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Andrea Mindell Cohen

As a first generation Canadian raised by immigrant parents and grandparents, Andrea Mindell Cohen shares, *“I have struggled to establish my personal identity in relation to religion and family history. My artwork is deeply influenced by my Spanish/Moroccan heritage, and my Sephardic roots.”*

After receiving her BFA from Otis/Parsons College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, a degree in fashion-textile design from the International Academy of Design and Technology in Toronto, Canada, and continued studies abroad in art history and photography at Lorenzo de Medici School in Florence, Italy, along with a career in fashion, Andrea is now based in Barcelona working primarily in mixed-media collage and printmaking. She challenges the traditional identities and gender roles ingrained in the Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) culture and seeks to construct new meaning in images.

“In an effort to say what is left unsaid, I alter the subjects of my images by obscuring or removing identifiable features. They become archetypal representations telling their stories through colours, marks and gestures, and motif.”

This process of layering and removal is a negotiation between her cultural heritage and a desire to imagine new roles and identities within it.

Collecting the source images is an integral part of her process.

“Throughout my travels, I gather found images, along with old family photos mixing them with my own photography documenting people, textiles, and architecture I observe. I’m drawn to the elegant images of generations of North African and Middle Eastern women in ornate traditional wear. To this, a combination of textile patterns, bits of architecture, plant life, and colours are woven together; the women are revealed, hidden, fracturing, and disappearing into this beauty.”

Andrea has exhibited in galleries across the world. 

Left: Andrea Mindell Cohen, *Reina de Flamenca*, Collage on surface, 75 x 87 cm