



ART BAHRAIN ACROSS BORDERS | LONDON 17

DIVERSITY





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 an art programme connecting the artists of Bahrain on a global platform.

The ambitious project aims to solidify Bahrain's position as a regional arts and education hub whilst stimulating investment and economic activity in the arts and cultural sector.

PATRONAGE



**HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS SABEEKA BINT IBRAHIM AL KHALIFA
WIFE OF THE KING OF BAHRAIN
PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR WOMEN**

BAHRAIN ART WEEK IN LONDON

This is the second edition of Bahrain Art Week in London. Bahrain Art Week in London celebrates the best of contemporary and modern art from the Kingdom of Bahrain, platforming it in London.

Bahrain has one of the oldest contemporary cultures in the middle east. A rich artistic life that crosses painting, sculpture, architecture, design, fashion, performance art and increasingly digital art.

Bahrain Art Week frames the activity of the International Artist Programme of Art Bahrain Across Borders in the UK.

This year sees a group exhibition of 15 artists at Saatchi Gallery, a tribute to the late Bahraini artist Ahmed Baqer whose sketches using pencil are iconic of the Bahraini tradition, a panel discussion at 12 Hay Hill on the Business of Art and various visits to the UK's leading exhibitions at the British Museum, Barbican, 180 The Strand and individual artist studio visits.

All this work builds the capacity of Bahrain's artists as well expanding their international influences whilst strengthening the creative bridges between the United Kingdom and Bahrain.



MARAM BINT ISA AL KHALIFA

Director, Office of Her Royal Highness
Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim, Wife of the King of Bahrain

Bahrain Art Week in London is the UK outreach of the International Artist Programme of Art Bahrain Across Borders (ArtBAB). The International Artist Programme and the ArtBAB international art fair are both key programmes of the wider Art Bahrain Across Borders initiative as devised by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Wife of the King and patron of all these integrated art activities.

ArtBAB is designed to further promote the development of the arts in Bahrain, strategically positioning the arts and creative industries as a key driver of economic growth within the kingdom.

On behalf of Her Royal Highness, I wish the week well and look forward to meeting all those who attend our events, seeking to build partnership between our two historically close nations.



KANEKA SUBBERWAL

Fair and Program Director
ArtBAB

We are confident that the second edition of Bahrain Art Week in London will go a long way in promoting Bahraini artists and also foster strong and enduring bonds between art and creative partners across both kingdoms.

It is a matter of great pride that the exhibition – Diversity – especially curated from some of our exceptionally talented Bahraini artists will be the central pillar of the Bahrain Art Week in London. It will be excellent exposure for the Bahraini artists and we are glad the exhibition will be showcased at the world-leading Saatchi Gallery and I thank my fellow curator Janet Rady for her support.

The Late Ahmed Baqer was one of the kingdom's great artists – his works are closely associated with the arabian horse. In promoting the book, Bahrain Authentic Arab Horses – a historical record of the Al Khalifa arab horses strains at the Maison Assouline we celebrate and pay tribute to the pioneer of pencil sketching who so significantly personified Bahraini art.

A third key element of Bahrain Art Week is the panel discussion at 12 Hay Hill – The Business of Art. As Sh Maram has written, economic development through the arts is a key focus for Bahrain and the means for this is Art Bahrain Across Borders. With our annual international art fair occurring March 14th – 18th in Manama, the infrastructure for this development is in place.

I encourage all of you to participate and enjoy this week whilst I hope to see many of you in Bahrain in March.

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BAHRAIN ART WEEK IN LONDON 2017

PUBLIC EVENTS

DECEMBER 6TH



7pm – 9pm, Private Viewing of “Diversity”,
Saatchi Gallery, Duke of York’s HQ, King’s Road, London SW3 4RY,
(exhibition continues to December 12th)

DECEMBER 7TH



6pm - 8pm Panel Discussion at 12 Hay Hill, London,
W1J 6DQ – The Business of Art – by invitation

Panelists:

Roxane Zand, Deputy Chair, Middle East and Gulf Region, Sotheby’s
Anders Petterson, Founder and Managing Director, ArtTactic

DECEMBER 8TH



630-830pm, a tribute to the late Dr. Ahmed Baqer: Bahrain Authentic Arab Horses
Maison Assouline, 196A Piccadilly London, W1J 9EY – by invitation

A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE DR. AHMED BAQER

Dr. Ahmed Baqer has focused his attention throughout his artistic life on pencil drawings. In a display of consistent energy and self-assured execution, he conjured figures in motion, of horses and men, in tonal variations interwoven with lines composed of tiny motifs repeated hundreds of times in an all-over pattern. One can easily feel the changing of pressure and speed in his hand, something like a conductor coaxing a subtle decibel or tempo change from an orchestra.

Brimming with sharply observed detail, the compositional sense and the emotional base of his drawing bear out a French penchant for atmosphere and gestural beauty. Erasing areas to enhance volume, he opens and closes an assortment of shapes with heavier touches, more aggressive, with a staccato attack where the density and gestural force of his line take command of the encompassing space – with grace and elegance.

