



Search



- MAIN
- ARCHITECTUR
- ART
- DECOR
- DESIGN
- SHOPPING

CONTACT US

Inside the Artist's Studio: Khalid Khreis

🕒 FEBRUARY 20, 2016

💬 COMMENTS OFF ON INSIDE THE ARTIST'S STUDIO: KHALID KHREIS

📄 ART, FEATURED

Popular Latest Random

House of

Retro

JANUARY 20, 2015

XXX by

Johanna Grawunder

MAY 11, 2015

Introducing

Amman Design Week

JUNE 15, 2016

Alessi

Supports (RED) Campaign

AUGUST 2, 2015



We meet with director of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and acclaimed artist Khalid Khreis to discuss his formative education, myriad inspirations and advice to aspiring artists.

Born: 1955, in the village of Samu'a. At the time this was part of Jordan, though it is now in Palestine. He grew up in Karak.

Studio location: Amman. He currently shares a studio in Wadi Saqra with his wife, the artist [Clara Amado](#). "It's not practical; you really have to have your own space. We don't work at the same time because the space is so limited; when I go there I work alone, and so does she. In the future I'd like to get a huge studio to share, but for the moment we're here."

Formal education: With a PhD, Khreis's education is extensive – both in art and other subjects. He initially studied art and education in Cairo; a decision that he says had a positive impact on the rest of his career. "This course was more modern than fine art because we touched on many subjects: art, education, history of art, psychology... It really opened my mind." The artist went on to study in Barcelona, where he met his wife and augmented his artistic knowledge by acquiring many new techniques, from mural painting to printmaking and sculpture. He has also taken courses in Mexico and Italy.

