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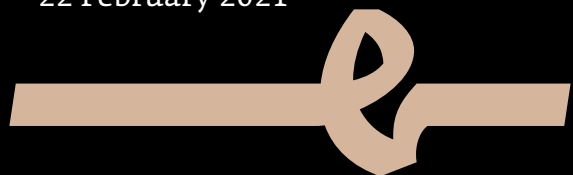
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A Dedication to Abdulrahim Salim

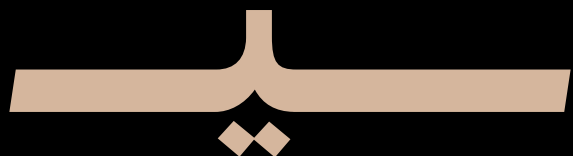


22 November 2020

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22 February 2021



M A H E E R A H



Cultural Foundation,
Al Hosn, Abu Dhabi



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‘Maheerah’

A Dedication to Abdulrahim Salim

A group art exhibition by
creative multimedia and figurative painting storytellers

‘Maheerah’ brings together figurative and multimedia artists to celebrate the works of renowned Emirati artist Abdulrahim Salim by reinterpreting his theme of ‘Maheerah’.

Ten multimedia artists bring the character of Maheerah to life through a series of commissioned short films, while 25 figurative artists embody her character in oil, water and acrylic portraits on canvasses of 1.5 x 2.5 metres.

Maheerah is the tale of a beautiful girl who lived in a neighbourhood of Sharjah during the 1950s. One day, a man proposed but she rejected his hand in marriage. Seeking vengeance, the man cast a spell on her which robbed her of her beauty and made her an outcast from her community. People started to dehumanise Maheerah, seeing her as a source of evil to be avoided.

Abdulrahim Salim first heard the story of Maheerah from his grandmother and it left a deep impression on him. He empathised and developed a deep affinity with Maheerah. He began to imagine what she may have looked like and, in the 1990s, he started painting his visions of her, which have continued to the present day.

Abdulrahim's passion for art began at an early age and he honed his talents through practice and academic study to reach prominence on the Emirati arts scene. Over time, his personal

initiatives evolved into the creation of the first academic curricula to teach drawing in schools. He worked with students in such a way as to give them a structured foundation in which to channel their artistic creativity and energy.

Emirati heritage and the magic of old tales such as Maheerah inspire Abdulrahim's paintings. He developed his own artistic style which sets him apart, particularly in his choice of subjects. Through his artworks, he tells us the story of suffering and the injustices that Maheerah was subjected to.

Maheerah was a catalyst for Abdulrahim's creativity and artistic expression. His art also has a philosophical dimension in that it transcends from mere observation to dynamic thinking about the subject and to the realm of imagination and emotion. He does not merely symbolise Maheerah but imbues his work with a living, breathing soul.



FOREWORD

One of the core objectives of the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi is to increase awareness of, participation in and engagement with cultural heritage and the arts. Supporting the emirate's artistic community not only elevates local talent but empowers future generations of artists, further contributing to the vibrant cultural ecosystem.

At the heart of establishing Abu Dhabi as a diverse cultural capital is the community, and community exhibitions are the lifeblood of any local arts scene. Aside from providing greater exposure for artists' work, they can be a unique opportunity for artistic exchange and a chance for participants to reflect on artistic heritage and to honour the legacies of the pioneers who came before them.

'Maheerah' is one such group exhibition, bringing together work by 35 figurative artists and short filmmakers from the United Arab Emirates to interpret a theme associated with the work and career of a renowned pioneer, Emirati artist Abdulrahim Salim. His long-time muse is Maheerah, the titular character of the traditional Emirati tale.

Many artists have their own personal muse but what happens when this source of inspiration is borrowed and explored by another? The Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation invites us to find out, as these young, up-and-coming artists from across the United Arab Emirates each bring Maheerah to life in their own unique way, providing countless interpretations of her story.

Having long been a space for open, unfettered thought and expression, the Cultural Foundation continues to serve Abu Dhabi and the wider community in the United Arab Emirates, its creatives and appreciators alike. With 'Maheerah', it continues to amplify local voices, providing a platform for experimentation and individuality which can only serve to further strengthen a dynamic creative scene.

Department of Culture and Tourism -
Abu Dhabi



Abdalrahim I. M. Farajallah

Born in 1986 in Palestine,
Abdalrahim I. M. Farajallah lives and works
in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Abdalrahim I. M. Farajallah has a Bachelor's degree in art (2008) and was taught by well-known Palestinian artists such Dr Kamel Al Mgani, Dr Basheer Al Snwar and Dr Shafeq Radwan. Abdalrahim's debut solo exhibition was 'Passion' in 2016 in Sharjah. He has also exhibited in the United States of America, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. He is a member of the Palestinian Fine Artists Union, Union of Palestine Association.



About the work

‘Visible’ is a conceptualised and skilfully rendered portrait of the Emirati tale about Maheerah, a chaste Bedouin girl who died in a fire in her tent. Abdalrahim I. M. Farajallah’s work includes interesting elements such as the crow, which symbolises pessimism and calamity, and the skulls, which symbolise tragedy and death. The skulls link the story of Maheerah to other human tragedies, folded between the pages of history and of which we know little about.

Visible, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Abir Tabbara Tukan

Born in 1976 in Lake Como, Italy,
Abir Tabbara Tukan lives and works in
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Abir Tabbara Tukan began her studies at the Lebanese American University of Beirut, graduating with a Bachelor's degree in interior design in 2000. She then attended several masterclasses and studied under renowned Ukrainian and Crimean artists such as Pedro Bevza, Igor Shipilin, Oksana Stratiychuk and Katerina Spirtus. Abir started exhibiting in 2015 and has since taken part in several group shows, in the United Arab Emirates, Italy and the USA. These include exhibitions at the Franklin Arts Center in Minneapolis, USA; Imago Mundi Luciano Benetton Foundation in Salo, Italy; Tashkeel, ProArt Gallery and Citizen-E galleries in Dubai; and the Salwa Zeidan Gallery, Etihad Modern Gallery and the National Theatre in Abu Dhabi. In March 2016, she was shortlisted for the fourth edition of the International Emerging Artist Award (IEAA).



About the work

‘A Woman Who Said NO’ depicts Maheerah in a moment of pride and strength, where she puts on her burqa and decides to say “no”, instead moving forward with her life with no turning back. Maheerah does not want to live in someone’s shadow but wants to live for herself. Abir Tabbara Tukan frames her subject with bold painted details and an ornate background with Maheerah in the centre. A watchful, all-seeing peacock looks on.

