



**BE BAHRAIN**

**ART WEEK**



**LONDON**

**15TH – 21ST DECEMBER, 2016**

Somaya Abdulghani  
Jamal Abdulrahim  
Ahmed Anan  
Balqees Fakhro  
Mariam Fakhro  
Faika Al Hassan  
Lulwa Al-Khalifa  
Marwa Al-Khalifa  
Nabeela Al Khayer  
Ghada Khunji  
Aysha Al Moayyed  
Abbas Al Mosawi  
Maryam Nass  
Areej Rajab  
Omar Al Rashid  
Latifa Al Shakar  
Mayasa Al Sowaidi  
Zakeya Zada





**Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa**  
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to United Kingdom

## Ambassadors Note

“The ties between Bahrain and the UK run long and deep. As you may know, this year, 2016, marks the 200th anniversary of the signing of the first treaty between our two nations, and the bicentennial was formally celebrated both in London and in Manama.

It is truly fitting that the 2016 exhibition should take place in the United Kingdom, in this year when our countries celebrate friendship and cooperation. I am both pleased and excited that so many talented Bahraini artists are part of this exhibition in Lancaster House on Bahrain’s National Day, including both established artists and relative new comers, and embracing such diverse range of styles and materials.”



**Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi**  
Chief Executive of Tamkeen

## Be Bahrain Platforms ArtBAB, Bahrain’s International Art Fair

Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, Chief Executive of Tamkeen, “As part of Tamkeen’s efforts to develop the private sector and grow the national economy, Tamkeen believes that the art sector has gained importance as an engine of economic growth, not only locally but across the region.

We want to support this sector through initiatives such as ArtBAB, and we hope to steer the arts sector into new levels. The aim is to inspire the local and regional talent and promote art education and skills development by bridging our local artists with their regional and international counterparts, encourage collaborations and foster learning and development from the exchange of ideas with renowned names in the art field.”



**Kaneka Subberwal**  
Founder ArtSelect

## Introduction

Under the patronage of His Excellency Shaikh Fawaz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Kingdom, Art Select, the founders of Art Bahrain Across Borders (ArtBAB), Bahrain's international art fair are proud to present Bahrain Art Week in London under the new "Be Bahrain" brand - aiming to initiate creative projects, communicate the best of Bahraini culture and forge art partnership collaborations.

The focal point of this week-long celebration of Bahraini art is the "Be Bahrain" collection, an exhibition of paintings and sculpture representative of the diverse and vibrant arts and culture scene in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

What makes the Bahraini arts scene unique is its focus on the artist and an emphasis upon the authenticity of these artists' work. Building upon the success of the first Art Bahrain and Bahrain Art Across Borders (BAAB), Bahrain Art Week continues Art Select's work to globally platform Bahraini art, contribute to the development of working Bahraini artists whilst creating a legacy for Bahraini-UK friendship which will continue through to ArtBAB 2017 - Bahrain's international art fair being held in the Kingdom from 22nd - 26th March 2017.

## Consultants



**David Hawkins**  
Head of outreach  
and VIP relations

As His Excellency the Ambassador has written, a select number of works will exhibit at the Bahraini Embassy in London's National Day reception and dinner being held at Lancaster House on December 14th which marks the conclusion of the celebration of 200 years of Bahraini - UK friendship.

These works will then transfer to Asia House for a larger exhibition from December 15th - 21st December.

As well as an exhibition there will be a fashion and craft pop-up and a panel discussion on the future of the creative industries in Bahrain, using examples from other international success stories and featuring global thought-leaders.

The "Be Bahrain" collection and the events being held at Asia House during Bahraini Art Week are part of the wider "Be Bahrain" brand launched by Arts Select and which aims to bring together art, textiles, design, architecture, fashion and the opinion leaders behind these creative industries so enhancing Bahrain's international exposure and reach.



**Janet Rady**  
Head of  
Development

Janet Rady is Head of Development for ArtBAB and is a Specialist in Contemporary Art from the Middle East, with over twenty five years' experience of the International Art Market including Leading Auction Houses and Major Commercial Galleries.

Janet Rady holds a Masters Degree in Islamic Art History from the University of Melbourne and a BA from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She is a member of the Arab British Chamber of Commerce and sits on the Advisory Council of Caravan Arts. Janet is on the Editorial Board of the Middle East in London magazine. She is an Expert for Auctionata and was Head of Development at Art Bahrain, the pilot to ArtBAB. Janet has recently edited the book "33 Artists... 33 Islands... A Kingdom of Art" - a comprehensive survey of the artists of Bahrain



## Building On The Firm Foundations Of Art Bahrain And BAAB

The first Bahrain Art Fair, ArtBahrain, was held in the Kingdom in October 2015. Forty Eight participants from 17 countries attended whilst an extensive education programme introduced attendees to the fundamentals of collecting, art appreciation and the art market. A central point of the fair was providing local Bahraini artists with a platform to the world so enabling them to further develop themselves as working artists.

Bahrain Art Across Borders, BAAB, was a significant new arts venture designed to showcase the Kingdom of Bahrain's rich creative talent to an international audience and further promote cross-cultural dialogue, broaden artists' horizons, and introduce art collectors and enthusiasts across the world to the "talents and vision" of Bahrain's artists.

Seventeen artists exhibited over 50 pieces at the Victoria & Albert Museum with a follow-up event at Gallery 8 in St James's, London in May 2016..

