

OUT OF KUWAIT



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KUWAIT**

Out of Kuwait

Out of Kuwait brings together the work of thirteen emerging Kuwaiti artists who have examined and reinterpreted the theme of landscape. The exhibition represents the artists' analysis of and response to their everyday surroundings and comments on the social, political and physical landscapes of contemporary Kuwait.

Curated by:
Prof. David Rayson

Private View:
Wednesday 13 November 2013, 6 - 9pm.

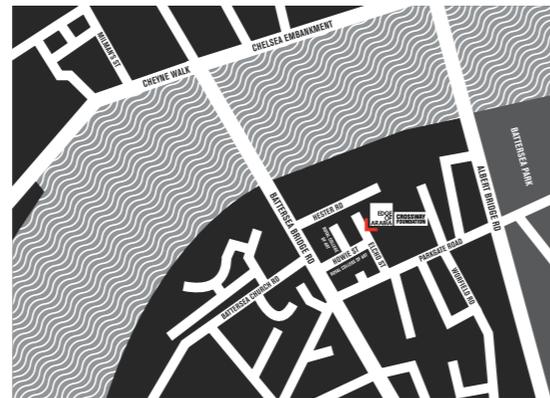
Exhibition discussion:
Thursday 14 November 2013, 2 - 5pm.

Exhibition:
14 November – 28 November.
Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm.
Closed Mondays.

ADMISSION FREE
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Artists:
Adel Ashkanani
Ahmad Alshammeri
Amani Althuwaini
Aseel Al Yaqoub
AbdulAziz Alhumaidhi
Mohammed Sharaf
Mona Al-Qanai
Mohammed Alkouh
Muneera Alsharhan
Nima Algooneh
Roa Alshaheen
Thuraya Lynn
Zahra Al-Muhdi



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Out of Britain-into Kuwait

The idea for the Out Of Kuwait London exhibition came about before the September 2012 Out of Britain exhibition in Kuwait. Out of Britain was a collection of fifty-two major works of twentieth century British landscape art from the British Council Collection and it was British Council Kuwait's largest ever intervention in the field of arts and culture. Over three thousand people experienced the exhibition at Contemporary Arts Platform (CAP), an extremely high number for Kuwait. The central principle of our work in cultural relations is mutuality. We were determined that the project should not just be an opportunity for a Kuwaiti audience to be inspired by British landscape art in all its diversity. It should also be a chance to inspire young Kuwait based artists to reflect on their own landscape, in the broadest sense, and create their own response for local and then a London audience.

Two people were central to making this a reality: Professor David Rayson from the Royal

College of Arts (RCA), supported by three of his postgraduate students, and international curator Alia Farid Abdal. British Council Kuwait selected a group of twelve local artists and set up a residency led by David and Alia. Just a month later in October 2012, the work created was shown in the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait with over 300 people attending the opening. The group continued to work, to experiment and to support each other new artists joined for the second residency in spring 2013.

The artists have since refined their ideas and developed new work. We are delighted to work with Edge of Arabia and Crossways Foundation, and exhibit this pioneering work at such exciting venue.

Kuwait is not so well known in the UK and most people's images are somewhat stereotypical, based around oil, Islam, the desert, extreme heat and high levels of wealth. But of course like any other society it is multi-

layered, diverse and evolving. I was most struck by many of the artists' fascination with the 1970s and 80s and the pre and post invasion realities. Everyone will leave the exhibition with their own thoughts and reflections after seeing the works of the young artists, most of whom are presenting their work abroad for the first time. I wish them lots of success and hope that long term connections are formed with students and institutions they get to know during their trip. Some of the artists will be involved in Out of Arabia to be organised by the British Council in 2015 in London.

There are so many people to thank and I will only mention a few. David Rayson, first and foremost, Sarah al Faour from Edge of Arabia, Mr. Ali Yoha from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), Abed Al Kadiri from CAP and all the artists from Kuwait and RCA involved. From the British Council: Andrea Rose, Director Visual Arts UK and

Stephen Stenning, Regional Director for Arts in MENA for their inspiration and support; Sean Williams for making so much happen and from Kuwait, Reem Dawani and Nadia El-Sebai for their drive and incredibly hard work. There are many others and please forgive the omissions.

Andrew Glass

Director
British Council/Kuwait
14/10/2013



VIEW ACROSS
KUWAIT CITY FROM
THE AL HAMRA
TOWER

Out of Kuwait

Out of Kuwait

Flying over the oil fields into Kuwait, out of the aeroplane windows down on the ground there are row after row of storage tanks and silos, strings and knots of oils pipes, lines of pylons and refinery chimneys like huge thin candles, their red flames brilliant in contrast to the hazy sandy ground. As the plane banks the landscape is dramatically tilted up as if vertical revealing this vast area of the earth punctured with small bright iridescent pools, a complex of roads and toy like lorry containers in convoy silently moving in all directions along the highways. As the aeroplane levels and begins to circle, in the distance we can see where the sea meets the land again, along the shoreline tall reflective glass and steel buildings emit bright flashes of colour: Kuwait City... Cabin crew get ready for landing...