This is also a symbol of spiritual awakening. The artist depicts Maheerah in two contrasting images, in confidence and defiance, but also in a mysterious, hazy reflection. This reflection refers to the two-fold nature of beauty, a duality that is a metaphor for completion. Twelve houbara birds fly in the sky, with the number 12 symbolic of completion. These birds refer to liberation and finding one’s own voice.

A Woman Who Said NO, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Ahmed Al Falasi

Born in 1968 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
Ahmed Al Falasi lives and works in Dubai.

Ahmed Al Falasi is a self-taught artist who excels in the use of colour configurations and in the art of fantasy landscapes. Ahmed is a member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society and has taken part in exhibitions including 'Creatopia', World Art Dubai, India Art Festival, 'Al Esra Magazine', 'Union Nation AUH', Ajman Art Culture, 'Peace in Islam' and 'EWU Dubai'.



About the work

The transformation of Maheerah into two personalities, with her face representing beauty and a profile representing the way society shunned her, is portrayed here. Maheerah is chained in handcuffs, in deep sorrow and sadness after being placed under a spell. The handcuffs symbolise the entrapment of a beautiful soul in a distorted body. The background of Ahmed Al Falasi's work depicts Sharjah in the 1950s.

The Other Side of Her, 2020

Acrylic and airbrush on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Arwa Abdallah Al Salami

Born in 1995 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates,
Arwa Abdallah Al Salami lives and works in
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Arwa Abdallah Al Salami studied fine arts at the University of Sharjah and has exhibited at the Dubai Community Theatre and Arts Centre and City Walk. She was also part of the Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship (the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation) in collaboration with the Rhode Island School of Design.



About the work

‘Lonely and Lonesome’ is a painting that represents the character of Maheerah in isolation. Arwa Abdallah Al Salami portrays her on a monumental scale but confined inside the frame of the canvas. The painting is a larger than life representation of a girl processing her emotions and sorrow after being wronged and abandoned.

Lonely and Lonesome, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Buthaina Mattar Bin Lahej

Born in 1995 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
Buthaina Mattar Bin Lahej lives and works
in Dubai.

Buthaina Mattar Bin Lahej has a Bachelor's degree in fine arts from Zayed University (2016). Buthaina began participating in group exhibitions and workshops from 2015 with 'My Coffee Exhibition' at Marsam Mattar, followed by Sikka Art Fair. In 2016, she completed her project titled 'The Struggle for Survival'. Working on this project was a turning point for her career and the advancement of her skills. In 2016, Buthaina took part in the 'Sheikha Manal Young Artist Award', followed by Abu Dhabi Art in 2017. In the summer of 2016, she took over the Summer Camp at Marsam Mattar, titled 'More than Art'. In 2017, Buthaina joined her father in running the Mattar Bin Lahej Gallery. She became the Gallery Curator and is the managing director for Sketch Art Café and Sketch Studio.



About the work

This painting focuses on the character of Maheerah, the subject of a story that has lived in the mind of Abdulrahim Salim since the 1990s. The artist was deeply affected by this story which he first heard from his grandmother, and it has lived with him to this day.

In 'In the Memory', Buthaina Mattar Bin Lahej portrays Abdulrahim Salim in black and white, with the spirit of Maheerah beside him. The gold pieces scattered across Maheerah's face symbolise her inner and outer beauty — qualities that were tragically stolen from her.

In the Memory, 2020

Watercolour on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Chandeep Seth

Born in 1995 in Chandigarh, India,
Chandeep Seth lives and works in
Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Chandeep Seth received his Bachelor's degree in fine arts from Cornell University, USA. He has hosted workshops that combine art, music and yoga in partnership with organisations such as Dubai Culture, Aisha Al Abbar Gallery, and Nasab KOA Canvas. He has also held talks at Heriot Watt University, University of Dubai and Guru Nanak Dev University. Most recently, he exhibited in Dubai Design District and at the Kevala Foundation, India.



About the work

‘Resilience’ is a portrayal of the moving tale of Maheerah, a girl from Sharjah with extraordinary beauty and charm. She was driven mad after being subjected to a spell cast by a rejected suitor.

The tale is a reflection on the double-edged sword of beauty.

In this portrait, artist Chandeeep Seth gives Maheerah back her sanity, imagining an alternative reality in which Maheerah’s inner light remains untainted. She now becomes a symbol of resilience in the face of wrongdoing. The portrait is a reminder that nothing external can affect your inner beauty, if you so choose.

Resilience, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Charlie Rana Villagrancia

Born in 1980 in Bataraza, Palawan, the Philippines, Charlie Rana Villagrancia lives and works in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Charlie Rana Villagrancia received his Bachelor's degree in fine art from the Far Eastern University in Manila, the Philippines, in 2004. He has won many awards, including first place in the 'On the Spot Painting Competition' at the 2019 Bayanihan Festival at the Dubai World Trade Centre; a 'Year of Zayed' prize; and an award in the 'Fann at AUH' art competition, Abu Dhabi International Airport. Charlie has enjoyed spending the past seven years travelling to take part in art projects across the Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. Currently he is focusing on mural art.



About the work

Charlie Rana Villagrancia's work focuses on Maheerah's anguished grieving heart and her withering ego, a result of her decisiveness. The curse turns Maheerah's innocence and beauty into a grievous agony.

Grief of Ego, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Jack Lee

Born in 1982 in Fujian, China,
Jack Lee lives and works in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates.

Jack Lee graduated from the prestigious Luxun Academy of Fine Art (LAFA), one of the top art academies in China. Since 2006, he has lived and worked in the United Arab Emirates. He is a member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society and has been teaching at the Art Workshop of the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi and in universities including Abu Dhabi University, Sheikh Zayed University and the Higher Colleges of Technology. He has also served as a private teacher for members of the Abu Dhabi's Ruling Family. Jack's portraits won the Academy prize in 2001 and he received second prize in 2007. In 2010, he won third prize at the International Technical Competition for the Traffic Department Abu Dhabi Police, Saaed. For each year during 2007-16, Jack won First Prize in the Finest Heritage Painting category of the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition. In 2020, he presented the Jack Lee Solo Exhibition and a live painting session at the central dome in Emirates Palace.



About the work

Artist Jack Lee's interpretation is that although Maheerah has a miserable tale to tell, she lives a beautiful life in the other world.

