



AMIRA HADDAD

B.S. STUDIO ART '14

What are your greatest accomplishments?

Artist Amira Haddad says one of hers is “gaining the courage to dream big.”

A native of Jordan raised in a traditional Middle Eastern family, Haddad moved to California when she was 12.

“I had a lot of mixed feelings as I adapted to my new surroundings,” she says. “Having your life completely transformed geographically and culturally is an emotional experience.”

In addition, Haddad felt uncertain about her career path. She always enjoyed sketching but lacked confidence in her talent, and no other family members had pursued art as a career.

Continuing on to Moorpark College after high school, Haddad initially explored other fields of study. When nothing grabbed her interest, she heeded the advice of her father to follow her heart. She began taking art classes at Moorpark and immediately felt life shift in a positive direction.

However, it wasn't until she transferred to CI that she felt fully aligned with her passion and purpose.

“I started taking upper-division art classes at CI, and gained assurance and clarity about my skills with each semester,” she says. “My professors and fellow students were extremely supportive. Napa Hall is where I discovered my identity as an artist!”

Haddad, who currently teaches art and serves as a teacher's aide at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School in Thousand Oaks, says that telling the story of her challenges through art – both painting and writing – is good therapy. She hopes to obtain a master's in art history to further her understanding of how art helps individuals process and convey feelings about culture.

“If a dream makes your heart beat and reaching toward it makes you feel alive, the notion of impossibility begins to fade away,” said Haddad. “I am living proof. Go for it.”

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