The 17 artists range from veterans of the Bahraini art scene to early career artists who were venturing into international events for the first time and included Amina Al Abbasi, Balqees Fakhro, Ebrahim Busaad, Faika Al Hassan, Ghada Khunji, Ghassan Muhsin, Hamed Al-Bosta, Jamal Abdul Rahim, Lulwa Al Khalifa, Marwa Al Khalifa, Nabeela Al Khayer, Noof Alrefaei, Omar Al Rashid, Taiba Faraj, Sumaya Abdulghani, Mayasa Al Sowaidi and Mariam Fakhro.



## ArtBahrain Across Borders ArtBAB 2017

Under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, wife of the King of Bahrain and President of the Supreme Council for Women, 'Art Bahrain Across Borders' (ArtBAB) is the Kingdom of Bahrain's international art fair. Now in its second year, the fair aims to bridge Bahrain to the global art market whilst platforming local Bahraini artists to the world.

ArtBAB is a Tamkeen initiative, Bahrain's semi-government agency which promotes entrepreneurship, skills development and training in both businesses and individuals. ArtBAB is managed by the Kingdom's leading art advisory firm, Art Select Bahrain.

Running from March 22nd - March 26th 2017 the fair will feature both international and local Bahraini galleries and feature an Art Bahrain Across Borders pavilion which will present 30 specially-selected and curated Bahraini artists whilst international artist participation will be platformed via dedicated exhibition spaces. Leading museum director and curator Jonathan Watkins will lead the selection of all artist participation at ArtBAB 2017.

A VIP programme will be in place which will see leading collectors visiting the Kingdom and explore and discover Bahrain's leading cultural venues.

The fair will host two days of talks, devised by leading Middle Eastern art expert and gallerist Janet Rady, exploring the art market, Bahraini artist participation and how Bahraini collectors can further engage in the global market. - [www.artbab.com](http://www.artbab.com)



## Bahrain Art Week Programme

Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London, W1G 7LP  
December 15th – 21st

### **December 15th:**

630pm panel discussion on the Creative Industries in the Middle East (by invitation only).

### **December 15th:**

Following the panel discussion there will be a private view of the “Be Bahrain” exhibition.

### **December 16th – 21st:**

The Be Bahrain exhibition continues (excluding Sunday December 18th) which includes a pop-up display and installation by leading Bahraini designers Nada and Noor Alawi who with their Annada brand have collaborated with over twenty renowned artists from Bahrain and across the region to design scarves, apparel, leather goods and paper goods (their work will be available for view and sale Saturday 17th December – Wednesday 21st December).

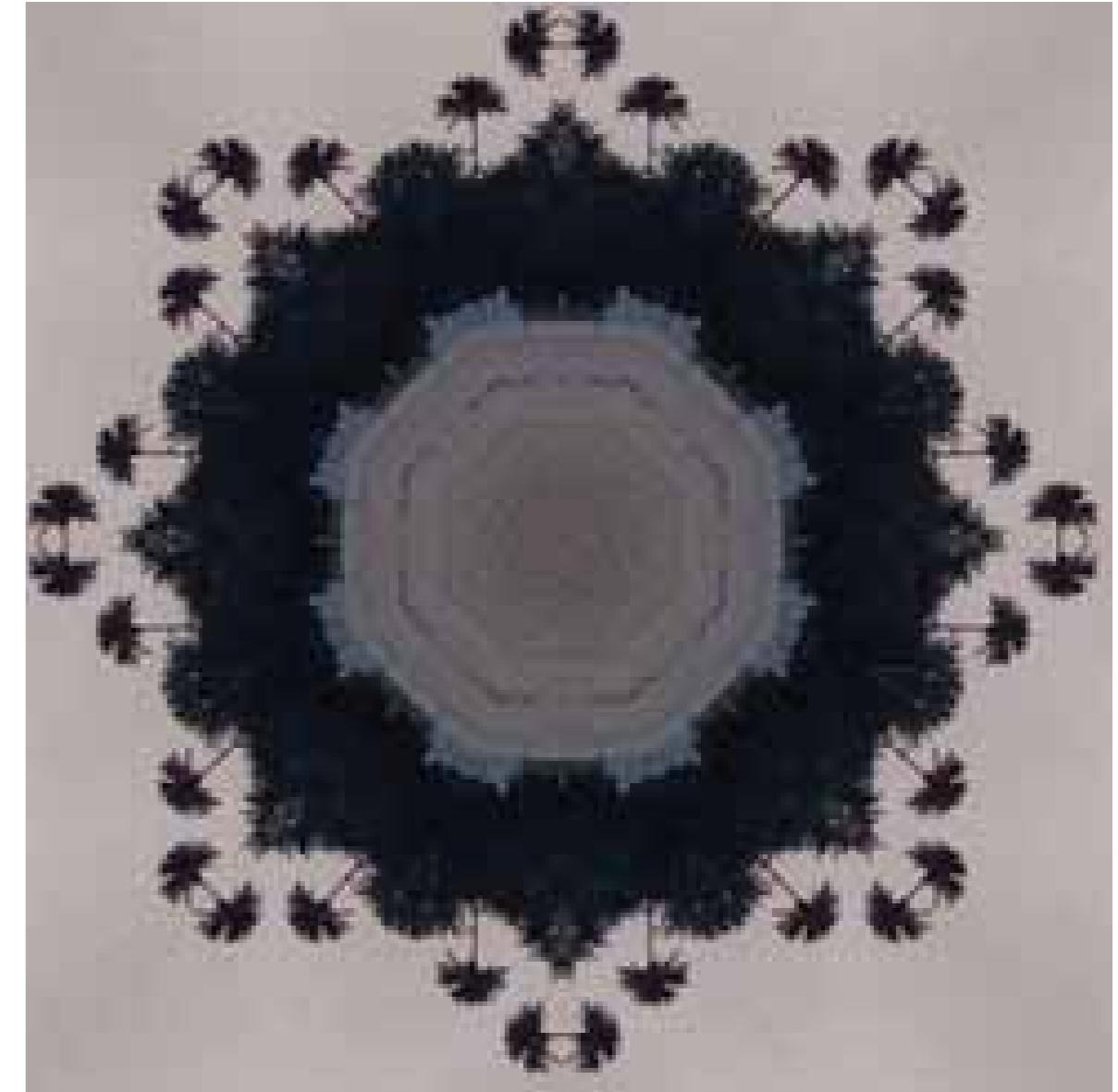
## Somaya Abdulghani

Somaya Abdulghani uses collage, photography, and mixed media to produce work that strives to introduce Islam's theological and philosophical beauty to the audience. Concepts that appear in Islamic texts, such as good and evil, purity, morality, and beauty make their way into Abdulghani's work.

