

# The Custodian: Artistic Visionaries: Tagreed Darghouth

[Selections Magazine](#)

I met Dr. Ramzi Dalloul back in 2014. During that encounter, he spoke of his memories of when he was still a university student back in Egypt and about the rise of pan-Arabism during the Abd-El Nasser period. My father was studying in Egypt back then, too. Both of them shared the same political views, but that wasn't the extent of it; I sensed a certain chivalry in Dr Ramzi with the way he spoke that I know my father also had. This "Rushdi Abaza" type of character from the famous classic black-and-white Egyptian movies era. I guess I wasn't wrong.

Dr. Ramzi later purchased a few of my artworks as he enthusiastically explained his ongoing project of collecting Arab art, and I was invited, among others in the art field, to check out some artworks from that collection in Beirut.

A few months later, I had an injury that kept me from working for a period of time. Dr Ramzi kept checking up on me every now and then, sending me lovely supporting messages and sometimes even phone calls from London, encouraging me to hold on. I know for sure now that the Brighter Than a Thousand Suns painting he later commissioned was to make sure I didn't face any financial difficulties due to the injury back then.

I later met Basel at one of Dr. Ramzi's art dinners. I was expecting a younger version of Dr. Ramzi, but I was completely wrong! During that dinner, Basel spoke his mind with zero constraints and no filters. I realised later that what you see in Basel is what you get. A dirty-mouthed man with a heart of gold.

I don't see Basel as an art collector; I see him solely as a friend. We are

constantly in contact, even after I left Beirut. I know for sure after all these years that he knows and follows closely what I do out of care and love.

As for the Ramzi and Saeda Dalloul Foundation, I highly admire Basel's exceptional ability to transform, in such a short period of time, the collection into a well-organised, rich, and wonderfully archived collection. It became itself a work of art.

Basel was able to transform the "rawness" of Dr. Ramzi's project into a spectacular cultural kitchen. We need more people like Basel, those who put in their utmost effort without any expectations in return. Art is not an investment but a mirror of our own cultural reflection as Arabs. Basel is one of the few in our region that is making sure that our reflections are well archived.