

IYAD قنازة
QANAZEA
GALLERY

Contemporary Art Gallery in Abu Dhabi

Al Meena St - Al Zahiyah - E13 - Abu Dhabi | +971 54 442 5127 | gallery@qanazea.com | www.qanazea.com

Mahra AlFalahi

IYAD QANA ZEA GALLERY is thrilled to present Mahra AlFalahi, an Emirati artist based in Abu Dhabi.



Mahra studied painting, printmaking, sculpture, and photography and later established a multidisciplinary practice that led her to work with fabric sculpture and installation. Her main interests relate to questions of memories, childhood, and surrealism. Mahra graduated from the University of Sharjah College of Fine Arts and Design with a bachelor's of Arts in Fine Arts in 2018. She has also been part of the Artist Residency program at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi 2021. AlFalahi graduated with an MFA in Fine Arts and Media from NYUAD in 2023.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2024 Stitches of Nature, Iyad Qanazea Gallery
- 2021 Seeking Utopia, Art Space WTC, Abu Dhabi
- 2019 The Evolution, COYA, Abu Dhabi

GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2023 Synthesis, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi
- 2023 Bound, Bayt AlMamzar, Dubai
- 2022 In Process In Progress, Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi
- 2021 1ST Edition Of Al Muraabbaa Art Festival, Ajman Heritage District, Ajman
- 2020 Transcendent, Zimzy Gallery, Dubai
- 2019 Tridimensional Art And The Society, Rotunda Gallery AUD, Dubai
- 2018 The Exit Show 13: Extension, Maraya Art Center, Sharjah
- 2018 The Exit Show 13, Rotunda Gallery CFAD, Sharjah
- 2018 EFAS 35TH Annual Exhibition, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah
- 2017 Islamic Arts Festival In Sharjah "17TH Edition", Rotunda Gallery CFAD, Sharjah

PRESS Coverage:



Artist Statement:

When creating fabric sculptures, I had to figure out a way to manipulate that fabric and force it to act the way I wanted it to, without the support of other materials. To learn how the direction of a weave could help the fabric stand or flap over and how a fold or a ruffle could create volume. I think there is an element of mystery and fragility when I'm making my sculptures without any help from different materials. Even when I get my sculptures to stand, they are still light and foldable, unlike how they might look. I'm very interested in using the material to make them appear hard or heavy while being the opposite.

When I started sewing, it felt like I was tailoring a story. I created plant-like sculptures from different fabrics (organza, chiffon, and tulle) as part of site-specific installations. I'm creating these creatures. I'm giving them a personality, then installing them and making them feel alive. For my most recent work my medium has shifted to cotton fabric and embroidery. I have also introduced stuffing into my work using various quilting techniques.

My work is rooted in my ongoing interest in the effects of one's childhood on their life.

Artwork:

الذانون, 2024

Folded Stories, 2023

Stories Embedded in a Book, 2022

Racing through the air, 2022

Transition (research), 2022

Invasion of Imagination, 2021- On going

COVID-19, 2020

The Evolution, 2019

Seeking Utopia Series, 2018

Untitled Series, 2017

Looking for "Home" in all the houses Series, 2016

"الذانون" yellow flower زهرة الذانون الصفراء

The first time the artist saw "الذانون" plant was in Al Mangroves in Abu Dhabi. She remembers how mesmerized she was by its bright yellow color, later she learned this plant is called "الذانون". Looking deeper at the yellow flower, she realized it contains many shades of yellow, which she wanted to make more tactile



2024
Wool Felt on natural cotton fabric
70 cm x 70 cm

الذانون "ألوان الذانون المتعددة" The many colors of

The artist captured many of the plant's colors from different images to create a color pallet of the plant and added ink drawings portraying different stages of its bloom



2024
Fabric dye and ink on natural cotton fabric
70 cm x 70 cm

مراحل زهرة الذانون "الذانون" flower Phases of

While looking at its shape, the artist started thinking about the different stages and different colors it turns into; She found an image that showed the life and death of "الذانون," and she used that image as a color reference to create an abstract shadow mounting techniuiqe of the shapes and colors of the plant



2024
Thread on needles attached on foamboard covered in natural cotton fabric
70 cm x 70 cm

"الذانون" شكل الذانون

Looking at the shape of the plant and the flowers, isolating it from its color and adapting the color of its environment



2024
Sewing on stuffed natural cotton fabric
70 cm x 70 cm

"دانون، ذانون، هالوك"

