

Art As a Bridge Between Memory and Humanity

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There are moments in an artist's life when creating a painting is no longer enough because the artist begins to understand that the Not because painting has lost its power, but true value of art is not confined within the frame. Its real life begins when it reaches another human being when it awakens a memory, raises a question, opens a dialogue, or simply allows someone to feel understood.

This Realization Has Shaped My Journey as a Libyan Visual Artist

Today, I work primarily within the field of contemporary Hurufiyya, where the Arabic letter is not, treated as a word to be read, but as a visual form capable of carrying memory, identity, emotion and movement. Yet my relationship with art did not begin with Hurufiyya, nor was it a Continuous Journey

Like many artists, I discovered drawing at an early age. As a child, I spent countless hours sketching and imagining worlds beyond the ordinary. My teachers recognized my talent, and I experienced the excitement of participating in school competitions. However, like many children growing up in environments where art is viewed as a hobby rather than a meaningful profession.

I gradually learned that passion alone was not enough to justify pursuing an artistic life

Over time, practical responsibilities took priority. Art slowly disappeared from my daily life. What began as a temporary pause eventually became a silence that lasted nearly twenty years

For many people, such a long interruption would have marked the end of an artistic journey for me, it became the beginning of a different one.

When I returned to painting in 2015, I was no longer interested in proving technical ability. I was searching for something deeper—a language capable of expressing questions that words alone could not answer

That search eventually led me to Hurufiyya

I was not interested in reproducing traditional Arabic calligraphy. My admiration for classical calligraphers remains immense, but my own artistic voice emerged elsewhere. What fascinated me was not the readable text, but the hidden energy within the Arabic letter itself

- A single curve could suggest movement.

- A single point could transform the balance of an entire composition.
- Empty space could become as expressive as the painted surface.
- Gradually, the letter stopped functioning as language and became image.
- It became rhythm.
- It became memory.

In my work, letters often dissolve into abstract structures that invite contemplation rather than reading. I want viewers from every culture—even those who cannot read Arabic—to experience the emotional presence of the letter before attempting to understand its linguistic meaning.

For me, this is where Hurufiyya becomes universal

The Arabic letter carries the history of a civilization, but it also possesses the freedom to speak beyond language itself

As my artistic practice evolved, another question began to occupy my thoughts? If art could transform the artist, could it also help transform society.

This question gradually changed the direction of my career.

Painting remained essential, but I no longer wanted my work to exist only inside studios and galleries. I wanted art to enter schools, public spaces, workshops, and communities. I wanted creativity to become something shared rather than observed from a distance.

This belief led me to work with diverse groups across Libya, including children, young artists migrants, and former combatants participating in reintegration programs.

Each workshop taught me something that no museum ever could.

When people are offered a safe space to create without fear of judgment, they begin revealing parts of themselves that ordinary conversations often fail to reach.

I witnessed individuals who initially believed they had no artistic ability gradually discovering confidence through colour, texture, and form.

- In those moments, art ceased to be an object.
- It became dialogue.
- It became healing.
- It became hope.

These experiences eventually inspired the establishment of Al-Marsm Organization for Culture and Arts, a nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to strengthening artistic life in Libya through exhibitions, education, public programs, and international cultural exchange.

- Founding the organization was not simply an administrative decision.
- It was a continuation of the same philosophy that guides my paintings.
- I believe artists have responsibilities beyond producing artworks.
- We also have a responsibility to create opportunities.
- To support emerging voices.
- To encourage dialogue.
- To preserve cultural memory while remaining open to contemporary ideas.

Through Al-Marsm, I have had the privilege of organizing exhibitions, leading educational initiatives, and building partnerships with local and international institutions that share the belief that culture can become an active force for positive social development.

Alongside these initiatives, my participation in international exhibitions, festivals, and cultural exchanges has reinforced another conviction.

Art speaks fluently where politics often struggles.

Every exhibition abroad has reminded me that audiences may come from different languages religions, or traditions, yet they often respond to the same visual emotions.

- Curiosity
- Silence
- Wonder
- Recognition

These encounters have strengthened my commitment to presenting Libyan contemporary art not as an isolated experience, but as an active participant in the global cultural conversation.

Representing Libya internationally is, for me, both an honour and a responsibility our country possesses rich artistic traditions, remarkable creative voices, and countless stories that deserve to be seen beyond headlines and stereotypes.

If my work can contribute, even modestly, to expanding that understanding, then every journey has been worthwhile.

This belief has accompanied me into new international experiences, including my participation in the European International Book Art Biennale (EIBAB 2026), where contemporary artistic practice continues to redefine the relationship between object, narrative, and human experience.

For me, such opportunities are never solely personal achievements.

They are invitations to participate in a broader conversation about culture, memory, and artistic responsibility.

Looking back, I no longer see my twenty-year absence from painting as lost time.

- It taught me that art is not measured by uninterrupted production.
- It is measured by authenticity.
- Every experience outside the studio eventually returned to the studio with greater meaning.
- Every challenge deepened my understanding of why I create.
- Today, when I stand before a blank surface, I am no longer searching only for a beautiful
- Composition.
- I am searching for connection.
- Between the visible and the invisible.
- Between heritage and contemporary life.
- Between the individual and the collective.
- Between Libya and the world.
- Perhaps this is why I continue believing that art is never merely decoration.
- It is not created simply to occupy walls or satisfy markets.
- Its greatest achievement is not beauty alone.
- Its greatest achievement is its ability to remind us of our shared humanity.

In a world increasingly defined by division, uncertainty, and noise, art still possesses the quiet power to build bridges where other forms of communication fail.

And if my journey has taught me anything, it is this.

The artist's task is not only to create images.

It is to create possibilities—for dialogue, for understanding, and for hope.

Because when art becomes a bridge, people discover that they were never as far apart as they imagined.

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