Luxury Bed

Linen

SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

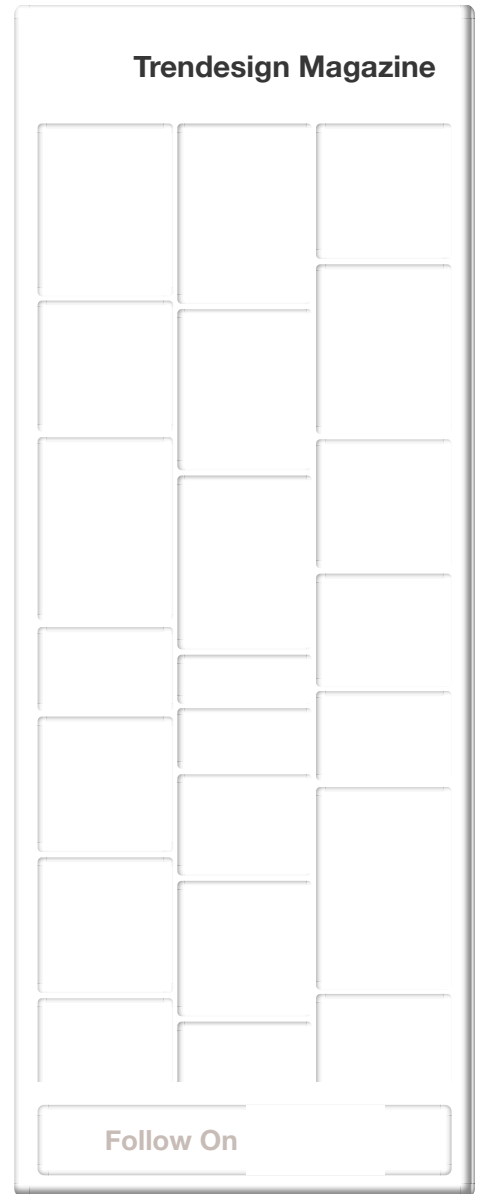
El Maghraby

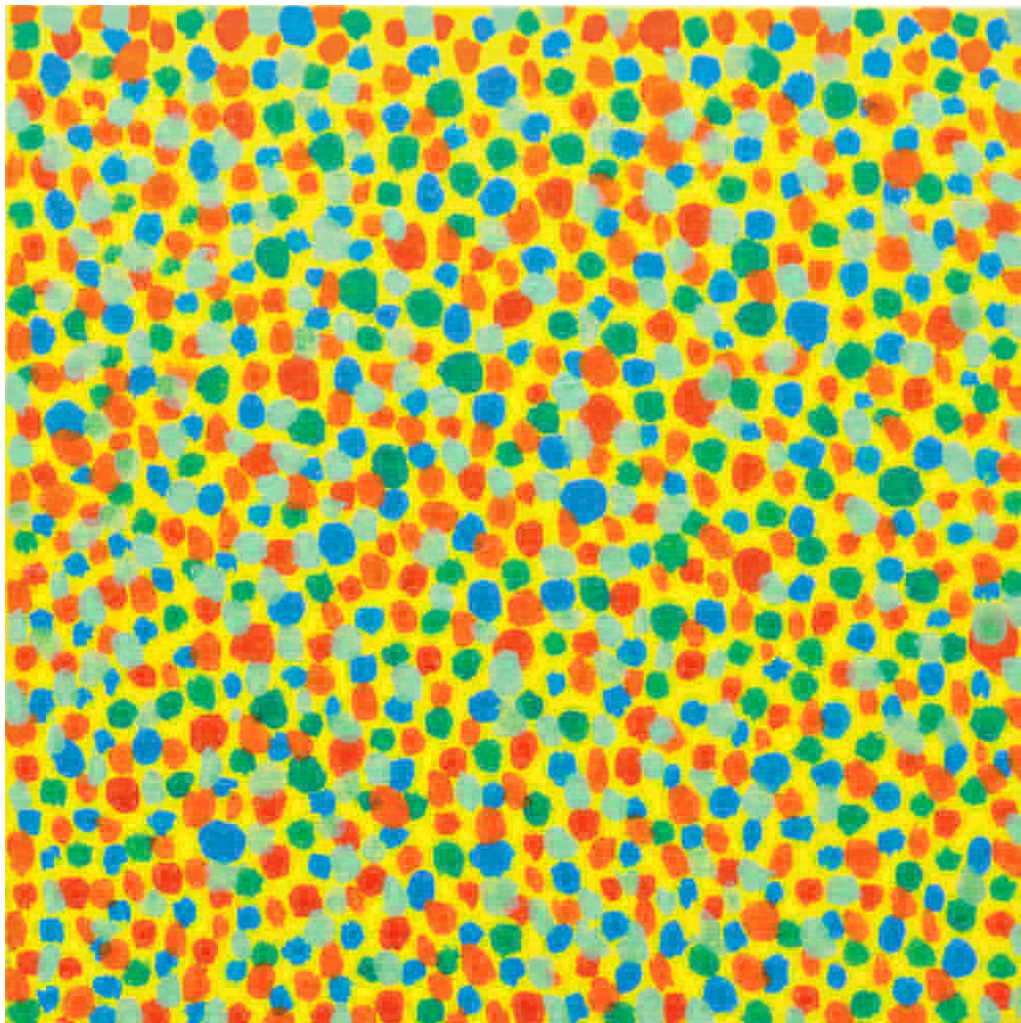
AUGUST 21, 2016

ADVERTISEMENT

Working life: Despite his day job as the director of the [Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts \(JNGFA\)](#), Khreis insists, “First and foremost I am an artist; then I am a director.” He works hard to achieve a balance between his day job and his art. “Printmaking requires a lot of space and special materials, while sculpting takes a lot of time. Due to the nature of my work as a director I cannot allow myself to stain my hands, as I would with printmaking, nor spend unlimited time sculpting, so therefore I chose painting. That way I can go to my studio and do a little at a time.”

Artistic origins: “There is something inside me that loves art – not only drawing and painting but also music, theatre and so on. I think that everyone has an artist inside. Sometimes it’s sleeping, sometimes it’s awake, and sometimes it’s very active. This has been the case with me. From the beginning I wanted to study art, though my family weren’t keen. At school too, I had problems; in the art class they used to teach other subjects instead. The geography teacher was very angry because I was drawing instead of paying attention to him. Eventually I told him, ‘This is an art class, so why do I have to listen to you? I have to draw.’ I got in big trouble and had to move to a different school, but this made me want to study art even more.”





First exhibition: Khreis’s first exhibition took place in Spain, a collective with Amado and another artist. “She did ceramics, Amado did prints and I did paintings with prints. At that time I was into arte povera, poor art. I used to bring things from the street and paint on them.” His first solo show was in 1985 in Amman, at the Spanish Cultural Centre, now known as the Cervantes Institute.

