



AMAR DAWOD

# INSINUATIONS

November 2019

The logo for Karim gallery, featuring the word "karim" in a bold, lowercase, orange sans-serif font, with the word "gallery" in a smaller, lowercase, orange sans-serif font directly below it. A thin vertical orange line is positioned to the left of the text.

## karim gallery

The art **Karim gallery** support is a reflection of the approach, style and discernment of art it represents and promotes... a formidable host of distinguished artists, joined by their creative accomplishments yet varied in style and art form.

### Represented artists

*in alphabetical order*

Dia Azzawi  
Naji Chalhoub  
Amar Dawod  
Bahram Hajou  
Hanaa Malallah  
Walid El-Masri  
Mahmoud Al-Obaidi  
Samer Tabbaa  
Khaled Takreti  
Nadia Safieddine  
Nazar Yahya  
Hani Zurob

In this current exhibit of mine as was the case in my Doha I am presenting illustrations of a new experiment linked to my past experimentations. While this new experimentation does not cancel the previous ones, rather it builds on them. What distinguishes this body of work is a desire to intentionally diversify the approach to my creative discourse through images that emanate from various sources that borrow from old images...images recollecting the little girl of the well-known "Alice in Wonderland" story; or the old papier-mâché puppets from my early childhood, as well as various structures of decorative, vegetational, geometrical references, and other metaphors. I combined these images in an "eclectic" form, using structures that are referenced to actual, imagined and in cases altered images, while destroying the physical laws of nature and dimensions of place, or their factual ratios. At times, I deliberately constructed a visual context crowded with multiple expressions in an attempt to be vocal rather than whisper as was the case in previous works.

In this exhibit, I depart from my former minimalistic style in the use of expressions, to the extent this text requires me to do so, and, in a way it serves the artwork to be experienced, as I had earlier explained when I wrote:

"To celebrate one over powering scene is no longer a necessary requirement, on the contrary, the scenes clutter in the same picture and overlap but without totally cancelling one another. Such accumulation and crowding will entrust the eye with the task to perform an archaeological canvassing to carry out an in-depth prospection rather than the negative reception, and where it engages into the interpretation of the elements and vocabulary as opposed to maintaining a neutral stand to them. In other words, a visual recognition that follows the intuition and not the sense of certitude."

The images of this exhibit provoke the imagination of the receiver and rely on their abilities of interpretation for they are not restricted to their forms; they pull behind them a long list of possible meanings. For, after every reading attempt, they become renewable images in their interpretation.

The effectiveness of the expressions in these images lies in the ambiguity and mystery of the content and the absence of a singular purpose to them. While single images hold a specific insinuation, the ambiguity of the scene and elements together, free them of their restriction.

It is not I, the person who created them, who will necessarily reveal their significance. I felt that I should stand behind the scene, leaving the recipients to deal with their confusion when they cannot reach a meaning to them, or, to relish their delight when reaching a pleasing interpretation.

Image makers and text authors die to leave a space of interpretation that expands unabated.

Amar Dawod  
Sweden 2018

أزعمُ أنني في معرضي هذا والذي سبقه في الدوحة، قد قدمتُ عيناتٍ من تجربةٍ جديدةٍ إذا ما قارناها بتجاريبي السابقة، إلا أنها لا تلغي ما سبقها، بل تضيفُ له. غير أن ما يميزها الآن، هو الرغبة في البث المعتمد على تنوع طرائقه، فهي صورٌ حاويةٌ على مفردات تنتمي لمصادرٍ شتى. مفردات مستعارة من صور قديمة، مثل استعارة صورة الفتاة الصغيرة آليس في القصة المعروفة، ( آليس في بلاد العجائب ). أو صور العرائس الورقية القديمة التي عرفتها في سن طفولتي المبكرة إضافة إلى بنيات ذات مرجعيات زخرفية، نباتية أو هندسية ، واستعارات أخرى، جاءت بصيغة تجميعية ( الكلاسيكية ) واستخدام صور واقعية المرجع مع أخرى متخيلة أو محورة، ثم هدم القوانين الفيزيائية فيما يخص طبيعة المكان وأبعاده أو نسبه الواقعية، وتعمدت أحياناً، أن أشيد نصاباً بصرياً مزدحماً بالمفردات، في مسعى الشطط في البوح وليس الهمس كما درجت عليه أعمال سابقة لي.

