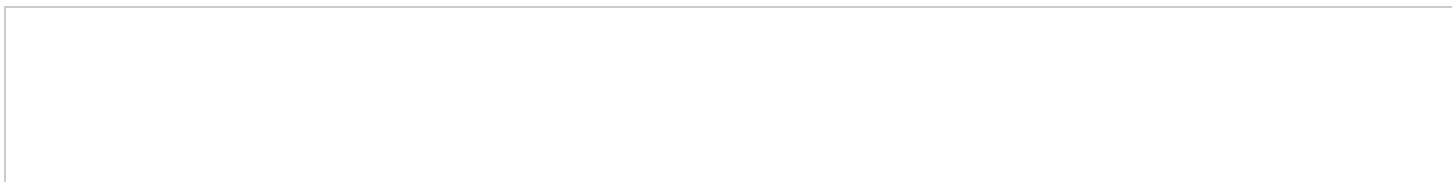




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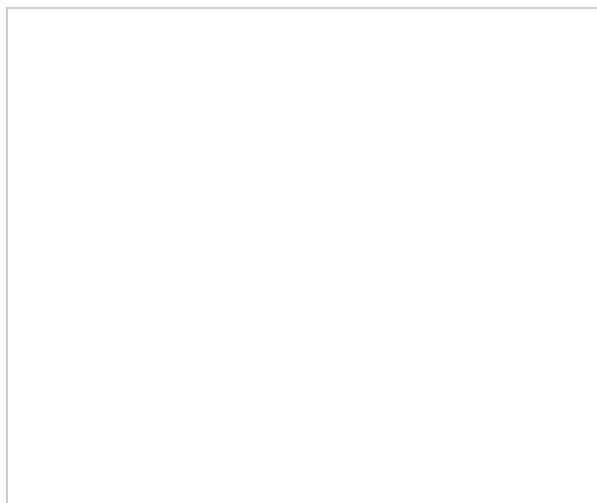
6 Inspiring Middle Eastern Artists



By Madelaine D'Angelo



Though the Middle East has experienced sociopolitical unrest in recent years, the persistence of original and moving art is a feat not to be dismissed. Here are 6 artists who remind us of the vitality of peace, and the vibrant, eternal culture of the Middle Eastern people:



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1. Tammam Azzam

Following the violent uprisings in his native Syria, artist Tammam Azzam created a rendition of one of the most iconic works of art, Gustav Klimt's 'The Kiss,' Azzam to protest the country's suffering. Making worldwide headlines, he superimposed an image of love over the war-torn walls of Damascus.

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Exposing the current state of his homeland to the world, Azzam communicates the dire need for the restoration of love and peace in his homeland.



“I want to discuss how the whole world could be interested in art and on the other hand two hundred people are killed every day in Syria. Goya created a work to immortalize [the] killing of hundreds of innocent Spanish citizens on May 3, 1808. How many May 3rds do we have in Syria today?”

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2. Afshin Pirhashemi

Afshin Pirhashemi examines the complexities of life in modern day Iran through photorealist portraits. Particularly, Pirhashemi is fascinated by the role of women in contemporary Iranian society and their relationships to the world around them and explores manifestations of power as they appear or are negotiated through gendered bodies and spaces.



Source: Ayyam Gallery

3. Oussama Diab

Palestinian artist Oussama Diab explores how art

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articulates the urgency of sociopolitical issues. Addressing the contradictions and obstacles of political conflict, globalization and exile through playful symbolism, Diab references popular culture and iconic imagery to best communicate with his audience.



Source: Ayyam Gallery

4. Nadim Karam

Best known for his large-scale urban art installations in metropolises Dubai and Beijing, Lebanese artist and architect Nadim Karam creates futuristic works and alternative spaces, particularly those built on dreams. Drawing from a variety of cultural discourses, Karam has fashioned a distinct pictorial language that is based on an evolving series of characters, symbols and settings, as he narrates the past, present and future while reconfiguring notions of space.



Source: Ayyam Gallery

5. Lalla Essaydi

Lalla A. Essaydi's art often combines Islamic calligraphy with representations of the female body and, from personal experience, addresses the complex reality of the Arab female identity. In much of her work, she returns to her Moroccan girlhood, looking back on it as an adult woman caught somewhere between past and present and as an artist. Her paintings often include Orientalist imagery from the Western painting tradition, thereby inviting viewers to reconsider these Orientalist symbolisms.