Maheerah, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Khalid Mohammed Al Astad

Born in 1993 in Khorfakkan, United Arab Emirates, Khalid Mohammed Al Astad lives and works in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Khalid Mohammed Al Astad has a Bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. As an artist, he has participated in 13 exhibitions, nine of them solo. His photographs and paintings are among the collections of the Ruling Family, executives and businessmen. Khalid's photographs, sketches and paintings are uniquely related to his personality. His goal is to raise awareness of Emiratis' artistic power in the global art world and culture community.



About the work

Khalid Mohammed Al Astad's work portrays the destruction of Maheerah's future at the hand of a selfish man, following her refusal of his hand in marriage. Maheerah is cursed through dark magic, leaving her unwanted and alone forever.

What If?!, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Lamya Al Shamsi

Born in 1991 in Sharjah,
United Arab Emirates, Lamya Al Shamsi
lives and works in Sharjah.

Lamya Al Shamsi graduated with a Bachelor's degree in interior, architecture and design from the University of Sharjah. Lamya's work explores the concepts of identity and duality, mostly depicting portraits and figures reimagined, colliding and splitting and reflecting various states of emotion. She uses several techniques and methods of paint application; a meticulous process of applying dozens of thin layers on top of one another to give a semi-transparent, semi-luminescent effect.



About the work

Inspired by the story of Maheerah, Lamya Al Shamsi portrays how this girl was perceived and judged on hearsay, instead of the facts. The portrait is multilayered to depict how society 'painted' her.

Erased, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm

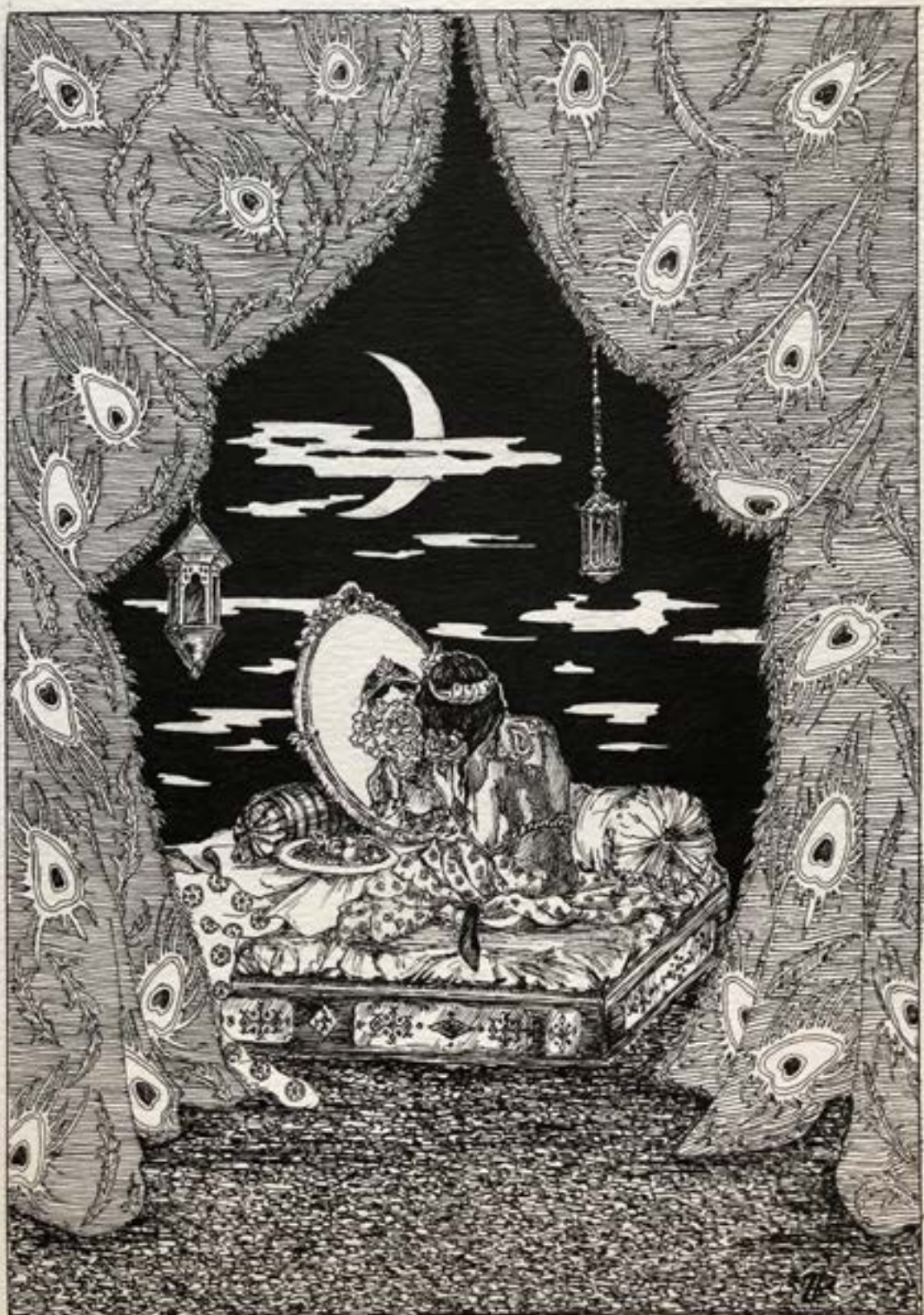


Liudmila Panenkova

Born in 1986, in Moscow, Russia,
Liudmila Panenkova lives and works in Dubai,
United Arab Emirates.



Liudmila Panenkova is a self-taught artist and her concept is based on applying individual emotional experience, both positive and negative, to art. She held two solo exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates: 'Emotional Alphabet', at Citizen E Gallery, Dubai, in 2016, and 'Affective Coincidence', at the Pro Art Gallery, Dubai, in 2019. Liudmila has participated in the art fairs Art Shopping Carroussel du Louvre (Paris), World Art Dubai and Sikka Art Fair (Dubai), and has taken part in group exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates, Europe and India.



About the work

Liudmila Panenkova was struck by the loneliness of Maheerah and painted her in a room at night to emphasize her isolation and suffering. Maheerah was forced to hide away from the community due to her 'ugliness' and because of social judgement.

The artist depicts roses in a mirror reflection to symbolise Maheerah's dreams and her sadness at losing her physical beauty. The flowers represent her divine beauty and purity of soul, which is no longer visible to society.

