

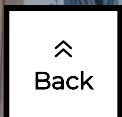
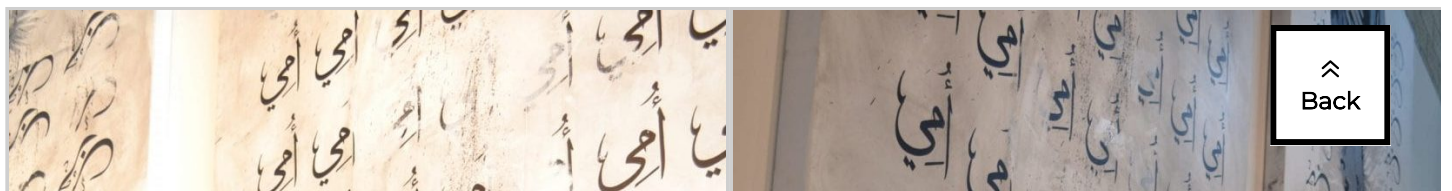


ART, DOHA NOTES - October 9, 2020

# PILLOW TALK BY AHMED ALBAHRANI

by [admin](#) 1 comment

The solo exhibition of Iraqi artist Ahmed Albahrani that has opened at the [Al Markhiya Gallery](#), located at the [Fire Station](#) is a work of deep insight and centers around an object from our daily life, a pillow that the artist uses to connect us to our state of tranquillity and consequently our vulnerability in this state. By [Sindhu Nair](#)





Iraqi artist Ahmed Albahrani cuts quite a figure as he stands stroking his long flowing distinct white beard. Not very well-versed in English, he uses his artforms to convey his angst. His artwork is direct, almost brutal in its impact, and close to a personal eruption of the inner conflict which is said to be the result of a forced exile from his home country.







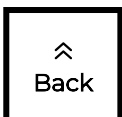
His art is an outcome of his beliefs; it is outspoken, and even intimidating to the viewer. For someone who was interested in the art of sculpture from an early age, Ahmed Albahrani continues with his passion and molds strong messages with his hands, turning malleable and some not so yielding materials into monuments and public art with compelling messages. His most famous recent work is *The Challenge*, 2015, a series of impressive bronze sculptures depicting larger than life hands reaching for the skies created to commemorate the 24<sup>th</sup> Men's Handball World Championship in Qatar, a work that was commissioned by Qatar Museums and sits quite prominently outside the Lusail Multipurpose Hall,





The Pillow exhibition is a strange intertwining of conflicting messages, expressed ever so beautifully as sculptures. A poignant one has a figure resembling the artist carrying a load of pillows on his back struggling to keep upright named Carrying Memories, a bittersweet experience, one would imagine by the stance and the expression of the man depicted. Another sculpture is a perfect rendition of a pillow with a pair of white wings carved on the pillow to perfection, another a ruffled pillow cover with two birds perched on its edges, named frivolously, “Rendezvous” all finished in typical Albahrani perfection.

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Some of the pillows tell the story of love and beauty, with a rose garden blooming out of one while other pillows narrate a story of destruction, war, and Albahrani's pet theme, exile.



Bullets on a pillow, a war-ravaged field depicted on the canvas which here is the pillow, a



Rim Albahrani explains about her father's wide-ranging work, "His work shows the interest in creating work that brings the attention to the political realities of the Arab diaspora as well as his own life experiences through the visual juxtaposition of opposites such as comfort and distress illustrated on each pillow."







This explains the rumples on the pillows, a clear indication of the distress of the occupier of that pillow. Symbolic of Albahrani’s work, each fold, every indentation on the pillow has a deeper meaning. Imagery, thoughts, and sounds from our dreams to the perspective of the pillow’s entity are all molded with perfection through AlBahrani’s hands.





The most striking ones at the Al Markhiya Gallery though is the large 500 x 200 cms panels, acrylic on canvas that takes over two walls of the Gallery, where the author depicts himself as the protagonist who goes through the motions of a dream or a nightmare, some in which he seems peaceful in his sleep on the pillow while some echo his tumultuous nightmares.



According to Rim, Albahrani is apt in challenging the use of bronze in sculpture as he takes us on a journey between dream and illusion, all crafted by this artist. Ahmed Albahrani, meanwhile stands guard over his dreams, silent yet as expressive as an artist can get with all his feelings poured out as his works of art.

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**Sreekumar Padmanabhan** October 9, 2020

Wonderful coverage, and as described ,the artworks truly express the artists own mindset , being exiled from his own country ❤️👍🙏

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