This was my experience of travelling to Kuwait, mediated through the frame of the aeroplane window, written down speedily in a notebook, and shaped by the nature of my visit, and voiced through my own particular relationship to landscape. This arrival was heightened by a fleeting position of newness, as with experiencing any new space. This heightened sense of things soon gave way to the reality of gravity, and the queuing through passport control, customs, and Baggage Reclaim. However my engagement with Kuwait was quickly reinvigorated on the ground and as I became increasingly engaged by the individual reflections and insights of the artists living and working in Kuwait as we journeyed around the city, talked about their work, reflected these

conversations back on to the city, and on to the broader landscape travelling into Kuwait's outskirts.

Visits to the desert, the souks, the huge recycling area at Amghara outside the city, and the fast lift to the top of the then unfinished Al Hamra tower, and all the time in conversation with this group of emerging artists of Kuwait.

Through their work the artists talked openly about the changes in the landscape they were all living through, the immediate and very local use of the highways, Bluetooth texts and speeding traffic, and their collective more encompassing overview of the landscape regarding the past and present, and talking through the virtual landscape, the constructed city, the actual day to day environment and spaces remembered.

All these artists have very individual agendas and are drawn to particular ways of working, and are also motivated by different driving forces in relationship to place, be it physical, cultural, social, intellectual, emotional or the political space of Kuwait. A common ground has been the time frame these artists have been growing up in and working in, and the working out of their immediate environment as a group of individual artists.

It is essential to emphasise the far reaching extent and varied range of these artist's personal histories, and how for them, the realm of landscape both external and interior, is a rich and expanded one.

During the residency that began back in September 2012, I continually made notes in my notebook and took many photos to both heighten my experience of Kuwait, and postpone the then present to a future date when I could then distil out what would become key moments, or key images that could act as windows or frames back to our time in Kuwait.

Many of our conversations, and indeed the works in this show centred around the built environment: The highways, the air-conditioned shopping malls, the water pipes irrigating the lines of planted trees, the apartments, the role of the car in connecting its inhabitants to the city, and to the landscape of electric pylons and water towers beyond the city limits.

These conversations sensitized me to our immediate environment of the residency, how we too were enveloped into structures, utilising constructed supports to enable us to project our ideas and speculate on our future art projects, from the constructed reality of the urban environment to the constructed spaces of the Museum, the gallery, the studio and the education room.

To begin the residency room at Kuwait's Museum of Modern Art all the artists took it in turns to project a selection of still images, film and accompanying texts to summarise their work, and stake a claim for their individual agendas. We witnessed compelling photographs, eventful large-scale paintings and installations, intimate small-scale drawings on paper, jewel-like ceramics, finished works, speculative works, sketches and plans, and the works of other artists and blockbuster film clips.

Before the first break, we sat in rows viewing each of the artist's work projected on to a white wall framed by the dark as a long rectangle of light.

In the break we moved out into the courtyard of the museum, where we could stand casually around helping ourselves to coffee and be surrounded by the high courtyard walls, intimately lit against the large space of a darkening sky. Off this courtyard space were all the internal gallery rooms that contain many framed works installed on the internal walls, with each artwork being seductively illuminated.

Via stairs and an emergency exit we broke out a little further onto the museum's roof, the evening call to prayer sounded out across an expansive space, and all around was the skyline of Kuwait City under a huge dusk sky – the view then being charged by the chorus of voices being amplified from the mosque towers across the city.

Throughout all these experiences our engagement had been absorbed by the sensory events before us. During the artists' presentations we didn't pay any attention to the buzzing of the projector, we automatically stepped over the extension cables powering the laptops, and we ignored the old nail holes on the projection wall. In the galleries we didn't pay much attention either to the air humidifiers, the halogen spotlights, and the painted over mirror plates supporting the work. On the roof we dismissed the wide electric cables, the awkward air conditioning vents and avoided stepping into the roofs drainage channels.

From the roof we saw down in the courtyard some of the artists gathered together into a tight group, all looking at something small being held in one hand. All those on the roof came down to join the group, and saw on a small mobile phone screen an aerial view of the whole of Kuwait City with a huge sand cloud moving as a solid form down its highways and covering the buildings. The tiny screen then stopped moving, and split into many static screens offering many alternative views of the event that took places weeks before.

The sky above the courtyard that night was crystal clear, dark blue-black, and littered with bright stars all framed by the illuminated walls of the museum.

