In Conversation

Massoud Hayoun: Making Art To Say Things Out Loud

Our author Elisa Pierandei spoke to visual artist Massoud Hayoun about his paintings, which aim to stand in opposition to anti-human politics and nihilism.

Massoud Hayoun, *Bad Jewish Boy*, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 36×48". Courtesy of the artist. "In conversation with Elisa Pierandei, Hayoun's work aims to stand in opposition to anti-human politics and nihilism." Image: Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris.

By Elisa Pierandei
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INTERVIEW

Elisa Pierandei: Your acrylic paintings are seen as exploring belonging, identity, and various of power. Are these topics important to your work?

Massoud Hayoun: Yes, I would say they are. I am a Jewish man, a middle-class queer Arab American North African man of Jewish faith living in Los Angeles, practically on the edge of all Western dream maps. I was raised by my Tunisian and Moroccan Sephardic grandparents, while my single mother worked very hard to support us. I'm left handed. The reality is that all of us identities are multifaceted and complicated, and I think that's what I try to show in my work. I think that the concept of my existence and my work resonates with people because we all occasionally feel lonely or alienated from the halls of power, regardless of our ethnic, sexual, gender, and religious identities.

Massoud Hayoun, *Alexander*, Mixed media, 2020, Acrylic on canvas, 36×48". Courtesy of the artist. "The Alexander in question is Alexander the Great, who conquered Persia, Egypt, and Jerusalem. Hayoun's work aims to stand in opposition to anti-human politics and nihilism." Image: Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris.

Elisa Pierandei: Your work is also a reflection on the contemporary political scene. Hayoun's work aims to stand in opposition to anti-human politics and nihilism. Image: Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Wendi Norris.