Using art paper stitched with thread, her project, The Threads of Knowledge, which combines collage with acrylic paint, has been inspired by the first word of the Holy Qur'an revealed to Prophet Mohammed [PBUH] – simply Ikraa, or Read – and chapter 96 (Surah Al-Alaq) that follows.

“Nowadays there is so much knowledge, but how are we using it, are we using it in a good way? To bring peace to earth, to develop the earth, or are we using it in completely the other way? That is the main question in my work,” says the artist. There is a certain sense of serenity to her work and the way she describes it.

Abdulghani was shortlisted for Dubai's International Emerging Artist Award in 2015, and featured in the Ayyam Gallery's Young Collectors Auction in the same year. Since 2012, her work has appeared in exhibitions in Bahrain, Qatar, India and Italy. In 2014, she participated in a collective exhibition at the Maraya Art Center in Sharjah.



Title - A Never Ending Love Tale  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Inkjet Print on Hahnemuhle Fine Art Paper mounted on Plexiglass  
Dimensions - 20cm x 20cm

## Jamal Abdulrahim

Jamal Rahim, who was born in Muharraq in 1965, believes that the skills involved in drawing are of the utmost importance. But Rahim works across mediums: he is a skilled print-maker — one of the most exciting in the Middle East — and has lately been sculpting, in such materials as stone and bronze.

For the past 20 years, the award-winning artist has staged 20 solo exhibitions in Bahrain and across the world. His work has been globally recognized. The Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore holds his print *Al Qalam* in its permanent collection. The artist has created 30 handmade books to date. His book *Rasa'el Qasab* (Cane Messages) was added to the British Museum's permanent collection. His career has included important collaborations, including those with his friend Ali Ahmad Said Esber, known also as Adonis, one of the most influential Arab poets of the modern era. His books and paintings also draw on poets such as Al-Mutanabbi, the 10th Century master, Al Niffari, considered to be one of the first Sufis, and the Persian Sufi mystic Mansur Al Hallaj.

From his home in Muharraq, Bahrain, Rahim runs one of the biggest print-making workshops in the region. His art changes with the seasons; His summers are devoted to print-making, winters to the demanding business of sculpting — which he took up about 10 years ago. He works with materials that range from granite to bronzes.

As a young man, Rahim took on tough manual work as a carpenter, a machinist, and a welder. On and off for a more than a year, he also worked as a fisherman in one of the small-engine boats that used to ply the waters of Bahrain, reeling in 40 or 50 kingfish a day — before fish stocks plummeted in the Gulf.

He believes that the physical labor he has done has paved the road for the rigorous practice of printmaking as well as sculpture, which he particularly loves. “I love stone,” he said. “When I find any stone I try to know the secret behind it.”

“We are an island, and when you are born, they throw you in the sea,” he said. The artist has a close kinship with the sea: it inspires in him musings on destiny and philosophy, and on the connections among the sky, stone, fish, and blue water.

“The sea and the people around you and what’s going on in the world, from all these things I get ideas for art,” Rahim said.



Title - Om Daffa  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Bronze  
Dimensions - 32cm x 12cm x 12cm



## Ahmed Anan

Born in 1968 in Bahrain, since 1989 Ahmed has participated in many solo and group exhibitions.

The theme of women runs throughout his work and his work is highly contemporary, using the medium of printing as well as drawing on canvas and across different materials such as mixed media.

He has had several solo and group exhibitions in Bahrain and the Gulf:

Solo Exhibitions:

- 2016 Solo Exhibition at Alriwaq art space - Bahrain.
- 2014 Solo Exhibition in Alkubar Design art gallery - KSA.

Exhibitions:

- 2016 Annual exhibition of Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities.
- 2015 Al Asmakh International Symposium of Art - Doha.
- 2015 Al Asmakh Art Atelier- Doha.

His work features in the Bahrain National Museum.



Title - Women in Abaya  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Mixed Media On Canvas  
Dimensions - 80cm x 120cm

## Balqees Fakhro

Fakhro was educated in Beirut, and lived and studied in northern California before returning to the Gulf. For the past 40 years, she has participated in group exhibitions and had various solo shows across the region and the world. For years, Fakhro has exhibited her work with a group of Middle Eastern artists as part of the Friends of Art of the Gulf GCC countries. In Bahrain her work is showcased at the Bahrain National Museum, and in the Manama Hall of the Four Seasons Hotel, among other venues. Her works have been acquired by museums and collections the world over, from Jordan to Germany.

Balqees Fakhro says that she uses abstract painting to reproduce the range of emotions she encounters in the music of Mozart or Stravinsky. When she completes a painting, she hangs it up on the wall of her living room, and plays one of her favourite piece of classical music. “I listen to classical music and compare it to the same feeling. Then for me the painting is finished, and I have to sign it,” she said.