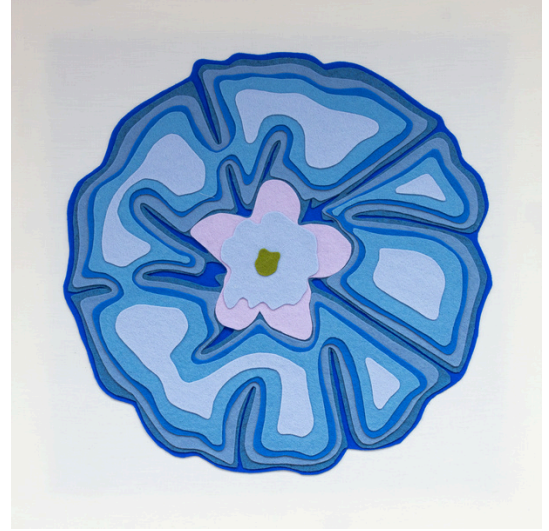
The artist wanted to include some of the plant's anatomy, the different names of The Desert Hyacinth in Arabic (هالوك، ذانون، دانون) and the different nouns of the word bloom in Arabic, which she wants to create using a combination of the different mediums she will use in the other pieces. To create different textures and techniques



2024
 ink, embroidery, and sewing on
 uncoated canvas
 70 cm x 70 cm



"البقره العين" yellow flower
2024
Felt on natural cotton fabric
50 cm x 50 cm



"عيفال" blue flower
2024
Felt on natural cotton fabric
50 cm x 50 cm



"قرنفل" pink flower
2024
Felt on natural cotton fabric
50 cm x 50 cm



"خزام" purple flower
2024
Felt on natural cotton fabric
50 cm x 50 cm



أذن الفار
2024

Ink on uncoated canvas sewn onto
natural cotton with machine embroidery
on cotton
35 cm x 35 cm



قرنفل
2024

Ink on uncoated canvas sewn onto
natural cotton with machine and
embroidery on cotton
35 cm x 35 cm



فندال
2024

Ink on uncoated canvas sewn onto
natural cotton with machine embroidery
on cotton
35 cm x 35 cm



خزام
2024

Ink on uncoated canvas sewn onto
natural cotton with machine embroidery
on cotton
35 cm x 35 cm



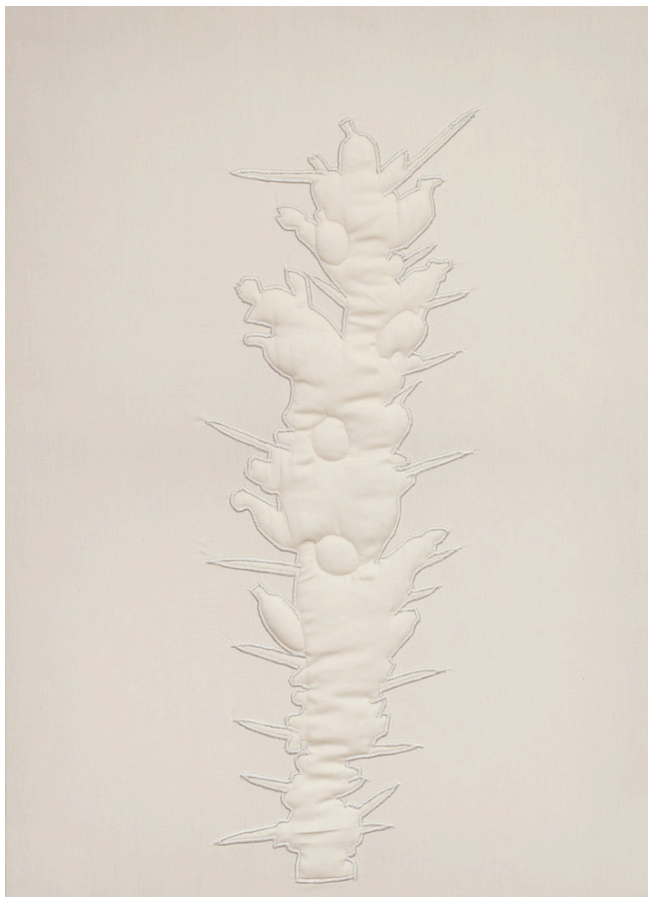
"ومهتدى اللزج النيلى"
 2024
 Ink on fabric and dye on natural cotton
 91 cm x 61 cm