In Bahrain Authentic Arab Horses, a historical record of the Al-Khalifa’s horses strains, Dr. Ahmed Baqer’s depiction of these unique and vital royal horses captures for the viewer their power and purity. His pencil strokes create a living image that is timeless and unrivalled.

Dr. Ahmed Baqer studied at the Ecole Nationale Superiere des Beaux-Arts, Paris, France.

“DIVERSITY”

ARTWORKS BY 15 BAHRAINI ARTISTS

SAATCHI GALLERY

6TH DECEMBER – 12TH DECEMBER 2017

CURATED BY JANET RADY AND KANEKA SUBBERWAL



“CREATIVITY THROUGH DIVERSITY”

JANET RADY

Enormously wide in its variety, the selection of works by 15 artists in Diversity sets out to showcase a cross-section of the breadth and scope of talent from the Kingdom. Indeed the diversity of visual solutions offered by these artists in response to the title of the show reflects a celebration of the dynamism and vivacity of the Bahraini art scene today.

But what do we mean by diversity? Diversity is an interchange of ideas, products and influences. Diversity means understanding (Stuart Scott). Diversity is the art of thinking independently together (Malcolm Forbes). Diversity is the state of having, or being composed of, differing individual elements that create a stronger whole. Diversity is a source of strength and inspiration.

Surveying the scope of Bahraini art practices today - including painting, installation, sculpture, photocollage and video - the exhibition convenes a space for critical cross-disciplinary and international cultural dialogue and creative practices.

It explores notions of identity and memory as expressed in Omar Al Rashid's Motherhood works whilst Faika Al Hasan creates tarboushes to invoke and associate with the landscape of her country.

The exhibition touches on belonging and community, as in the case of Amani Al Hajeri's union flags, or Jamal A. Rahim's multi-cultural portraits. A number of the artists embrace the concept of Diversity with a sense of self reflection such as Lulwa Al Khalifa's introspective female figures, and Hesham Sharif's compelling message to us to follow our hearts. Whilst some take a more critically analytical stance, such as Maryam Al Noaimi who comments on the challenges facing Bahrain's ecological environment and Zain Al Kooheji who reveals a poignant sense of loss of identity through architecture. At other times the artist treats his subject, albeit equally sensitively, with humour and irony, as in Mohammed Al Mahdi's quixotic feline works.

Many of the works take on a spiritual dimension such as Marwa Al Khalifa's lightboxes or Othman Khunji's Religious Authority which addresses the relationship between religion, culture and social practices. Similarly Salman AlNajem's work is inspired by religion and the sublime. Sarah Aradi touches on the rebirth of the spiritual body and freedom whilst Somaya Abdulghani's photocollages, video and installation from her Al Meezan project delve into Islam's theological and philosophical beauty. Lastly, Seema Baqi deploys a visual depiction of Sufi practice to spread a message of peaceful co-existence.

But it also goes beyond this. The curatorial framework is based on a synthesis that explores intersections beyond the diversity of art and artistic production practices; common expressions beyond subjective interpretation and formal dialogues beyond the multi-layeredness of conceptual contents. And in so doing, it thereby becomes an effervescence of the present and a prospect for the future.

AMANI AL HAJERI

As a self-taught Bahraini artist, art has interested me since an early age and I was blessed with encouraging parents who had the greatest influence in nurturing my talent. Being a high achiever in school particularly in science and art, I chose to pursue a career in medicine and continued my passion in painting throughout the years, winning local and international prizes; exhibiting in galleries and taking part in philanthropic activities. I am a member of Bahrain Art Society and am actively involved in art activities. I also run specialised art workshops.

I am primarily an oil media artist; although I also paint with watercolours, acrylic, and mixed media. I believe that it is crucial for an artist to be acquainted with the basics of art and know how to exploit them in generating unique pieces to stand out from the crowd.

Therefore, I am continuously learning new techniques and styles.

Looking past history, reading between the lines, and foreseeing the future is the process I went through in creating these two new works to capture a fleeting moment of admiration of a major nation. The challenge was translating human diversity and unity into representational elements. London, the city of dreams, is a model of unity despite the vast ethnicities. Deploying many commonly found elements and using different paint media to express my thoughts, the message I want to convey through this artwork is that people can live together peacefully and enjoy their achievements and celebrate their unity no matter what their ethnicity and religion are.



London's Diversity A, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
50 x 70 x 2 cm



London's Diversity B, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
50 x 70 x 2 cm

FAIKA AL HASAN

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. They are those that are open to other cultures and see a reflection of what's happening around them through my work. Multiple movements have influenced my work across art history: from Aboriginal art in Australia to the Renaissance masters, and more modern artists such as Picasso and Dali. But I have 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 I draw inspiration from the older generation of artists from Syria, including the late Louay Kayali and Fateh Moudarres. I have a deep appreciation for Youssef Abdelke, who in his recent work has viscerally portrayed the trauma that his homeland has endured through war. I also look to the techniques, philosophies and uses of colour of Iraqi masters Faiq Hassan and Nouri Al-Rawi for inspiration. In the meantime, I am trying to evoke the landscape of my country by representing the desert, the sun and the sea in my work.