She has also had a distinguished career as an art critic, and has lectured at the Bahrain Arts Society, most notably on the British artist J. M. W. Turner’s use of light, and on the artist’s influence on her own work.

She considers her oeuvre to have been influenced mostly by Western artists; she cites Da Vinci and Duchamp as key inspirations.

Critics would say that Fakhro’s work has been influenced as much by Iraqi painting as American abstract traditions. Her background suggests that such comparisons may be accurate; the artist was born to an Iraqi mother and studied in San Francisco at a time when abstract art was booming.

As an art writer as well as an artist, Fakhro observes how the strongest markets for art in Bahrain range from calligraphy, or work based on calligraphy, to more straightforward realist work. In the West, fashions have shifted from Marcel Duchamp’s found objects to multi-media and video installations, she says. But after 40 years in the art market, “I am still attached to the canvas,” she declared. “I like to express my feelings through canvas. I have to express my feelings through the complexity of the texture, simplicity of expression.”



Title - Painting 3  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Acrylic On Canvas  
Dimensions - 120cm x 140cm

## Mariam Fakhro

The influence of Bahrain can be clearly seen in Mariam Fakhro's work – mainly oil and acrylic works on canvas. Born in 1952, the artist draws on images of old Bahraini houses. Memories from the time she spent in her family house in Muharraq make their way into her artwork.

“It was a big, traditional, Bahraini house, which gathered the extended family and had many rooms and separate wings around an inner courtyard,” Fakhro fondly recalls. “The house had natural springs, which Bahrain was quite famous for, and which would water the gardens and pour into a swimming pool, which is where I learned to swim.”

One of Fakhro's earliest paintings captures the sun setting over the blue waters of the island. Even her landscapes tend to carry hints of nostalgia and childhood memories, she explained.

“My subject matter has always been of scenery or people and images from my memories, and imagination. My work always tries to capture a feeling or a moment, which has some personal meaning for me,” she said.

The artist strives to paint from the heart. “One thing I always felt was most important to me, was to always paint what I enjoyed and what I felt,” she said. “I always aim for my work to be authentic, and always trust my own instincts in terms of the subject I want to paint, and how I want to portray it.”

In addition to her art practice, Fakhro has been contributing to Bahrain's art scene as a curator and administrator over the past three decades; she joined the Bahrain Arts Society in 1985. Between 1991 and 2000, Fakhro curated 25 shows at the Bahrain National Museum. She also ran the Laffan Gallery for a while, organizing shows that featured local and international artists.

She graduated from the Beirut Arab University in Lebanon with a degree in business administration, and in the 1980s, started to take painting seriously. She joined workshops lead by the Spanish artist Raquel Durain, who at the time offered private painting classes in Bahrain.

She started with the basics; painting a sunset and drawing a horse were her earliest achievements. Filled with enthusiasm, she started copying paintings in various styles. “It became a daily practice, taking up most of my time and dedication,” she recalls.

Her art has been deeply informed by her identity as a Bahraini woman and artist, she said. “The women in my paintings are all inspired by what I see in local Bahraini culture. I am inspired by everything I grew up with, from the colors of the fabrics, and the scenery and natural surroundings to the gentle, calm pace of life Bahrain was known for.”



Title - Memory Of The Place  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Acrylic & Mix Media  
Dimensions - 120cm x 120cm

## Faika Al Hassan

In mixed media on canvas, Faika Al Hassan renders tens, if not hundreds of faceless figures, roaming around in absolute anonymity. In her work, the painter seeks to deconstruct the relationship between human beings and the vastness of the universe.

Al Hassan was born in Bahrain but studied in Iraq. After graduating with a degree in economics from the University of Baghdad, the artist returned to Bahrain, and enrolled in a number of art and painting courses. She started exhibiting her work in Bahrain in 2004, and in 2007 won the fine art exhibition award at the Bahrain National Museum.

Her work is not only celebrated in Bahrain: she has had solo shows in Madrid, Brussels and Damascus, and showcased her paintings in group exhibitions and galleries in the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Qatar.

Growing up in a conservative family, Al Hassan says she sought an escape in art. “It was the only way for me to express all the emotions and feelings I had inside,” she says now.

“I believe that my audience, or those that have followed my work over the years are those that have not been influenced by the extremism overshadowing our world,” she said. “They are those that are open to other cultures and those that see a reflection of what’s happening around them through my work.”

Multiple movements have influenced her work across art history: from Aboriginal art in Australia to the Renaissance masters, and more modern artists such as likes of Picasso or Dali. But she has been particularly impressed by the “works and determination” of Amedeo Modigliani, a Jewish Italian painter who struggled as an artist but was determined to continue painting.

At the same time she also draws inspiration from the older generation of artists from Syria, such as the late Louay Kayali and Fateh Moudarres. She has a deep appreciation for Youssef Abdelke, who in his recent work has viscerally portrayed the trauma that his homeland has endured through war. She also looks to the techniques, philosophies and uses of colour of Iraqi masters Faiq Hassan and Nouri Al-Rawi for inspiration. In the meantime, the artist is trying to evoke the landscape of her own country by representing the desert, the sun and the sea in her work.



Title - Untitled  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Acrylic On Canvas  
Dimensions - 130cm x 130cm

## Lulwa Al Khalifa

Lulwa Al Khalifa's art, mostly abstracts painted in oil, is deeply connected to her personal experience in the world. "I paint what I feel and what I like," says Al Khalifa.

Born in Bahrain in 1968, she earned her BA in literature from Boston University. Despite being a self-taught artist with no formal art education, Al Khalifa received preliminary training from her father, a former minister of education in Bahrain. "My father taught me how to sketch and how to perceive a still life subject and think about scale and shading," she says. She recalls that his professional documents were typically "riddled with sketches."

