THE ARTIST: ANWAR BOULOS HADDADIN

Anwar Boulos Haddadin was born in Jordan in 1963. His works of art, for which he mainly uses acrylic paint, are typically created as collages.

Many of his works have not only been shown in his own or in group exhibitions. They have been part of major exhibitions within and outside Jordan. The artist has received several prizes for his works, also at the international level. For two of his works Haddadin in 2016 received the Colours Award at the International Symposium of Vienna Festival of Colours in Vienna.

Haddadin has worked at Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan, since 2003. Besides heading the Design Department, he is also responsible for the graphic design of all the university magazines. Haddadin is married and has two sons.

Anwar Haddadin designed the »Epiphany« collage in 2017 for the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS).

Sofia Gutekunst

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»Stay quiet! We are not allowed to talk to them over there,« says the Jordanian soldier, politely but firmly. It is hot; in front of us the River Jordan, reduced to a greenish-brown trickle, flows lazily through the reeds. Here, on the east bank of the once so proud biblical river, I am in Jordan. And »over there« lies the West Bank, Palestine, Israel… It would not be hard to simply wade through the water. If the soldiers were not here – and super-modern surveillance cameras on the other side, picking up every movement by the riverside. There has officially been peace between Israel and Jordan since 1994. Yet the tensions and distrust between the two countries are only too visible here.

The place on the Jordan side is called Al-Maghtas, which means »place of baptism«. This is where John the Baptist, in »Bethany across the Jordan« (John 1:28), baptised Jesus. Yet over there, in the West Bank, it is called Qasr al-Yahud – »fortress of the Jews«. Probably in memory of the spot where Joshua once led the people of Israel over the Jordan to the Promised Land (Joshua 3:14-17).

Jordanians are proud that archeological digs have uncovered numerous ancient baptismal fonts, water pipes, monasteries and pilgrim inns. This is »Epiphany Land« – because it is exactly the place where Jesus at his baptism became visible (Greek: epiphaino) as the Son of God through the appearance of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17).

At Epiphany, which is the same date as the Orthodox Christmas, and the Festival of Theophany, the Christians from different denominations process down to the Jordan. They come from the West and the East, with their patriarchs, priests and pilgrims, to sing here and celebrate the Holy Liturgy together. That is always a colourful event – like the Epiphany scene portrayed by Jordanian artist Anwar Haddadin, where the Wise Men from the East have opened their treasures. All is joyful bustle – an expression of exuberant life. And then often it happens that the ancient antiphons resound from one riverbank to the other, which no soldier can forbid.

Recognising that this place of Epiphany is so special for Christians, the Jordan royal family a few years ago provided land nearby for all the officially recognised denominations to build their chapels and churches. That includes the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, a member church of EMS and one of the churches supporting the Theodor Schneller School in Amman. A kind of mixed-denominational »Christian quarter« is emerging here, rather like the historical Christian quarters in Jerusalem or Damascus.

Incidentally, the friendly Jordanian soldier finally left me in peace and sat down in the shade of a thornbush, pretending not to see or hear me.

And then I said the Lord’s Prayer aloud with the pilgrim group on the west bank of the river. Where there is Epiphany, where the Holy Spirit appears and makes Jesus visible as God’s son, rigid political borders are also made permeable. The small kingdom of Jordan, that has received so many people from the crisis areas beyond its borders, is, in the best sense, an »Epiphany Land«.

Uwe Gräbe
Jordan is the native country of the Epiphany picture created by our artist; it is that small kingdom between Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Saudi-Arabia, with a lot of desert – and very few raw materials. But it has plenty of people. While in 1948 it had about 400,000 inhabitants, today it has about twenty times as many: just under eight million.

No country in the Middle East has taken in more refugees in the last 70 years than Jordan. The first ones to come were Palestinians, due to the 1948 and 1967 wars. They now make up 40-60 percent of the whole population. Then, after the Gulf wars of 1990/91 and 2003, came Iraqi refugees and since 2011 people have been coming from Syria. So far about 700,000 Syrians have found refuge in Jordan. The Zaatari refugee camp in the North has about 80,000 residents and is the fourth biggest city in the country.

The absolute number of Christians has also risen in the last few decades – through the 1948 war alone from 5000 to 40,000. In the 1990s Christians numbered around 150,000. In percentage terms, however, the share of Christians in the rapidly growing overall population is constantly falling and today lies at less than 2.5 percent. That includes the largest group, the Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholic (Latin) and Greek Catholic (Melkite) Church; Protestants, Armenians, Syrian-Orthodox and Copts are tiny minorities. Sunni Muslims make up 95% of the population.