We were then called back in to the projection room to witness spaces and ideas that again transcended the gallery wall and defied the present time we were in, to rerun past events and offer future fictions and fabricate future realities.

As a group we are able to share ideas by viewing in quick succession jpegs of images projected onto the museums wall. Projecting images, projecting ideas.

With the multi-faceted and hyper-accessibility of images, film and sounds available globally, all of these artists are 'well-travelled' and are able to continue to travel through a vast and ever increasing amount of material from the internet, I-phones screens, magazines, TV and film. However these artists' own personal and cultural forces also act as a gravitational force, drawing them towards particular visual currencies and often the re-enactment of reoccurring motifs.

It is curious and will generate discussions

during and beyond the exhibition that for this exhibition we will encounter physical works, often singular and in a fixed state, whether the work is a finished painting, a drawn work on paper, a graphic print, a stand alone sculptural work, a sequenced and edited film, or a choreographed installation.

These are physical objects, shipped into the UK, installed into an architectural space, and to be travelled to by an audience to be directly encountered and engaged with.

So many of our discussions concerned the excavation of our ideas, and the fleeting, fading and veiling power of time, that reduces everything ultimately to an image, or after image. Here the artists have reclaimed their ability to touch and get real in making physical objects, and have navigated the support structures such as solid walls and floors, illuminating gallery lighting, electric points, DVD players and amplified sound to house actual material works.

These artworks have travelled a long way out of the artists' ideas, beyond the frameworks of their homeland, and have travelled halfway across the world to be here in London: out of Kuwait.

Professor David Rayson
Head of Painting
The Royal College of Art
10/10/13

Past Preservation and Recent Reconstruction

By Aseel AlYaqoub

It is challenging as an artist to be born and raised in a young country where art is considered a recreational hobby by the masses. Although we have experienced a noteworthy series of historical events, art in Kuwait has rarely ever been used as a megaphone for social and cultural commentary. I am not denying the fact that we have had artists in the past, and more emerging currently, that have used their talents to create art that is informative, experimental or reactionary. I am merely stating that we have not experienced a focused art movement that held hands with social, cultural or political movements.

To understand this notion, I will explain Kuwait's history. As a nation, Kuwait has only been independent for 52 years, and the need for economic and urban development became the priority. With oil brewing under our soil, we were able to quickly catch up with the world and build on our education and services. During the 60's, Kuwait managed to throttle itself ahead of its neighboring countries and became renowned regionally over time for its theatre, music and art.

“Before Doha, Dubai, or Abu Dhabi, the city with the boldest ambitions in the Gulf may have been Kuwait. In the 1970s, everyone from I.M. Pei to Andy Warhol traveled here to build, show, experience, and experiment in an atmosphere that was flourishing, at least in part, care of a sudden oil boom.” – DIA Magazine

Due to economic growth many Kuwaitis became avid travelers, which in turn influenced a change domestically and socially. This growth leaned a lot on the “sudden oil boom”, however I believe that the main influences came from the bourgeois liberals. They began hosting artists, initiating galleries, and importing books and art supplies. Art became a commodity and many Kuwaitis became enthusiastic art collectors. The government also supported the arts financially, and sponsored artists by giving them grants as well as scholarships to study abroad. They also founded Marsam Al Hur (The Free Atelier), which still exists today, and consists of studios that can be used by local artists for free.

The 80s saw the rise of the religious movement and the decline of the artistic and cultural movement. As the influence of the new



ANDY WARHOL, FRED HUGHES, AND JED JOHNSON IN KUWAIT, 1977 – HEDGES PROJECTS ARCHIVE, WARHOL COLLECTION

movement grew, sculptures were torn down and theatre doors closed. New and stricter censorship laws created a stagnant atmosphere for the local artists, limiting their creative freedom and once prospering art environment. After the 1990 Gulf War, the dynamic of the country as a whole changed even more, along with its social and political ideologies. Universities are no longer coeducational, there are no formal art schools and galleries are very cautious and specific with the press. As art was no longer precedence, a lot of the press had closed down their cultural sections, which limited artist exposure and also denied the majority of the public from knowing much about the art scene. Artists, as an outcome, began secluding themselves and became exclusive to a very small part of our society. This snootiness, although justifiable, had isolated the art scene further from the major public and had constrained itself from expanding.

I am part of a limited art community that contains a handful of art educated artists. Many of us have received education in other

fields so that we may financially sustain our art “practices”. An art education enhances ones theoretical and critical thinking, and by studying art history and movements can start to initiate a change within society both politically and culturally. It is also vital that artists integrate themselves within their society and understand the larger audience. As artists we can construct a change by searching out new audiences and support each other in developing dynamic art practices. In order for these practices to progress, we should detach ourselves from the international art practice and start to identify within our local spheres.

