

Issue 019

ithra  
by aramco



# Ithraeyat Magazine

# REFIK ANADOL

November | December  
2022



Artist Refik Anadol





Welcome to **Ithraeyat**, a bimonthly cultural magazine produced by The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra). Created to inspire hearts and enrich minds, this Saudi inspired platform with an expansive international outlook captures the art scene and the **culture of art** by bringing together a mosaic of stories collected from across the Kingdom, the region and beyond.

### **Behind the scenes:**

Ithraeyat is the plural of Ithra (enrichment).

Magazine has its origins in the Arabic word makhzan, a storehouse. And therefore, Ithraeyat Magazine is a storehouse of unique, enriching stories.

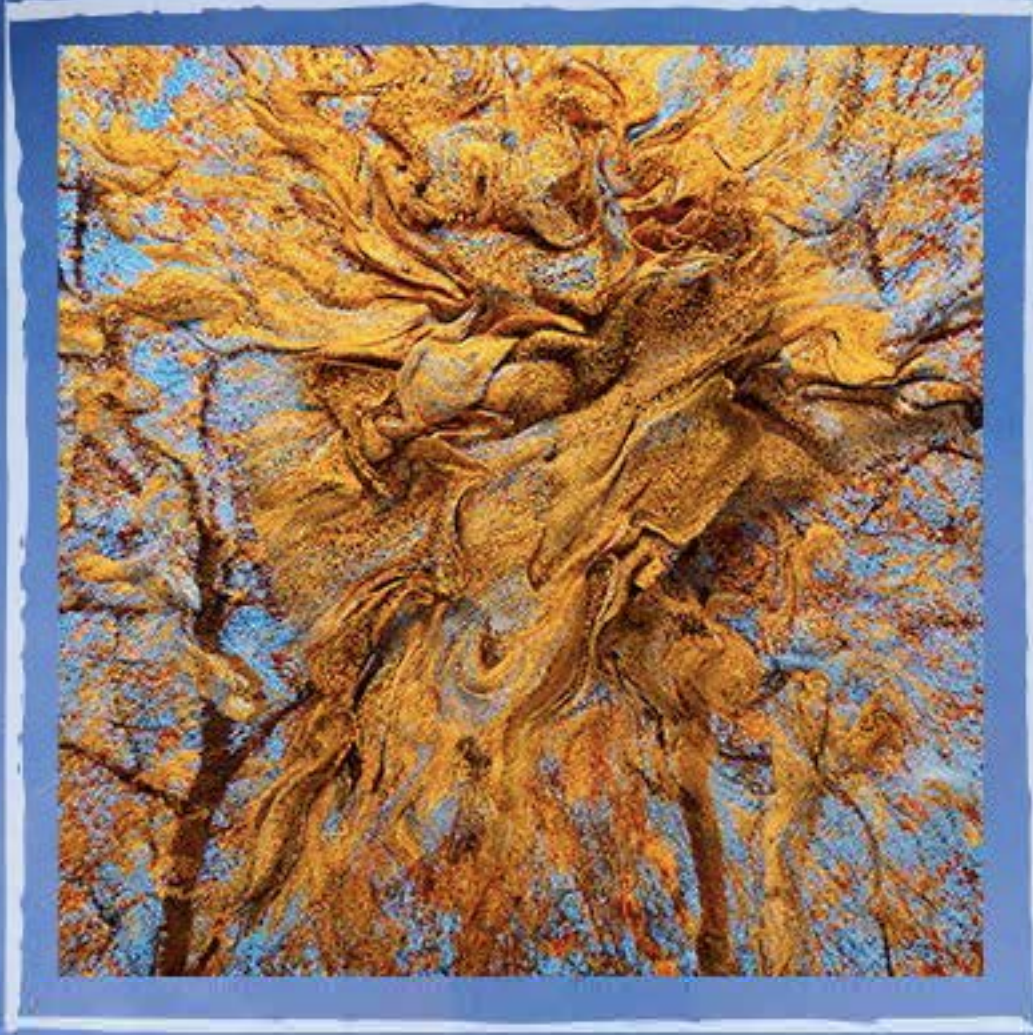




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Artwork by Refik Anadol.

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## The Art of Re-set

By Rym Al-Ghazal

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

— The legendary artist Pablo Picasso (1881 – 1973)



As 2022 comes to an end, we reflect over the year and its ups and downs, and welcome the new year 2023 and what possibilities and opportunities it may bring.



In its 19th edition, Ithraeyat celebrates this moment of reflection through its theme of **‘re-set,’** giving us all a moment to reboot, readjust and rest as we begin new chapters.

The power of art to give us joy, reduce our anxiety, and tackle burnout and trauma is explored in this edition via interviews with art therapists, and artists who gift us art that embraces and restores our sense of self and wellbeing.