Not Entirely Red Series, 2012
Mixed media and acrylic on canvas
13 x 10 x 10 cm



Not Entirely Red Series, 2012
Mixed media on canvas
11 x 9 x 9 cm

HESHAM SHARIF

"Don't be afraid of touching the dark.
Don't listen to your mind telling you that
the end is dark.

Don't follow your head that will take you
to where you don't wish.

Put that all aside.

I think the heart is only the key to where
a new image will build, that's because
the heart is stronger in sight than eye. It's
the heart that gives new dimensions to
sight, and allowing black to be light. Let
your heart guide your hand to discover
the mysteries of the mind."

I started painting as a child. I've been
trained by my father, AbdulRahim
Sharif, and throughout my life, having
someone like him mentoring me, there
was never a reason to formally study
art. My father is a graduate of both the
École Nationale des Beaux Arts and

Parsons School of Design in New York,
so I have been in safe hands.

My first participation was at the Bahrain
Annual Fine Arts Exhibition in 2012, and
I am still the youngest in its history to
participate. I also took part in the 2016
and 2017 exhibitions.

I had my first solo exhibition November
2017 at the Bahrain Arts Society, the title
of my show was 'Frightening The Dark'
and the works I'm taking to London
are actually an extension of that show.
All my works are in black and white. It's
a challenging game to play, figuring
where things should go and the medium
I deploy allows me to give the audience
a better visual experience and I think it
makes the impact stronger.



Angel, 2017
Acrylic on paper
32 x 42 cm



Man and the Vase, 2017
Acrylic on paper
32 x 4 cm

JAMAL A. RAHIM

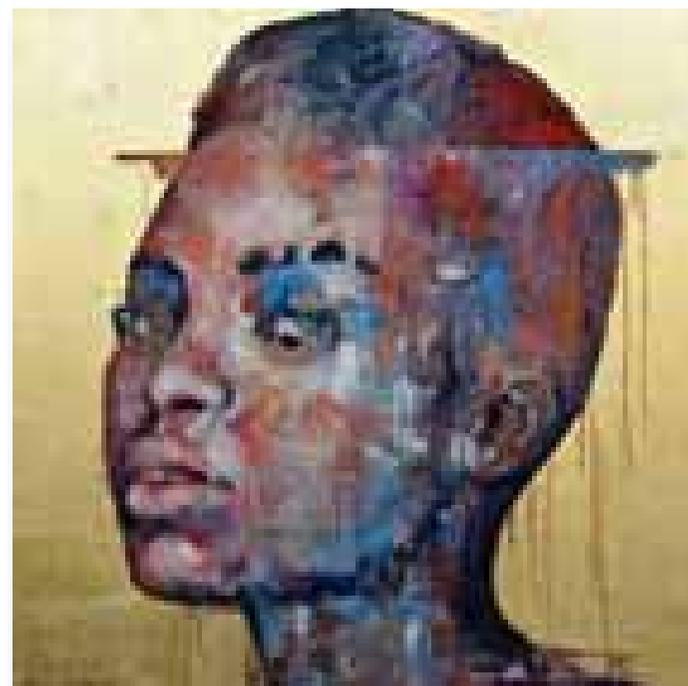
In an era of a digital world, I strongly believe in self-confidence and human inner power, rather than the technological developments that fade-out the real spirit of human beings. Born to Bahraini parents in Bahrain and schooled in India, as an artist, I have always had a worldly outlook.

I build my art from a culture deeply rooted in rich Arab civilization, its mythology, religion and language. I feel that artists can pick their inspiration from everywhere – from places, from people, from emotions and from attitudes around them.

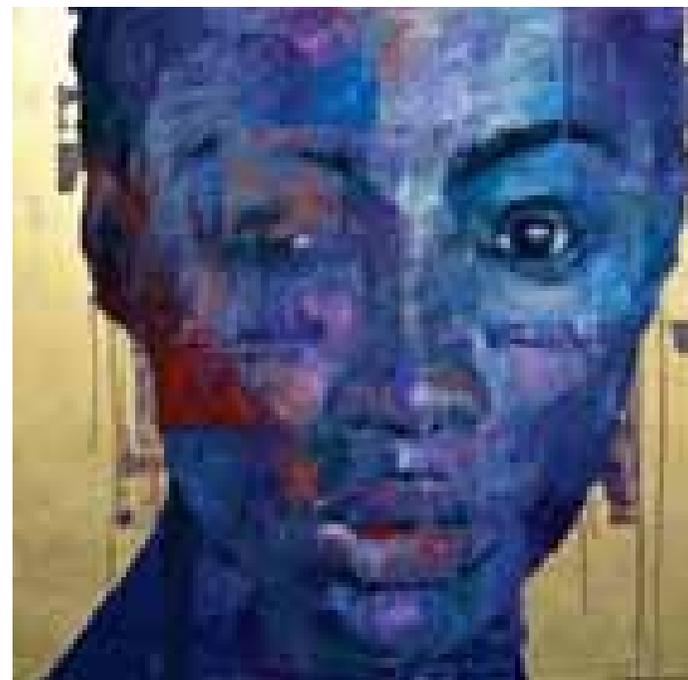
Inspired by a sense of place, my voyage with art is one of both discovery and provocation. I started in 1987 as an oil painter, then a professional print-maker

