

Technical Mastery and Complex Subjectivity at Amar Dawod's Insinuations

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AMMAN – More often than not, art appreciators encounter challenging works of art opposite their eyes. Art appreciation however, goes beyond analysing what one's sight offers, it is the marriage of theory, culture and knowledge in artistic technique combined with a great deal of patience to do the artist's story justice.

In Amar Dawod's *Insinuations* at Karim Gallery, spectators are presented with a simultaneously evident and hidden melange of eclecticism and surrealism. Eclecticism is a conceptual approach that gathers and involves objects, ideas and beliefs from various sources. This is not limited to visual imagery, eclecticism can also involve the interference of opposing opinions, contradictions and even seemingly unrelated elements into one paradigm. Surrealism on the other hand, is a celebration of irrationality and the wonders of the subconscious mind where parallel lines meet at an unexpected point.

In the presented body of work, Dawod borrows elements from memory and over time, builds individual multi-thematic artwork. *Insinuations* finds Dawod stepping away from his previously minimalistic style in expression and his entrance into a world of bold visual insinuation and representation. The artist presents somewhat of an exercise to the eye of the spectator, allowing some space for ambiguity to entertain their

minds. *Insinuations* thus leaves each viewer to their own imaginative interpretations of the work.

A citation by Professor Richard Hunger of the *Academy of Arts* in Poland digresses on Dawod's art and its strife to universalisation. Professor Hunger argues that Dawod's complex works are received through their atmospheres. From afar, the works can be mistaken to digital collage paintings as a result of Dawod's mastery in oil and acrylic painting technique. The compositions are also created in layers of visual wastelands filled with multiple objects, animals, shells and toys floating in space. Upon closer inspection, each of the elements holds its own weight, time period as well as nationality.

In *Repercussions*, a sword-bearing warrior figure echoes the warriors of ancient Mesopotamia. This draws a bold line under the theme of cross-culturalism in Dawod's work. Especially since other elements in the scene belong to Ancient Egypt, existing thousands of years earlier in history. Then, there is a modern contrast brought about through the inclusion of the artist's own version of Alice, the famous character by Lewis Carroll whose world was built around the curious, wonderful and the misunderstood.

the woDiversity in rk can also be seen in the artist's use of colour. As common in his work, harsh, earthy browns are interrupted by soft sky blues and warm peach hues acting as spotlights theatrically helping the viewers in shifting their eyes from scene to scene all on one canvas.

Repercussions could be perceived as an optimal example of Dawod's combination of figurative and natural landscapes.

In *Dream*, there is a clear assembly of feminine, classic figures arranged within the composition in layers. The paper doll cut-out figures and other elements overlap as they would in a collage. Simultaneous construction and deconstruction is seen in the work. The head draping hanging on the top left corner of the composition is separating from its wearer's featureless face, inspiring anonymity and mystery.

The work's title, *Dream*, pays tribute to the strange human condition of dreaming and its illogical nature. Moreover, the garments that evidently belong to the women in the picture form a framework of grace and discipline, they also inspire thoughts of costume changes and the embodiment of multiple characters as a way to escape reality and live a dream. Finally, the boat centered in the middle is a signifier of ideological and visual contrast; as it could embody a number of possible interpretations such as departure, a new beginning or an upcoming voyage, all valid interpretations in the eyes of Dawod's viewer.

Rituals of Life is a contemporary nod to Vanitas paintings. Dawod here heavily uses symbolism and artistic metaphors to manifest *momento mori* in painting form. The vibrant colour palette in the background is strongly weighed down with the effortlessly suspended skull centralising the painting. Themes of death, rebirth and metamorphosis echo in the work through the depicted elements. With the butterfly symbolising change, the rabbit symbolising rebirth and the skull representing death, *Rituals of Life* depicts the ordinary which mortals tend to forget.

In a brief conversation with Dawod, he talked to artmejo more about *The Day of Birth* saying

I enjoyed working on it for three years. For that time, I was always adding .and omitting parts of it, until it reached to what it is now

The Day Of Birth started as a painting of a room, then I continuously added some components on it. There was a woman lying on a bed, with people preparing her for labor, then I thought of covering her with the cow. After that came the clown puppet on the wagon and a deer. Those additions occur as time goes by. It is a sort of celebration, or a carnival of birth. You can also .notice the conductor of the symphony on top, orchestrating life and birth

Dawod's thought-provoking pieces stray the imagination. Observers are lost in a harmony of technical mastery and wondrous subjectivity. With works that are timeless both in concept and implementation, *Insinuations* flirts with its .viewers while Dawod's brushstrokes make a lasting impression on the mind