Style: “When I first started, people described my art as expressionist, abstract. But I don’t believe in boxes. What I can see, the vibrations that I take from my surroundings, and the influences of what and where I studied: these are more important. In general I like expressionism and abstract art, but at the same time I also like the figurative. I like simplicity, and sometimes I look for technique, but I think technique can sometimes kill expression.”

Tweets by @TrendesignMag

Trendesign Magazine
Retweeted



Amman Design Week
@ammandesignweek

@TrendesignMag meets Sahel Al Hiyari and Dina Haddadin, the curators of two of #ADW2016’s exhibitions goo.gl/RTI1pu #Jo

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Imagining Desi... We meet with S... trendesignmaga...</p> |
|--|---|

21 Jul

Trendesign Magazine
@TrendesignMag

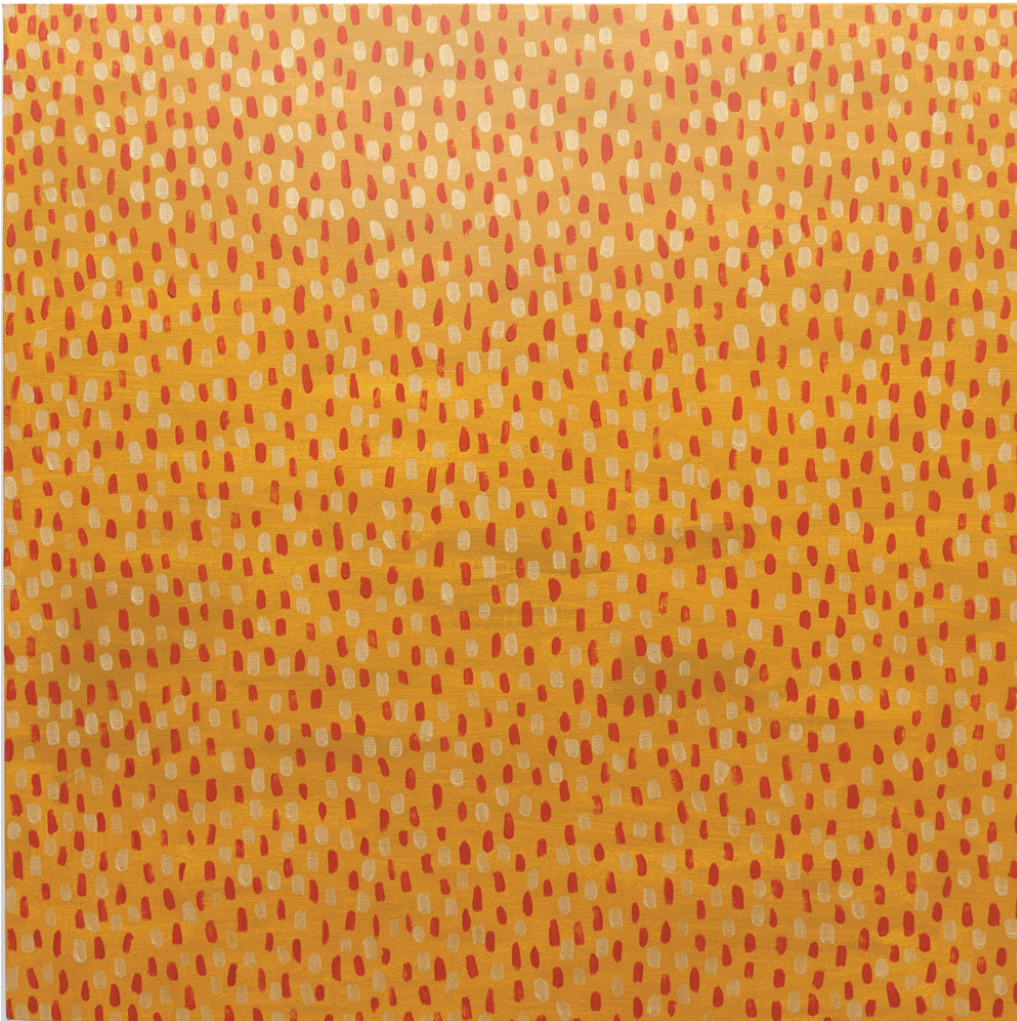
This stunning residence from @gulfSIR is an island of calm just minutes from Abu Dhabi: buff.ly/28Vua3F