Al Khalifa's father took her to visit major museums in Europe, where she found prominent artists from whom to gain inspiration. The work of Spanish artist Salvador Dali left a particularly strong impression on her - but she says she does not need to walk into the Louvre to find inspiration.

"Everything inspires me, from Salvador Dali, to a song, to a bird on my balcony," she says. She even cites the influence that a guitar riff from an Aerosmith song has had on her practice.

Her work has been showcased in art fairs in New York and Miami with Belgium's Vogelsang Gallery, and as part of ArtBahrain 2015.

Al Khalifa describes her artwork as being "visceral and instinctual." Her makeshift studio is a balcony overlooking the sea.

"I don't complicate my process at all, I just stand in front of the canvas and paint," she says. "I like the raw energy that produces on the canvas. Each painting is a journey of discovery that starts from an inspiration. That inspiration could literally be anything. I don't question that inspiration, I just go with it. I have never feared a blank canvas because I view it as an exciting possibility and I look forward to the outcome."



Title - Untitled  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Oil On Canvas  
Dimensions - 120cm x 80cm

## Marwa Al Khalifa

Marwa Al Khalifa is a multidisciplinary artist who works across mediums. She is well-versed in painting, but her practice includes experiments with light box installation and photographic imagery.

Al Khalifa has not had formal art training, but she has ambitiously expanded her practice over the years. She said that she had applied to an art college overseas, before succumbing to the “stereotype” and opting for a more conventional degree — in advertising and public relations. Al Khalifa has not forsaken art, though, quite the contrary. She has studied with painter Omar Al Rashid, for example. She also worked with renowned Lebanese photographer Camille Zakharia, who currently lives in Bahrain.

A mural by the artist, consisting of eighty light boxes, covers the curved reception wall of the Art Rotana Hotel on Bahrain’s Amwaj Island.

In her Yellow & Blue series, Al Khalifa took photographs on her phone of leaves floating on a pool in her garden, and played with the shapes as if they were a puzzle, before printing them in recurring abstract patterns. The result is an image reminiscent of mosaic tile work from Iran or Morocco — or the clear California blues in David Hockney’s swimming pool images.

Al Khalifa has admired Hockney’s work at the Royal Academy, and she has been specifically inspired by how the artist documented spring or summer, capturing fallen leaves or pathways in the snow. “When you are inspired

by an artist, you carry it through your work,” she said. “You don’t usually see leaves in the autumn or the spring, it’s not common in Bahrain, and I just loved the contrasts of the yellow and blue. Blue in general surrounds us from the sky, to the water, so colour-wise, I associate it with Bahrain, with swimming and being around water.”



Title - Dm il Ghazal  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Acrylic Paint On Spices  
Dimensions - 43.5cm x 43.5cm

## Nabeela Al Khayer

Nabeela Al Khayer studied at the prominent Slade School of Fine Art in London, and in workshops in Paris and Geneva. Her work, which includes striking portraits of women, draws inspiration ranging from the ancient art and jewellery of Africa to Sufism.

In Al Khayer's 2014 work, Dialogue, the figure of an African woman seems lost in contemplation despite the cobra within troubling distance of her face. "I conjure women in all my work. I see a woman where others don't see a woman. Her beauty moves me, whether it's alluring or bland, whether it's breathtaking or ugly," Al Khayer says. "I try to dive into the depths of every woman so that she may reveal all her secrets to me."

Al Khayer has had twenty six solo exhibits between 2003 and 2010, including shows in Bahrain, New York, Florence and Cairo.

In 2014, she was ranked #45 by Forbes Middle East in the list of most powerful women in the Arab World, and #6 in Bahrain.

After the sudden death of her husband, Mahmood, in 2007, Al Khayer took over the operations of Asia Jewellers, and a second family company, the Phoenicia Décor furniture store. Founded in 1962 with a single shop in Shaikh Abdullah Street in Manama, in an island nation where traditional pearl fisheries had helped draw in the world's greatest jewellery makers, Asia Jewellers grew to boast seven outlets in Bahrain and in Al Khobar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

acting as sole distributor for a string of high-end brands.

She has lived and traveled as an artist and international businesswoman, taking in museums, galleries, art fairs, and meetings with artists along the way, devouring art books and reviews. Art, she says, is composed of both practice and research.

Al Khayer creates expressive portraits of young women, painted with scratches or harsh, inconsistent strokes. Vivid colours emphasise the features of her Arab or African subjects, and notes written on the borders offer an intimate, diary-like feel to the pieces.

She has said that her goal is to continuously inspire women in both business and the arts. "To be an artist is to reveal the depths of your art and enter into the depths of others," she said. "You embody a memory with its beauty or ugliness. You are the other and the other is you and here, I believe, lies the equation of the human psyche."



Title - Henna Night  
Year - 2004  
Medium - Mixed Media On Canvas  
Dimensions - 80cm x 80cm

## Ghada Khunji

Ghada Khunji spent more than two decades in New York, training in premier arts institutions, collecting prestigious photography prizes, and building a strong career in documentary photography. She has recently relocated to Manama, Bahrain, where she is expanding her artistic practice by experimenting with mixed media.

Born in Bahrain in 1967, Khunji attended a pre-school associated with the Sacred Heart church, an experience that explains the iconography present in her most recent work. She enjoyed a multi-faith childhood, she said, since she grew up “literally next door” to a Hindu temple, a church, and a mosque.

She traces her fascination with photography back to the moment she found an old suitcase that belonged to her mother, stuffed with portraits of many generations of her family. She was swiftly charmed. Beside the surviving prints, she discovered stacks of negatives. She has since used some of these old images in her work, to “revisit family moments that I was not around for,” she explains. Some tell stories of Bahrain, others of family members living abroad.