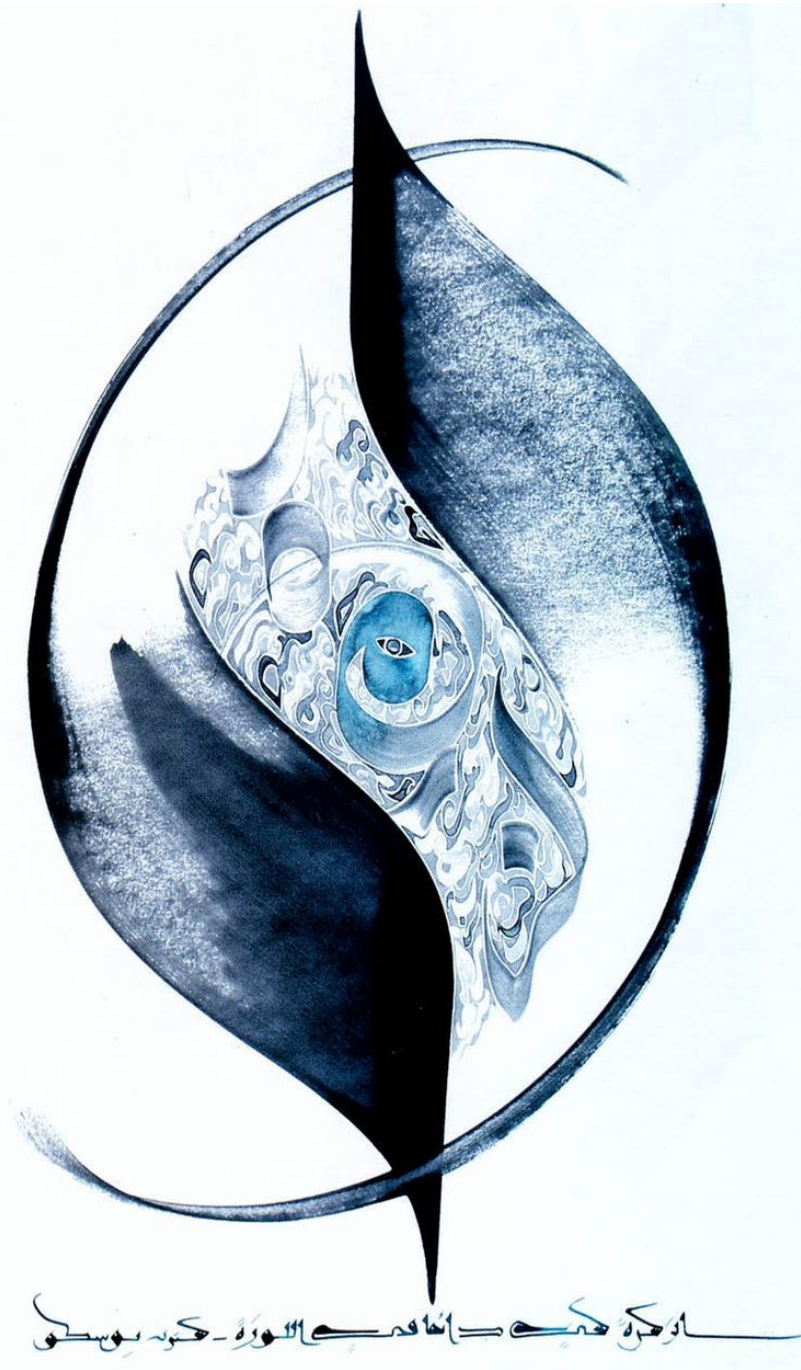


“In my art, I wish to present myself through multiple lenses — as artist, as Moroccan, as traditionalist, as Liberal, as Muslim. In short, I invite viewers to resist stereotypes.”

6. Hassan Hassoudy

Splatter painting, or action painting, is perhaps the

most physical of all painting One of the world's most respected calligraphers, Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudy expresses the great words of poetry, literature and philosophy through his beautiful medium. His creations are a subtle mix of present and past, oriental and occidental, tradition and modernity. In 1972 he toured Europe for thirteen years with his Arabesque calligraphy performance combining music, poetry and calligraphy.



Source: October Gallery

By Cecilia Zhou

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