The younger generation of artists is opting for art majors, and many of us are refining our art direction through reading, education and travel. The social respectability of art in Kuwait is increasing, as more artists are finally committing to their art practices full time. There are multiple social networks online that invite the public to view miscellaneous works by different artists. Facebook groups are being formed to advertise different art exhibitions

and events. Art blogs are becoming more critical in their writing and some have developed into art magazines. New galleries are launching on a yearly basis that adds a new competitive edge on another layer. Individual artists and art groups are beginning to merge and more solid amalgamations are being formed.

Slowly but surely, these changes have invited different facets within our society to join the discussions and debates. It is also encouraging more individuals to be more artistically inclined, and pursue a more rigorous art agenda. There are multiple workshops that are being run by galleries and artists, which include abstract calligraphy, textile, painting, photography and writing. More artists are participating in art residencies abroad and take courses to expand on their technical skills and explore more mediums.

Out of Kuwait is the first local art residency and the diversity of disciplines in this show is an example of the potential that can be extracted from Kuwait. Although we have to abide by censorship laws, cultural and religious taboos

and a few other restraints, does not mean that the art itself is limited. As these are challenges we constantly face, we must work around them until we manage to categorize ourselves within the art world. Only then can we start lifting some of the limitations and truly expand on our individual artistic capabilities without the self-orientalizing elements.

The work in this show is driven by our own personal experiences, concerns and imagined nostalgia. It is a reaction to the questions that we have been asking as a generation and we are attempting to unearth the answers via artistic means. I see this exhibition as an experiment, and the mixture of backgrounds within this group of artists creates a unique show that can be the basis for critique and development. To many of us it is a starting point and to some an expansion, but nonetheless a chance to voice our concerns.



Abdulaziz Al Humaidhi

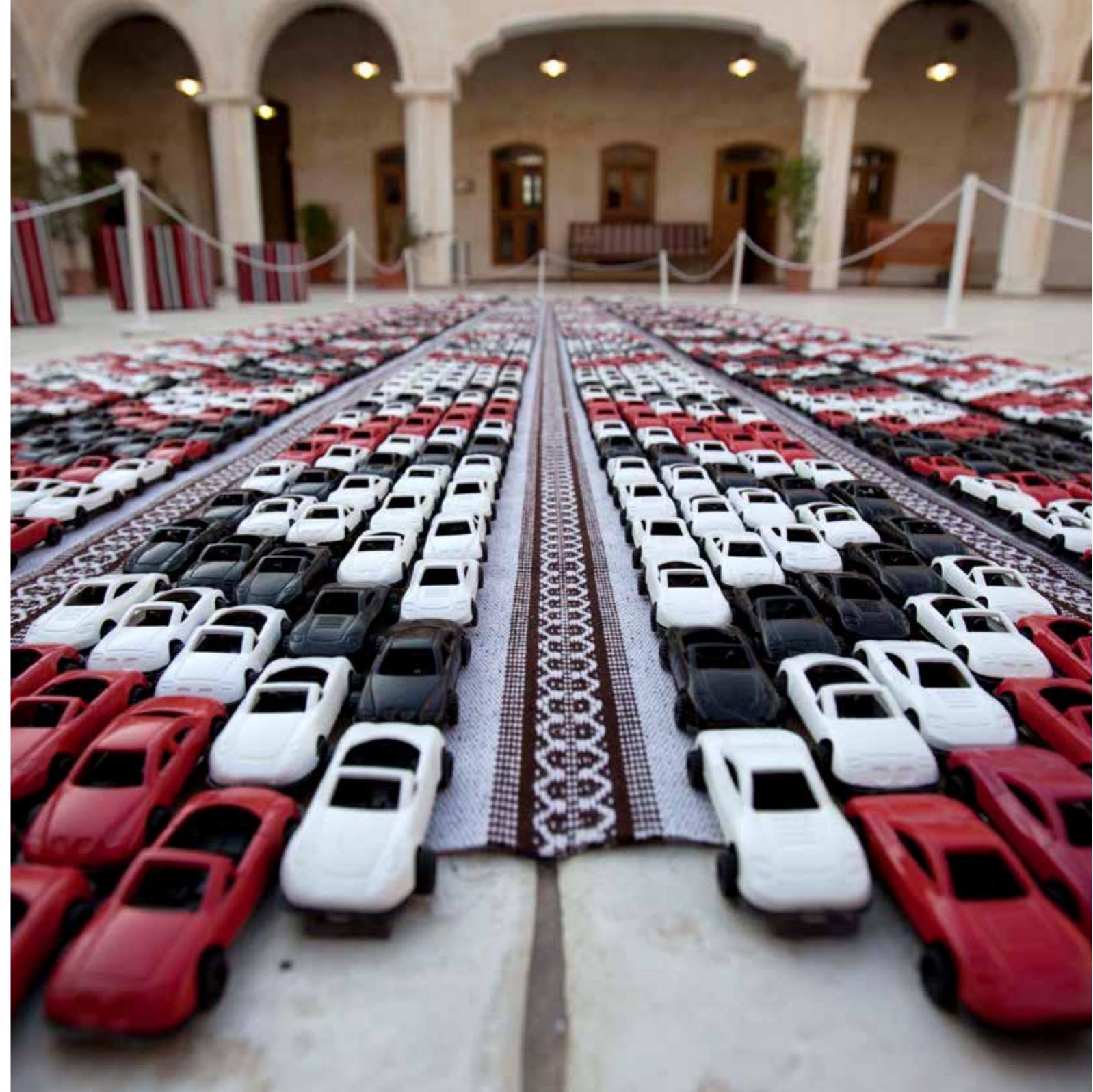
I am not artist.

