

## **Illustrating Dreams**

What is most striking about her is the sparkle in her eyes that becomes even more intense when she talks about her city, Damascus, and her publishing house for children's books –Box of Tales- which is the second largest in the country.

Writing and illustrating for children is a dream that she has had since she was ten years old and today, now that she lives in London where she is completing a master's in illustration, she explains civil war to children with a book that talks about hope and war-free future. What's her inspiration? Childhood, the cats, and the blue of the houses in Damascus!

### **Your new book has a beautiful title, 'Ghadan', which means tomorrow. What is it about?**

It talks about what is currently happening in Syria even though I never use the word 'war'. I tried to explain to Syrian children that the anguish and fear they're experiencing is only temporary and the life will return as it was before. Many children don't understand why they can't go to school or why they can't play in the streets anymore. They need to be reassured.

### **How do you explain war to children?**

I was simply honest and told them that there is a conflict underway and that things will go back to normal when they find a peaceful way to talk. It's very difficult to address such delicate topic with children, but it is necessary.

### **What is your favorite theme?**

I generally speak from personal experience, such as in the case of 'Ghadan', where I was inspired by the civil war. But I love to enter the world of children and I also address theme regarding kids with special needs, such as in Leila princess' book which is the result of my experience with a deaf girl.

### **What is your favorite technique?**

I love water colors: they're 'sincere' and poetic!

### **Your favorite book when you were a child?**

The Little Prince: it's a timeless book!