artist and a sculpture-artist. I love trying new techniques and playing with colours and figures that I have absorbed in my childhood and acquired as an adult.

On my canvas, I like to work on different subjects, but I find it a real challenge to work on portraits. Portraits can take you deep inside the painting to delve into its finest details and sink into the underlying senses. I need viewers to observe the techniques behind the painting and to enjoy every single detail in it. I believe that a work of art that doesn't provoke the viewer into some kind of reaction is not artistic.



Beauty Portrait 2, 2017
Oil on canvas and gold leaf
100 x 100 cm



Beauty Portrait 3, 2017
Oil on canvas and gold leaf
100 x 100 cm

LULWA AL KHALIFA

Despite being a self-taught artist with no formal art education, I received preliminary training from my father (a former minister) in subject matter and in understanding scale and shading. I recall that his professional documents were typically riddled with sketches. My father took me to visit major museums in Europe, where I saw the work of various masters who became an important source of inspiration for me.

Everything inspires me, from Salvador Dali, to a song, to a bird on my balcony. My work is visceral and instinctual. I don't complicate my process. I just stand in front of the canvas and paint. I like the raw energy that manifests itself on the canvas. Each painting is a journey of discovery that starts from an inspiration that could literally be anything. I don't question that inspiration but just go with it. I never fear a blank canvas because I view it as an exciting possibility and I look forward to the outcome.

These paintings are a part of my From The Outside series. I wanted to explore the concepts of clarity and perception. In *At This Moment* the lines obscure the women and force the viewer to look at them through a barrier that impacts their clarity. The lines become a filter through which the outside world views the women, thereby colouring its perception of the women, and in turn the women look at the outside world through the lines and their view is similarly impacted by them. In *Nothing's Gonna Change My World* the lines frame the woman almost trapping her or restricting her space.

The lines in both paintings represent how our perceptions, beliefs and preconceived ideas and our restrictions, both self-imposed or otherwise, exist.



Nothing's Gonna Change My World, 2017
Oil on canvas
91 x 91 cm



At This Moment, 2017
Oil on canvas
120 x 120 cm

MARWA AL KHALIFA

By way of exploring new artistic boundaries, I incorporate the use of mixed media, including burlap, wood, and LED lights into my artwork.

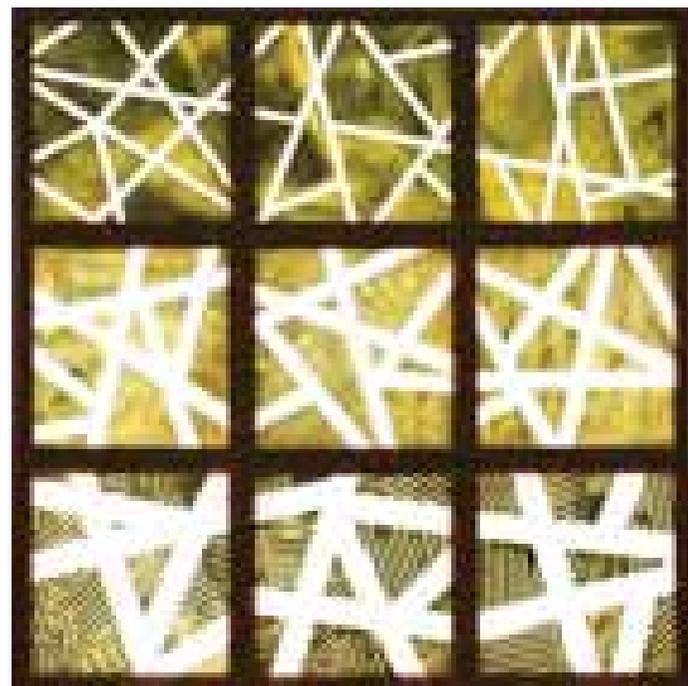
The light collection represents different stages in my life. For me, light symbolises the illumination that is life and the essence of one's soul. The lines and textures in The Walk and Light of my eyes 1 correlate with my milestones and years of being, not as stasis but rather in continuum. The Walk is a journey by two people. Light of my eyes 1 is from a series of three and this body of work represents my three children.