Undefined boundaries
 2024
 Felt on natural cotton fabric
 59 cm x 65 cm



زهور مغروزه
 2024
 Embroidered thread and machine embroidery on natural cotton
 30 cm x 80 cm



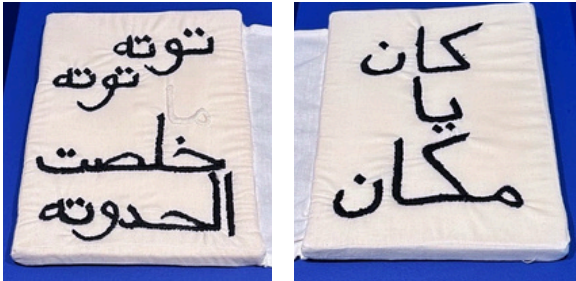
Shape of "عنوره"
2024
Embroidery and sewing on natural
cotton
70 cm x 50 cm



Shape of "البرسيم"
2024
Embroidery and sewing on natural
cotton
70 cm x 50 cm

Folded Stories

In the project *Folded Stories*, the artist utilizes fabric, sewing, and embroidery to investigate the impact of children's stories on socialization and memory. The written, oral, and visual aspects of fairytales and folktales play a vital role in sculpting a child's-worldview. Stories can create a sense of pressure, the need to act in specific ways that conform to a character's behavior to avoid punishment and gain fulfillment or a "happy ending." As the artist discovered through interviews with colleagues, friends, and family, these tales are often carried into adulthood as distant or fractured but highly significant memories. In her soft books and sculptures, the artist delves into familiar fairytales across many regions, focusing on the words used to describe characters, morals, and color. Each artwork in the project offers a critical reflection on the stories, as well as suggestions for potential changes to their structures.



Title: The story did not end ما خلصت الحدوته

Year: 2023
Mediums: Hand embroidery on cotton fabric with a sponge filling
Size: 2 parts 29 cm x 22 cm each



Title: When I become a mother, and later a grandmother عندما أصبح أماً وبعدما جدة

Year: 2023
Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling
Size: 104 cm x 62 cm



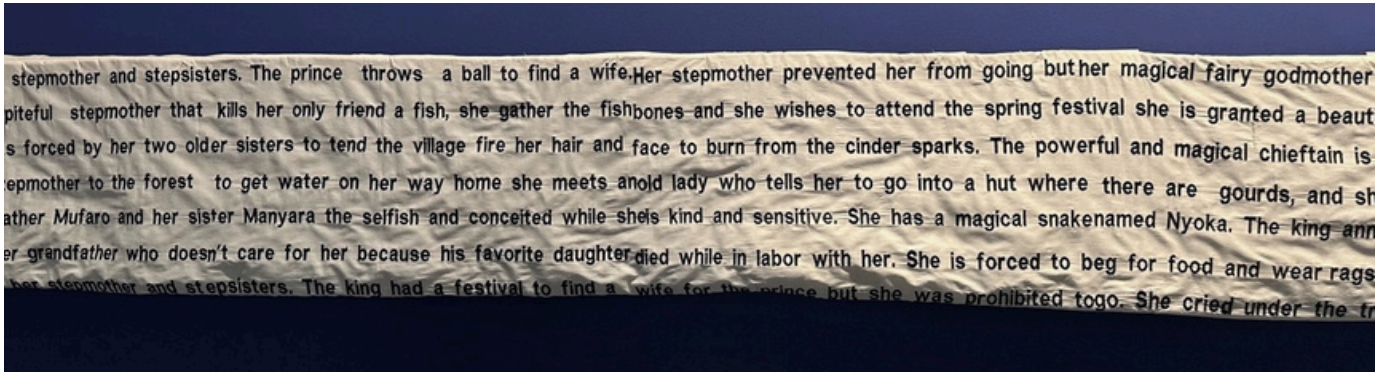
Title: The wolf ate them اكلهم الذئب

Year: 2023
Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling
Size: 95cmx51cm



Title: Burn the Witch احرق الساحرة

Year: 2023
Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling
Size: 74cmx51cm



Title: Same story, different values نفس القصة، قيم مختلفة

Year: 2023
Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling
Size: 47cmx790cm