I do not have a body of work.

The work that Aziz has done or plans on doing, deals with personal or collective frustrations with a given social, political, or cultural status quos. His work is methodical with outcomes that are mainly process driven, the aim of which is to keep the work as clear and accessible as possible to the viewer. In doing so he finds that he approaches the process more from a design aspect than an artistic one. Aziz's background as a designer first and architect second enables him to formulate a holistic

and comprehensive approach to the way he creates any given piece-whether executed or as an idea. Aesthetic, functional, and logistical requirements all have equal footing in the construct of the pieces and the thought process behind them.

Aziz hopes to investigate the role that the state plays in manipulating education for religious or political motives. And the time this may require for such actions to impact upon future generations. Specifically, his interests lie in the manipulation of the collective memory of a culture or people.



Adel Ashkanani

Adel Ashkanani was born in 1987 in the city of Kuwait where he currently resides. During his college years he studied Radio/ TV/ and Film at the Lebanese American University, but due to political instability, he moved to London where he finished his degree with a major in communication and a minor in arts design and media. It was there where he picked up painting as a hobby and became fascinated with creating new things that attract the eye.

Infatuated with dots, he started using a particular method in painting. Adel would use thousands of dots placed next to each other to form a single image, usually leaving one with different interpretations of his work. After that he started exploring different materials that could be added to a canvas other than paint, which allowed him to explore the three dimensional approach.

Having jumped straight into a job in his native country after graduating he was left feeling uninspired and therefore started painting again and experimenting with different platforms in art. That's when he quit his Job and started working for a Asyawah Industrial, recycling marble and stone and creating furniture out of it. The Edge of Arabia exhibition will be the first in which Adel's work will be displayed.

At first, he would merely be an observer of the various exhibitions that were held at different art platforms. However, as he grew more curious as an aspiring artist, he began to explore new methods and techniques that could be incorporated into modern day art but yet tell a story about the past as well.

He was privileged enough to be able to study the notion of expanding boundaries both culturally and personally. After calling London home for a few years, he would soon absorb all he possibly could about multicultural diversity and instill what he has gathered upon moving back to Kuwait.



Ahmad AlShemmari

Inspired by the father of modern photojournalism, French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who produced monochromic photos that gave more depth to his subjects and eliminated any distraction caused by colors. I take street-life photos. My work represents me as a human being. The camera is my eye, my voice and my heart; an instrument to express reality in an abstract form by simplifying equations of life. Stories are told in one decisive moment; the protagonists are normal people living normal lives. A photo that speaks emotions.

For me, photography is more than a reproduction of an image. In every photo session, I take time to study the surroundings, the people and their interaction. To be able to understand human nature, I had to research about psychology, physiology, sociology, and anthropology; it is a sophisticated process to produce one simple and comprehensive image.

I've faced cultural boundaries where photography is considered "haram"; any reproduction of any sort of image is a complete blasphemy. As a Kuwaiti artist, I feel that it's my mission to introduce my messages in an acceptable form where I can reflect the tradition and the mores of my society.



Amani Adel Thuwaini

As a half Kuwaiti-half Ukrainian artist, for Amani identity has always been the driving force behind her work. In an attempt to explore this, she uses themes of everyday life, memory, and social criticism directed to the general public. She has carried out a lot of field work related to migrant workers around Kuwait, with an exploration of public intervention and she used the collected material to install her work for the Out of Kuwait exhibition in the Modern Museum of Art in Kuwait in November 2012.

Amani's primary research interest is to combine a natural intrigue for aesthetics with function. Exploring spatial design in architecture school enabled her to develop a personal artistic language. Her art practice enables her in the first instance to notice, and then put forward solutions attempting to promote change and transformation.

As a result to exploring everyday life in Kuwait, she attempts to understand how and why people operate and how these everyday events shape their behavior.

