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# TUNISIA MADINATI



In 2012, when eL Seed painted the minaret of Jara Mosque in his hometown of Gabes, in the south of Tunisia, he never thought that an art piece would bring so much attention to his city

Initially, he was just looking for a wall in his hometown, and it happened that the minaret was built in 1994. And for 18 years, those 57 meters of concrete stayed grey. When he met the Imam of the Mosque for the first time, and he told him what he wanted to do, the Imam responded, "Thank God you finally came.". For years he was waiting for somebody to do something on it. The most amazing thing about this imam is that he didn't ask me anything – neither a sketch, or what I was going to write.

In every work that he creates, eL Seed writes messages with my of calligraphy. He uses quotes or poetry. For the minaret, he thought that the most relevant message to be put on a mosque should come from the Quran, so he picked a verse that says: "Oh humankind, we have created you from a male and a female, and made you people and tribe, so you may know each other." It was a universal call for peace, tolerance, and acceptance coming from the side that it is not usually portray in a good way in the media.

The local community reacted in an amazing way to the painting. It made them proud to see the minaret getting so much attention from international press all around the world. For the imam, it was not just the painting; it was really deeper than that. He hoped that this minaret would become a monument for the city, and attract people to this forgotten place of Tunisia. The universality of the message, the political context of Tunisia at this time, and the artistic challenge were not insignificant. It reunited the community.

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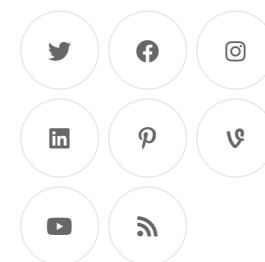
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