Title: The Ogress ate them اكلتهم الغولة

Year: 2023

Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling

Size: 95cmx51cm



Title: Beheaded by a sickle قطعت رأسه بمنجل

Year: 2023

Mediums: Machine embroidery on cotton fabric with cotton filling

Size: 74cmx51cm

Stories Embedded in a Book

In creating this book, the artist used trapunto quilting, embroidery, and sewing techniques. The book displays characters and scenes from mythical stories the artist was told as a child at bedtime. The artist chooses three mythological stories to recreate for the book based on her memory of them. The choice of which stories to recreate was based on the stories repeated to her the most as a child and growing up. She chooses to emphasize some of the characters that were neglected in the story or were not the main character of that story, whoever stuck out to her the most. Some of the pages include text. One has the word "جميلة" which means beautiful, an adjective that is commonly used to describe female characters that get their happily ever after in the form of getting married to the prince. The other piece of text is "كان يا مكان" which translates to "once upon a time", which marks the start of these stories when the rules are set on the ways that one can and cannot behave, how to act, how to be, and what is expected of you. The book is made from cotton fabric in a color that resembles the pages of the storybook her grandma used to tell them stories from; that book had no hardcover, making the pages turn off-white with a yellowish tone.



Title: Storybook
Year: 2022
Mediums: Sewing on cotton fabric
Size: 20x20cm

Racing through the air

The artist created an installation that would represent a diversity of some sort and focus on the connection between a rider and a horse. She chooses Bridle and the Saddle as her primary focus because they play an essential role and are a critical element when racing. The composition of the installation represents a rider and a horse racing the wind. All of the installation elements are entirely made with fabric, making it light, airy, and interactive depending on the air movement around it. The scale of the work is around 20 meters by 30 meters.