[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)

Influences: “Influences are very important because they guide you one way or another. For me, the Spanish school of contemporary art has had a big influence on me and international art as well. When I came back to Jordan, I saw that many artists had the same style, but times are always changing. We have to change with the moment; I can’t keep doing the same style from 1985 to now. I’m influenced by society and what’s happening internationally. We have problems respecting the earth, the poor... These things make me think about the future and about humanity. So many things inspire me: people and many other simple things in the universe.”

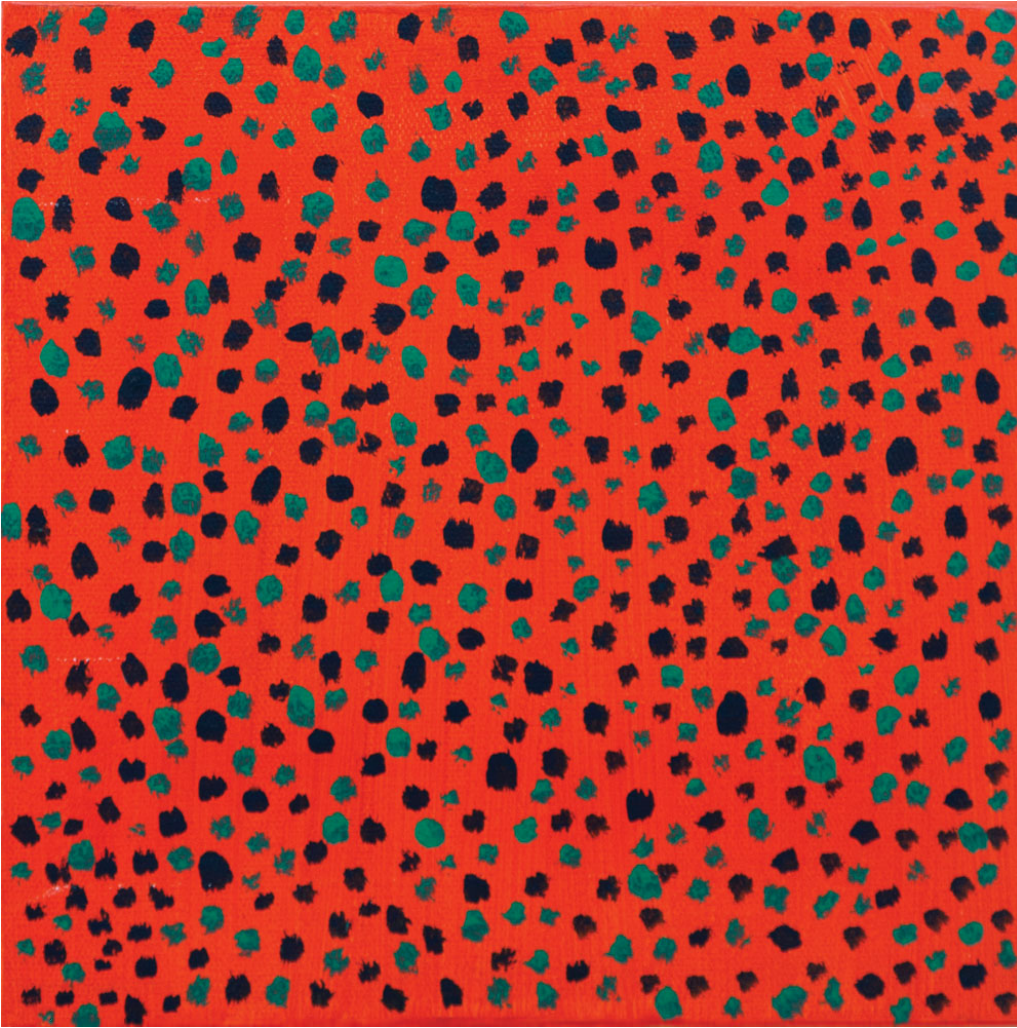


On honesty: “Since the very beginning, my wife and I have inspired and supported each other. But we are also able to criticise each other; I’m as honest with her as I am with myself. If I don’t like something I will tell her and give her reasons. In general I try to be very honest, but sometimes I don’t want to offend people. But I won’t say something is good if it isn’t – I’ll

just keep quiet.”