There is something for everyone in this special edition. From the beautifully immersive and dream-like cover art by the renowned artist **Refik Anadol**, to the insights of **Dalya Mousa**, Director of Arts at Diriyah Gate Development Authority, as well as the art of giving back and ‘hope’ by dynamic artist **Joel Bergner**. For those thinking of trying their hands at gardening, enjoy reading the interview of the gentle ‘art of gardening’ by avid garden educator **Alzainah Al-Babtain**. Meanwhile those needing a bit of quiet can revel in the creation of ‘silent rooms’ that multidisciplinary artist **Nathalie Harb** is trying to introduce in cities. Then there is the power of light from **Noor Riyadh** as captured in the column by curator **Gaida Al-Mogren**.

How art has helped through difficult times can be explored in the writings of artist **Dr. Haya Al-Hossain**; through the delicate philosophical art revolving around birds, migration and the journeys within by cross-disciplinary artist **Doa Bugis**; and in how we can all find joy in the mundane as shown by artist **Hoda Zohrob**.

We travel to wonderful Abha in the ‘Our Cities, Our Stories’ section with artist **Hatem Al-Ahmad**, then to Jordan with our latest partner **Wadi Finan Art Gallery** to meet Syrian artist **Besher Koushaji** and explore his nostalgic art of flowers and memories. We also understand the healing power of art by meeting two art therapists, **Dr. Abdulaziz Al-Duqail** and **Alaa Naeem**.

We enjoy a moment of pause as we appreciate the depth of the latest art collection shared by our esteemed partner **Barjeel Art Foundation**. We also gift our wonderful readers **online resources** that we hope will bring a bit of joy and rest into their lives, where a simple act like **deep breathing** can actually make a difference.





But let us not forget the **art of music**, and its power to inspire, to re-set and to heal.

With the legendary composer and musician Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750), an ancestor through my mother, classical music pieces like ‘Air’ have always been one of our anchors that helped us find our center and readjust our compasses. Extensive research has shown that music does have the power to heal, and Middle Eastern composers and philosophers played a crucial role in the development of music as a modern therapeutic tool.

The ‘Hijaz Maqam’ for instance — a specific oriental musical scale — has a greater range of microtones than the western scale and therefore helps to give the music a greater evocative power. Al-Kindi — known as the father of Arab philosophy — was the first great theoretician of music in the Arab-Islamic world, and is said to have coined the term “musiqi,” while another, Al-Farabi (known in the West as Alpharabius) wrote five books on music – one of which is Kitabu al Musiqi al Kabir (the Great Book of Music).

Therefore, I leave you with Al-Farabi’s words: **“Sounds, in the diversity of their tones, cause in the person that listens to them such shades of feelings or passions, raising to him, controlling to him or tranquilizing to him.”**

So please take a moment for yourself to read, to see the art, and to listen to music that you like as you go about your day.

The Ithraeyat team and family wish you and all your loved ones a **Happy New Year**.





A MOMENT OF  
REFLECTION



Artwork by Rifek Anadol.





'Salsa Can,' by Legendary artist Dia Aziz Dia.

# Spotlight

## The Joy of Our Artists

Itthraeyat has been fortunate to feature amazing artists and creatives from the Middle East, and here we share which artworks give them joy. We hope it gives you joy as well to discover them with us.

**DIA AZIZ DIA**

LEGENDARY ARTIST



"I love this painting, it is from my memory, it captures the innocence of the time, the simplicity of the play, that makes me smile each time I look at this artwork. The tomato sauce inside the can was used in cooking. The boys in the area would take the empty salsa can and play with it like a football. While playing, the boys are so happy. I wanted to capture this pure happiness with a clear sky around them. This is how we used to be so happy, just playing in the street, with a simple empty salsa can. This art captures my own joy and the joy of simpler times..."



# ABDULLAH AL-SHALTY

THE RENOWNED ARTIST



"Allah Almighty has created man, and endowed him with reason and thinking, each with his own structure and constituents, and because art is a taste and feeling, and a measure of the civilization of peoples, and because our beloved country has the purest spot on the face of the earth, it contains the Sacred Mosque and the Holy Kaaba, the qiblah of all Muslims, and it contains the mosque of our Prophet and our beloved Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family and companions. My feeling was established through research and experimentation of a fine art style, the aim of which was to send a message to the world about this pure spot that I love because I am a Muslim, and all Muslims love it from the farthest corners of the earth, in an impressionistic inductive style without details, and with the touches of a drawing knife. In short, the large crowds of pilgrims around the Kaaba, with spirituality and a white-dominated color rhythm, linking the heavens and the earth, such as showers of rain and hail, and a deep sense of what the event means, far from spectacle."



'Tawaf around the Kaaba,' by Abdullah Al-Shalty.





'Empowering Saudi Women,' acrylic on canvas, 2021, by Tagreed Al-Bagshi.

TAGREED  
AL-BAGSHI



"As a Saudi artist, I have experienced multiple stages of changes and events, I was interested in the historical documentation of these stages in my artistic achievement. In this painting, I documented the "Empowering Saudi Women", to express the "New Saudi Arabia" under the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman; and to express Saudi women who honored her country with a strong presence and recognized in all forums, she proved that she deserved the Medal of Pride, Honor and Elevation, as she was the creator of generations and the teacher of the values from which we learn."