It seems to be mainly due to the skilful action of the western-oriented Hashemite royal family that, despite all the demographic challenges, Jordan has been able to remain an island of stability in the troubled Middle East. The patriarch of the Hashemites is the great-grandfather of the prophet Mohammed. From the 13th century to the end of World War I, the royal dynasty was responsible for managing the Mecca and Medina Holy Sites. To this day, the King of Jordan understands himself as the protector of the Islamic Holy Sites of Jerusalem – even though the West Bank, which Jordan seized in 1948, was occupied in 1967 by Israel and the kingdom abandoned all its claims to these Palestinian territories in 1988. The royal family intensively promote interreligious dialogue and from time to time organises weeks of Christian-Muslim harmony.

For the local Christians, Jordan is the Holy Land: here dwelt the biblical tribes of Manasse, Gad and Ruben; it was from here that the People of Israel set out for Canaan, which Moses was allowed to see from Mount Nebo. And not least, here lies the biblical town of Bethany, the traditional site of Jesus’ baptism in the River Jordan, where Christians from both sides – from Israel, Palestine and Jordan – regularly celebrate Epiphany (according to the western calendar) on 6 January with a festive Orthodox Christian liturgy.

Uwe Gräbe
I’M GLAD YOU ARE HERE!

AN ARTWORK FROM JORDAN

IDEAS FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUPS FOR THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY
EMSO THE ELEPHANT TELLS OF HIS JOURNEY TO JORDAN

The children sit in a semi-circle. One person holds the elephant stick figure and tells the story from Emso’s point of view. Emso’s case lies in the middle.

Emso: I’m so glad you are here. A warm welcome to Sunday school today. My name is Emso and I am happy to be with you here today. Today is a special day – we are celebrating Epiphany. Emso yawns

Oh, sorry, I am exhausted from a long journey. Yesterday I was still in Jordan. Do any of you know where Jordan is?

Look for Jordan on the globe or atlas

Jordan is a kingdom with a lot of desert. It is neighbours on Israel and Palestine. In Jordan there are a lot of people with different backgrounds. It was exciting to be there and to meet and talk with children. Fortunately I was not there in summer. The desert there is very hot and dry and you really need to ride a camel or travel by jeep. By the way, Jesus was baptised there at the River Jordan. I naturally had a look at that spot. The river meanders through the desert and plants grow near the water. We are celebrating Jesus’s baptism and Epiphany together today, on 6 January. And I am here because of Epiphany. What is Epiphany, in fact? What are we celebrating? In Jordan I discovered a wonderful work of art and I took a picture for you. It is a colourful collage. I’ve brought along the photo for you. Who would like to take it out of the case?

A child opens the case in the middle. The case is empty.

Oops! Oh dear! I must have left it at home. What a pity! What will we do now? Hmmm... Emso thinks. I’ve got an idea: We’ll remake the picture together. Come and help me!

MATERIAL FOR THE CHILDREN’S SERVICE

- Take the poster with the Epiphany collage from Jordan out of the booklet or order a copy for each child free of charge from www.ems-online.org/shop
- Stick figures Emso the elephant and Pipit the bird (to photocopy)
- Case or travel bag for Emso
- Possibly a doll to represent baby Jesus
- Newspapers, magazines, glue, scissors, paints, card as backing for the collage
- Globe or atlas

All documents can be downloaded for photocopying from: www.ems-friends.org/en

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ARTIST

Anwar Boulos Haddadin lives in Jordan. He often works with collage technique. His works of art have been exhibited, and received awards, in Jordan and worldwide. He works at Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan, and heads the Design department. He created the Epiphany collage especially for the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity.
Emso describes the collage in his own words and explains who the people are and where they stand. This illustration shows what it could look like. The children get into position.

Emso: In the picture there are several people. On the right, Mary kneels down with Baby Jesus on her lap. Who would like to sit down here and put the doll on her lap? Several woman and men with presents stand to the left of Mary. They look at Baby Jesus and everyone is happy that he is there. They stretch out their hands with gifts. Come and give it a try.

The children reproduce the scene interactively. Depending on the size of the group, the picture can be recreated several times with different children. The girls and boys describe how they feel about it. If you have more time available you can get Emso to describe the picture in greater detail. But it is important to ensure that the children have not yet seen the collage itself. When all the children have sat down again, someone takes the stick figure of Pipit the bird and »flies« it around.

Pipit tweets: Emso, oh there you are! I’m glad to have found you. You are sometimes very forgetful. You left the picture on the breakfast table.

