

Saj Issa

I Was Out Partying While You Were Home Making Prayers

May 14th - June 19th, 2022

Le Maximum is thrilled to present *I Was Out Partying While You Were Home Making Prayers*, an exhibition of new works by Saj Issa. This is Issa's first solo exhibition. The exhibition will run from May 14th to June 19, 2022. A reception for the artist will be held Saturday, May 14th from 6 to 8 pm.

Issa creates works of striking poignancy that subtly reorient our cultural and aesthetic expectations. Drawing on her experience growing up between Palestine and the American Midwest, the artist merges Eastern and Western influences across painting, sculpture, ceramics, and other mediums. The everyday places and objects that she depicts are charged with significance: corner stores, Islamic tiles, cash receipts, corporate logos, women's cosmetics, and diamond plate metal sheeting summon a world of migration, erasure, and perseverance.

Issa's works are counterpoints to codified representations and beliefs. *Get Her Some Water* transforms a humble corner store into a shrine to intoxication and commerce: a receipt effaces the cashier, following the Islamic prohibition on figuration, while the ceramic tile border compares differing notions of paradise. In another painting a Los Angeles parking ticket hovers above figures intermingling in a darkened bathroom scene, suggesting the costs of representation. *Portrait of Father*, a patterned tile work, conjures an absent presence, while the Marlborough chevron logo pattern recalls a mihrab prayer niche. Issa translates these symbols of exchange and ritual into scenes of beauty and vulnerability.

Saj Issa (b.1994, St. Louis, MO) received a BFA in ceramics from Webster University, St. Louis in 2017, and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of California, Los Angeles. Recent and upcoming art fairs include Felix (Los Angeles, 2022), NADA (New York, 2022), and Material (Mexico City, 2022); her work will be featured in the upcoming exhibition *Many* at the Craft Contemporary Museum, Los Angeles. Issa is a recipient of the 2022 NCECA Graduate Student Fellowship, and she participated in two long-term residencies at Craft Alliance Center of Art + Design and Belger Crane Yard Studio. Issa lives and works in Los Angeles.

Please write to art@lemaximumvenice.com for inquiries.