

About Sara Shamma

Sara Shamma (b. 1975, Damascus, Syria) is one of Syria's most significant contemporary artists working internationally. Renowned for her emotionally charged figurative paintings, her practice centres on the human condition, exploring themes of loss, resilience, identity, memory, and displacement through psychologically expressive figures.

Shamma has exhibited extensively across Europe, the Middle East, and internationally, with more than 25 major solo exhibitions including *Echoes of 12 Years* at the National Museum of Damascus (2024–2025), *Bold Spirits* at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (2023), and *Modern Slavery*, presented at King's College London and touring UK cathedrals (2019–2021), alongside solo shows in Syria, London, Dubai, Kuwait, and Lebanon. Her work has been shown in leading institutions and venues such as the Royal Academy of Arts (London), Royal College of Art (London), Christie's (Dubai, London), Bonhams (London), Sotheby's (London), and international Biennales such as the Sharjah Biennial, Cairo Biennale, and Mediterranean Biennial. Her works are held in notable public collections including the National Museum of Damascus, British Council, and UAE Ministry of Culture, as well as private collections.

She graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus in 1998 and has received numerous international awards, including Fourth Prize at the BP Portrait Award (London, 2004), and First Prize at the Waterhouse Natural History Art Prize (Australia, 2008), among others. In 2010, she was appointed a Celebrity Partner of the United Nations World Food Programme, supporting humanitarian causes through her artistic practice.

After eight years living and working in the UK under the Exceptional Talent Visa, Shamma returned permanently to Damascus in late 2024, reaffirming her commitment to artistic production, cultural engagement and renewal within Syria.

Website: sarashamma.art

Instagram: [@sara.shamma.artist](https://www.instagram.com/sara.shamma.artist)

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