لقد خرجت في هذا المعرض عن صيغ الاختزال والزهد في المفردات، للحد الذي يتطلب مني في هذا النص العودة إلى سبيل التلقي، الذي كتبت عنه وشرحته ذات مرة، حيث قلت: فالاحتفاء بطغيان المشهد الأوحى لم يعد أمراً ضرورياً على الدوام، بل على العكس، سوف تتدافع المشاهد المتزاحمة على الظهور في الصورة عينها، وهي تغطي بعضها بعضاً جزئياً دون أن تلغى بعضها كلياً، سوف يؤدي هذا التراكم والتزاحم إلى قيام العين بمهمة ( إبطار أركولوجي ) يقوم بعمليات من قبيل: التنقيب وليس التلقي السليبي تأويل المفردات وليس تأملها الحيادي فحسب. الإبطار المعتمد على الحدس وليس الإبطار اليقيني.

صور هذا المعرض تستفز مخيلة المتلقي، وملكة التأويل لديه، ليست هي بالمباحث الشكلية الصافية فحسب، بل تجر خلفها طواوير من إمكانات التفسير. فهي صور، قابلة للتجدد من جهة التأويل، بعد كل مشروع قراءة .

تكمن فعالية تعبير هذه الصور في غموض ولغزية محتواها وانتفاء أحادية الغرض فيه، فمفردات هذه الصور بحد ذاتها غير قادرة على التخلص من الإيماء إلى معنى ما. ولكن بفضل عناصر الغموض واللغزية المقصودة، تتخلص الصورة من وزر دلالتها المحددة نحو الدلالات المفتوحة، التي تشكل سمة رئيسية فيها، وهو النهج الذي يسمح بقراءتها بحرية و بسبل شتى. ليس شخص الصانع الذي هو أنا ضرورياً في كشف مغازيها، فقد ارتأيت أن أتوارى خلف أستارها، تاركاً المتلقي في حيرته إذا ما لم يتم له استبيان معانيها حيناً أو في غبطته أن اختار لها تأويلاً يرضيه. يموت صناع الصور كما يموت مؤلفو النصوص ليتركوا فضاءً من التأويل يتوسع وينداح بلا هوادة.

عمار داود  
السويد 2018

Striving towards universalization is typical theme of Amar Dawod's art. This doesn't mean conventional cosmopolitanism. Dawod doesn't submit to the naivety of local folklore. He is aware of the fact that underneath the layer of dust and rocks there are values unbelievably pure.

He references these cultural traditions, which, due to their universal properties, have crossed borders both geographical and cultural. The secret world of ancient Egypt, Sumerian sculptures, and beyond that the fascination with informal art and surrealism are the cornerstones of the formation of Dawod's art.

The creation of a universal language, not blocked by the tradition of one Nation, has become the basic message... While observing the works of Amar Dawod, we are not only reminded of the creativity of Kafka, but also the whole world of suggestion, which has brought with it: illusion, symbols, metamorphosis, the feeling not existing, restraint, unease and alienation.

The world of this art is hard to comprehend: we receive it through its atmosphere.