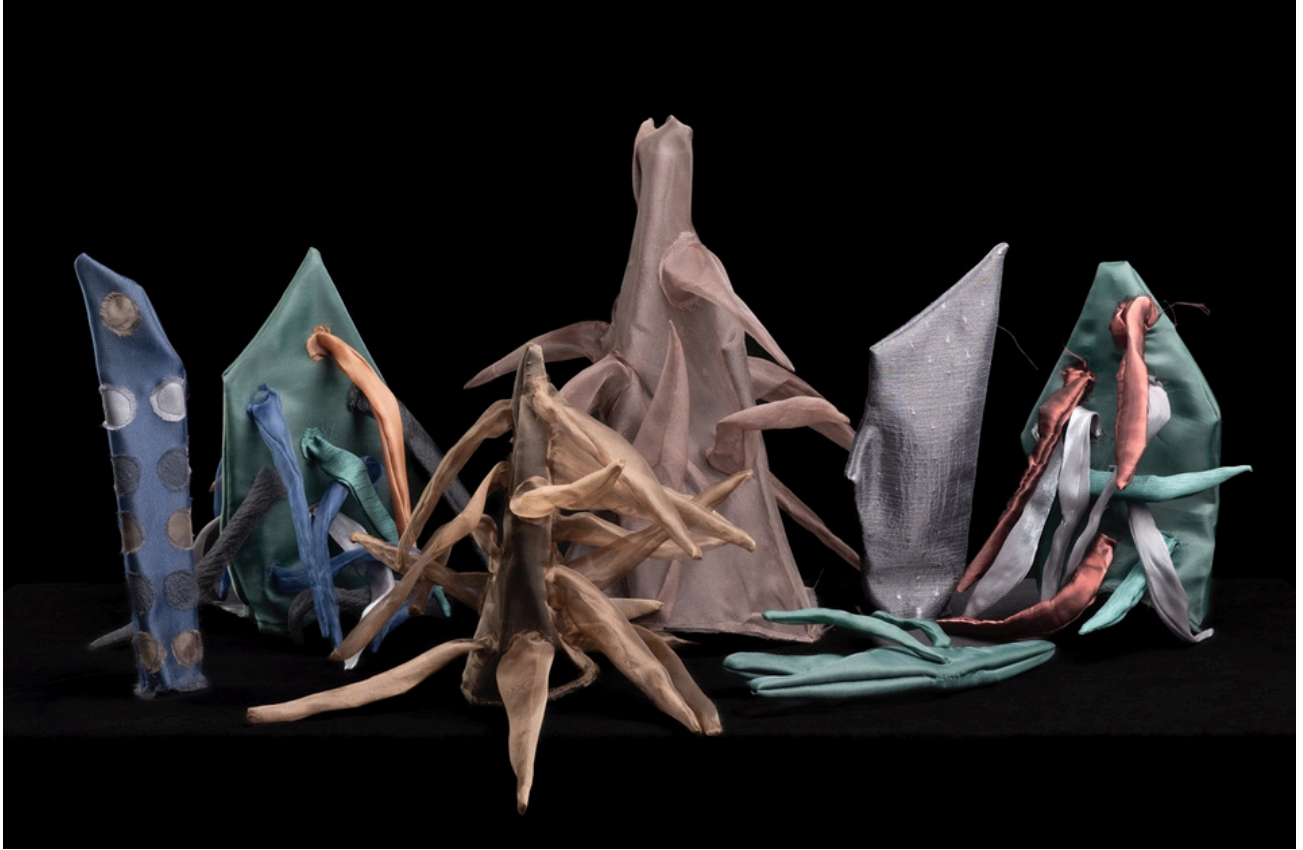


Title: Racing through the air
Year: 2022
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 20x30 m
Location: Dubai's Race Club -
Meydan Racecourse

Transition

A process-based project. The artist allowing her sewing machine to take over and create its shapes while gently adjusting or tilting the fabric while pressing on the paddle, taking her hands away from the machine, and letting go of total control. This direction was driven by an exercise she did during her undergrad foundation year, where she had to draw with a pencil stuck to a broomstick. This changed how she held the pencil, so she needed to find a similar way to hit a reset button on her hands and what they're used to make and create with the sewing machine. It allowed her to take a step back from what she's used to as far as planning and sketching all the stages of making any of my plants or creatures, where the outcome is not a given but something to discover gradually. She's taking this project to experiment with new methods and techniques. She used a soldering iron to test embossing on the fabric. It turned out to be a great idea, it did no embossing, and instead, it kept melting the fabric! So, the artist used that to test out different ways to add texture to her pieces, making interesting cutouts, and melting away some edges. After creating about ten or thirteen pieces, the artist started to sketch shapes formed by the sewing machine to produce her new creatures.





Title: Transition
Year: 2022
Mediums: Fabric

Invasion of Imagination

The artist created plant-like sculptures from different fabrics (organza, chiffon, and tulle) as part of site-specific installations. Familiar plants inspired her sculptures in nature but with a slight exaggeration of shapes, sizes, and colors. The artist created a video installation that showcased how these plants look if they exist in our world.



Title: Invasion of Imagination
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 300x400 cm
Location: Abu Dhabi





Title: PE6
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x30 cm



Title: PE2
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 10x6cm



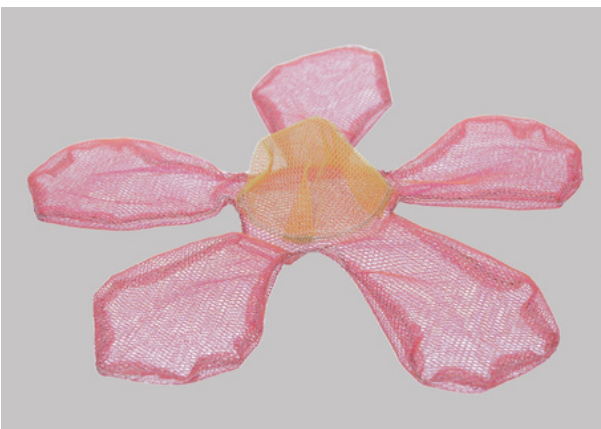
Title: PK3
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 10x20cm



Title: PK5
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 30x60 cm



Title: Flower A
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 20x20 cm



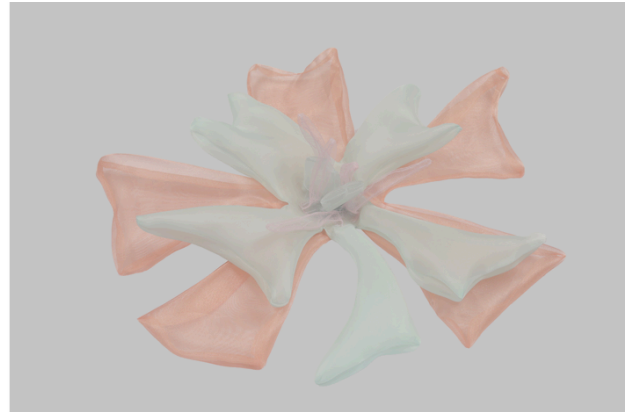
Title: Flower B
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 20x20 cm



Title: Flower C
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 20x20 cm



Title: Flower 1
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x50 cm



Title: Flower B
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x50 cm



Title: Mushroom 1
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 13x20 cm



Title: Mushroom 2
Year: 2021
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 13x40 cm

COVID-19

The following work is a series of photos the artist took of fabric sculptures she made when the COVID-19 pandemic first started; it was intended to spread hope and invite others to be creative. They were also part of Dubai Culture's #CreateTogether campaign. The photos show multiple items that became so important it almost feels like an accessory you must wear as a safety precaution. It went from an item the artist rarely wear to an item we keep by our door, so no one forgets to wear. The series showed some things that have become essential items to have (Face masks, Gloves, and sanitizers), all made from delicate fabric. Hand sanitizer is an item that you would find in almost every bag, office, or entrance and, again, a thing that most of us don't use as frequently as we do now.