The artist also follows the Islamic tradition of not painting a face but instead focusing on silhouettes.

Making the Choice, 2020

Acrylic and ink pen on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Maitha Al Muhairy

Born in 1990 in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates, Maitha Al Muhairy
lives and works in Abu Dhabi.

Maitha Al Muhairy has a Bachelor's degree in architecture. Her works have been displayed at 'The New Identity' exhibition, at Etihad Modern Art Gallery (2018); 'A Touch of Heritage' National Day exhibition in 2017; 'Deconstruction of a Muqarnas' installation for BUNYAN at the 19th edition of the Islamic Arts Festival in Sharjah (2016); and at 'A Touch of Heritage', the ADMAF National Day exhibition in 2015.



About the work

Maitha Al Muhairy's work is a contrast of minimalist and figurative elements, a reflection on the surreal simplicity of the tale and the complexity of the cultural context. The artist focuses on the silent departure of Maheerah after her dehumanisation by society. With the loss of her identity, Maheerah is simply represented by a letter, M.

M, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Mariam Al Binali

Born in 1992 in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates, Mariam Al Binali
lives and works in Abu Dhabi.

Mariam Al Binali graduated from Zayed University with a Bachelor's degree in graphic design. She enjoys working in various styles, from painting realistic portraits on canvasses to illustrating comics. Her works are characterised by unique lines and colours. She enjoys exploring realistic concepts and relatable themes through unreal compositions and colours. As a freelancer, Mariam has given workshops on digital and traditional painting. She has also worked with comics and illustrators.



About the work

Mariam Al Binali depicts how Maheerah was robbed of her beauty in a society which judges on appearance.

Due to the selfish actions of a suitor, she has a tortured life, subjected to a curse of hatred, isolation and rejection by an ugly society.

Despite everything, Maheerah remains true to herself and the artist also portrays how she preserves her inner beauty, her kindness and morals, away from people.

Infernal, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Muneera Naji

Born in 1975 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates,
Muneera Naji lives and works in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates.

Muneera Naji is a self-taught artist who worked as a graphic designer for many years and is also a freelance make-up artist. Through intense daily painting with watercolours, Muneera has improved her skills dramatically. Watercolours, mixed media and recycled arts and crafts are her avenues for creative expression. Muneera is an art teacher at Al Marsam Al Hor, the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, which makes good use of her knowledge and abilities through the teaching and practice of the fine arts. Her art classes contain an element of self-development, as well as learning art techniques. She believes that the act of creating art can be a gateway to healing and personal growth.



About the work

Artist Muneera Naji portrays how society saw Maheerah as the harbinger of a curse. Her work 'Maheerah' embodies a girl subjected to injustice and a dark state of mind not akin to her true self. Maheerah is a girl freed from restraints but also broken by a curse which imprisons her in other ways. She lives on a horizon filled with madness, love and pride, in a world she tragically made for herself.

Maheerah, 2020

Acrylic and ink on canvas

250 x 150 cm

Oussama Agazzoum

Born in 1990 in Sidi Bou Othmane, Morocco,
Oussama Agazzoum lives and works in
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Oussama Agazzoum studied art in the Casablanca Art School. He worked with Ubisoft and then joined Riot Games, known for the popular video game 'League of Legends', as a member of their talented concept art team.



About the work

Oussama Agazzoum's painting shows Maheerah's transition into a 'monster'. The artist imagines this process through Maheerah's own eyes, as in a moment of death before her real death, as she is abandoned by her community and is considered a curse.

Death of Maheerah, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Randa Haddadin

Born in 1985 in Russia,
Randa Haddadin lives and works in
Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Randa Haddadin received her Bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Jordan and worked as an architect for eight years before pursuing a career in art. Randa's artworks have received recognition on international social media accounts and art platforms such as My Modern Met, as well as among brands such as Valentino, Roberto Cavalli and Murad Osmann's 'Follow Me To' series. She has also collaborated in projects for brands such as Nescafé, Vacheron Constantin Overseas Campaign, Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Lancôme, Armani and Christian Dior's Forever.



About the work

Randa Haddadin's work celebrates the transitional feeling of leaving this earth with all its glory and ugliness into the arms of the heavens. As Maheerah rises she reaches a place where she is finally free and at peace.

Now I Am Free, 2020

Mixed media

250 x 150 cm



Rashed Al Mulla

Born in 1980 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates,
Rashed Al Mulla lives and works in Dubai,
United Arab Emirates.

Rashed Al Mulla received a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Concordia University in Canada. He works in a variety of mediums. He focuses on human emotions in his subjects but also sheds light on environmental issues. He has exhibited at exhibitions and events such as Sikka Art Fair, the Annual Exhibition in Sharjah and the Faike exhibitions at FN Design in Dubai. He was one of 10 artists commissioned by the Cultural Office of Her Highness Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to create a 140-metre long mural. Rashed has also undertaken live art at Abu Dhabi International Airport, Sikka Art Fair, the Arab Travel Market and at Mirdif City Centre, for Dubai's Ministry of Culture and other organisations.



About the work

Rashed Al Mulla depicts Maheerah sinking deep into sleep forever, bewitched by one man's desires and cursed with bad luck for not being able to break the spell.

Spellbound, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Reem Al Mazrouei

Born in 1990 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Reem Al Mazrouei lives and works in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Reem Al Mazrouei is a graduate of Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, where she studied fine art. Since 2012, she has practised fine art professionally, exhibiting and freelancing. She was chosen by Her Highness Sheikha Maryam bint Mohammed Al Nahyan for a project by WRG Creative Communication FZ-LLC, London, to illustrate a story for an event at the 2013 Qasr Al Hosn Festival. She also exhibited her work at the Abu Dhabi Festival that year, with a presentation of Emirati traditional characters in her surreal style, in an exhibit on the Corniche organised by Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation.



About the work

The focus of Reem Al Mazrouei's painting is the emotions within Maheerah and her sense of deep isolation.

