

# sadiq alfraji interview

‘untitled’ 2013 indian ink, charcoal on rice, chinese and printed paper on canvas 180 x 180 cm. courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist

last week an exhibition of new work by iraqi artist [sadiq alfraji](#) opened at the [ayyam gallery](#) in london. ‘I do not feel that I am free’ will run until April 27 and features paintings, drawings and a video installation that explore death, displacement and expectations.

in this short interview, sadiq alfraji (SA) tells designboom (DB) more about his work:

**DB: it’s said that you are fascinated with the idea that humans are always waiting for something meaningless which never arrives’ – is there a significant example of this from your own life thus far?**

**SA:** one great example is our daily life. we start the day with a certain expectation of the day to come in mind, and we end the day with a repeated routine – we lie in bed, close our eyes and think about what will come tomorrow before drifting off to sleep.... we are in a constant state of waiting and expectation, it’s a part of being human. and I think this continuous process of expectation allows us the space to generate and develop new ideas, beliefs and hypotheses.

**DB: how have your thoughts on death and representing it through your art evolved?**

**SA:** I see them becoming clearer and sharper which has been reflected on the work itself, with a greater degree of simplicity in the colours and graphics.

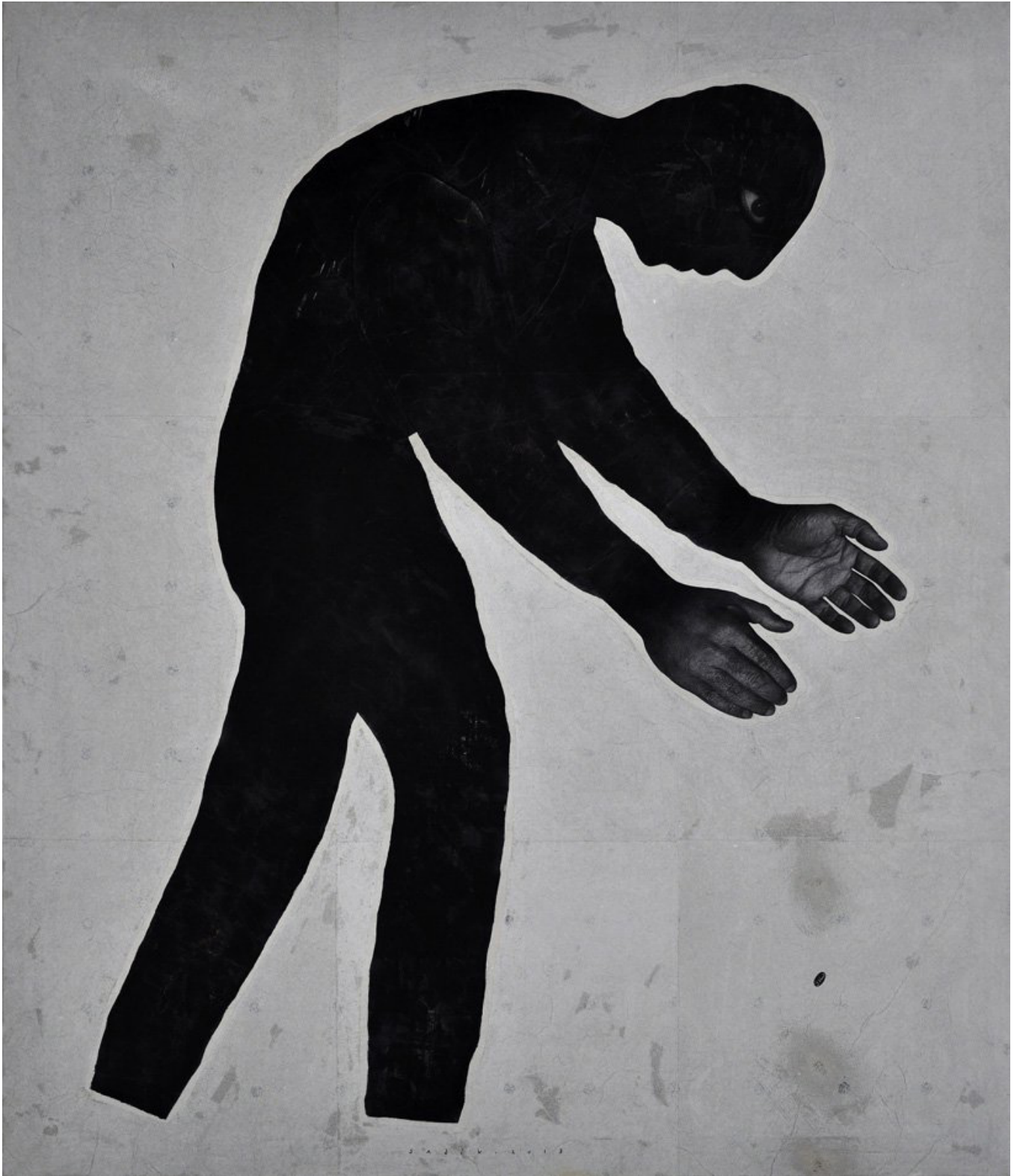
**DB: are you more comfortable working with moving or static images?**

**SA:** each provides a great medium for my art and delivers a different sort of pleasure in its working process and defining characteristics.

both moving and static images have an effect on one another and some of my latest painted works seem almost like moving images, or perhaps images on the verge of moving...I don't think that I can or would want to choose one over the other, they're both very important to my practice.