Title: Glove
 Year: 2020
 Mediums: Fabric
 Size: 18cm x 9cm



Title: Glove Box
 Year: 2020
 Mediums: Fabric
 Size: 18cm x 10cm x 7cm



Title: Face Mask
 Year: 2020
 Mediums: Fabric
 Size: 17cm x 8cm



Title: Hand Sanitizer
 Year: 2020
 Mediums: Fabric
 Size: 8cm x 7cm x 3cm

The Evolution

The "Evolution" is an installation that shows a bloom of jellyfish.

It tells a story where a bloom of jellyfish longed for more than they had in their mind. They thought that the ocean and the sky shared the same colors, so they decided to fly away to the clouds. As they nested in the cloud, their silk-like tentacles created lightning of every color, and the sky never looked more colorful.

The artist's installation pushes the boundaries of reality. It challenges the viewer's mind to rethink the possibilities of what might seem impossible.



Title: The Evolution Year: 2019

Mediums: Fabric

Size: 300x400 cm

Location: COYA Restaurant Abu Dhabi



Title: Jellyfish 1
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 45x107 cm



Title: Jellyfish 2
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 40x101 cm



Title: Jellyfish 3
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 38x126 cm



Title: Jellyfish 4
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 29x110 cm



Title: Jellyfish 5
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 32x103 cm



Title: Jellyfish 6
Year: 2019
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 29x117 cm

The "Seeking Utopia" Series

"Seeking Utopia" is the opening piece to a series the artist have created showcasing parts of a Utopian world. This series has been inspired by the artist's childhood memories and imagination translated through creating a Utopian world.

Childhood is a very influential time in one's life; it's the stage where everything seems more significant and more colorful, and we look at the world with an open mind and wild imagination. These memories often revisit our minds unconsciously while trying to feel comfortable or happy; it's only because the older we get, the more we hold back on imagination and the more we seek perfection.

The artist installation is about wanting something we can't have. The purpose of her installation is for the viewer to experience it and feel like they've been transported, taken away in their thoughts by the piece, and once they leave, all their feelings mix as if they were in a safe place. Still, they're not just like the transformation from childhood to adulthood, going from being safe and well-protected, viewing the world with a perfect lens to worrying about the future and stressing about life, seeing the world with its true colors.



Title: Seeking Utopia Year: 2020

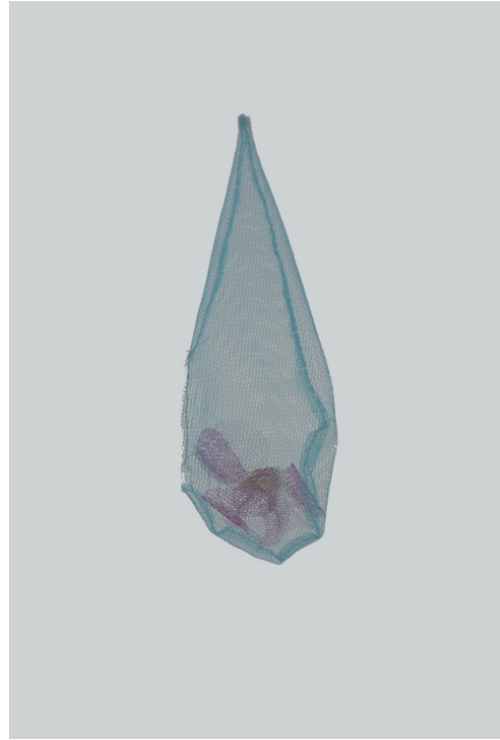
Mediums: Fabric

Size: 300x700 cm

Location: Art Space – WTC Mall Abu Dhabi



Title: The Mushroom
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 40x25 cm



