



<< Back to Blog

BASHAR ALHROUB: THE FREEDOM ARTIST

By Maha Alsharif
24/10/2018



Bashar Alhroub, "NeoPalestine", 2018, Installation, 140 x 70 x 12 cm. © Bashar Alhroub.

Artist Bashar Alhroub looks for freedom through his practice. He draws from his background and personal experiences to outline a metaphysical existence in terms of socio-political constructs that continue to distract and dictate human abilities, goodness, and consciousness. In his work, he combines visual and conceptual elements to create layers of meaning that challenge the viewer and encourage critical thinking and action.



Installation view: Bashar Alhroub, "War & Desire", 2018. © Bashar Alhroub.

A cultural and a spiritual nomad, who was born and raised in Palestine, Alhroub was subject to unique experiences that elevated both his awareness and anxiety about attachment, identity, belonging, and existence. The result is a deep appreciation for the moment accompanied by existential anxiety, that together motivate him to explore issues holistically, taking into account a compound of factors that lead to certain understandings or states, yet always at risk of change. This mentality sneaks into his creativity, in that there is no constant medium, style, subject, identity or truth; everything becomes interchangeable. Free from restrictions outside the moment, Alhroub deconstructs preconceived notions using a time continuum and offers a new fluid meaning that has yet to define its position in the past, present and future.



Installation view: Bashar Alhroub, "Object 3 (Bilad Al Urb Awtani)", 2018, Mixed Media Sculpture, 180 x 120 x 43 cm ©Bashar Alhroub.



Installation view: "Bilad Al Urb Awtani" 2018 ©Bashar Alhroub.

In "Bilad Al Urb Awtani (The Arab World Is My Homeland)" (2017), Alhroub references a song he, and many Arabs, grew up listening to and singing. He explains the song has conditioned his perception of the region as it romanticises the unity and togetherness of Arab Nations. Written by the late Syrian poet and activist, Fakhri Al Baroudi (1887 - 1966), it meant to support and give hope to Arabs while their nations were still claiming independence. Its positive message and words of encouragement remain an idealistic dream, unrealistic due to the divisions caused by politics, sectarianism and wars.

The artist reduces the history, culture, struggle, and achievements of Arab nations to a deconstructed graphic map, that is illustrated in painting, print and sculpture. He breaks down a map of the Arab World and visually plays with positive and negative space to show the reality and potential. Applying a very minimal approach, Alhroub requests the viewer's input to colour and give identity to each nation and its state. In the sculptures, he uses positive and negative impressions of each nation's map as a layer to construct fragile and unsteady structures, that may reflect the current fragmentation and dark times, but simultaneously - and sarcastically - reflect hope for a renaissance and a better future.



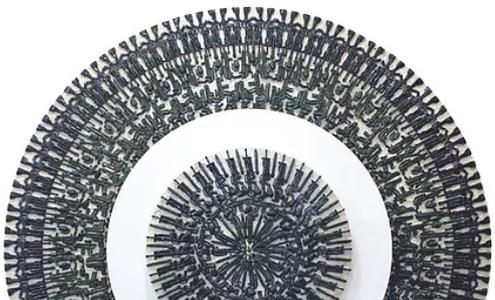
Bashar Alhroub, "Invasion", 2016, Bronze, 50 x 50 x 50 cm, edition of 3 + 2 AP. ©Bashar Alhroub.



Bashar Alhroub, "Heart", 2017, Mixed Media (Plastic & Resin), 50 x 50 x 4 cm, variation of 5. ©Bashar Alhroub.

In his most recent project, "War & Desire" (2016 - 2018), Alhroub maintains a holistic view point, in which he presents beautiful compositions made of destructive material. Through the misplacement of common cues, the artist develops a symbolic narrative that brings awareness to our controlled cognition.

By using little plastic toy soldiers and weapons as the base of beautified aesthetics, the artist brings attention to the meaning of the object itself as well as its connotations. The mass produced military figures for kids represent universal associations to power and heroism that children learn about





Bashar Alhroub, "Arabesque", 2017, Mixed Media (Resin, Plastic, and Wood), 85 x 85 x 6 cm, edition of 5 + 1 AP. ©Bashar Alhroub.

through play. However, drawing from his first-hand experience in Palestine, Alhroub sees soldiers directly associated with occupation as opposed to freedom and justice. He goes further to suggest that war has become a crucial part of global trade that feeds capitalist interests, in which the vicious kill the competition, conquer and profit. The structures are covered in resin and painted in *happy* colours that contrast the purpose of the objects, and thus illustrate humanity's modern myth, coexisting in beautified environments.

Like freedom, Alhroub's work is never secure, fixed or static. It is apparent in his point of view, his process, and projects. His unmasked and educated point of view is neither limited nor satisfied; much like a philosopher, he believes in infinite possibilities and therefore with each answer resolves another mystery. Along the same lines, his process is experimental and full of thought. Finally, his projects address man made constructs in contrast to the bare human experience, and bring both awareness and anxiety to existence, conditioning, and unexplored possibilities.

Follow the artist:

Instagram: [@bashar_alhroub](https://www.instagram.com/bashar_alhroub)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/baasharalhroub/>

Website: www.basharalhroub.com

© 2020 The Art Cricket | contact@theartcricket.com