The Beginning of the Curse, 2020

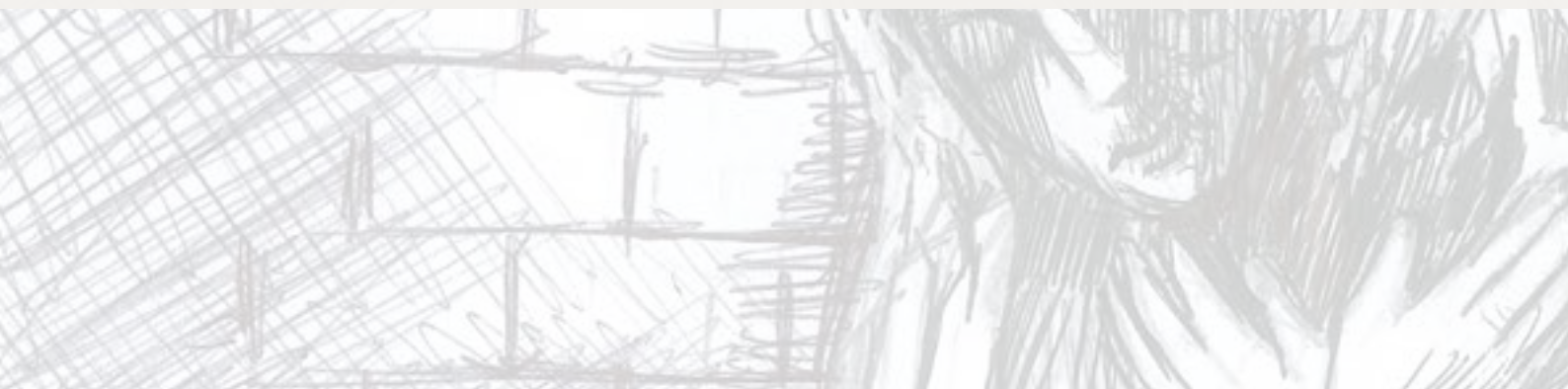
Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Reynaldo Tambong

Born in 1967 in the Philippines,
Reynaldo Tambong lives and works in
Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Reynaldo Tambong studied fine arts at the University of the East in the Philippines. He joined a group art exhibition at Tashkeel in Dubai. He also joined the group exhibition in Abu Dhabi titled 'Recognition of the Martyrs, Emirati Soldiers who Fought for Freedom'. Reynaldo won first prize in the 'On the Spot Painting Competition' organised by the Philippines Consulate at Dubai World Trade Centre in 2017, a contest in which he was second (runner-up) the following year.



About the work

Reynaldo Tambong presents “a straightforward representation of the Maheerah tragedy”. His narrative composition tells the story of the girl whose beauty and happiness are taken away from her forever by a man who she rejected.

The artist’s light and dark contrasts evoke romanticism and drama, while his painting also uses colour, shapes and figures to tell the story.

Maheerah (A Beautiful Story), 2020

Acrylic and oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm

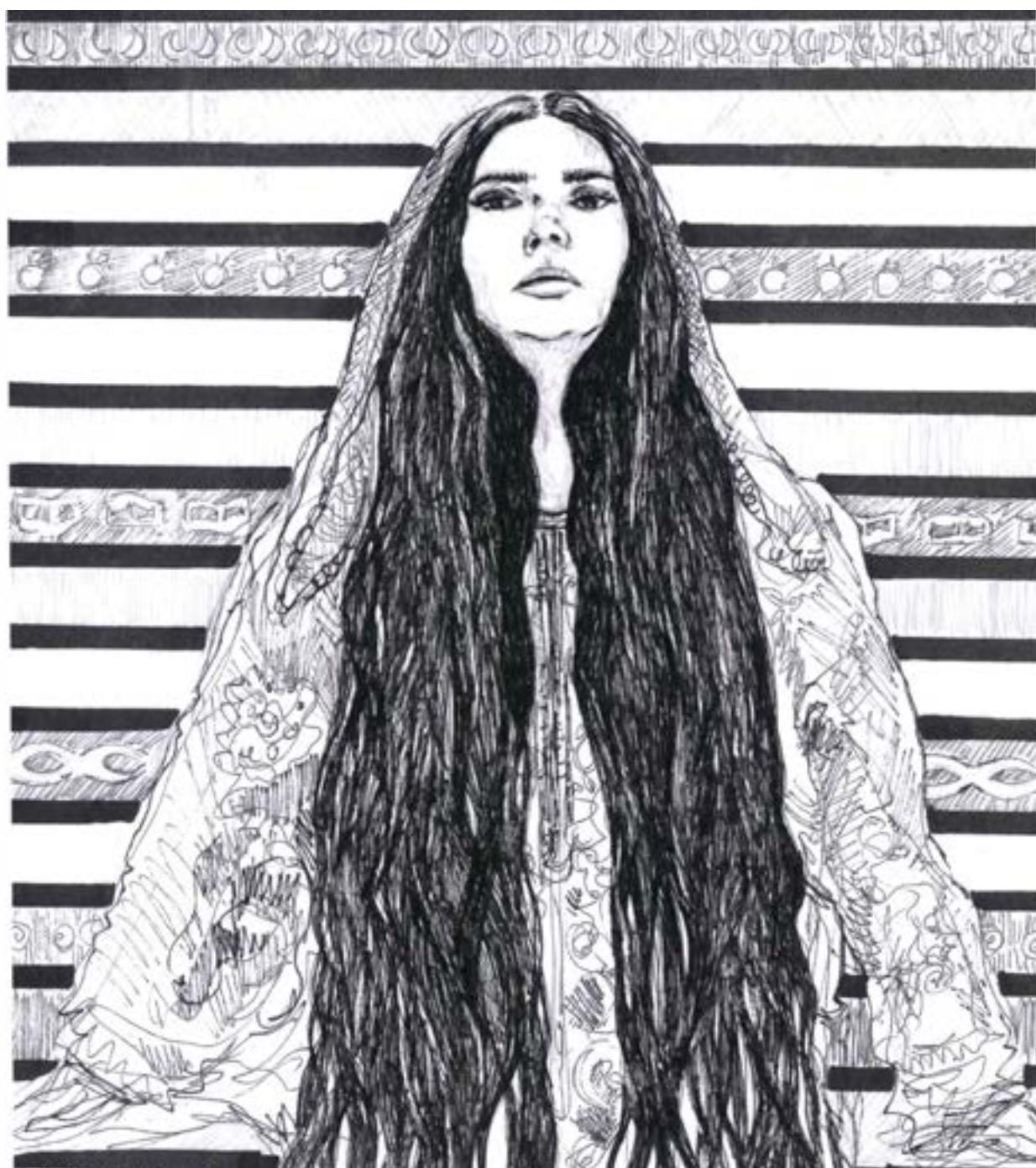


Rima El Debs

Born in 1978 in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates, Rima El Debs lives
and works in Abu Dhabi.