Khunji trained in New York, including at the prestigious Parsons School of Design, and for 10 years paid the bills by working as a photographic printer for high-end clients including Annie Liebowitz and the magazine Harper’s Bazaar. Any disposable cash paid for photography trips to pursue her own projects. In 2006, after digital technology made dark rooms redundant, she

competed in the prestigious Lucie Awards and won the Discovery Prize for a non-professional photographer, for series of portraits she shot in the Dominican Republic. She carved out a career as a documentary photographer that took her to India, Cuba, and the Middle East.

Khunji’s work in New York was influenced by some of world’s finest artists, including Duane Michals, Diane Arbus, and Robert Frank. She also says that she has recently developed a fascination with Frida Kahlo.

Kunji believes that Bahrain’s art scene is both unique and promising. “We are influenced by so many different communities here,” she said. “The art scene in Bahrain is getting better and better. It’s growing quickly. With ArtBahrain and the galleries, we are starting to come to the forefront. It’s well deserved; it didn’t develop as quickly before, someone had to start it. There’s a lot of talent here. “



Title - Baabuna  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Digital Photograph On Canvas  
Dimensions - 100cm x 100cm



## Aysha Al Moayyed

Born in Manama Bahrain, 1988 Aysha graduated from Goldsmiths University with a Masters in Fine Art in 2015. She lives and works in London.

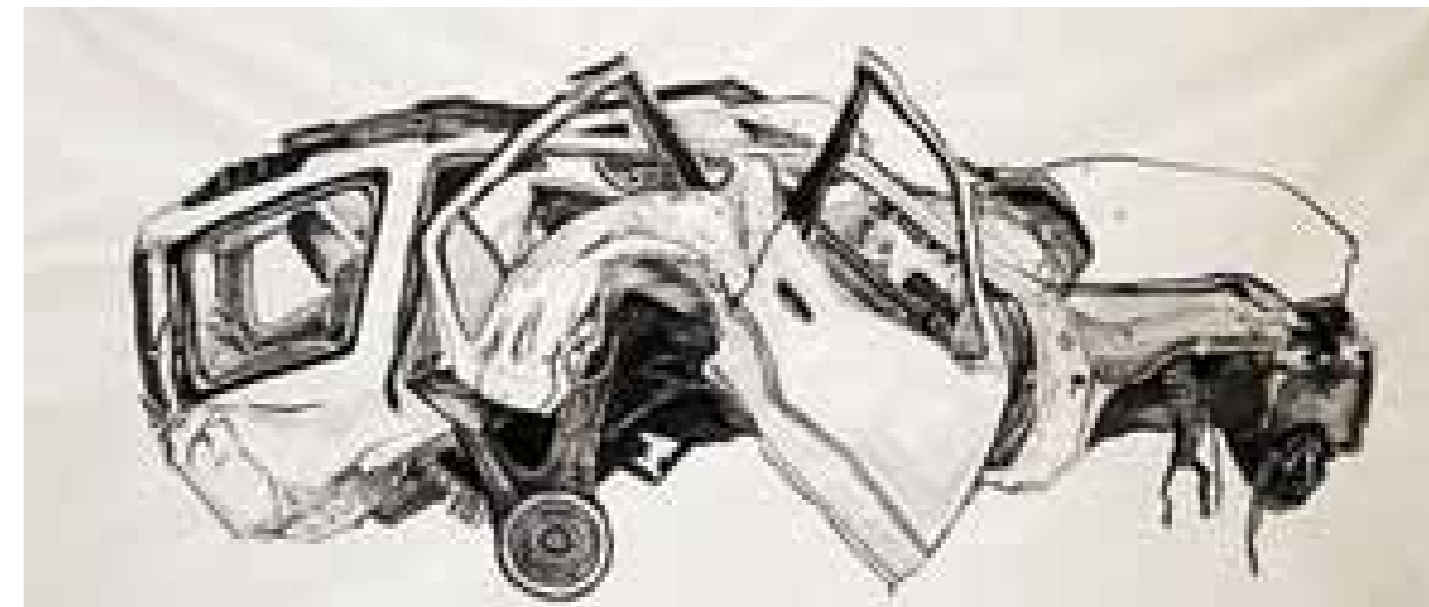
Previous exhibitions include:

2016 exhibitions

- STRATA Exhibition, Studio ACA, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
- Collaboration with Hyper / Hypo Fashion label, London, England
- 42st Annual Fine Art Exhibition, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

2015

- Top 10 Artist to Watch in 2015 by Degree Art, London, England
- The youngest recipient of the 'Al Dana Prize', Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain



Title - Car Crash  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Ink On Newsprint  
Dimensions - 120cm x 152cm

## Abbas Al Mosawi

Abbas Al Mosawi has been a professional artist for more than forty years. He learned his craft under the tutelage of the eminent Bahraini artist, Dr Ahmed Baqer. Later, as a student in Cairo, he was attracted to the impressionist style of Sabry Ragheb, whom he considers to this day to be the prince of painters. The sources for his work were derived principally from the old Manama market, Manama's suburbs and surrounding villages. Given the irreversible changes of the urban and rural landscape his paintings provide the viewer with the necessary imaginative and aesthetic bridge to the past.

His paintings show the power of his native Bahrain on his creative output and which colours his abstract paintings both literally and figuratively.

Abbas Al-Mosawi is the founder of the Art & Peace Project.