My work broaches a spiritual level that invites the viewer to meditate upon and interrogate their own personal life journey.

I have been involved in painting and photography since 1990. In 2012 I was awarded the Recognition Prize for my art at the 38th Bahrain Annual Fine Arts Exhibition and am the Golden Palm Prize recipient - Fine Art - Bronze category, 2015.

My latest international participation includes in 2016 where I was selected as one of the top thirty artists for the Sovereign Middle East Art & North Africa Art Prize.

In 2017 I participated in the CARAVAN Arts "I AM" exhibition, as one of 31 Middle Eastern contemporary artists. Starting in Jordan in May, "I AM" continued to the UK in July and the USA in September. The exhibition continues touring in the USA throughout 2018.



Light of my Eyes 1, 2017
Acrylic paint on canvas with LED lights
90 x 90 cm



The Walk, 2017
Acrylic paint on canvas with LED lights
215 x 65 cm

MARYAM AL NOAIMI

I was born in 1990 in Bahrain and undertook my Masters in Urban Design at the University of Colorado and my Bachelors in Interior Design at the University of Bahrain.

I am interested in the relationship between the human being and the place, how each is affecting the other and influencing culture, identity, and environment. My artwork includes installation and videography serving as a platform to explore, question, and create a dialogue within oneself and with others.

The Bahrain archipelago has always been biologically rich and diverse, making it a valuable outlet for people, young and old. Not only that, the archipelago has also become a refuge for migratory birds. This remained the case for a very long time until the rapid

urban development came in to rob us of our identity, our beach, and our salt. The new pattern of urbanism resulted in drying out the springs – whose fresh water people used to wash their clothes –, wiping out the islands, and increasing the gap between people and their surrounding environment.

This work is a depiction of evaporation of the sea water, leaving behind only the salt that stains our clothes because there is no more fresh water to restore them back to their original condition, nor is there any access to the sea to repeat the event.



Salt Enriches, 2015
Installation
250 x 150 x 100 cm



Salt Enriches, 2015
Installation
250 x 150 x 100 cm

MOHAMMED AL MAHDI

I was born in Bahrain in 1976 and am an award winning artist and designer.

My paintings are highly personal, continuing an ongoing engagement with my childhood passion: I have been painting since I was four and indeed, most of the symbols used in my paintings now are the same symbols I used to draw as a child. They are about events that I have personally experienced or issues that are happening around me.

A restaurant is a place where food and drinks are served to customers. In former times, restaurants were placed on the edges of long distance travel roads allow travel. A restaurant is a place where travellers can rest and regain their strength to continue their journey. Today restaurants are nearly everywhere, from

quiet and busy roads to hotels, airports, bus stations and trains. In addition, they are also found in parks and office buildings and shopping malls.

Restaurants are the largest food service producers, a sector that includes other places that produce food for people outside their homes including schools, hospitals and factories. Restaurants have become a gathering point for art and culture, and a place to meet loved ones.

Here, I have incorporated into my work a scene that I always see in restaurants: Cats waiting in a conspicuous manner to either get food or become food themselves.



Untitled, 2017
Oil with acrylic on cloth
30 x 30 cm



Untitled, 2017
Oil with acrylic on canvas
100 x 100 cm

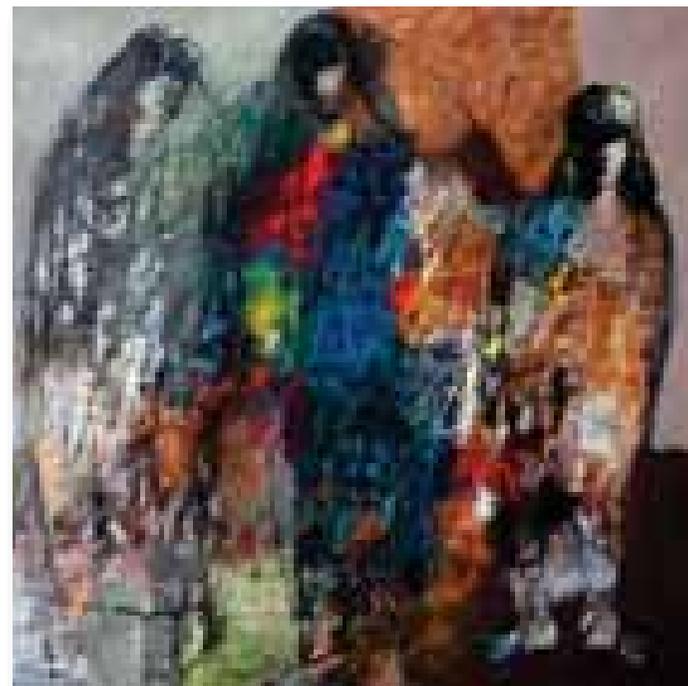
OMAR AL RASHID

My colours and textures have been deeply inspired by the heritage, history and traditions of my homeland. My childhood in Muharraq and the folktales I heard from my mother figure strongly in my work. It is because of this intimate association with my mother that I hold women in high respect in my work.