Rima El Debs is an illustrator, painter and expressionist artist who was taught by some of the most ambitious names in the industry, including Mohammed Al Rawas and Abdul Hamid Baalbaki. She received her Bachelor's degree in fine arts at the Lebanese University, Beirut, in 2000. Rima exhibited her work at the South Cultural Centre, Art Division, Lebanon, in 1998 and at the Al Safir (Lebanese newspaper) 25th anniversary celebration in 2000. She has also exhibited in the Emirates, most recently at Dubai Design Week in 2019.



About the work

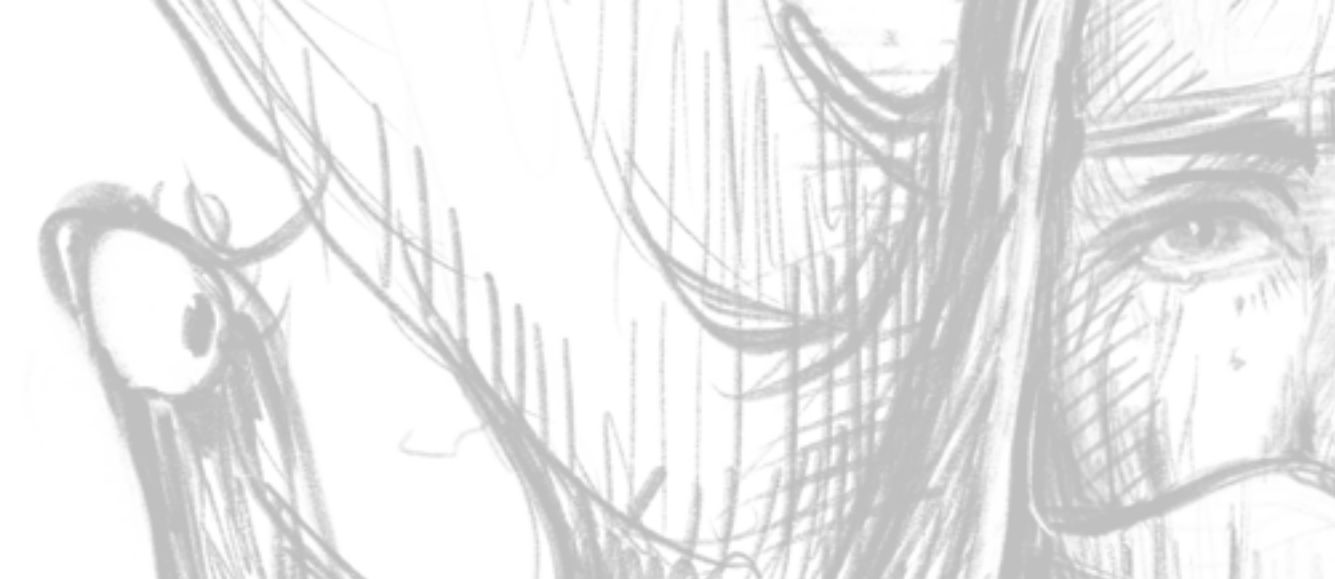
Rima El Debs portrays Maheerah as a neighbour, daughter, leader and an innocent. The artist sees her subject as a “marginalised but persevering fighter”. She is someone forgotten but she is also a change-maker.

Maheerah emerges from layers of shadows into a sunrise which lights up her beauty and kindness.

The Dawn of Maheerah, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Saggaf Al Hashemi

Born in 1983 in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates,
Saggaf Al Hashemi lives and works in
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Saggaf Al Hashemi is a self-taught artist who has been commissioned for many projects in the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf, creating murals and large canvas paintings. His passion is painting Arabian horses and portraits, and his work is popular among private collectors. Saggaf has also taken part in art exhibitions such as 'Emirati Expressions', 'Proud Expressions', 'Wahat Al Karama', 'Europe's Union Day' and the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition.



سقايف
2020

About the work

Artist Saggaf Al Hashemi said he was inspired by the story to focus on three things: the sad face of Maheerah, her hands, and the judgmental eyes upon her. His work portrays unjust punishment and the shortsightedness of people in shunning her. Although he shows Maheerah's tears and sadness, she is also depicted as a dignified, confident woman.

Her grip on the abaya symbolises her fight against the hatred and evil around her, which was the result of a curse. The eyes upon her represent the malicious gossip and rumours circulated about her and her abandonment by the community.

Chainless Captive, 2020

Acrylic and oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Salem Al Jneibi

Born in 1986 in Sharjah,
United Arab Emirates, Salem Al Jneibi
lives and works in Sharjah.



Salem Al Jneibi studied art at Sharjah Art Foundation. He joined the Emirates Fine Arts Society in 2006 and is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors. Salem has taken part in many local and international exhibitions and workshops, such as the Emirates Fine Arts Society exhibition in 2019 and the Paris International Book Fair in 2018. He held a solo exhibition at the Emirates Fine Arts Society in 2012.



About the work

Salem Al Jneibi brings in different elements to the story. In his work, the marionette symbolises control and the manipulation of fate while the silhouette represents the evil man who caused Maheerah's demise.

There is also a vortex which portrays the struggle between good and evil. A crowd is also depicted, gathered behind her.

Maheerah, 2020

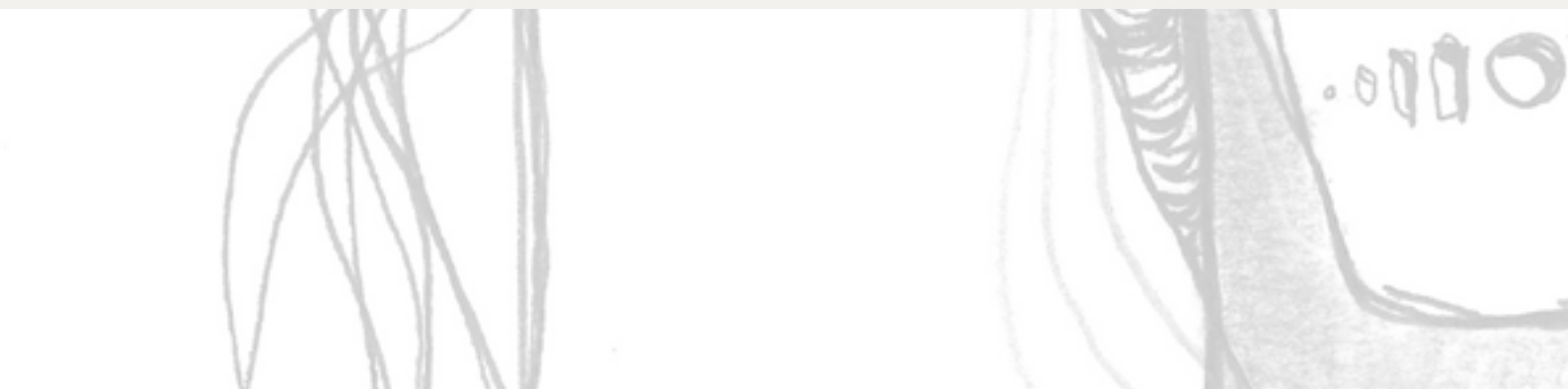
Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Salma Elbanna