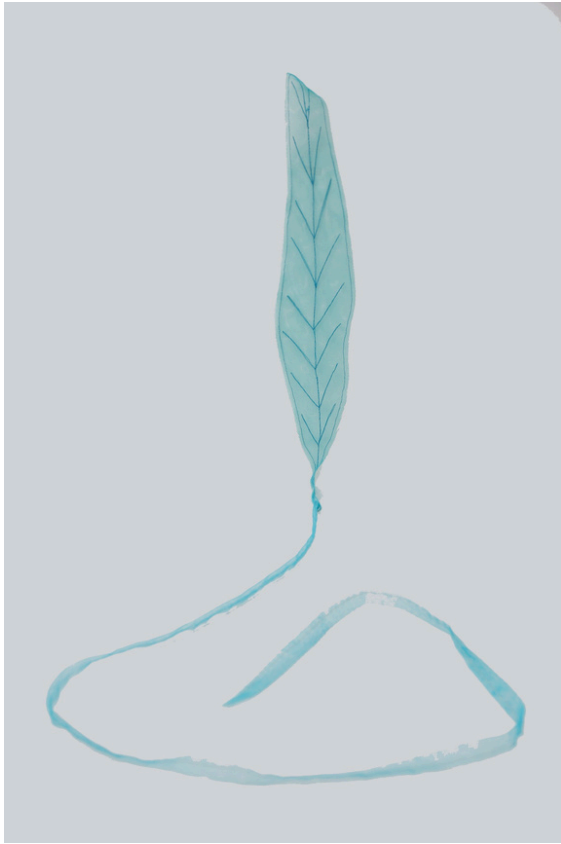
Title: The Raindrop
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 15x6 cm



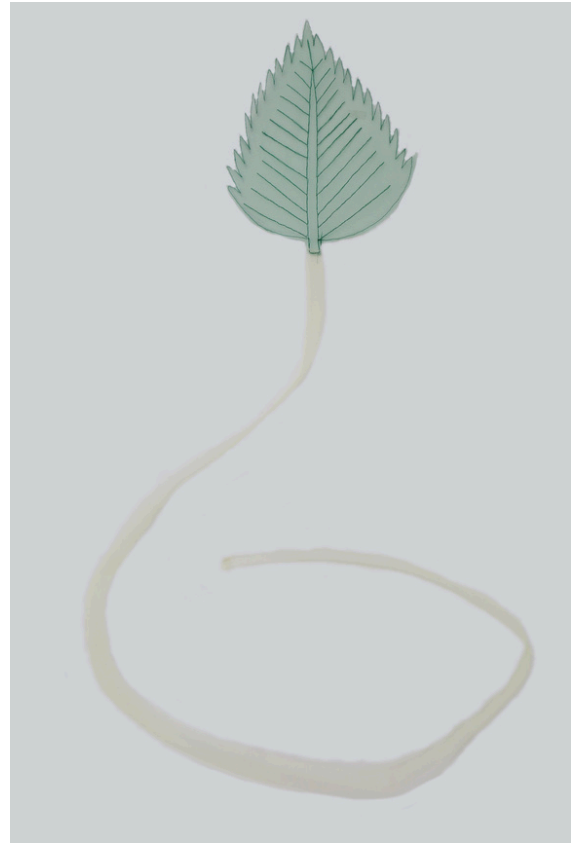
Title: Leaf 1
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x200 cm



Title: Leaf 2
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x200 cm



Title: Leaf 5
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 15x200 cm



Title: Leaf 6
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 30x200 cm



Title: the Bee
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 40x30 cm



Title: The Dragonfly
Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 90x30 cm