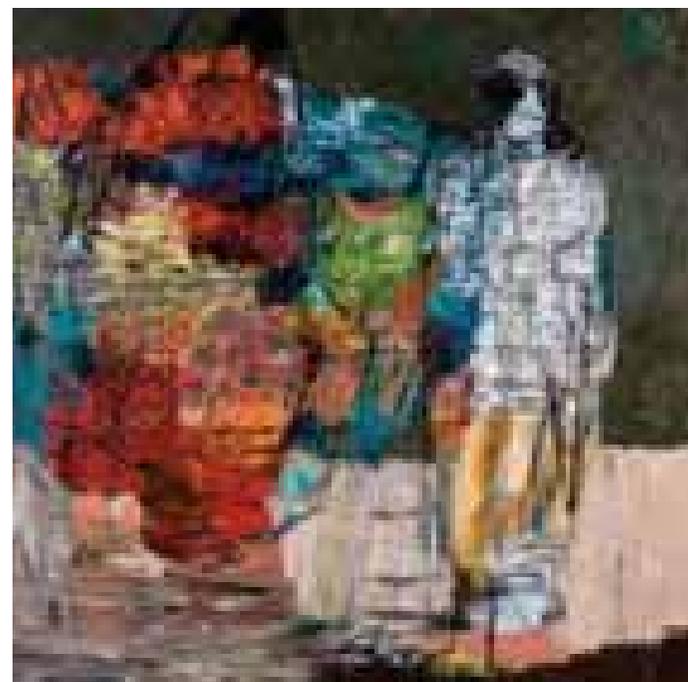
My choice of a woman as the subject of much of my work also allows for my portrayal of intricate and detailed fabric. My female figures echo a balance between femininity and strength; strength reflected by the dominating colours and vivacious fabric. Colour dominates when darkness is present, causing the abaya to play an inferior role to the fabric which lay beneath it. I use my ability to intertwine culture and tradition with a depiction of a strong woman.

I position my women so that they appear firm and secure; as the focal point of the painting. Their importance is obvious regardless of whether or not their faces are obscured. These are not portraits but instead are portrayals of symbolic women; middleeastern women; women of the past, present and future.

I strive to capture moments of calm amid the chaos of daily life. My work is laced with a sense of intimacy and benevolence. I am still embarking on a journey of discovery, exploring new ideas and painting techniques.



Motherhood (1), 2016
Oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm



Motherhood (2), 2016
Oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm

OTHMAN KHUNJI

I am a Bahraini interdisciplinary designer, currently based in Qatar, working at Qatar Museums as an Exhibition Design Specialist. My work ranges across the fields of product, and interactive installation design. The social behaviours, from an Islamic perspective, triangulating how the relationships between religion, culture, and society can be expressed through the language of design are my particular areas of interest.

Whether educational or critical, evocative or reminiscent, my interactive creations invite a reawakening and exploration of faith-based practices and social justice issues that will establish platforms for dialogue in the hope of generating new schools of thought.

My work is dedicated to the loving memory of my late mother,

Majeeda Ali Ahmed Al-Awadhi and father, Mohamed Rasheed Khonji for raising me to be the person I am today. (Biography by Scott Andrew Walsh).



Religious Authority, 2016
Beechwood, CNC Engraving
64 x 64 x 90 cm

SALMAN ALNAJEM

A creative force, painter, sculptor, and designer from the Kingdom of Bahrain, I hold a BA Interior & Spatial from University of the Arts London, LCC and an MA in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art. I have had exhibitions around the world including Bahrain, London, Saudi Arabia and Milan.

I believe that it is the artist's duty to spark a dialogue on the social issues that he or she is surrounded by. I believe that art sheds light on issues that are usually shied away from. My work does not abide to any specific model - my hand freely creates sketches derived from emotions, thoughts and questions, which I believe dwell deep within my subconscious mind. These sketches then go through study, refinement and selection to then be painted on canvas, allowing me a better understanding of my work and what I express.

Of the varying themes I explore in my artistic practice, it is the theme of the human experience as it propels and pulls me into thinking about reasons for human existence, which is paramount. I explore this through critiquing society closely, by looking at luxury, wealth and materiality as I attempt to prove or disprove its validity and importance. The theme of human experience intertwined with culture is another integral part of my work.

Through this, I aim to redirect attention from mortal desires in the form of importance of social status, cultural stigma, westernisation vs modernisation, to the shedding of light on the beauty and importance of culture and traditions.

My work is also inspired by religion and the sublime, issues that I believe are of the utmost importance.



House, 2017
Blackened Series
Emulsion, oil paint, oil pastel, spray paint, graphite, ink and glitter on canvas
130 x 120 cm



Help, 2017
Blackened Series
Emulsion, oil paint, oil pastel, spray paint and graphite on canvas
130 x 120 cm

SARAH ARADI

I am a Bahraini born artist that has been exploring the art scene since 2008 and has been making waves ever since.

