

TABARI

ARTSPACE



Alymamah Rashed
Solo Exhibition
Tabari Artspace, DIFC, Dubai
March 29 - April 30 2021

We are pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Kuwaiti surrealist painter, Alymamah Rashed, to take place at our DIFC gallery during Dubai Art Month in March, 2021. This is Tabari Artspace's inaugural exhibition of Rashed.

Note: March remains the apex of the region's cultural calendar as such we felt it important, as a gallery, to spotlight an emerging female talent from the Gulf amid this momentum and moment of international interest. We believe that Alymamah Rashed's powerful practice and visual chronicles of her reality, at the vanguard of contemporary Middle Eastern art, might act as a beacon to other aspiring female talents from the region.

Visual artist Alymamah Rashed's gestural, surrealist paintings harness self-portraiture to investigate the complexities of identity in the post-internet generation. Rashed understands herself as a multifaceted being, the various elements that comprise her persona flow out into the different realms that she emits onto her canvas: the earth-bound (the mind and the fleshed body), the spiritual (the thobe), and a combination of the two which come to form a third space. Spirituality, specifically the notion of spiritual intelligence, has been a central tenet of Rashed's existence, yet she understands spirituality as universal; the act of prayer is engaged with across faiths and cultures. Observing the body as a capsule of movement, through the process of prayer Rashed can transcend as she witnesses her physical and spiritual worlds conflate.

Like a cyborg whose physical abilities are extended beyond fixed human limitations, her figures are replicas of her own body. Invested with the power to transition, they appear magically from different timescapes, in multiple states. For Rashed, the body is a site of action, a dictator of gravity that is always in relation to an object, a space, or perhaps, another body. It learns what to reveal and conceal. The body moves and eventually orients itself according to the gravity of the space in which it breathes within. External and internal worlds unite through Rashed's choice of colour which is typically rooted in a present sensation or immediate encounter. It is instinctive and based on a dominant emotion or a colour that she encounters in her everyday existence such as a cerulean blue school gate. When painting she attempts to envision the colour of *Barzakh* (a space that lays between life itself and the afterlife; a space of liminality). Rashed seeks to investigate Barzakh through colour in order to expand the spatiality or perhaps the

typology in which her figures exist, and that is within the liminal. Rashed accentuates the colour and the scale of her objects, elevating their status, vibrancy and placement in order to emit their liveliness.

Referencing late Algerian modernist pioneer Baya Mahieddine's colour-fuelled, idiosyncratic form of autobiographical portraiture, her large-scale works negotiate her female subjectivity. Rashed draws from regional folklore and the rapid social shifts that she has witnessed such as the modernisation and industrialisation of the Gulf region, she negotiates readings of Islamic philosophy and poetry, and ornamentation and the every day banal objects that she encounters. The artist is inspired by the likes of Francis Bacon, Chris Ofili and the ornamentation of Matisse. Rashed's internal world manifests in her art through icons absorbed from myriad sources including regional typographic, Persian and Afghani visual icons, Sufi poetry, philosophy and theology responding to both Plato and Muslim scholars, such as Suhrawardi, Ghazali. Her father, an academic and humanitarian and her mother, an economist with an affinity for art, design and culture, have also come to inform the artist's multifaceted world which she dutifully relays through her art.

As part of her practice Rashed produces poetry which will be displayed in unison with her paintings. Here we share a selected preview on her meditations on the body taken from her poetry journal.

“Body”

Al-Jism (جسم) :

A body lays in between the remembrance of you and I.
A body lays in between a heavy soul and a fleeting presence.
A body lays in between thought and desire.
A body lays in between my thob and my skin.
My body lays in between my bodies.

-ENDS-

For interviews requests please contact: Laura Beaney | e. Laura@TabariArtspace.com

Images:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hPpfNdKm5fldmVZrk-4f9tjtRqCWqhlq?usp=sharing>

ABOUT ALYMAMAH RASHED

b.1994

Rashed received her MFA in Fine Arts at Parsons School of Design in 2019 and her BFA in Fine Arts at The School of Visual Arts in 2016. She participated in various exhibitions in New York City including the Czech Center, Parsol Projects, and The New School.

She is a recipient of the Masters Scholarship and the Merit Scholarship program by the Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education. She was also a fellow at the Professional Development Initiative Program sponsored by the National U.S-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Kuwait Ministry of Higher Education, Embassy of Kuwait, and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

ABOUT TABARI ARTSPACE

Since its inception in 2003 Tabari, Artspace's mission has been to foster fresh dialogue between the artists of the Middle East and an international audience.

Established in Dubai, eighteen years ago, Tabari Artspace embarked upon an ambitious programme of exhibitions and special projects to cultivate a global community centred around Middle Eastern art. As a pioneer of this movement, the gallery played a pivotal role in drawing international attentions towards Middle Eastern Masters such as Adam Henin, Mohamed Abla, Adel El-Siwi, Hussein Madi, and Khaled Zaki. Today these artists are collected and exhibited by such institutions as *British Museum*, *The Guggenheim*, *Centre Pompidou*, *The Barjeel Art Foundation*, *Institut du monde arabe*, and *Seoul Museum of Art*.

The name 'Tabari' stems from 'Lake Tiberias' and foregrounds notions of borders, space, place, and identity - some of the universal topics that are tackled by the Middle Eastern artists of the contemporary moment. As a reflection of the Founder's belief that art is a powerful tool to dismantle social boundaries and ignite greater cultural understanding, Tabari Artspace continues to honour the Masters it built in the past while introducing a new generation of artists that are deeply engaged with the present and push forward perspectives - male and female - from far-reaching social and cultural contexts including: hyperrealist, Samah Shihadi; painter, Tagreed Darghouth; and visual artist, Hazem Harb.

At the core of Tabari Artspace's missions are community engagement and wider social access to Middle Eastern art, as such its programming is supplemented by talks, publishing, workshops, and community events. In 2020 the gallery expanded its presence, opening a second location at Cromwell Place, London. 2021 will witness the inauguration of the Tabari Artspace global residency programme, Home from Home, which encourages the artists of the region to develop their practice amid new communities and environments.