



albareh
art gallery

Insight
Jehan Saleh

October 2016

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In "Insight," a series of mixed-media-on-canvas paintings, I cover portraits of individuals – friends, colleagues, artists, strangers - that I have taken over a period of two years, with layers of acrylic paint and ink. I present to the viewer a barely visible image of an upside down face gazing intently from under multiple veils of paint and ink.

I chose to start the process with a large portrait printed upside down on stretched canvas as a base. I then begin to cover it with layer after layer of acrylic paint and ink. Eschewing the use of brushes and other painting tools for a limited palette of freely flowing colour that I allow to find its way, under my direction, onto and around the canvas. Using a limited number of colours preserves the simplicity of the work and the concept.

The concept of this exhibition was borne of a single idea: changing a situation or its outcome by changing the perspective from which it is viewed. Thus, the upside down faces looking at the viewer from under the paint allow for an examination from a fresh new perspective which can lead to new, creative solutions to resistant problems, or the discovery of an exciting new aspect to something that had grown stale with time. I aim to engage the viewer on an intimate personal level, provoking him to a deeper self-examination in an attempt to rejuvenate, renew and simplify all in a bid to achieve a new level of contentment.

Jehan Saleh

2016

The Silent Poetry of Jehan Saleh

*'Painting is silent poetry,
and poetry is a speaking picture.'*

Simonides

Jehan Saleh's paintings possess that poetic quality that gently compels us to see the world anew, to perceive the things that have always been there for the first time.

Insight was sparked by a simple idea – what if we changed how we look at things? How would that affect our perception of a person, an object, or, more significantly, a situation and as a result, its outcome? Insight is Saleh's visual exploration of this concept. In it, she turns images upside down, covers them in ink and paint, and endlessly reflects upon them in an attempt to see them differently.

Long fascinated by the human face and its ability to convey nuances of emotion and character, Saleh began to document faces. Over the past two years, she amassed a portfolio of more than two hundred portraits from Bahrain, Spain, Greece, Morocco and Egypt. The portfolio included photographs of friends, colleagues and strangers. It was, and continues to be, her personal study in human physiognomy.

It is this portfolio that Saleh resorts to as the basis for her new body of work, using the portraits as a backdrop for her otherwise abstract paintings. Starting with the portrait printed in black and white on a large canvas, Saleh methodically covers it with layer upon layer of acrylic paint and ink. She does not use tools or brushes opting instead to allow the paint, under her loose direction, to find its own way over the portrait. Symbolically, she is letting go of any attempt to force a specific solution to that particular situation, choosing instead to pursue new paths to a new one.

Saleh insists that the portraits are not the main part of her work. In fact, in some paintings, the portrait is barely visible forcing the viewer to search intently to find it. However, one can argue that the portraits, though not central, are important to the core concept of the series in the sense that they provide an anchor for the otherwise abstract paintings grounding them in the here and now, and securing their relevance to the viewer on a level of intimacy that is not possible with abstraction alone.

The layers of paint and ink are the subject of the painting, acting as a veil through which the viewer and portrait interact. They are signifiers of our own subjectivity, representing the filters through which we see the world and which as a result, colour our perception. They also signify the complexities inherent in any situation.

The limited palette of blue and tan, black and white, is Saleh's attempt to counter the complexity by simplifying the use of colour.

In *Insight*, Saleh has taken her artistic practice to a new level. It reflects a heightened maturity that is the culmination of many years of artistic practice. She has also taken the courageous step of making this body of work 'personal', sharing with the viewer her personal insight from years of life experience. The strength of the exhibition lies in the simplicity and elegant profundity of its message and the artist's ability to translate it into a visual journey through which she connects with him on a personal level.

Insight is about taking control by choosing how we view the world. In that respect, *Insight* is Jehan Saleh's ode to creativity.

Sulaf Derawy Zakharia

Bahrain, 2016



Jehan Saleh, 100x133cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2016



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Jehan Saleh, 100x133cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2016



Jehan Saleh, 133x200cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2016



Jehan Saleh, 133x100cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2016



Jehan Saleh, 100x133cm, Mixed Media on canvas, 2016



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Biography

Born in 1973 in Alexandria, Egypt, Jehan Saleh is an Egyptian artist who lives and works in Bahrain for the past 10 years. She started her journey in Bahrain as an Art teacher in a public school from 2002 till 2005. Later she became an active member of the Bahrain Contemporary Art Society. And for the past 10 years she is working at Albareh Art Gallery (Adliya, Bahrain) as the Gallery's Coordinator and Business Development Manager.

