

Jerusalem Stone Rooms

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Acrylic and photo collage on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2018

Artist's note: I have been painting and pondering Jerusalem Stone since I first encountered it while living in Jerusalem and see it as a material that symbolizes the sociopolitical situation in Israel. Since 1936, an ordinance of the British military governor of the time mandated that Jerusalem Stone cover the facade of every building in the city in order to promote architectural unity, a feeling of belonging, and antiquity. To this day, it covers all buildings in Jerusalem, including in the surrounding area and many settlements. Moreover, it is almost exclusively quarried in the West Bank. Many synagogues in North America import Jerusalem Stone to use as a decorative material in the synagogue space, thus equating Israel with Judaism, or Zionism with Judaism, which is a divisive issue within the American Jewish community.

Using grids in my work provides a skeletal framework to make sense of the weight of the past, present, and future of Jewish identity in the world. I see the grid as my orderly American system of organizing space, a result of the suburbs of my youth and the need for clear distinct lines. This grid has recently morphed into rooms, which are blasted and pushed inward, to create space for more contemplation.

