



## ***AFTER ALL THE LEAVES HAVE FALLEN: MUSLIM WOMEN AND THEIR TRADITIONS***

**Rochelle Shicoff**

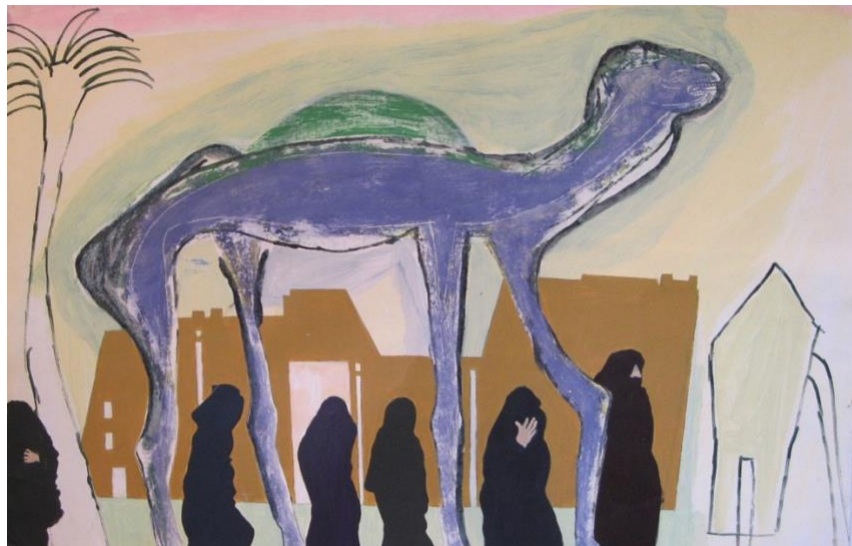
Many of my neighbors when I lived in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, NY, were from the Middle East -- primarily from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. It is an interesting neighborhood in which to live. For the years that I have lived there, my involvement with my neighbors has included conversations, interviewing women, shopping in stores that they own and observing the beautiful black shapes of the women in their Abayas (simple loose garments which cover the whole body except face, feet and hands).

My series of paintings *After All The Leaves Have Fallen: Muslim Women And Their Traditions* emerged from my life in Bay Ridge and my trip to Egypt which was taken a long time ago. This trip still resonates within me: the grandeur of the desert, the spectacular ancient monuments, the markets, the camels, and the jalabas, again the beautiful flowing loose-fitting garments, but this time, worn by the men.



My painting process is to work in a series format. I believe that all work created on one subject over an extended period of time unites and intensifies the concept and imagery. This method allows me to subtract and add ideas.

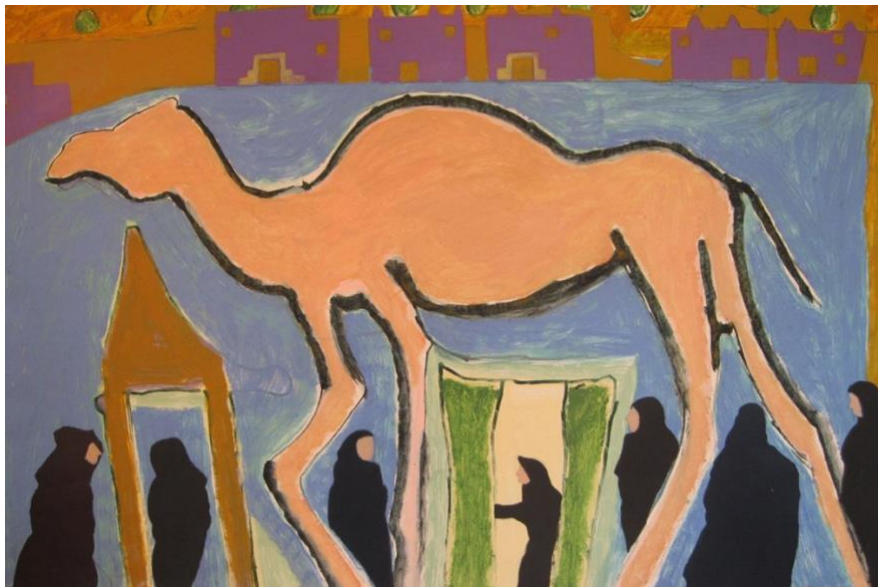
The Abayas, though in actual life are stark black, are not pure black in these paintings. In my work, when there is a repetition of one color, in this case black, I have varied this base color by mixing dark green, dark blue, brown, purple or red into the black. This mixture creates an assortment of black, which adds visual excitement as the viewer's eye moves through the painting.



The Middle Eastern cultures have a profusion of patterns in their rugs, fabrics, hand and leg tattoos, mosaics and pottery. This series mirrors my interest in these decorative arts by using patterns on the women's skirts, camel saddles and jewelry. I have also maintained a pattern in the organization of the shapes, lines and colors in the overall composition of each painting.



The camels represent strength, endurance, loyalty, comfort and playfulness. Miniature scenes of people are included, expressing dignity, modesty, and hard work within the camel culture and pottery markets. The perspective here complements the larger figures while altering the space to suggest an unexpected near and far.



My focus and intent in this series is to bring the viewer into a greater appreciation, through a visual expression, of women in Middle Eastern cultures.

**Rochelle Shicoff** is a contemporary artist living in Massachusetts. Her paintings are exhibited nationally and internationally. She was the recipient of the Rome Prize Fellowship in Painting. Rochelle's artistic career includes a Fulbright nomination, numerous community grants, New York and Massachusetts Foundation grants, and various Residencies. She is currently a member of Gallery A-3 in Amherst, MA. She co-authored *The Mural Book: A Practical Guide for Educators*, an engaging and useful text written specifically for K-12 teachers, and published by Crystal Productions. Rochelle Shicoff's public art works can be viewed in New York City, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts and Mexico.