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I write on walls. I write messages that are relevant to the community wherever I create my artwork. The wall is a pretext to open a conversation with the public. After a wall is complete, the conversation exists only between the viewer and the art piece and the essence of my work is rooted in the ancient art of Arabic calligraphy.

In 2013, I started a residency at Tashkeel – a studio hub and arts centre based in the Nad Al Sheba district of Dubai. The founder of Tashkeel, Lateefa Bint Maktoum, told me when I started the residency that she wanted me to leave the residency with something I had never done before. That was a big challenge. For my final show after the year-long residency I created *Declaration*. It was my first sculptural work. The lettering was formed in three-dimensional shapes, protruding from the walls and curving around the corners. In the closed space of Tashkeel gallery, it became a conversation between the poem, the language, the form and I. And I invited the viewer to walk through this exchange.

The words were taken from a poem by Nazir Qabbani, a Syrian poet famed for his sensual compositions, who wrote to his wife telling her no matter how much she aged, she would always be beautiful to him. I took those words to make a similarly emotional testimony to my art and make a love declaration to calligraphy. After the five weeks of the show, *Declaration* was destroyed.

In 2018, when Dubai Opera commissioned me for a sculpture, I wanted to pay tribute to *Declaration* and make my declaration of love permanent. Jean Cocteau said: 'There is no love. There are only proofs of love'. Bringing my art into 3D was a way to allow it to materialize. The work is still tied to script, but by releasing the letter forms from one dimension I discovered new territories for expression that celebrate and elaborate my deep respect and love for this art.

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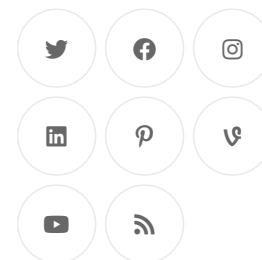
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