Latest exhibition: Khreis’s latest exhibition, *Dialogue of the Dot*, ran from November 22 to December 9 2015 at [Nabad Art Gallery](#). In somewhat of a departure from his previous style, the canvases that filled the walls were vibrant abstractions of multi-coloured dots. These pointillismesque works were not entirely thematically removed from the artist’s earlier works, however. “I had an exhibition called *People, Places and Traces*, which was inspired by the Arab Spring and the images I saw of masses of people. I didn’t paint the blood or violence – I just experimented with colours and textures. Now I’ve focused on one aspect of that – the people – whose faces in a crowd look like little dots. These small pieces are just the beginning; next I want to do something huge, maybe six metres. But here there is no space for such paintings, either in galleries or in my studio, so I’ll have to wait.”

Process: “I want to make art – I want to play with different textures and colours. I enjoy what I do; I like the variation. I go to my studio, put on music and concentrate. Art is like contemplation or meditation for me; it allows me to reflect on how I feel, to release. Contemplation is very important, and I often call my artworks *Contemplation 1, 2* and so on. It’s my form of therapy to deal with what is happening around us. I want to express myself, but doing the dots themselves is like a meditation in itself.”



Importance of art: “Art is very important in life – without it we cannot live. It’s all about balance; we have many questions: where we came from, what we’re doing. Art makes us forget these questions and just enjoy the moment. Art means expressing yourself, but at the same time it’s wider too; it’s about how to live together. It should begin with children being taught in school, because it’s not the end product that matters, but rather about the learning process. The children themselves are the end result. That’s why at the JNGFA we have the Touring Museum, and I hope one day we will be able to have training programmes at the museum to teach children to appreciate art and to live in society.”

Art scene in Jordan: “In truth, I’m not happy with how it is here. I look at other countries and even though we started before them, they have a much better art scene than we do. Artists here don’t have good relations; there are many conflicts between them and in general no one cares. Each one

works solo, not as a team. But this is a problem with our society, and with our education. We need a strategy and a vision, and this must come from the Ministries of Education or Culture. Art institutions work alone too; there is no link between them. Other artists sometimes ask me why I don't exhibit at the JNGFA. But I tell them if I did that, how would the other galleries work? We have to support one other. You can't scratch your own back."

Advice to young artists: "First they must look deep inside themselves, to see whether they are an artist or not. Everyone knows deep down, so be honest. And work very hard – it's not easy! Sometimes I think some people become artists to get famous, but fame is just an illusion. Instead, they should wish to express their thoughts and feelings. You have to find a balance between technique and creation. They should also work little by little, and never finish learning; I learn new things daily. Be down to earth, work very hard, look around you, and try to gain knowledge about art and other things around the world. Finally, learn to accept others, even if you don't agree with them."

0
SHARES

 Facebook

 Twitter

Tags: [#amman](#), [#art](#), [#InsidetheArtistsStudio](#), [#jordan](#), [#nabadgallery](#), [#painting](#)

 » [Art](#), [Featured](#) » [Inside the Artist's Studio: Khalid Khreis](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: MARION EELE

Having grown up in Wales, Zimbabwe and Washington DC, Marion has since found herself living in Amman and loving her life here in Jordan. She studied Arabic and Middle Eastern History at SOAS

in London, but her real passion is, and always has been, art. With a penchant for the unusual and an eye for originality, Trendesign's perfectionist Editor promises to keep readers on their toes. Her interests include crafts of all kinds, from crochet to willow weaving; vegetarian cookery and looking at vintage photos of swimming pools.

RELATED POSTS



LA CAPITALE:
CULINARY
TREASURES



WADI FINAN
ART GALLERY:
WINTER
STREAM



AL NAHDA
PRINTING
PRESS: BOTH
AESTHETIC
AND
FUNCTIONAL



MOHAMMAD
AWWAD:
VIBES AND
VISIONS