In my latest works, I have started exploring the definition of lines and minimal drawing. I continue to relate my previous journey of story-telling through realistic oil paintings, and now I experiment strictly with paper and lines to create the same impact and beauty without reducing the substance of the message and details.

I am continuously finding new creative angles through which to tackle my subject: women, and these works are accomplished by dealing with them but with a different perspective and outcome.

The first work Revelation deals with structure, her stricture. Defined by her

hunched, tired back in a white silhouette (light), her body is rooted by a deep vein of life (red). The birds of peace surround her while her head is separated in a field of freedom between life and death. The execution of the physical body is the rebirth of the spiritual one. Freedom from flesh, desires and pain, elevates her into this state of revelation.

In Untouched, we see her purity and childlike innocence and her soul's freedom. Despite all that surrounds her in her world, a world of mixed light and dark, thin and empty moments versus heavy and colourful ones, she is untouched by her surroundings, barely even affected. "Let not my surroundings affect me for I am who I am."



Untouched, 2016
Paperwork framed in double glass frame (black frame)
111.5 x 85 x 2.5 cm



Revelation, 2016
Paperwork framed in double glass frame (black frame)
115.5 x 85 x 2.5 cm

SEEMA BAQI

A message of peace, courage and co-existence is what I want to share through the eyes of a Bahraini artist in abstract form. The artistic expedition aims to express the local traditions in today's contemporary world to paint a scene of modernity in attitudes and practices with the preservation of culture and tradition.

A creative imagination and expression is where my abstract pieces tell the story of Sufi culture and its ideologies of selflessness, simplicity and the journey to self-actualisation. Much like the authentic Bahraini culture, the root of Sufism based on the practices of loyalty, love and truthful intentions in any setting. It is rather like a form of tradition and emotional beauty which is translated on canvas.

I have spent most of my career in the corporate world but now I am dedicated to my passion. I have collaborated with several artists and contributed to many charities. My main aim is to showcase local Bahraini art by bringing together designers and artists of all cultures to create beautiful art and spread a message of peaceful co-existence.



Inspiration, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 120 cm



Positivity, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 120 cm

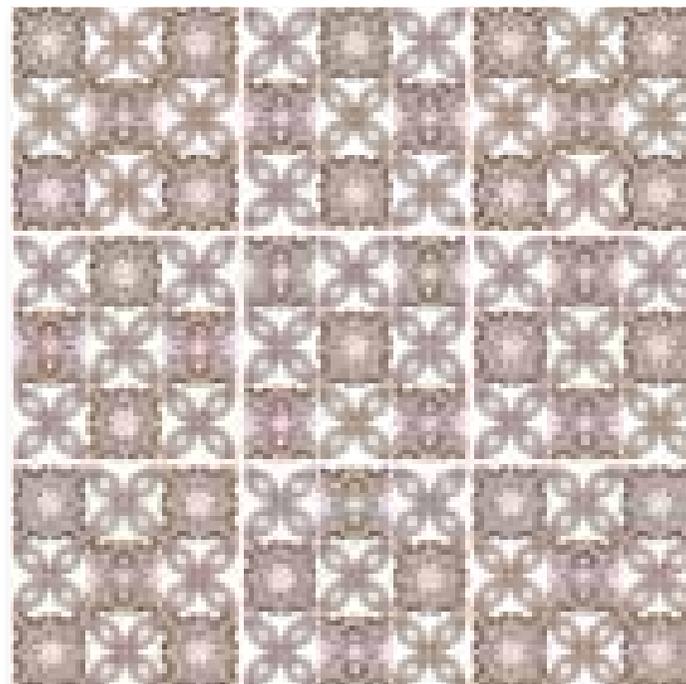
SOMAYA ABDULGHANI

I am a Bahraini artist who specialises in collage, photography and mixed media. I strive to introduce Islam's theological and philosophical beauty to my audience, by developing delicate, rhythmic and organic patterns in my art; attempting to mirror nature's simplicity. The enlightening nature of the religion acts as a strong propellant in my art and practice. I believe in shared values present across various religions, such as morality and purity, and is interested in developing concepts related to her research.