*Ryszard Hunger (Richard Hunger), 1984  
Polish professor, Academy of fine Arts, Poland.*

## ON THE ART OF PAINTING

**‘If one day I decide to abandon painting, nobody will feel its impact; neither will society recognise the need for my work.’**

That is what the great Danish artist Per Kirkeby said in reference to the art of painting. Here, I cannot but declare my full support for his position. We still have illusions, embedded in our imagination about art. Many commentators portray it as a very egoistic need—aiming to satisfy the painter and not necessarily an audience. In fact it is possible for painting to not even have an audience, even though, at its height, it proactively engaged in the making of a civilisation, in the sense that it persists outside of the paths of history and its intentions. There are those who think of art as equivalent to ‘breathing air.’ Their dogmatic fantasies lead them to the perception that art is capable of changing history and raising societies. I would say that indeed it can, but only for the seeker who wholeheartedly embraces it, assimilates its hidden secrets and claims the keys to unlock its inner world. The endeavour alone does not however guarantee the success of the quest. To further the analogy, some of the discovered keys could be ineffective; the unveiled secrets could be inconsistent with the core essence of painting and its accomplishments. Painting can be a unique and different translation of the world. Its function is not simply to turn perplexing and intriguing concepts into more graspable thoughts. From that which is ‘incomprehensible’ it is able to create a new visually tangible entity capable of numerous facets. It can be joyful or nightmarish, comforting or painful, hateful or pacifying, bewildering or nauseated, vague or obscure. And all this whilst never

manifesting itself as a comprehensible entity.

Those with an inflexible view of an ideal world – a utopia - may find the artist’s depiction of a magical world difficult to accept. The artistic depiction often extends beyond the boundaries of political and ideological walls, outside the limits and confines of accepted norms, traditions and the commonplace. Its subject may not pertain to our visible actions but rather it attempts to focus on and unravel areas and ideas which may be puzzling, or even apparently absurd or meaningless. Understanding the course of painting can be compared to the anticipation and thrill of climbing a staircase, winding endlessly into the unknown. The one who climbs the ladder will experience an uncanny feeling of fear and delight which is a result of the risk that the adventure of climbing the composition carries with it.

What I tell you now is no secret. My art, my painting, has in a way spared me the pain which I associate with human existence. It is in a way like my own space in which I breathe the air from my virtual and different life. Does it mean that I hate this world? If so, it is because humanity has organised the world in a devastating way. People are preoccupied with satisfying their worries and needs, tirelessly continuing to pursue them, even if this results in the murder of others and the desolation of all the flowers and trees in the world. What kind of darkness do we live in? How many stars have we extinguished? Painting, as a

reaction to all this, is a kind of liberation and thrilling road, even if that road is sometimes bumpy.

Pleasure, in its physical and spiritual form, is among humanity's central goals; the problem however lies in how to attain it! I tell you, there is a great deal of pleasure in painting, because it strives for man's ultimate dream: the unity of the world's phenomena, a unity structured on doing away with all the existing dichotomies.

'He who arrives at the object of his vision is no longer concerned with the vision' (The Book of Tawaseen, Al Hallaj)

I do not rule out using intuition to tackle the essence of painting. It gives me the ability to return to my being, myself in an original and more innovative state. Freeing myself from the rules of authoritarianism, I am able to investigate the elements which construct a painting. Accordingly, this self-awareness leads me to neutralise the mind, to alleviate my perception of things, above and beyond the ordinary, as I face human destiny in all its manifestations, and reach out for the beauty within its continued and lingering decline. The pursuit of this beauty is now my means of achieving satisfaction. I am not a scientist examining the world in parts, rather I see the entire world transforming as I observe it. My own test of it brings me closer to myself, my fears, anxieties and feelings of uselessness, and leads me to my imagination as

it aims to dominate the process of capturing and constructing my world of art. I believe that the imagination is free of the restrictions of space and time, and beyond the control of norms and rules. As I visualise how objects unfold and materialise, I am led to a new and different rendering of the commonplace, the ordinary. I do not capitulate to the assistance given by my mind in depicting the image it composes until it serves my intention of composing my restless thoughts, tirelessly manoeuvring between different formations.

