arts non-profit with Egyptian origin, has shaken up the Middle East with its exhibitions and international tours that have encouraged dialogue between the Middle East and the West to promote greater intercultural understanding. Founded by Paul-Gordon Chandler in 2009, the organisation has earned a reputation as a flag-bearer of peace for its efforts to break down stereotypes and bring communities together. Its success at Art Bahrain Across Borders earlier this year was marked by a Khalil Gibran-inspired exhibition that featured works by 18 Bahraini and international artists on the subject of peacebuilding.

An educational platform for art-initiated social awareness, discussion and change, CARAVAN is gearing up to present its *I AM* exhibition at St Mark's Cathedral in Seattle this summer as part of its 16-month US tour. Having premiered in Amman, Jordan in May last year, the show will display original multimedia works by 31 premier female artists from 12 Middle Eastern countries.

The idea is to debunk myths, expose mis-



Maitha Demithan. *Mother*.
2017. Scanography, edition
one of three. 100x80 cm