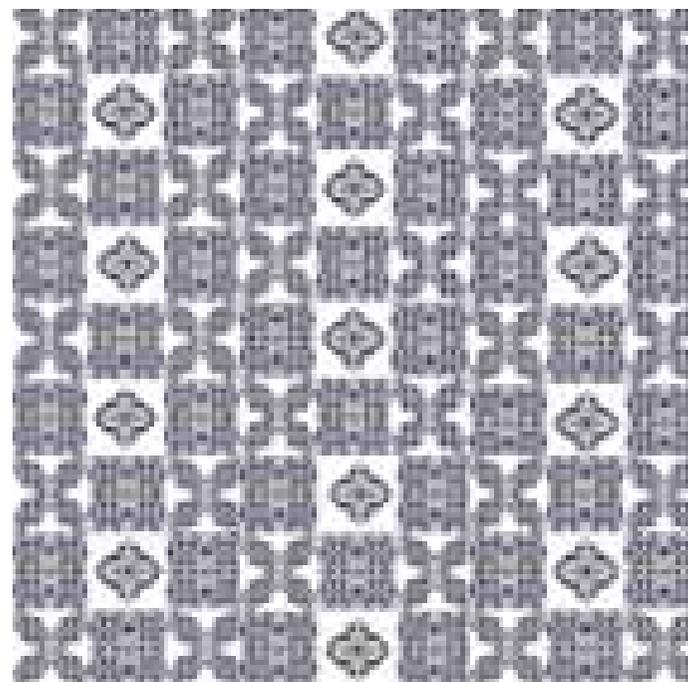
'Al Meezan' which translates into 'the scale' in English, is a concept that symbolises the spiritual weight of good deeds against bad to determine the consequences during the afterlife.

This artwork was inspired by a group project – After Life – done by the Qu'ran club I attend. A friendly game was created that illustrated the divine concept of the scale. Participants were asked to pick five wrapped pebbles from a dark alley lit by lanterns, each pebble bearing a type of deed. For the stones that bore good deeds (a smile, kind words, etc.) 2 points were added. For stones inscribed with bad deeds (a lie, swearing, etc.) 2 points were subtracted. The total was then calculated from 10. Those who got 0 were saved from Hell, more than 0 were sent to Heaven and (-) would end up in symbolic Hell.

The photographs presented feature the stones as designs.



Untitled, 2017
Almeezan Project
Archival inkjet print on fine art paper
120 x 120 cm



Untitled, 2017
Almeezan Project
Archival inkjet print on fine art paper
120 x 120 cm

ZAIN AL KOOHEJI

As someone who has always struggled with their identity, my artwork reflects the loss of identity and quest for individuality in this vastly modernizing world we live in. To me, architecture is the identity of a nation.

In this evolving world, there is a sense of disconnection between individuals, as if the changes occurring around us are colluding to aid the loss of culture. It hurts me to witness that with the marvels and creations of the previous nations, slowly and gradually, cultural identity is lost.

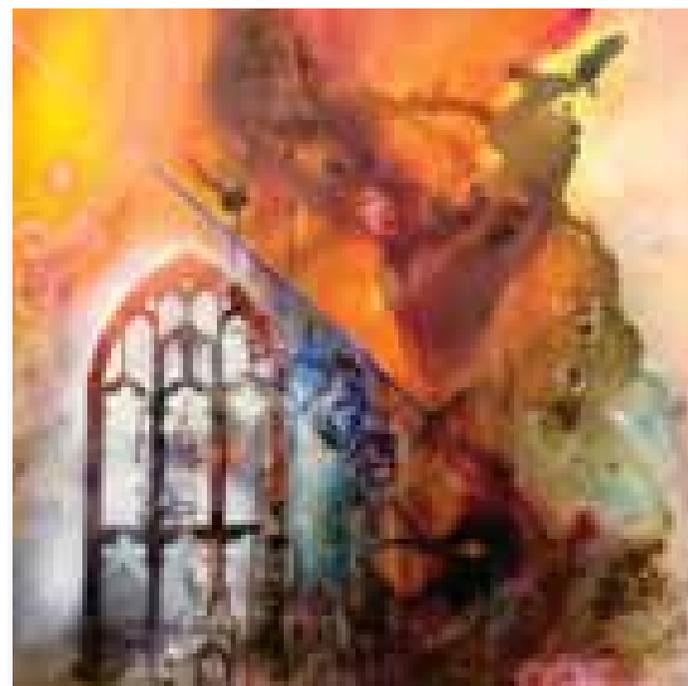
I realised how strongly my culture defines and represents me as an individual, and how I present myself. My artwork is an attempt to portray these colliding motions of identity and loss aiming to represent not only myself, but all of humanity.

I appreciate complex Islamic architectural features; from domes and pillars to archways and geometric patterns, these features all date back to 784 AD and preserve culture within it. As architecture is the identity of a

nation it is therefore vital to nurture it.

As for my most recent project, I explored cultural identity by looking at the several aspects and components of Arabian culture; from the intricate architectural features, to family, tradition, fashion and language. For my paintings Modernisation and Ruins, I revealed the deterioration of Arabian architecture and added gothic features in my paintings to embody the overlap of existing culture.

My artwork is calculated; quite often, I let my paintings look slightly unfinished to leave my paintings with a sense of ambiguity to allow viewers to explore my work to their own extent. I want viewers to have a sense of purposefulness when looking at my paintings.



Modernisation, 2017
Acrylic, ink, spray paint, stencil, pastel and tissue paper on canvas
100 x 100 cm



Ruins, 2017
Acrylic, ink, spray paint, stencil, cloth and string on canvas
100 x 100 cm

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