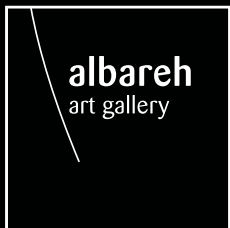
Participations

- 2015 Mini Art Exhibition – Katara – Qatar.
- 2014 Drypoint Printmaking Workshop With Artist: Mohamad Omar Khalil – Albareh art Gallery – Bahrain
Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial, UAE
The 8th Riudebitlles Art Biennial Artwork on paper – Spain
- 2013 “Displacement” Collective Exhibition organized by Albareh art Gallery – Artist Leadership program – Bahrain
Assilah international festival of culture 35th – Assilah – Morocco
Collective Exhibition “Taqaseem V” – FA gallery – Kuwait
- 2012 Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial, UAE.
Collective Exhibition – Diversity from the Arab World – Albareh art gallery – Bahrain
“STAMP1” – The First print exhibition for Arab women artists – organized by artist Jehan Saleh and Bahrain
Contemporary Arts Society – Bahrain
Collective Exhibition “Taqaseem III” – Roiya art gallery – Jeddah – Saudi Arabia
Collective Exhibition “Taqaseem VI” – Albareh art gallery – Bahrain
- 2011 Solo Exhibition – Blue Fig art gallery, Porto Heli, Greece.
3 rd International Art and Science Festival, 7th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF PAINTING, Patras, Greece
- 2010 Collective Exhibition organized by the UN Arabic Book Club, at Palais des Nations, Geneva.
Collective Exhibition “Stare at the Other Side”, Albareh Art Gallery, Bahrain.
Collective Exhibition “Taqaseem II”, Art Select, Dubai.
Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial, UAE.
Collective Exhibition “Taqaseem I”, Bahrain Contemporary Arts Society, Bahrain.
2nd International Art and Science Festival, 6th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF PAINTING, Patras, Greece
- 2009 “Across the Gulf Exhibition”, Brisbane Arc Biennial, Australia.
Collective Itinerary Exhibition, with Art Select, Dubai, Amman and Bahrain.
“Letter and Color”, solo exhibition, Bahrain Contemporary Art Society, Bahrain.

- 2008 Annual Collective Exhibition, Bahrain Contemporary Art Society, Bahrain.
Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial, UAE.
- 2007 Youth Saloon, Qatar.
- 2006 Annual Collective Exhibition, Bahrain Contemporary Art Society, Bahrain.
- 2005 Collective Exhibition in Bahrain Gardens Club, Bahrain.
Adhari Festival for Graffiti Art, Bahrain.
Collective Exhibitions organized by the Ministry of Education, Bahrain.
- 2004 Collective Exhibition in Bahrain Contemporary Art Society, Bahrain.
Graffiti Festival, Al Eskafi Society, Bahrain.
Aseela Art Festival for Graffiti Art, Bahrain.
Collective Exhibitions organized by the Ministry of Education, Bahrain.
Competition "Against Torture", in the Human Rights Society with the participation of Hussaini Art Centre, Bahrain.
- 2003 Collective Exhibitions organized by the Ministry of Education, Bahrain.
- 1995 Collective Exhibition for the Youth Salon, French Coucil, Port Saed, Egypt.
Collective Exhibition, Italian Council, Port Saed, Egypt.
- 1992 Biennial Port-Said, Egypt.

Prizes

- 2005 Honorary Certificate of Art from Adhari Festival, Bahrain.
Honorary Certificate from Ministry of Education for participation in Exhibitions organized by the Ministry, Bahrain.
Second prize in the Bahrain Gardens Club, Bahrain.
- 2004 Honorary Certificate from Graffiti Festival, Al Eskafi Society, Bahrain.
Honorary Certificate from Aseela Art Festival, Bahrain.
Second prize in the competition of Human Rights Society "Against Torture", Bahrain.
Honorary Certificate from Ministry of Education for participation in Exhibitions organized by the Ministry, Bahrain.
- 2003 Honorary Certificate from Ministry of Education for participation in Exhibitions organized by the Ministry, Bahrain.
- 1992 Honorary Certificate in Biennial Port-Said, Egypt.



Albareh Art Gallery
P.O. Box 26282, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain
Tel +973 1771 7707
art@albareh.com

www.albareh.com