Peace Prize Awards:

- 2007 Peace Project in China with 100 children and 20 artists
- 2013 Opening of Peace & Art House in Janabeya, Bahrain
- 2015 Invitation from UN Secretary to hold Peace Project in New York on the UN 70th anniversary

Selected Awards and Prizes:

- 2009 First Degree Competency Award from H. M. King of Bahrain



Title - Soq  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Acrylic And Mixed Media On Canvas  
Dimensions - 130cm x 130cm

## Maryam Abdulla Nass

Born and raised in Bahrain, Maryam Abdulla Nass received her bachelor's degree from Pepperdine University in Malibu, California where she studied International Business. She started painting on porcelain at the young age of 15 and rediscovered her abandoned love for art, in 2004. Art became a means of achieving internal peace and a silent medium for dialogue. Her paintings portray the general feelings and emotions all humans experience as they go through life, ranging from the darkest times of despair, desolation and grief to the brightest moments of hope, bliss and elation. Her artwork are expressions of emotions and a glimpse into her inner self. Sometimes, they even offer an alternative to those emotions.

“Abstract art is a way for me to express, rather than illustrate, feelings and inner emotions. My ideas come from reflections on life. They are created without a plan, without an explanation, just a spontaneous composition after having dared to descend into my inner self. Being a diarist all my life, and a person who does not express oneself verbally painting became a way of expressing myself without the use of words.

Many pages on my diary end with dotdotdot, where as a painting can say it all. Words are not always understandable or received well, but a painting can have hidden messages and meanings that do not have to be revealed. My paintings are a lot like me, they don't tell the whole story. Layers are added and changed and mixed together to hide the real meaning behind the feelings. Not all stories are told. Being a perfectionist in my daily life, art frees

me of the restrictions of having to be perfect all the time. Affected by many abstract expressionist artists such as Gerhard Richter, Reza Derakshani and Jackson Pollock, large textured canvases predominate in my work. They are random coagulations of color. They seem to constitute isolated moments of pure visual and emotional gratification. Relying on the risk element and the details that emerge from the painting process itself, painting abstract gives me the freedom I seek, yet each step forward becomes more difficult and less and less free as shapes, color combinations and patterns appear. Layers expose themselves and different manipulations of colors appear. The process may take weeks and sometimes months until there is nothing else that I want to change and I stop. It is an extended process of layering wet on wet oil paint.

I love the excitement of embracing chance, a sense of the unknown, the infinite and as the patterns and colors appear and layers expose themselves the painting starts to take its shape. Color, gesture, scraping, concealing and layering oil paint allows unintentional combinations to emerge from the surface. Finally, a spontaneous illusion of space is produced, that becomes an extra page in my diary.”



Dimensions - 120cm x 100cm

Title - Cryptic  
Year - 2015  
Medium - Oil On Canvas

## Areej Rajab

A Bahraini artist, born and raised on the Kingdom Island. Areej had a passion for art from a very young age and after studying business and general management at the University of Bahrain followed on that passion by enrolling at London Art College.

Areej has participated in a number of youth exhibitions organised by the Bahrain Art Society:

- First solo exhibition 'Florals' was held January 2010.
- Her art show "This is me 2011" was held under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture at Bahrain Arts Centre.
- Her Solo exhibition 'Inner Gestures 2012' was also held under the patronage of the ministry of culture at Bahrain Arts Centre.
- Solo exhibition 'Ten Thoughts 2012' at Saffron café, Muharraq.
- Participated at the Bahrain Second Annual Female exhibition "Fearless Minds" 2012 held at Bahrain Arts Centre.
- Participated at the Bahrain Annual Exhibition 2012 under the patronage of his Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Alkhalifa, Prime Minister.

And recently:

- Participated at the 'Bahrain Art Forum' first edition workshop and exhibition (2015), which was held at Hend Gallery, Muharraq.



Title - Zari  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Mixed Media On Canvas  
Dimensions - 100cm X 100cm

## Omar Al Rashid

Omar Al Rashid is one of Bahrain's most established contemporary artists. His works, painted in compelling colours and textures, have been deeply inspired by the artist's heritage and the history and traditions of his homeland.

Al Rashid was inspired by the bright, vibrant colours of the seascape. Muharraq was the first place where his passion for Bahrain's customs and folklore developed.

For example, horses make frequent appearances in his artwork. The horse is a cultural symbol of the Arabian Peninsula and Bedouin life; it has appeared in artwork throughout history. Al Rashid's paintings combine interwoven patches of colours in a manner reminiscent of collage. In his most recent exhibition titled *The Knight*, held at the Al Riwaq Art Space, he explores the relationship between man and horse, and themes of attachment and loyalty. "The horse was always part of our culture and I have tried to present them in a modern art style," he said. In one painting series, he celebrates the distinctive Bahraini breeds, and the colourful fabrics of the saddles. He describes the horse as "one of the best friends of the old Bahrainis who have lived on this island."

The artist's childhood in Muharraq and the folk tales he heard from his mother also figure strongly in his artwork.

In other works, he strives to capture moments of calm amid the busyness of daily life. He captures moments at a breakfast table and parents' prayers: his work is laced with a sense of intimacy and benevolence.

Currently, he is still embarking a journey of discovery, exploring new ideas and painting techniques. "This is how we maintain a good level of art," he said. His work features in international collections, including at the Barjeel Foundation in Sharjah. Several of his artworks have been acquired by the Bahrain Museum, while entire collections have been bought by the Four Seasons in Bahrain and London, as well as several other five-star hotels across the region.