Born in 1983 in Alexandria, Egypt, Salma Elbanna lives and works in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Salma Elbanna gained her Bachelor's degree of fine arts at Alexandria University in 2005. She is a mixed media and abstract artist. Salma was the resident artist at Manarat Al Saadiyat's Art Studio from September to December 2019. She has taken part in group exhibitions in Alexandria and Abu Dhabi, such as 'L'atelier d'alexandrie' in Alexandria, (1998-2000); 'Affordable Art' at Art Hub, Abu Dhabi (2014-2015); 'HONALFAN II' at the National Theatre, Abu Dhabi (2016); and at the 'In Resident' exhibition at Manarat Al Saadiyat. With six years of experience in teaching art education, Salma has also led workshops for children and adults at several art centres in Abu Dhabi.



About the work

Salma Elbanna's artwork shows Maheerah trapped within a cocoon of intertwined strings which threaten to suffocate her. The curse transforms her into a mask looking for meaning, an imprisoned butterfly looking for a window of escape, fearful of dying in isolation before she can fly into the light. Maheerah's dream is to escape through the gaps of this silk house which is a prison of her own making.

Erased, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Sara Al Adayleh

Born in 1996 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
Sara Al Adayleh lives and works in Dubai,
United Arab Emirates.



Sara Al Adayleh is a Jordanian architect and artist who teaches art and design. She communicates research through architectural and illustrative expression. By bridging architecture and art, she explores the duality in mediums of acrylic, ink, block printing and digital modelling. Sara also painted murals in 2nd December Street, Satwa, for the 'Dubai Street Museum' project with the Dubai Media Office. Global artists were invited to work on the streetscape by creating large-scale murals.



About the work

‘Oxymoron’ is a surrealist portrait and a manifestation of the duality of expression in the traditional tale of Maheerah. Sara Al Adayleh’s work embodies acceptance versus rejection, signified through gestural ornamentation. Ostracized or not, Maheerah presents herself with a strong standing gaze at anyone in sight.

Oxymoron, 2020

Acrylic on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Sheena Ajan Mannathukandi

Born in 1975 in Kozhikode, Kerala, India,
Sheena Ajan Mannathukandi lives and works
in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Sheena Ajan Mannathukandi is a commerce graduate and an alumnus of the School of Fine Arts in Calicut, Kerala. Sheena became passionate about art and started painting at a young age. She has taken part in many group exhibitions in India and the Emirates. She is inspired by everyday life and visits her home-town regularly. Sheena reminisces on scenes and sights, recreating them in her individual style.



About the work

‘Moonlight’ portrays the eternal beauty of Maheerah and of women in general.

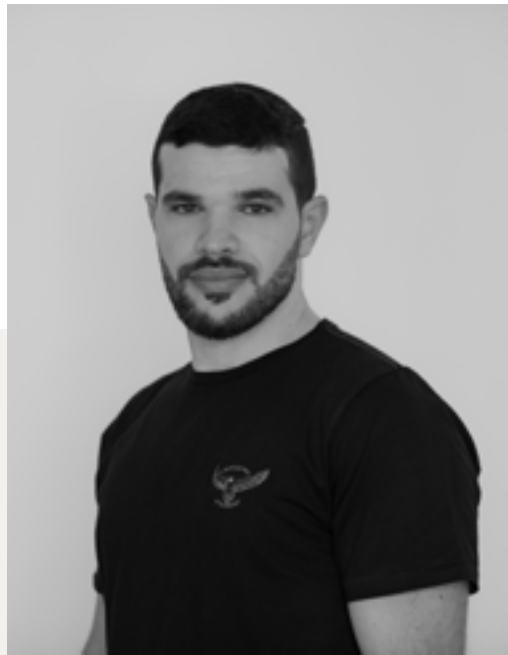
The girl pictured represents beauty in its raw form. Beauty exists in women forever, through their peaceful and calm natures.

In Sheena Ajan Mannathukandi’s artwork, the apples represent the hunger of the needy and the quenching of thirst. As the moon shines and spreads its light, it symbolises the smile of a beautiful woman in any circumstances. Beauty in peace and elegance never dies — it exists forever through nature itself.

Moonlight, 2020

Oil on canvas

250 x 150 cm



Bernard Jouaret

Born in 1992 in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, Bernard Jouaret lives and works in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Bernard Jouaret has a Bachelor's degree in mass communication from the University of Sharjah. He began photography and videography as a hobby, which then became a passion and a lifestyle. Bernard won second place in the Dubai Police Work Environment Photography Competition in 2018 and also took part in the Vantage Point Sharjah 4 exhibition at Sharjah Art Foundation.

My Soul, 2020

Duration: 00:01:06

Bernard Jouaret in collaboration
with Rasmia Hourani



A beautiful, brave girl must face a traumatic fate
alone against the harsh tides of reality.



Daniel Malak

Born in 1991 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Daniel Malak lives and works in Abu Dhabi.

Daniel Malak has a Bachelor's degree in architectural engineering from Al Hosn University, Abu Dhabi.

He was selected for four international film festivals and has won more than six awards, including the People's Choice Award. He received a scholarship to New York Film Academy and has more than 12 years' experience in directing, filming and editing videos. His clients include the Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi Awards, Mubadala, Urban Planning Council, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, Abu Dhabi Police, Manchester City Abu Dhabi and Quest Arabia. Daniel creates content for documentaries, advertisements, social media videos and narratives. He can also operate drone cameras, 360 cameras, motion sliders and camera gimbals, as well as work in colour grade, audio recordings and video motion graphics.

Chasing Maheerah, 2020

Duration: 00:00:47



A visual story that lives in each of us — one of chasing tales of old.

This story is timeless with a permanent resonance, one that is engraved into our thoughts. We can chase it, but do we ever catch it?



