

## Moving experience

Muhammad Yusuf

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Showcase Gallery, Dubai, is presenting Moving Forms (Sept. 9 – Oct. 9), an exhibition that sees the merging of two Middle Eastern artists, Alia Dawood and Mohammed Fassounaki. 'Moving' indicates something that is in motion, something changing; a dynamic entity. That is to say, movement implies the passage of time – we experience movement as time progresses.

A movement is also a portion of time, namely, the present. It is always temporary. 'Form' indicates structure – structure that can be found in both the natural world and the constructed, man-made world. It can be organic and it can be fixed. In 'moving' and in 'form' ideas of the temporary and of structure can be found.

The title Moving Forms suggests that the exhibition concerns itself with two seemingly contradictory artists' work, coming together under the notion of forms that move, forms that are temporary, through a combination of their processes and their subject matter.

The inspiration behind Fassounaki's paintings is drawn from his observations of passing scenes of everyday life and how he experiences these moments and the thoughts they evoke. Interested in both human figures and nature, the exhibition sees a particular emphasis on his preoccupation with the natural world.

Like the Impressionist masters of the late 1800s, Fassounaki's dramatic use of colour accentuates the changing qualities of his subject matter. Starting with colour, layer upon layer, moment upon moment, he builds the completed form of his paintings.

As for Dawood, trained in architecture, one would imagine her drawings to be precise, fixed and clear-cut. However, with a drafter's sense of structure and perspective, her investigations of built or incomplete constructions in Dubai, a 'city-in-process', we see a dramatically fluid and dynamic record of her experience of the urban scape.

Dawood sketches on the street, or plein air, capturing the passing moments of the city around her. "Drawing Dubai from life", she says, "has fuelled more sentience towards the temporary". Placed together, we see an obvious distinction in the natural forms of Fassounaki's paintings and in the constructed forms/urbanscape of Dawood's drawings.

However, there is an intrinsic visual and conceptual relationship between the two bodies of work. Within each, a strong sense of movement can be found, relating to temporality and the passage of time – temporary, passing moments of forms which are captured and recorded through the artists' materials.

Dawood was born in Baghdad, Iraq, and grew up in London. She read BA Arts, Design and the Environment (Architecture) at Central Saint Martins University in London. Subsequently, she went onto the Princes' Drawing School Postgraduate programme for an MA in Drawing in 2010. One of her pieces is now part of the British Royal Collection. She has also exhibited alongside University of the Arts graduates in Hoxton, London, in 2011.

Fassounaki was born in 1944 in Tabriz, Iran, where he also attended art school. His oeuvre draws inspiration from his homeland and the society within it. His vibrant and colourful works derive from the socio-political context of Iran as well as the country's natural vegetation and plantation.

Moving to Europe in 1967, he studied at the Städelschule of Frankfurt, followed by Rome's Academy of Fine Arts. In 1973, he returned to his birthplace, to teach painting at Mirak school. A collection of his works was published successively in 1999 and 2006. Moving Forms is

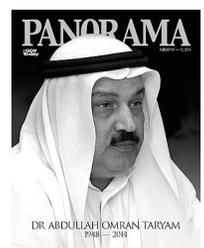
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curated by Karena Liebetrau.

Some of Dawood's works on show are from her trip to Japan in 2012. "I was lucky enough to travel to Japan", she says in her blog, "and was luckier in the fact that I got to travel across the country alongside four of my dearest friends. Having anticipated that Japan would be different to anything I had ever experienced before, it was ideal to decipher the whole experience through sketching the spaces I found most interesting".

She is the Creative Director of the proposed Dubai Museum of Contemporary Art (DMOCA), a project which aims to "allow everyone to come together to help build and design the first Museum of Contemporary Art in Dubai, UAE".

Known for her out-of-the-box thinking she is fond of quoting Jean-Louis "Jack" K rouac, American novelist and poet. "Here's to the crazy ones", Kerouac had said. "The misfits. The rebels. The trouble-makers. The round heads in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules, and they have no respect for the status-quo.

"You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify, or vilify them. But the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do".

Dawood has her own take on this, expressed in a more gentle way. "By constantly recording and analysing what surrounds us", she says, "we can research ways in which we can make a positive change as practitioners, designers and artists. This form of thinking and re-thinking can activate a new mode of dealing with each other and with our environment".

Visitors to Moving Forms will never again see landscapes, cityscapes and naturescapes as they did before their visit.

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equivalent moments

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