

Ozlem Silverstein
Silence



I have a social responsibility to ask questions, to rethink convention. The piece titled, *Silence* was completed in 2007. It is of mixed media. The portrait is oil, the background an archival print, 30 X 40 inches, mounted on wood panel. The textures represent the beauty of the material culture of the Middle East that is so well appreciated by the Western world - carpets, silk, linens, embroidery, gold & silver engravings, mother of pearl inlays on wood, calligraphy and miniature paintings, Middle Eastern cuisine, music and dance. However, when it comes to coexisting, the West perceives the people of this culture as the “other”. It de-humanizes them through long established prejudices, invades and bombs their countries, places sanctions on them when they do not comply with Western foreign policies, portrays them as sewer and makes fun of their prophet. The woman in *Silence* is speechless at this point. This piece is part of a series of portraits of Middle Eastern and American women who lost their loved ones during the latest unjustified and unjust war.