Apollinaire said: 'When man wanted to imitate walking he created the wheel, which does not resemble a leg..'

Painting is no different from entering a labyrinth. I can start from whatever point of departure I want: from the circular shape of a ball, a line, an area, or even from a period.

Initiating the starting point is an easy task, representing a sort of introduction. The real difficulty, in laying out the drawing, depends on the success of that introductory step which aims to capture the essence of the painting, striving to reach the goal of the original undertaking. It is not sufficient to know how to begin, but to understand how to get to the ultimate destination. In other words, you have to discover the picture prior to drawing it. For me, the aesthetics of a painting lie in the vagueness and recklessness of the content and the absence of a Uni-dimensional purpose. In themselves, shapes are

incapable of avoiding one particular meaning. Elements that save a painting from the burden of characterisation are ambiguity and recklessness, or a certain lack of caution, and courage. Such elements are a necessary feature in a painting. For me, a painting is not dissimilar to a written text which has been eroded and destroyed so that though it is hardly legible but can still be understood through intuition. In this way, it reinvents itself through different interpretations, after each new reading. The more ways a painting is 'read', the more effective and powerful it becomes.

Celebrating the dominance of a singular scene is not always a necessary approach. On the contrary, my aim is for many different scenes to swarm the canvas' surface, scrambling around to claim their presence without completely cancelling each other out. Using 'visual excavation,' this multi-layered scene allows the eye to proactively:

**drill rather than passively react,  
retrieve rather than confront,  
observe intuitively instead of factually.**

And then, what part of me would appear in my painting? Is it my own self with its joy, pain and anxiety, my thoughts? Or perhaps;

**The universe,  
death,  
The spirit,  
war.**

Or that which my hand – hesitant, unsettling, harsh and charitable – has performed?

What appears of me on the canvas is like the sound reverberating against the walls of a valley or a thunderbolt illuminating a forest's darkness for a fleeting moment.

I should have turned into a massive centre of gravity, just like a spider dreaming of turning its cobweb into a net for everything. I too would like my inner web to lure all things in, not in order to walk on life's outer surface with a confident pace, but with the restrained steps of uncertainty. Perhaps my paintings might breathe to create their own worlds encompassing diverse objects: the air in the earth's cracks, paper clippings, spilt mud or even things prone to forever disintegrate. I would happily have tended to millions of imaginary birds, which alone among all other things are aimlessly lost in our existence, are equipped to generate the thunders of astonishment from the world's other shore. The effect of the

astonishment is in the unravelling of the true face of life from beneath the heavy dust of the ambiguities hiding underneath that same face. What invites me to the eternal fellowship with the imagination is nothing, that persistently penetrating feeling against the injustice of the ways objects are being projected; what exists out there is only a pale reflection of the true potential inherent in the objects of observation. What we customarily call 'life' is merely a handful of posts for decoding the symbolism of a more welcoming world, posts left out at the sidewalk of our daily lives.

In order to step into this all-embracing world, before all else, humanity must colonise the 'self,' occupy and settle it, to find the soul's untapped wealth as we search for the sanctuary of hope. We would have then a protection and a greater energy to change the existing order of things. New ideas would spur us to the path of boundless freedom—a freedom, which I am able to achieve through my painting and which places me in a difficult and necessary confrontation with both myself and the world.

When I begin the act of creation, millions of imaginary birds haunt me, waiting in the distant horizon. I wait too, in the expectation of a single glimpse; they appear and then fly off again. Where I to gaze at them for hours on end, I would simply drop my tools and do nothing at all, for imagination is a commitment to achieve perfection. And if it was possible to capture this perfection with ease,

the very act of creativity would extinguish forever.