Hajar Khaled Al Maskari

Born in 1998 in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates, Hajar Khaled Al Maskari
lives and works in Abu Dhabi.

Hajar Khaled Al Maskari graduated from Zayed University with a Bachelor's degree in marketing and entrepreneurship. She aims to make her artwork comfortable to the viewer in terms of lighting and detail. She likes her work to be simple but meaningful, so her photos and videos have fascinating stories behind them and prove to be memorable experiences. The first thing people notice about Hajar's work is her unique perspective and her focus on subtle detail.

The End of Love, 2020

Duration: 00:01:09



How can love exist between animosity and hatred? Maheerah was a beautiful girl and the man who fell in love with her was overwhelmed by the love of ownership. He ruined the life of this innocent girl, who was just born beautiful. We know that the end of love is not always hearts and roses, so how can a love which never began come to such an end?



Issam Fadel Yousef Akel

Born in 1978 in Dubai,
United Arab Emirates, Issam Fadel Yousef Akel
lives and works in Dubai.

Issam Fadel Yousef Akel has a Bachelor's degree in fine arts from American InterContinental University, Atlanta, USA (1999) and a Master's degree in business administration from University of Wollongong in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (2010). Issam uses creative visual and interactive communication to express his clients' brand values, often through 'out of the box' videos and short film content. Clients commend his creative maverick, edgy style which also brings depth and humanity to projects.

Curse & Temptation, 2020

Duration: 00:01:08



There are certain similarities between love and beauty and mirage and curse. However, mirage and curse play mind games and distort reality. A man chases his desire for Maheerah, only to have his faith tested by the very curse he has brought upon her.



Ola Allouz

Born in 1983 in Dubai,
United Arab Emirates, Ola Allouz
lives and works in Dubai.

Ola Allouz is a visual artist who specialises in culture and daily life photography. Ola has a background in accounting and statistical analysis but developed a passion for photography and went on to gain a degree in photography from the Emirates Fine Arts Society. Her practice reveals an almost mathematical approach towards details and symmetry. She has a passion for sharing untold stories and this unique blend of perspectives has garnered international awards and photography distinctions from countries around the world. Currently, Ola is a Fujifilm brand ambassador. She also founded the @foto.uae Instagram feed, which organizes periodic photo-walks and meet-ups around the Emirates for like-minded creatives, helping to foster relationships across artistic communities.

The Fish That Thought, 2020

Duration: 00:01:04

Ola Allouz in collaboration with Salha Obaid,
May Rashed and Shatha Masoud



This is a poetic film about the story of Maheerah, a story that might be repeated in different places and times.



Sameer Al Jaberī

Born in 1988 in Abu Dhabi,
United Arab Emirates, Sameer Al Jaberī
lives and works in Abu Dhabi.

Sameer Al Jaberī began his career by studying filmmaking and photography, not just in Abu Dhabi but also in Dubai, Paris, the United Kingdom and New York, United States of America, where he was exposed to many different styles. After attaining a Bachelor's degree in media production, Sameer worked with twofour54 and the Abu Dhabi Film Commission for several years. He was responsible for the locations department and its work in assisting local, regional and international film productions in the emirate. He has worked with international productions such as 6 Underground, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, Deliver Us From Evil, Fast & Furious 7, Baby, Bang Bang, Top Gear, Wild Arabia, Al Ikhwa, and Hamam Shami. It is no surprise that, in Sameer's active role at Abu Dhabi Film Commission and twofour54, he gained valuable experience in communications and in working with international production companies, while at the same time honing his own skills in filmmaking and storytelling. Sameer joined Toastmasters International to improve his skills in public speaking, to inspire and to tell stories. He is now an award-winning public speaker and was the first Emirati to win the District Toastmasters Annual Conference 2018 award, for Humorous Speech.

Maheerah, 2020

Duration: 00:01:08



This short film reflects the story of Maheerah, a beautiful girl who refused a man's marriage proposal. Following his rejection, the man became so angry that he used black magic on Maheerah, causing her to lose her beauty. She was also shunned by everyone around her, who saw her as cursed.



Sarra'a Abdulaziz

Born in 1990 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates,
Sarra'a Abdulaziz lives and works in
Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates.

Sarra'a Abdulaziz is an artist and filmmaker based in Ras Al Khaimah. She is an experimental artist who enjoys exploring different mediums and expressing her unique, personal experience through her work. Sarra'a graduated from Zayed University with a Bachelor's degree in visual communications, which includes the art of photography and videography. She also has a Master's degree in screenwriting and directing, from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Her film *Open Wound* made the official selection at the 2015 Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) and was distributed by BBC Arabia. Sarra'a has exhibited her collage work at the ProArt Gallery in Dubai, in 2014, and her photography at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2016 and at Gulf Photo Plus in 2017.

Cleansing Session, 2020

Duration: 00:01:10



Maheerah tries to see her beauty and a reflection of her inner self during a spiritual cleansing session. Through her rituals, she tries to undo the black magic cast upon her.



Sultan Al Yafei

Born in 1993 and raised in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, Sultan Al Yafei lives and works in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Sultan Al Yafei has a Bachelor's degree in finance from UAE University, Al Ain. He is a photographer and videographer who specialises in landscapes and cityscapes. He also produces travel videos and advertising videos for corporate clients. Sultan has taken part in photography contests such as 'Abu Dhabi Through Your Eyes' and HIPA — the Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum International Photography Awards, in which he was sponsored by Dubai Police and received an award.



Mohammed Al Kaabi

Born in 1993 in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, Mohammed Al Kaabi lives and works in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Mohammed Al Kaabi is a videographer and content creator who began his career in 2010. Last year, he worked on projects with major companies such as Nikon, DJI and Apple. He was also a finalist in competitions run by Nikon and Imdad.



Mana Al Marbooei

Born in 1992 in Al Ain,
United Arab Emirates, Mana Al Marbooei
lives and works in Al Ain.

Mana Al Marbooei began his career as a documentary photographer in 2009 and then became a portrait photographer. He has worked with the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi and SEHA on various projects. Recently, he began making travel videos and he hopes to travel the world, capturing the lives and cultures of various countries and creating videos of his experiences along the way.

Sounds, 2020

Duration: 00:01:00

Mohammed Al Kaabi in collaboration with
Sultan Al Yafei and Mana Al Marbooei



The sounds of one person's desire transformed this girl's image and life, changing her from a bright person to a dark, tragic character.

