

Dotan Moreno | Even Though I Walk

“Even Though I Walk” examines transition and emblematic liminal spaces: Arabness and Jewishness, the expressed and the untold. According to Moreno, the potential of visual in-betweenness opens up new interpretations and possibilities. His etchings represent entangled identities, challenging societal pressures to define and preserve distinctions. Evoking a sense of calibrated balance, he fuses Jewish and Arab symbols and religious texts, and the male protagonist of his works retains delicate characteristics. This yields a correspondence of sorts between externally set historical, religious, ethnic, and gendered identifications and the artist’s considerations of the shades that lie in between them. Etching is Moreno’s technique of choice because it allows for the exemplification of mixed nature. In effect, etching requires the smoothing and covering of a surface, the scratching and removal of material, and the revelation and disclosure of the details only following a process of ink retention and exposure. Incisions, layering, covering, and uncovering reveal a nuanced tonal palette that aptly mirrors the subtle implications of the complex identities portrayed.

A set of colorful paper masks accompanies the black-and-white etchings. Imbued with socio-cultural significance, mask-wearing is central in rituals of representation, performance, warfare, and religion. Hiding the wearer’s features, they serve as a means to conceal oneself and take on new roles. These masks represent both a cover for and an escape from a perpetual state of ambivalence; encapsulating the restorative efficacy of staging identity and the inclination to perform in order to fulfill conventional roles and conform to a particular socio-cultural classification.