Creativity derives its being from the suspense of the unpredictable, from unanticipated distractions. If I had sought after a specific artistic aesthetic, it would not have survived. The aesthetic expression is not what we create, though we are engaged in generating it. My friend, let the imaginary birds set in on your wasteland; but do not classify them. In the beginning, there never is a classification; there is no particular point where the creative experience ends. If I were an author, I would hang up, next to my works, many commentaries to explain what my works could or could not accomplish. This is because I dream of figures with strikingly unfamiliar heads, feeble and velvet hands. But, this is not always achievable. Many are the wonders that are planted in the fields of the soul but they are not always easy to harvest.

I ask you, my friend, to contemplate this predicament. In the heart of every artist the desire for a work that he or she has failed to conjure up. If this was realised, the act of painting would die; for every single creator is a hunter, returning back to us with magical tales and wholesale lies, after miles of a long and difficult journey. For these tales and lies are far better than observing the heart that ceased in the corpse of a dead animal. Creativity is pure imagination and it can never be the complete realisation of what is imagined. Creativity is a long journey. There is no destination to head to.

Amar Dawod, Sweden  
September 2010



AMAR DAWOD

The Day of Birth, 2019  
Oil on Canvas  
157 x 200 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Repercussions, 2019  
Acrylic on Canvas  
157 X 200 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Horse's Room, 2019  
Acrylic on Canvas  
157 x 200 cm



