

*Holy Family*, by Nabil Anani

art selection and comment by [Lil Copan](#) in the [March 11, 2020](#) issue



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A founding member of the League of Palestinian Artists, Nabil Anani has helped cultivate the contemporary arts movement in the Palestinian territories. His art is rooted in the soil, work, landscapes, architecture, religious identities, suffering, and resistance of Palestinians. It documents not only a people and a landscape but a collective psyche. Each work contains smaller works and worlds within—tiles, words, symbols, and documents of historical significance. In this painting, *Holy Family*, Anani places a familiar narrative into the realities of suffering and place. Here the

Holy Family moves beyond the usually symbolic frame; it is a family of the occupied territories. Anani's artworks "grasp at moments from people's lives," writes poet Mourid Barghouti, "their hills, olive groves, homes, their grandmothers' embroidered gowns, their weddings and funerals, as if their creator fears the demise of all these things."