'Open window,' original new art debuting in Ithraeyat by Ola Hejazi.

## OLA HEJAZI

ARTIST AND ART TEACHER

"Windows are a consistent theme I revisit in my art. And I decided with the new year, I want to open my window to hope, to love and to positivity. In our childhood, we used to have open windows, ones that were open to our neighbors and to life outside. Now they remain closed, we only open them to clean out the dust. So I want to encourage us to remain open, and to welcome whatever life brings. In this artwork, you see my sweet bird Tutta, who has been there for me in the toughest of times, and whom I love dearly. I also feature our wonderful coffee and symbols of a love story in the figurines you see there on the cup. There is something in every corner of this piece, little surprises, in the same way we should welcome good and new surprises with an open window that welcomes a new year."



# SHARIFAH AL-HINAI

FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE KHALEEJI ART MUSEUM,  
AND FOUNDING COO OF SEKKA.

"In Anwar Sonya's Al Rustaq, two men are depicted walking between the trees of the Omani wilayah that the painting is named after. The work is part of a series of watercolor paintings that the pioneering artist created in 2022, and that were inspired by his memories in various areas of his native Oman, including Al Rustaq, which is known for its heavenly topography and which Sonya brilliantly captures here.

I had the privilege of viewing a number of works from Sonya's series in March, in his presence, and between tens of incredible paintings, this stood out to me the most. My late grandfather and great-grandfather both served as governors of Al Rustaq at different points in history. Whenever I see the work, which now rests in my home, I am reminded of them, their outstanding character, and my heart is filled with warmth."

'Al Rustaq,' by the artist Anwar Sonya.







'Al Mahaffa', by the artist Fatimah Al-Nemer.



## FATIMAH AL-NEMER

"The fan, or "Al Mahaffa" has been associated with man's relationship with nature throughout the ages, which explains his adaptation to it according to time and place, as he likens it to accelerating events. This work symbolizes adaptation to our current era, and how we can coexist with the fears that we have, which I now embody in a symbolic expression within this painting.

This work gives me the strength and determination to face the changes, because despite the changes taking place and the speed of this era, and our attempt to keep up with it; there remains a need for the artist to know the value of his artwork. Because art is a sensory experience, only 10% of people succeed in expressing this feeling by embodying it in an image, artwork, or idea to become like a beacon that illuminates this artist's feeling."



## ZEINAB AL-MAHOOZI



"This artwork brings joy to my heart, because the woman in the painting wears a type of veil that is famous in Qatif, decorated with red on its edges, and it is known as (the robe) or (Al Rida) in the Qatif dialect. This work of art reminds me of the grandmothers and grandfathers in the past among the alleys and lanes of the city of Qatif, and this robe is considered rare in our time. Therefore, I am very happy when I see an old woman wearing this dress, because I know that one day this traditional dress will disappear. In this artwork, the woman also carries a dish of luqaimat, and this food is usually associated with the month of Ramadan and its joy and blessings, as neighbors and relatives share this dish among them."



'Our neighbor Um Hussein,' by the artist Zeinab Al-Mahoozi.





'Dimensions,' by artist Husain Al-Hashmi.



## HUSAIN AL-HASHMI

1383 STUDIO FOUNDER &  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY SPATIAL ARTIST

"My art gives me peace and joy because I make art that I consider a celebration of identity, culture, peace, and soulful beauty inside out. The whole creative process brings me joy and inner peace, from the early stages of inspiration all the way to unfolding the hidden gems through my art. As a multidisciplinary artist who is raised by thoughtful and considerate artists, I never take the realm of arts for granted and continuously appreciate having a creative voice that evolves what could be rather than what is through an intricate reflection of meaning and high sophistication in message delivery. I have a passion for art that speaks through silence, art that speaks to minds, hearts, and souls despite your own language, culture, and roots. Art that is rooted, multilayered, and contemporary all at once, art that embraces the roots of the past through the stem of the present for the fruits of the future."



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## Special thanks for contributing artists & art:



sekka.

WADI  
FINAN  
ART GALLERY

متحف الفن الخليجي  
KHALEEJI ART MUSEUM



# About Ithra

The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) is one of Saudi Arabia's most influential cultural destinations, a destination for the curious, the creatives, the seekers of knowledge, and more.

Through a compelling series of programs, performances, exhibitions, original content, events and initiatives, Ithra creates world-class experiences across its interactive public spaces that bring together culture, innovation and knowledge that are designed to appeal to everyone. Connecting creatives, challenging perspectives and transforming ideas, Ithra is graduating its own leaders in the cultural field.

Ithra is Saudi Aramco's flagship CSR initiative and the largest cultural contribution to the Kingdom. Ithra's components include the Idea Lab, Library, Cinema, Theater, Museum, Energy Exhibit, Great Hall, Children's Museum and Ithra Tower. For more information, please visit:  
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