LOOKING AT THE POSTER TOGETHER
Place the poster (or several of them) in the circle. Staff can decide how to organise the way the children look at the picture, depending on the size of the Sunday school group, e.g. in a circle, or in small groups or singly. Comments are made to the whole group.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO THE CHILDREN

LEVEL OF RELATIONS
Who do you see in the picture?
Where are the people looking at?
Who is Jesus looking at?
What might the people be saying to Jesus?

COLOURS
What are the main colours?
What kind of mood does the picture convey?
If you were to frame it, what colour frame would you choose?

TECHNIQUE
Is it a painting?
Can you pick out newspaper cuttings or the like?

PLACE AND EVENT
What is happening in the picture?
What are the people doing?
Can you see a stable?
Can you pick out houses?

QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN
Where can Jesus be seen apart from as a baby?
Can you see the star? Can you discover a map?
What could that mean?

CONCLUSION
Emso: In the picture we have discovered that the most varied people are happy about the birth of Jesus and welcome him. That is what we celebrate at Epiphany. It is as though people were calling to Jesus from all over the world, »I’m glad you are here!«
Let us say that to each other now. We will hold hands and say: »I’m glad you are here!«

IDEA
Design a collage or painting on the topic.
SUGGESTED SONG

He’s got the whole world in his hands

PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for loving us.
Thank you for letting us celebrate Epiphany worldwide today – this day of such joy at the birth of your Son Jesus Christ. We are glad, too.
Thank you for coming to meet us. Thank you for letting us meet you.
Thank you for always letting us talk to you and say what makes us happy and what makes us sad. Amen.

Idea and text: Anna Kallenberger and Annette Schumm
Illustrations: Gert Albrecht

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YOU + ME: FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD
is an educational programme for children in Sunday school and primary school.

Children get to know each other worldwide: at eye-level, ecumenically and open for similarities and differences. YOU + ME: FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD is part of Evangelical Mission in Solidarity, a network of churches and mission societies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

www.ems-friends.org/en
I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflications for the sake of his body, that is, the church.

I became its servant according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,

the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints.

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Col 1:24-27

What a lovely picture of Epiphany! Not only the shining background colours. The people visiting Mary and her baby also beam happily. Another thing that appeals to me is that we see not only the familiar three wise men from the East but other people, too, who are not easy to classify. We beholders may well discover ourselves among them.

Katja Dorothea Buck, Religious Studies and Political Science

A NEW CLARITY
Christmas – the festival of love and contemplation – is over. Now the festival of Epiphany casts a new light, a new clarity on events. Epiphany means appearance – God’s becoming manifest in the world. The light of God shines into the world.

Artist Anwar B. Haddadin expresses the new clarity of Epiphany in his own way. He puts the open treasure boxes in the foreground. His painting appears in warm shades, bright and friendly. A town, perhaps Bethlehem, is outlined in the background. A sacred place is indicated – or is it a stable? Top right is a faint star, beside it in big letters the name of Jesus. Everything is small-scale but multifaceted except for the figures. The characters move to the focus of attention.

Yet anyone expecting to see the »three kings« at Epiphany will not find them right away. Standing in front of Mary are six people. They are not characterised as kings. Instead the artist expresses the original sense of the biblical words: they are wise people, who can read the stars. Among them is a woman, and a man with dark skin. They are both older and younger people, in the picture they merge together into a globe-like shape.

Epiphany: »The world sets off anew...« and encounters Mary and the baby Jesus.

GIFTS FOR THE CHRIST CHILD?
But at least the treasure boxes are a familiar feature of the Christmas scene: the visitors bring along gifts for the child. Light shines from their treasures.

Yet the passage from Colossians suggests something quite different. Its author speaks of the suffering that he has gone through himself. This suffering relates to the sufferings of Christ. Indirectly we glimpse the gift of Jesus Christ to those who believe in him.
Yet how can something still be lacking in the sufferings of Christ that the author of Colossians is able to add? Theologian Eduard Schweizer explains in his commentary on the Letter to the Colossians (1976) that it is about the future sufferings of the church. He derives this from the wording. The original Greek text uses the term »sufferings« in relation to Christ but »afflictions« in relation to the author and the congregation.

THE GIFT TO THE WORLD

The child, so unremarkably held in his mother Mary’s arm, has himself the greatest gift for those he is looking at. Gold, frankincense and myrrh pale before the treasure the Saviour Christ bestows on the world: »To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory« (Col 1:27). The ‘Gentiles’ (peoples) meant the whole world known at the time. »The world sets off anew...«

This verse from Colossians shows clearly what the treasure is: the presence of Christ in the congregation. A presence that leads to freedom, freedom in faith. Freedom also from the compulsion to have to make gifts. Freedom from the need to set ourself and our performance in the best light.

