

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Rania Daniel**

### *Urban Illusion*

November 12, 2011 to January 7, 2012

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition featuring new work by Rania Daniel. *Urban Illusion* opens Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> with a public reception with the artists from 6:30 to 9:00 pm.

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.

The architecture in a city speaks of the past and present, of absence and presence, what is forgotten and what remains. In Beirut, the colonial style houses from the French Mandate (1920-1943), 16th century Venetian, or 19th century Ottomans buildings are either collapsing from neglect or demolition, emptied either by destruction or reconstruction. Rania's work is an attempt to explore these spaces, whether from a mental or physical aspect in order to try to fill in this gap in our memory lost in time between the civil war and the present; between remembering and forgetting our history: "Where remembrance is often bulldozed by amnesia."

Rania attended the American University of Beirut in Lebanon and UCLA Los Angeles with a degree 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 and conceptual future media installations.