

EMBROIDERING A CULTURE

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Palestinian-Jordanian fashion designer Hama Hinnawi opens up her new showroom and offers us a sneak peek at her *Spring 2015* collection.

Palestinian-Jordanian fashion designer Hama Hinnawi found her way into the fashion industry through a rather unconventional route. She began her career in business administration working as a project management professional in the medical field, but four years ago, after a trip to Palestine, she discovered that she had a different calling. She saw how in our modern age, traditional skills like hand embroidery and patchwork, integral elements of Palestinian history, were becoming a thing of the past and she realised how important it was to preserve this heritage for future generations.

“I want us as a culture to be more loving and proud of our traditional clothing and heritage. For example, why don’t we give our loved ones Dead Sea products as gifts?” the passionate designer asks. “People come from around the world to see our amazing region and experience our locally made beauty products. We are so lucky to have this culture and history but we aren’t using it or appreciating it.”

In 2011, spurred by her holiday in Palestine and with encouragement from friends and family, the designer launched Hama Fashion. She describes her fashions as “trendy oriental” and the clothing line includes both traditional abayas for formal events and national holidays as well more modern styles embellished with hand embroidery or oriental-inspired decoration.



Fashion designer Hama Hinnawi

Hama established her company not only to raise awareness for a disappearing tradition but also to bring work to fellow Jordanians. Her designs are crafted by artisans from rural communities – specifically, traditional women who are not permitted to work outside the home. Many of these women were not previously trained in hand embroidery but have now been taught as well as encouraged to share their new-found knowledge with their daughters and other young members of their communities.

The fashion designer hopes that other businesses will be inspired and make an

effort to revitalise the hand-embroidery industry in Jordan. The country is inundated with mass-produced low-quality abayas created in foreign factories, which are devoid of any character and meaning. Bringing the industry back home also has the potential to create a variety of jobs in towns and villages desperate for work.

“We need this in Jordan. It would be a great opportunity for us. We have so much talent here and people don’t want to exist on hand outs. They want to support themselves. Let’s spread the word!”



Model wears a red and black shift by the designer



Model wears rose printed tunic with slim-fit black trousers



Model wears rose printed tee with ripped jeans

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Her designs have been well received in the region and are popular with public figures as well as local celebrities. Last year the cast from the award-winning Jordanian film, *Theeb*, wore Hama’s traditional designs to the *Venice Film Festival*. The actors and their iconic outfits were publicised to millions around the world when they graced the stage alongside director Naji Abu Nowar, who accepted the *Orizzonti Award for Best Director*.

Building on last year’s success, Hama is releasing a new collection for spring 2015 which includes an expanded selection of contemporary clothing. This recent line features the intricate hand embroidery on which she has built her reputation as well as introduces a new element – the screen printed image of a woman dressed in a Palestinian veil and cloak blossoming from a red rose. Hama explains: “This picture represents a new beginning for women in the Arab region specifically in Palestine, which is represented by the red flower meaning new life and blood. From birth to death, this woman fights all kind of struggles and restrictions and she stands out in her determination.”

To see Hama’s designs in person, visit her showroom in Khalda which is open upon call/appointment or online at Hamafashion.com and [Facebook.com/Hamafashion](https://www.facebook.com/Hamafashion).



*Model wears military-
inspired shirt with floral
A-line skirt*

“THIS PICTURE REPRESENTS A NEW BEGINNING FOR WOMEN IN THE ARAB REGION AND SPECIFICALLY IN PALESTINE”



Left: Model wears rose printed tee with yellow A-line rose patterned skirt



Right: Model wears bright yellow maxi dress