

MEDIA RELEASE

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Deborah Colton Gallery
FotoFest 2014: Rania Daniel: Urban Transmutation

March 14, 2014 – April 26, 2014
Opening Reception: Friday, March 14, 2014, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Deborah Colton Gallery, a participating space in the FOTOFEST 2014 Biennale, is pleased to present *Urban Transmutation*, an exhibition of artworks from Lebanese-American artist Rania Daniel. This exhibition opens on Friday, March 14th with a public reception from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

In *Urban Transmutation*, Daniel attempts to capture ephemeral houses and architectural elements that are destined to be transformed into modern concrete buildings. This transformation from past to present effectively changes traditional neighborhoods into new yet artificial environments. Daniel's work is an attempt to explore these spaces, whether in a mental or physical way, creating momentary images that depict this disappearing architecture. Her imagery is imbued with the dynamic of the constant rebuilding of a city surviving unrest, an uncertain future and sectarian division. This ongoing transformation is a paradox with our overlapping memories thus creating a separation between the city-dweller and the city.

Rania Daniel's work is essentially an attempt to reconstruct a narrative. Her point of departure is the past, where memory and nostalgia are the important elements. Each painting becomes a narrative of the artist walking in the city of Beirut, witnessing the movement of a contemporary city that has survived civil war and unrest while relentlessly rebuilding itself. Oscillating between modern and old, the city's architecture symbolizes the disappearing heritage and collective memory of the Lebanese. As Rania observes, "It becomes the symbol of our displacement and division in different, distinct neighborhoods after the civil war created mental barriers that exist up to this day. Through my movement in the city, I witness the contrast, while passing through the different areas and neighborhoods." Rania's work is creating a recollection of the city in the present. The notion of transformed identity is important too, the duality of being both an American and Lebanese, the physical move from one place to another, absorbing constantly new experiences, shifting in time and space. This shift is depicted in the movement of the city and the artist's own movement, walking in the city, taking photographs. The movement of the city analogs Rania's own reflective introspection.

Rania attended the American University of Beirut in Lebanon and UCLA Los Angeles with degrees in Business Administration and Interior Architecture. She has participated in several exhibitions and has curated Houston art exhibitions. Her work is included in many esteemed private collections in Houston.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance, conceptual future media and public space installations. The Gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make positive change.