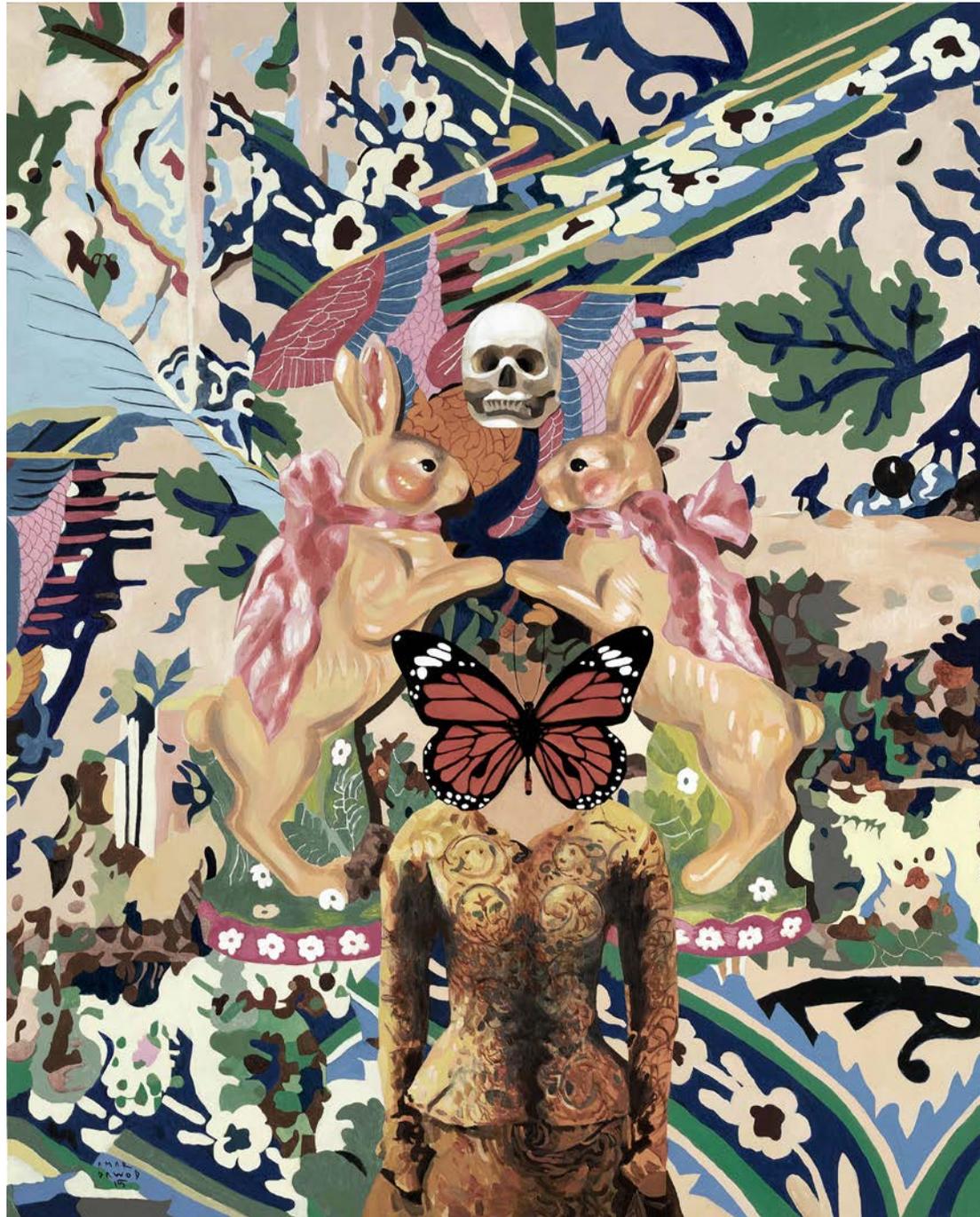
AMAR DAWOD

Giotto's Room, 2018  
Acrylic on Canvas  
200 x 160 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Dream, 2016  
Acrylic on Canvas  
130 X 162 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Rituals of Life, 2015  
Acrylic on Canvas  
162 x 130 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Transformations, 2015  
Acrylic on Canvas  
162 x 130 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Alchemy II, 2012  
Acrylic on Canvas  
65 x 78 cm



AMAR DAWOD

Angel, 2010  
Acrylic on Canvas  
77 x 64 cm

**Amar Dawod** is an influential artist of the generally known as the "80's generation" in Iraq. His seven years in Poland and life in Sweden, for the past thirty two years, have shaped his person and artwork into the Eclecticism style. Dawod draws from the different cultures and philosophies that he was exposed to and which he relished to fully absorb. One is compelled to know that fact as one experiences his work. While he is a master of printmaking and sculpture, he regards painting to be the pages where he records and impregnates it with his philosophy. Born in Baghdad, Iraq 1957 Dawod obtained his Diploma from the Institute of Fine arts in Baghdad, Iraq (1979) he later completed his Masters of Fine arts, Graphic, at the Art Academy in Lodz, Poland (1986). And finally he studied Animation at the Animation House, Eksjö, Sweden (1991).

His works have been exhibited in several solo exhibitions in many cities in Poland and Sweden; in New York, Texas and Colorado-United States of America, Paris - France, Dubai - United Arab Emirates, Amman - Jordan and Beirut - Lebanon. Furthermore he participated in the International Biennial, Petit format de Papier, Musée du Petit Format, Couvin-Belgium; Graphics Triennials, Krakow - Poland; Graphics Triennial, Fredrikstad - Norway; International Graphics Triennial, Intergrafik 90, Berlin - Germany; Primo Internazionale Biella, Per Lincione - Italy; Biennial of Graphic Art, Ljubljana - Slovenia

Dawod received several awards; the Award of Mention Honorifique, Krakow, Poland (1984) and (1986) and the Graphics Triennial Award, Fredrikstad, Norway (1989) . He also received a grant from the Institute Arab Du Monde that allowed him to reside in Paris at the Cité Internationale des Arts. Also he was awarded the Grant from Swedish Art Grants Committee, Sweden (2010, 2011, 2012).

His work is found in several private and public collections internationally including in the; The British Museum- United Kingdom, Gewerbe Museum- Switzerland , Musée du petit format- Belgium, The National Museum Baghdad- Iraq, Jordan National Museum Jordan, Darat al Funun Collection- Jordan , Barjeel art foundation- UAE, Ramzi Dalloul art Collection-Lebanon, Kinda Collection- Saudi Arabia

The artist currently lives and works in Sweden.



# karim gallery

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