### Prizes and Awards

- Grand Prize (the 1st) - Al Khorafi International Biennale for Arab Contemporary Art 2012
- Grand Prize (the 1st) - The 1st Gulf Contemporary Art Festival - Riyadh 2013
- Solo Shows
- 2014 9th Solo Exhibition named "The Knight"- Kingdom of Bahrain
- 2015 10th Solo Exhibition Named "Women" - Sudan

### Group Shows

- 2016 Views Exhibition - Ritz-Carlton, Kingdom of Bahrain



Title - Women From Bahrain  
Year - 2014  
Medium - Ink On Paper  
Dimensions - 72cm x 52.5cm

## Latifa Al Shakar

Born in 1987, Latifa Al Shakar studied at the London College of Communication and completed her BA at London Southbank University in 2010. She undertook various courses including Darkroom Photography at Parsons School of Art and Design, New York and was one of 13 photographers selected for New York's International Centre of Photography's, 'Art of the Photo Essay'. Her photography has since documented her travels to specific places – focusing on people and subcultures impacted by current social and political conditions.

Her selection of work presents imagery of her documentation of cities, everyday life and political and cultural issues world-wide. Her work gives us insight into Latifa's impression of these subjects and her observation of the similarities between the cultures and people. Her work echoes concepts that exist beyond borders, regardless of nationality, and of social and political systems that are relevant to and affect all of us.



Title - The Wedding Chef  
Year - 2007  
Medium - Photography Ed 1/5  
Dimensions - 68cm x 97cm

## Mayasa Al Sowaidi

Mayasa Al Sowaidi is a painter who is not afraid to experiment with diverse forms of visual artistic expression. Her earlier works mostly include figurative works on canvas in oil or acrylics, and have varied in style from expressionist to pointillist. In a new project titled Art of Tea, Al Sowaidi completed a series of collage works for which she re-purposed thousands of used teabags collected from restaurants and hotels. The colours of tea – black, white, green and red – comprise the palette of this project.

The idea for Art of Tea came to Al Sowaidi during Food is Culture, an event staged by Bahrain's Culture Ministry. At the event, Al Sowaidi was paired with an Italian chef, and the artist proposed using tea for their project -- both as an art material, and as a cooking ingredient. While Al Sowaidi worked with the colours created by the tea stains, her partner prepared white tea spritzers and Earl Grey-marinated chicken.

Further pushing the boundaries of painting, Al Sowaidi has experimented with incorporating writing on canvas. In one series, titled Inner Gestures, she brought poems on the essence of colour onto the canvas.

Al Sowaidi is an ambitious and courageous self-taught artist. Her career and passion for art are not always aligned, but she maintains that art is an essential component of her daily life. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration, and is now pursuing a PhD in Social Sciences with a focus on emotional intelligence at the University

of Grenoble. She currently works at the Central Bank of Bahrain.

"In maths, everything should be balanced, it should be clear; in art I feel more free. It has opened doors for me, it's my way to relax," Al Sowaidi says. "Do I need a degree to be an artist, to be called a professional? I am already an artist, working in art, loving art. Art is part of my daily life, except I don't have a degree in it."

To further her art skills, Al Sowaidi has participated in various painting workshops. For two years, she enrolled in a workshop with painter Omar Al Rashid, titled "Landscape," together with Marwa Al Khalifa. The workshop culminated in an exhibition at Bahrain Across Borders.

Her recent works include more and more geometric patterns reminiscent of Islamic art. Since there was a strong kinship between Islamic art and mathematics and geometry, it is perhaps unsurprising to find a skilled mathematics graduate exploring abstract art.

Several works from Al Sowaidi's Art of Tea series have since been acquired, two by a private collector, and one by an art galley in Dubai. She is preparing for a new show in Dubai later in the year.



Title - Questioned 1  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Acrylic On Canvas  
Dimensions - 140cm x 120cm

## Zakeya Zada

“My art is from my heart. Using a paintbrush, I transfer my emotions and feelings onto the canvas. It is a form of escapism, a way to release stress, and an alternate reality”.

Inspired by the beauty and strength of women all over the world, self-taught artist, Zakeya Zada expresses her sentiments with vivid colours and uses modern form in a mélange of styles. Her pieces almost always revolve around a female figure, sometimes in a classic portrait style and other times in a more expressionist, modern manner - she does not believe that an artist has to stick to one style throughout their career.

“My fascination with art pushes me to learn new techniques and styles, as I have a desire to fully immerse myself in the realm of art. Some of the artists that have had a profound influence on my work include Amedeo Modigliani and Gustav Klimt, as I have taken inspiration from their use of colour and texture. I am also deeply intrigued by African culture, and have attempted to adopt the traditional African prints to my pieces. These styles give me freedom of expression and allow me to depart from the more classical art styles”.

Zakeya Zada holds a Masters in “Art in Museums and Galleries” from the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom. Currently, she is working on her PHD on Contemporary Art in the Middle East.

She is the founder of “Tolerance through Arts” initiative in Bahrain which aims to promote tolerance and peace principals to the younger generation through arts. She travels around the world to endorse these values; recently participating in a workshop in Turkey for the Syrian and Iraqis refugees in Istanbul - Turkey. She has also partaken in similar workshops throughout the Middle East.

Zada won the first prize in (The 4th Fine Art Competition) which was conducted by (Things to Do), a prominent art company in Bahrain held at Bahrain Art Society in 2013.

She is a member of the Bahrain Art Society and Emirates Art Society.

Group Exhibitions:

- 2016 International Modern Art Exhibition, Contemporary Art Museum, Napoli - Italy
- 2016 (Faces of Peace), Brussels - Belgium
- 2016 2nd Triple Art Exhibition (Oriental Lines), HEND Gallery - Bahrain
- 2016 (VIEWS), Ritz Carlton Hotel - Kingdom of Bahrain



Title - Neighborhood 2  
Year - 2016  
Medium - Acrylic, Pastel & Gold Leaf on Canvas  
Dimensions - 80cm x 70cm



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