The work demonstrates her fascination with interpreting and representing her explorations and research processes into the context of the gallery space working across a broad range of mediums such as video projection, painting, drawing or installation work. This she feels is also driven by her wanting the work to invite a broad range of interpretations through the subjectivity of the viewer.

This in turn motivates her drive to explore many different ways of working, which ties in with her relationship to the function of aesthetics, which for Amani is guided by her direct involvement with the vernacular of Kuwait.



Aseel AlYaqoub

Aseel AlYaqoub (°1986, Kuwait) is an artist who works in a variety of media. By using an ever-growing archive of found documents to create autonomous artworks, she references the self-made memories of pre-war Kuwait as well as the current cultural and social taboos as a form of resistance against the contradictory and discriminatory factors she faces in her country.

Her artworks are an investigation of concepts that aim to bridge social gaps by rebuilding mechanisms of lost communication through contemporary art. By demonstrating the omnipresent lingering of a 'contradictory world', she reflects on the closely related subjects of archive, memory and documentation. This often results in an examination of both the human need for 'conclusive' stories and the question of whether anecdotes 'fictionalize' history.

Her works directly respond to the surrounding environment and uses everyday experiences from the artist as a starting point. By parodying mass media and tradition, she exaggerates certain formal aspects inbuilt within our contemporary society. She touches various overlapping themes and strategies through repetition and investigation to criticize the social, cultural and political issues faced in present-day Kuwait.

Her works are saturated with obviousness, clichés and jokes. They question the coerciveness that is derived from the more profound meaning and the superficial aesthetic appearance of an image. By using popular themes such as sexuality, family structure and culture, she tries to approach a wide scale of subjects in a multi-layered way, likes to involve the viewer in a way that is sometimes physical and believes in the idea of function following form in a work.

With a conceptual approach, she makes works that can be seen as self-portraits. Sometimes they appear idiosyncratic and quirky, at other times, they seem typical by-products of self-orientalization and imagined nostalgia. Through viewer participation, physical interaction and social media, she reaches out to the local pop and mass culture with light-heartedness to create and encourage dialogue between the different facets of the Kuwaiti society. Aseel AlYaqoub currently lives and works in Kuwait.



Mohammed Al-Kouh

Mohammed Al-Kouh was born in 1984 in Kuwait, and lives and works in Kuwait. Fascinated by all forms of art, Al Kouh is a self-taught artist who has explored a broad range of art making since childhood and has participated in group shows from an early stage of his life. His artworks have been shown several times in The Formative ARTs Institute Exhibitions and Al Qurian Cultural Festival. He has also took several workshops locally & internationally: Nuqat, Art Dubai & Abu Dhabi Art Fain just to name a few.

After graduation from College of Business Administration - Kuwait University with BA in Marketing, Al Kouh took his passion in art and exploration into a new level; he started working on projects with deeper meanings and touched by untold true stories from society, film photography and mix media became Al Kouh's method to cascade his findings.

In 2012, Al Kouh created 'Kalimat' a mix media project utilizing newspapers, calligraphy and paints to share heartbreaking true love stories and was highly acknowledged as an artwork with value when he exhibited it in 'Without Boundaries' at FA Gallery.

I discovered the power of words; it's amazing how a single word can change us completely! I started to tell stories via this method, vintage newspapers became my platform. As work develops, words and peoples merged together to create a unified form that surprised me how similar both can be!

Amazed by vintage era in all its details from buildings to people, AlKouh found in photography a method to capture any remaining of the past in Kuwait or recreate a scene that only existed in the past, aiming to protect it from being forgotten, lost or erased from memories.

As a child I was captivated with idea of "Stealing Souls and Keeping Them in Negatives" and I began to photograph everything I wish not to lose, photography became my way to steal my favorite moments in life and keep them in my closet.



Mohammed Sharaf

My passion for art has gone through several stages, and each one taught me an important lesson. Each one has instilled a value that I still carry and implement each time I work on a project.

Art has fascinated Mohammed since he was a toddler. He gazed in awe at the fine strokes of my father's paintbrush on the canvas and the shutter snap of his camera lens. His father was an avid artist. When Mohammed remembers his childhood, he remembers how his walls were adorned with his own artwork. His father stopped doing any art related activity in late eighties. Not because he was not capable, but because of his political/social paintings. Mohammed states that the reason why his father stopped is because he was not allowed to showcase his work in exhibitions in Kuwait.

One of his father's late paintings was a painting called "The Non-functioning Constitution" Where he illustrated the Quran with its pages falling down.

Living in a region that is characterized by constant turmoil has taught Mohammed that it is the mission of designers and artists is to be socially active in our respective communities. Throughout the eventful year of 2011, he discovered new dimensions of social activism. The massive change happening in Mohammed's part of the world drove him to start creating social/political posters.

