

العربية

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ENGLISH

# Painting a woman's body: Gaza artist breaks the mold



**Gaza-based Ayman Essa said he wanted to depict his different perception of what would constitute a beautiful woman. (Photo courtesy: Ayman Essa)**

The female body is no stranger to canvasses as for centuries paintings have boasted artists' perception of a woman's anatomy, and one Gaza-based artist is joining their ranks.

Giant women clad in figure-baring dresses and drawn with narrow eyes, artist Ayman Essa is making waves on the art scene by depicting his idea of a beautiful woman's body.

Essa's paintings, currently on display in a **Ramallah gallery**, accentuate every part of a woman's body, which he said is more beautiful than a man's.





(Photo courtesy: Ayman Essa)

He has always painted the human figure, but according to Essa, “there are more beautiful things in a woman’s body than there are in a man’s.

“So I took off in that direction,” he told Al Arabiya News in a phone interview, adding that he focused “on the theme of the female body and shape primarily.”

When asked about the woman’s rather curvy silhouettes, he said: “I tried to portray different shapes, something different from the others [painters].”

With their giant hands and elongated narrow eyes, Essa said these drawn women set him apart from other artists.

“Everyone has painted the female body, but everyone did it from his or her own perspective.



(Photo courtesy: Ayman Essa)

“The shapes I paint are gigantic but there still is beauty.

“Big but beautiful,” he explained.

"The faces look strange but are beautiful, the women are beautiful," he affirmed.

In one of his pieces, a woman in a shoulder-baring dress stands between two nude women. Another piece features a woman striking a sultry pose as the star of the painting, however, the Gazan artist said he never came across issues posed by the conservative climate in the enclave.

"I never suffered," he said, adding that "these things were never a problem."

However, in an interview with Al Arabiya News earlier this month, Gaza-based sculptor Eyad Sabbah said he could not display his human figurines in the Shejaiya district of Gaza for too long because some deemed them "haram."

"I displayed these painting in Gaza, no one ever disagreed with me on my work," Essa countered.

"But generally, after the war, the climate is tense, some things are more halal or haram," he explained.



(Photo courtesy: Ayman Essa)

Essa was born and raised in Gaza. He said that he has left the enclave three times. The first was to pursue a degree in Fine Arts from a university in the Occupied West Bank city of Nablus, the second for Master's in Egypt's Helwan University and the third for a visit to Norway, where he almost immigrated to in 2010.

"I came back. I am happy here," he said.

Essa's childhood in Gaza acted as backdrop to some of his work.

"I remember seeing the women in my neighborhood gather, chatting the afternoons away. I tried to manifest that, bring it to my work, and make it different."

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# What did Trump tell this Saudi artist when they met in Riyadh?

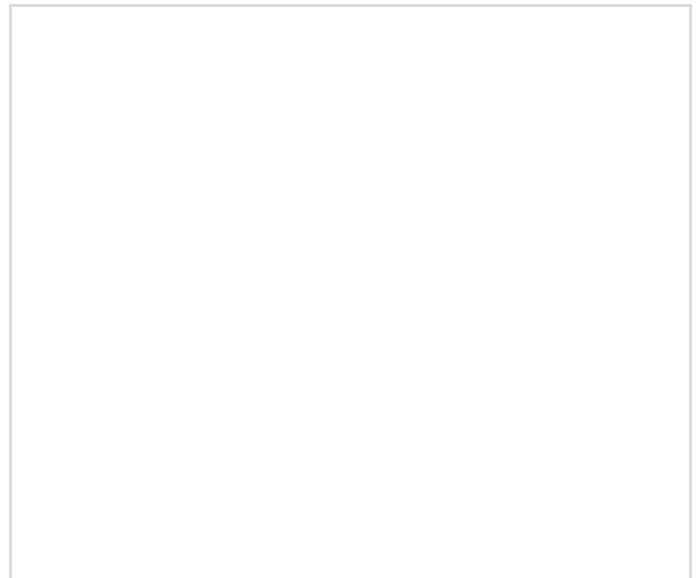


**Al-Othman, who was showing some of his artwork at the kingdom art exhibition, said Trump shook his hand at told him, “Great job. You’ve done beautiful and wonderful work”. (El-Ekhbariya)**

Saudi artist Abdullah Al-Othman has revealed what United States President Donald Trump told him when they met during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

Al-Othman, who was showing some of his artwork at the kingdom art exhibition, said Trump shook his hand at told him, “Great job. You’ve done beautiful and wonderful work”.

The exhibition held on Saturday aimed at highlighting Saudi Arabia’s contemporary art across several generations, with a particular focus on young artists. It also aimed at showcasing the Kingdom’s rich culture through the creative craftworks of a number of contemporary artists and encouraging the dialogue between Saudi and American cultures through visual artworks demonstrating the artists’ life experiences.





Pictured: Abdullah Al-Othman. (Supplied)

“Art opens its doors to the social and political life of peoples and presents it as the first event on such an important occasion to demonstrate to what extent art can play an important and influential role,” Al-Othman told Al Arabiya.

Al-Othman is an emerging Saudi artist and writer working with conceptual shapes in ways that stray from traditional frames of reference. He has exhibited work at Caravan in Tolentino, Italy and Mostly Visible at Athr Gallery, Jeddah.

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