'untitled' (triptych) 2013 indian ink, charcoal on rice, chinese and printed paper on canvas 140 x 420 cm. courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist



left panel from 'untitled' (triptych) 2013 indian ink, charcoal on rice, chinese and printed paper on canvas 140 x 420 cm. courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist



central panel from 'untitled' (triptych) 2013 indian ink, charcoal on rice, chinese and printed paper on canvas 140 x 420 cm. courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist



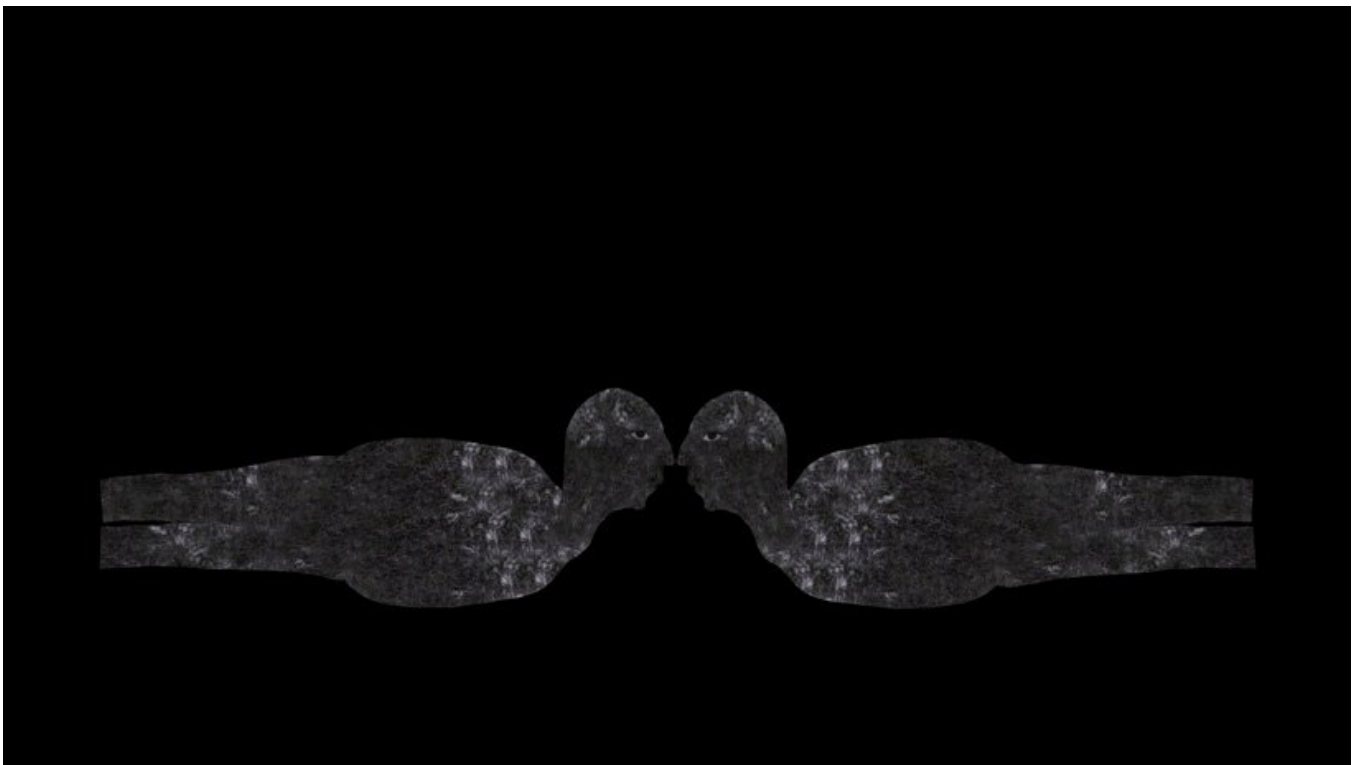
right panel from 'untitled' (triptych) 2013 indian ink, charcoal on rice, chinese and printed paper on canvas 140 x 420 cm. courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist

**DB: color is used sparingly in your work – how do you decide to use it or not?**SA: black, in its nature, is a colour which contains and

swallows all other colours. black's engulfing qualities makes it one of the best colours to work with as it is powerful and effective in expressing and forming ideas and concepts.

the colour can emphasise its subject and is malleable, lending itself to symbolic meaning, just like a shadow that can take on all possibilities of shapes of matter.

the piece of work in progress decides on the colours it uses. it is a very instinctual process. the concept I am working on is sometimes an influential factor too in what colours I use – often the concept summons the colour when it is needed.



'godot to come yesterday' 2013 video animation still courtesy of ayyam gallery and the artist

**DB: what attracted you to the story 'waiting for godot' and how have you reinterpreted it in your video?**SA: this new video work, godot to come yesterday, is an extenuation of my previous works titled after samuel beckett's absurdist play, a series of prints showing human

figures in various states of waiting. these lonely and even bored figures are now no longer frozen and are now able to move around the screen, but are still trapped within the video frame and the endless process of waiting.

this idea of futile waiting is something that I think is incredibly relevant to all of our lives – we are always waiting for something but it never quite arrives. it's the nature of our existence and this idea has long been a central concern of my work.

**DB: having spent your life in diverse environments how would you say your approach or way of thinking has changed? and how is it visible in your work?**SA: man's life is more like a melting pot, especially when it is exposed to a diversity of cultures, tongues and thought. I think that the way I see things and perceive them has become more mature and more comprehensive. that in turn can be seen in my work which has become more direct. the questions or ideas i present have also become more holistic as well as individualistic.

more information on the exhibition 'I do not feel that I am free' and the ayyam gallery can be found [here](#).