These posters have been exhibited locally and internationally. Additionally his artworks have won several competitions, and have been exhibited, and published locally and internationally.

Today, Mohammed strongly believes that the graphic designer should be an entrepreneur, problem solver, and social activist.



Mona Al-Qanai

Mona Al-Qanai regards herself as an artist that's a storyteller, in every story spoken, a stroke of a relationship between her narrating a story and getting a reaction from the audience, has inspired her into looking at different mediums, such as painting photography and film.

From working with a range of mediums she discovered that film is the strongest way of evoking the subconscious. She believes this is because of the universal nature of the language of the moving image that offers a rich medium reflecting upon human nature. Filming has become the primary channel of expression that motivates Mona's new works.

From Mona's observations on women's predicaments and those that have experienced dramatic situations, all have influenced her into making the film "The Rhumb Line". Which revolves around her personal interest in women's matters in terms of their condition, physical and philosophical state, in the Kuwaiti society and culture. To do this she has employed symbolic implications of the circle in terms

of value and position within the traditional culture, which needs to be re-surfaced and embraced. As an example of this, men lack the knowledge of what men wear over their heads, which implicates the circle, symbolizing the female. According to Arjo Klamer:

"The myth of our culture says that men do the squares and women the circles."

Mona believes that the identity of women is getting lost and removed on many levels and for many reasons, she is aware that it is extremely complex but she believes that these issues should be addressed. She feels that in the past, evidence of the circle was a reflection of people within the society that understood and valued its importance, whereas, now the traditional culture is being pushed to the side.

And as a female, Mona took it upon herself to re-represent these stories through film. By pointing out, the physical position of the circular shape, the motion of the circular going around and who is processing and placing it in the society.



Muneera Hamed Alsharhan

Muneera has been exploring the idea of finding identity through memory. Through research and revisiting past memories, whether real or imposed, she finds meaning and endeavors to make sense of her reality. Muneera is fully aware of her tendency to romanticize the past, which in turn alters the reality of the now. In making her self believe in a created and more beautiful world, the truth about her surroundings is thrown into sharp contrast. Through her work she wants to take people with her on a trip to a past, and to come back to find things altered more colourfull- both visually and emotionally.

Muneera has been using materials where I can work with my hands like clay, wood and metals. These materials require a sort of a repetitive movement to manipulate them into the shape that I need. Movement for Muneera becomes meditative, where she is enabled to drift into her thoughts and transfer the energy of them into the pieces she is working on. Working with her hands allows her to feel connected to everything. The literal connection of the hands to the pieces allows her to feel that her memories and ideas can be transferred to the pieces.

She has been exploring the viewer's physical connection to a piece, and how this informs their experience and relation to the work. When the works are small in scale they have to stand near enough to it to experience the detail of the work, or by the way a piece feels when worn. She wants her audience to connect with the piece so that they feel that they have a right to respond how they want, to relate to the piece personally, and to make the piece their own.



Nima Algooneh

Nima Algooneh (born 1984, Kuwait) makes conceptual artworks and installations. By putting the viewer on a deliberate track, Algooneh attempts to create works in which events still have to take place or have just has ended. The drama unfolds elsewhere while the build-up of tension is looped to become the memory of an event that will never take place or is soon to be, in passing. It speaks to a tension, never resolved. He isolates and encourages the viewer to 'enter' the piece, to explore it, to be immersed in its world.

Parodying mass media and certain aspects inherent to our contemporary society, he makes works that can be seen as self-portraits. The purpose of which is an introspection. Sometimes they appear idiosyncratic and quirky, at other times, ominous and grandiose.

His works demonstrate how life extends beyond its own subjective limits and often tells a story about the effects of global cultural interaction. It challenges the binaries we continually reconstruct between Self and Other. His works references post-colonial theory as well as the avant-garde or the post-modern.

His works are saturated with mental inertia, clichés and abstract specters.



Roa AlShaheen

Roa is an architect that stimulates designs to enhance existing spaces, celebrate the flaws and evoke responses. She constructs art on an instinctual basis, to communicate underlying concerns, to review without overgeneralizing, and to encourage interpretation beyond the visual details. Her intention is to connect with the viewer on a mainly aesthetic basis leaving

interpretations open to occur in visually vague terms, but still providing the viewers with a physical platform upon which to form a more meaningful inspection of the artwork. She is highly driven to create interpretive art that expands the aesthetic potential of the artwork by admitting its own bias, whilst leaving room for additional and multiple interpretations.



Thuraya Lynn

Thuraya's work attempts to explore how "common sense/differences" are used to identify explicit and implicit interactions between individuals and the space they inhabit.

