

# EZRA NAHMAD

## LEAVE

ARTIST'S RECEPTION ON JANUARY 19 FROM 6 TO 9  
JANUARY 20 – FEBRUARY 25, 2017

From Wednesday to Saturday, 2-7 pm and by appointment



© Ezra Nahmad. Courtesy Les Douches la Galerie

Ezra Nahmad brings forward figures and narratives of exile, between immigration, exodus, cosmopolitanism and globalisation. The fragility and ferociousness of the sense of belonging, the visceral reactions against confinement, the desire to flee. This multiplicity of experiences within a circumscribed territory. *Leave*, is the final part of Ezra Nahmad's Israeli trilogy.

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## PRESS RELEASE

My parents were twenty-five when they left Egypt, just as my great-grand-parents had emigrated from their native Turkey, Syria or Morocco to settle in Egypt. We didn't see exile as an aberration or a loss; circulating around the Mediterranean was strictly our own affair. But the move to Israel put an end to this chapter of our history. We took on new roles, as settler-survivors and prodigal sons. Since I didn't want to assume them, I opted for Europe. But now I sense that the wind is changing again, with Europe and the Middle East swept away on the same tortuous path.

The Middle Eastern countries have adapted to globalisation but the cosmopolitanism of the past, the openness to cross-border exchanges, have given way to autistic nationalism. And like the whole of the region, Israel has become a laboratory of globalisation. At the heart of this system, the exodus of capital, labour, populations and terror are at once an instrument of power and a flaw, a necessity and an impossibility.

A space of regained freedom for some, one of tyranny for others, Israel is a land that has been wrested away, a destination for all sorts of wanderings – those that flourish and those that are shattered. It is open to Jews who change countries to change their lives but locks in another people, the Palestinians, whose slightest movements are obstructed. Alongside these two figures of the emancipated immigrant and the outsider exiled on his or her own land, there is also the disenchanting Israeli obsessed by emigration, the refugee from Sudan or Africa, the migrant worker from China or elsewhere in Asia. With this singular combination of neighbours, Israel would seem to cultivate and perpetuate a quasi-mystical belief: leave, change your life, start afresh somewhere else.

Preoccupied for some time by the mirage of this paradoxical Utopia and the echo of the war in Syria, I photographed Palestinians who were pent up or about to be expelled, Israelis who would have liked to escape, Syrian houses abandoned on the Golan Heights, African refugees and migrant workers, and even foreigners with vague identities, representatives of multinationals or international organisations. And the disjointed intersection of these lives.

Extract from *Leave*, Peperoni books, 2016 (Translated from French by Miriam Rosen)

## SELECTION OF WORKS

Ezra Nahmad. Série *Leave*, 2016, C-Print, 20 x 28 inches.

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### *Leave #1*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Edition 1/8



### *Leave #2*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Edition 1/8



### *Leave #3*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Edition 1/8



### *Leave #4*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Edition 1/8



### *Leave #5*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Édition 1/8



### *Leave #6*

C-Print signed by the artist, 2016

Print size: 50 x 70,75 cm (20 x 28 inches)

Edition 1/8



## BIOGRAPHY

My parents are Egyptian; my family is originally from Aleppo, Istanbul, Morocco, and Italy. As for myself, I was born in Israel and grew up there until I was ten. I had a happy childhood. When I was little, I was accustomed to hearing three languages at home. The sea was my daily horizon for a long time and then at ten I left for Paris by boat with my family.

I went to a lycée in Paris in the 19th district. I lived in a sixth floor walk up in Ménilmontant. When I'd do my homework, I'd look out and see all of Paris from my sixth floor vantage point.

Later on, as an adolescent, I was absolutely crazy about the movies. I spent a lot of time in movie theaters; I used to draw and do collages. All of this, of course, was after my baccalaureate.

I went back to Israel because my parents no longer wanted to stay in Paris. I lived there for another 5 years and enrolled at the university without much enthusiasm. I became a political activist. But I didn't feel comfortable and decided to return to Europe. I intended to go to Paris, but I stopped in Italy, in Florence, for ten years. There I studied Art History and began to paint and exhibit my work.

After my Master's degree (my thesis advisor was an art historian and poet), I began my work as an editor, translator and author of monographs published for major Italian museums.

I still like languages. After this long stay in Italy, I went back to Paris to continue painting and working in journalism as a critic. I have regularly participated in or set up educational projects; I like sharing my experience with amateurs in all kinds of fields.

As of now, I'm photographing and still writing on photography as a critic (I use a pseudonym). I live in Paris and the Loire valley, near Angers.