

Canvas

ART AND CULTURE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARAB WORLD

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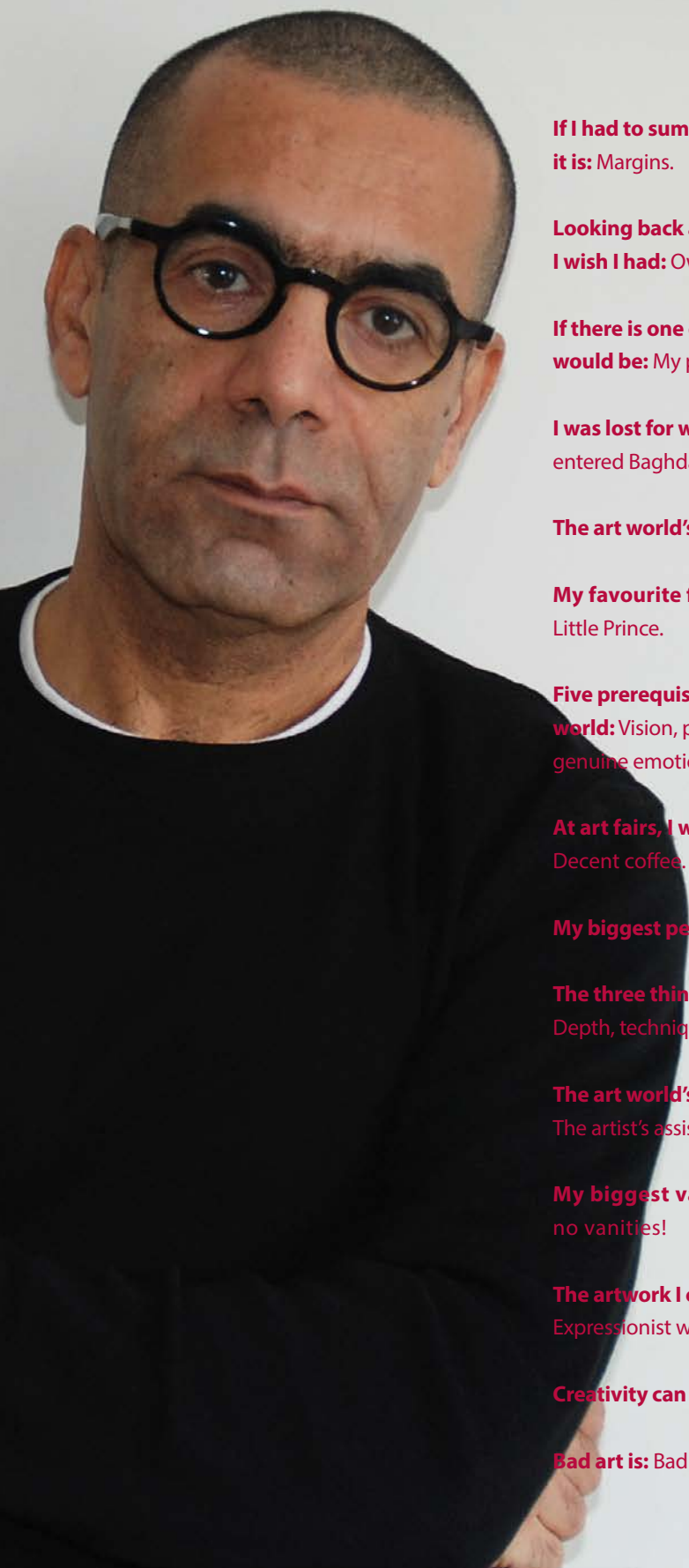
SPECIAL ISSUE **TURBULENT WATERS** THE 56TH VENICE BIENNALE



THE LAST WORD

SADIK KWAISH ALFRAJI

The Iraqi multimedia artist on the perils of ignorance, a potential future role for Dustin Hoffman and the joys of good coffee, woodcuts and Fairuz.



If I had to summarise art in one word, I'd say it is: Margins.

Looking back at my career in the art world, I wish I had: Owned an etching press.

If there is one era I would go back to, it would be: My primary school.

I was lost for words when: American soldiers entered Baghdad.

The art world's biggest crime is: Easy art.

My favourite fictional character: The Little Prince.

Five prerequisites for survival in the art world: Vision, patience, skill, practice and genuine emotions.

At art fairs, I wish they would serve: Decent coffee.

My biggest pet peeve: Cheating.

The three things I look for in an artwork: Depth, technique and the ability to move you.

The art world's greatest unsung heroes are: The artist's assistants.

My biggest vanity: Believing that I have no vanities!

The artwork I can stare at for hours: Expressionist woodcuts.

Creativity can be crushed by: Ignorance.

Bad art is: Bad art.

If I were stranded on an island that had abundant food, shelter and electronics, the three things I would take with me are: Books, paper and pencils.

The song I can listen to over and over again: Most of Fairuz's songs.

I just don't understand: Myself.

The artwork that best describes me is: *Godot To Come Yesterday*.

For inspiration, I go to: Cafés.

In the art world, it's never too late to: Make art.

If I weren't doing what I do, I would have been: A novelist.

I am happiest when: I finish an artwork.

Life would be meaningless without: Others.

My biggest vice: Being an artist. Or so my wife says!

The most overused art term: Conceptual art.

The artist I'd want my portrait created by: Van Gogh.

I'd like people to remember my: Smile.

Without art, the world would be: Impossible.

The actor who would play me in a movie about my life: Dustin Hoffman.

I wish people wouldn't: Be so cruel.