She is striving to develop an art practice that when people see her work, the viewer considers the "logic" that constructs common sense and difference and if it is logic in the first place?

Influenced by the intertextuality of Derrida's theory of deconstruction, common sense and differences- created by the complexities of society were made to be undone. These

are not absolute, nor have universal truths. Inspired by minimalist lines, negative space and a combination of personal fields of interests such as: sexuality, religion, cross-cultural identity and racial socialization. Thuraya is driven to spur dialogue about the interplay of binaries and how it can leave out a sense of untruthfulness and the possibility of a new truth. Also how it turns and transforms into "truths" that legitimizes itself within a certain structure/system/space. Is it the real truth? What is right, what is wrong?



Zahra Al-Mahdi

Zahra's paintings and sculptures illustrate the idea of false archiving, assumed histories, and selective cultural memory. Through diagram-like images of mundane phenomenon, she juxtaposes what her culture falsely assumes to be part of its history, as opposed to what she realizes to exist.

The subject matter of each body of work determines the materials and the forms of the work. Zahra's eclectic medium choice of ink and acrylic paint is also a formal response to

tradition and artistic propriety. Also, the use of average, available, industrial materials like wood and wire delivers the feel of a seemingly natural imposed environment.

Her work focuses on the social environment, the development of historical knowledge, employing as she herself has stated 'black humour' whilst depicting a positive message celebrating the vital space needed for cultural growth, which encompasses the biological, the anatomical and the emotional realms.





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British Council

The British Council's high-profile work in English, the Arts, and Education and Society helps hundreds of millions of people worldwide to learn about and experience creativity and excellence from the UK. Millions of talented people of all ages –but particularly younger people–engage face-to-face and online with us learning English, developing new skills, experiencing life and study in the UK and earning UK qualifications.

Through its Arts Programme in the Gulf and wider Arab world, the British Council continues to nurture and promote the artistic practice of a broad and diverse range of artists, working with them on residency programmes and a series of exhibitions both in the region and the UK throughout the period 2012 to 2015/16.

EDGE
OF
ARABIA

CROSSWAY
FOUNDATION
creativity across borders

Edge of Arabia

Edge of Arabia is an internationally-renowned initiative developing an appreciation for contemporary Arab art and culture. Following its launch in London in 2008, this independent platform has produced landmark exhibitions in Riyadh, Berlin, Istanbul, Dubai, Jeddah, and twice at the Venice Biennale. Over 200,00 people have visited its exhibitions and over 10,000,000 have come into contact with Arab art through its publications, websites and a highly successful international PR campaign.

In 2012, Edge of Arabia created The Crossway Foundation, a London-based charity delivering education initiatives for young people in the Middle East, the UK, and internationally.



Royal College of Art

The Royal College of Art is the world's most influential postgraduate university of art and design. Specialising in teaching and research, the RCA offers the degrees of MA, MPhil and PhD across the disciplines of fine art, applied art, design, communications and humanities. There are over 1,200 masters and doctoral students and more than a hundred professionals interacting with them – including scholars and leading art and design practitioner, along with specialists, advisors and distinguished visitors.



Contemporary Art Platform

Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) is a non-profit organisation and cultural centre based in Kuwait, focusing on contemporary and new media art. CAP aims to increase the local and regional visual culture by providing art exhibitions. CAP also offers a diverse educational program, and provides the public with a growing art library.



National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters

The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) in Kuwait works to foster creativity and cross-cultural interaction. NCCAL's scope of work involves supporting artists, developing cultural infrastructure and maintaining cultural centres in different governorates across Kuwait, encouraging intellectual production, preserving heritage and tradition and promoting cultural tourism.



Mosaic Rooms

Mosaic Rooms, a leading independent arts space in west London, delivers a high quality, contemporary and progressive cultural programme from the Arab world and internationally. They are managed by the A.M. Qattan Foundation, a UK charity dedicated to the support of culture and education in Palestine and the Arab world. The Foundation's London office, headed by one of its trustees, Omar Al-Qattan, is responsible for the Mosaic Rooms' programme. The Rooms are part of the Foundation's Culture and Arts Programme.



National Bank of Kuwait

NBK was established in 1952 as the first local bank and the first shareholding company in Kuwait and the Gulf region. Over the years, NBK has remained the leading financial institution in Kuwait and has successfully extended its well-established franchise throughout the Middle East. NBK currently operates through a large international network covering the world's leading financial and business centres across 16 countries. NBK has long been recognised for its excellent and stable management team and its clear and focused strategy. NBK's strength rests on its consistent profitability, high asset quality, and strong capitalisation. NBK offers a full spectrum of innovative and unrivalled financial and investment services and solutions for individuals, corporate and institutional clients. NBK currently enjoys a dominant market share with a large and ever-expanding local and regional client base.

Out of Kuwait

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