The freedom to stand with nothing but empty hands before the God who shows himself as a child in the manger. This serenity may be seen in the smile on Mary’s face. And it is reflected in the faces of the wise persons.

Dorothee Beer

PRAYERS AND INTERCESSIONS

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER

O Lord, when you were baptised in the Jordan a voice came from heaven:

»You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased« (Mk 1:11). At the Jordan God showed us that God is with you. The Jordan is our witness: God has truly appeared in you, Jesus Christ.

In this service let us feel that Jesus, the humble person, who knelt before others and humbly before you, O Lord, at his baptism, is all that you have to tell us: your power is strong in ordinary, humble people.

Amen

INTERCESSIONS

Lord, today’s Jordan has always been a transit country. Abraham and Lot crossed it. It was from Jordan that the children of Israel looked across at Canaan, with Moses, Joshua and Miriam. It was there that Moses died.

Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman and Persian armies marched across it. Arab tribes crossed it to capture Jerusalem. Bedouins have always dwelt there.

So we pray today for this small country of Jordan, in which unrest has always been brought from outside. It has taken in so many refugees at present – from Palestine, Iraq and Syria. Protect all those who live peacefully in Jordan today. Keep out the extremist forces that elsewhere prevent life in community.

Epiphany is a divine jet of water giving life in the midst of our human desert.«

Rima Nasrallah, lecturer at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon
Continue to give a home in Germany to the people migrating or fleeing from other countries of the Middle East.
Give the people in Jordan peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Oh Lord, since the resurrection there have been Christian churches in Jordan.
When all Jews and Jewish Christians in the year 70 A.D. were driven out of Jerusalem, members of the early church fled to what is today Jordan and settled there. No one can look back over a longer Christian history than the churches in Jordan.

We pray for all Christians in the country and especially for our member church, the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Bless its parishes and its services. May they know that as Arab Christians they are of equal value as members of society. May the people living or being cared for in their institutions sense your goodness: the children in the Theodor Schneller School in Amman, the blind children in the inclusive school in Irbid, the deaf children and young people who cannot speak in Salt.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Our Father in heaven,

Since the 19th century Germans have been active in the spirit of love for people in Jordan. The Schneller Association arose because of reports of evictions and attacks on Christians in 1860.
The Theodor Schneller Schule in Amman took in Christian and Muslim children from the start in order to give them an education and prepare them for daily life in a community of different beliefs.

We pray for the Schneller Association – may it keep its ability to raise up the Middle East issues and give effective assistance. We bring before you the many boys and girls from poorer families who receive a home and an education at the Theodor Schneller School.

May they have a good start in life.

Foster the spirit of friendship among Christian and Muslim children.
May they have good teachers and educators who give them a sense of their own value and importance as human beings.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jürgen Reichel

Baby Jesus held in her arm,

Mary kneels and rubs her sleepy eyes as she looks at the friendly people standing before her with their gifts. In most pictures it is exactly the other way round – the wise men kneel down before the young child.
In the background the domes of the city of God shine in the light of the morning star. The collage technique chosen by the artist lends a liveliness to the painting and invites the beholder to look more closely: Jesus is the first, and our power.

Ursula Feist, EMS Middle East Desk
As Christians we believe that we can fashion the future and that peaceful relations among people are possible across religious borders.

That is reality at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School in Lebanon and the Theodor Schneller School in Jordan. Here disadvantaged children and young people find a loving home and get a good education. Here Christians and Muslims live and learn together and from one another. Here education is holistic in the fullest sense.

And where is that more necessary than in the Middle East – the region that we first associate with crises and wars, destruction and suffering, generations of uprooted and traumatised people?

Schneller schools have had to face so many challenges since the war started to rage in Syria. At the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) in Lebanon two tailoring courses were established in spring 2016 for single mothers among the Syrian refugees. About two thirds of those women have now found work! Syrian refugee children have long been fully included in life at the JLSS school. Unlike the other schools in Lebanon, they are completely integrated into the ordinary classes and boarding school families.

Such work naturally costs money – and it is therefore all the more admirable that the school strives to manage more sustainably. In summer the trucks with components for a photovoltaic plant finally drove up to the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Jordan. The plant was financed from a collection at the German Protestant Kirchentag. Soon it will be producing the necessary solar power itself – which will save a lot of money in a country like Jordan.

And yet this educational activity in the Middle East could not exist without donations. With your support the Schneller Schools can continue to contribute to a more peaceful development in the Middle East. Thank you for your gift.

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