Title: the Butterfly Year: 2018
Mediums: Fabric
Size: 50x40 cm

Untitled Series, 2017



The Castles - القلاع

2017

Intaglio print and embroidery on paper
21cm x 30cm



The Rabbit - الأرنب

2017

Intaglio print and embroidery on paper
21cm x 30cm



The Jellyfish - قنديل البحر

2017

Intaglio print and embroidery on paper
21cm x 30cm



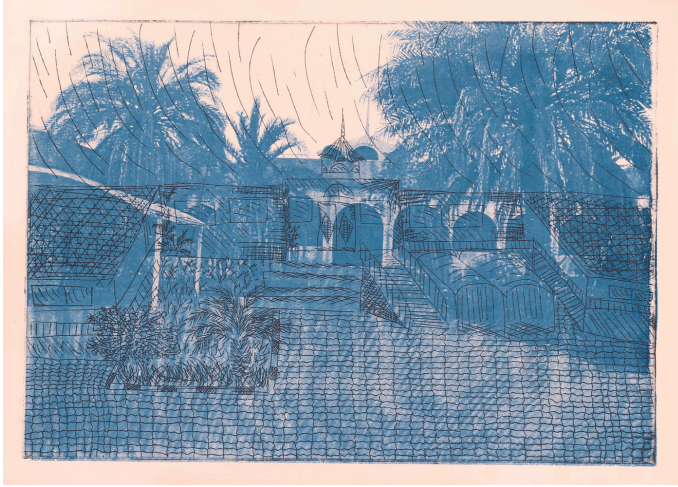
The Seashells - الصدف

2017

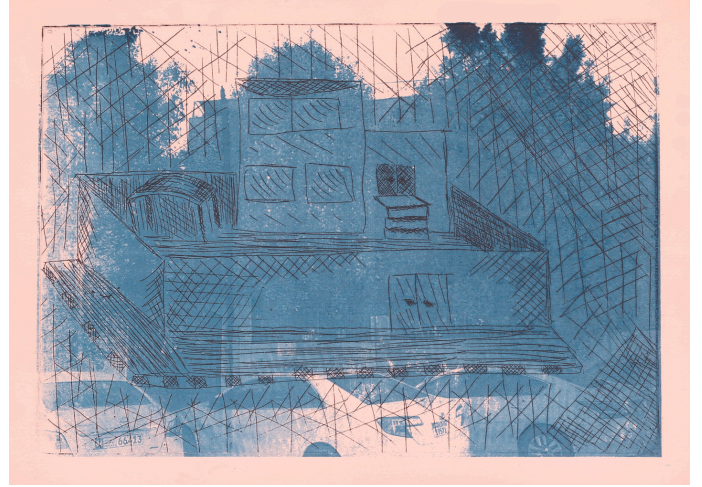
Intaglio print and embroidery on paper
21cm x 30cm

Looking for (Home) in all the houses البحث عن (البيت) في جميع المساكن

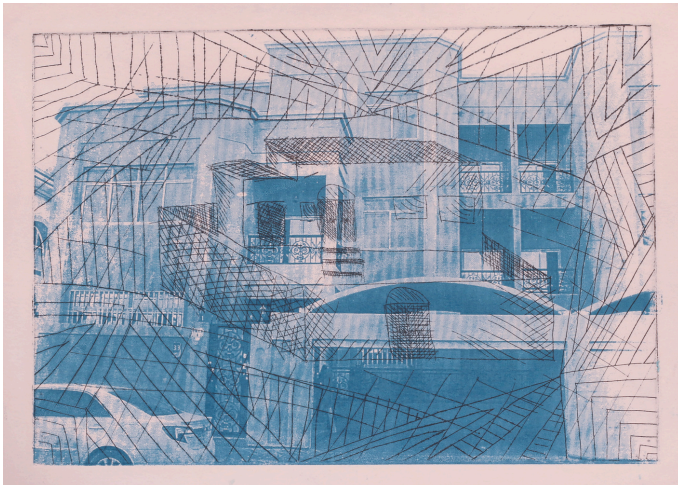
A Series of prints and handmade paper expressing the process of living in five different houses. The question in the artist's mind was, "What is home?" Initially, the artist thought home was her childhood house, where she lived for 14 years. While revisiting her memories and the locations of the houses we moved to, her feelings changed, going from feeling like this was home to feeling like she never belonged there. It was such a relief to finally let go. As for the three houses in between, the artist had no attachments to any of them; they were just places she lived in for a while. To find an answer to her question and feelings, the artist decided she would etch what she could recall of her memories of each house on a copper plate, and then she'll visit each location and photograph the houses and use silkscreen to create an overlapped print of each of the etchings and the silkscreen as if she's overlapping her memories vs. reality. The artist noticed that the memory in her mind had a perspective that didn't match reality. It was so strange that she sketched some of the houses with a perspective that she didn't get to see, such as the top of the house, and others didn't have that many details but much void in her memories except for her childhood house the memory of it was so clear and vivid. She realized that by overlapping her memories with reality, it was clear that none of the houses she'd lived in felt like a home to her. She collected plants from each location and used them to create handmade paper. The idea was to mix all the memories into one piece that would combine them all together. She later used silkscreen and printed just two houses that she felt were more important to her at the time. The first was her childhood house, and the second one was the house she lives in, right? The reason behind that was that her childhood house was the one she spent most of her years in. As for the houses in between, She's spent about a year in each, unlike the fifth house, where she knew it would be permanent, and she had hoped that she would eventually feel like it was home.



House No.1 - البيت رقم 1



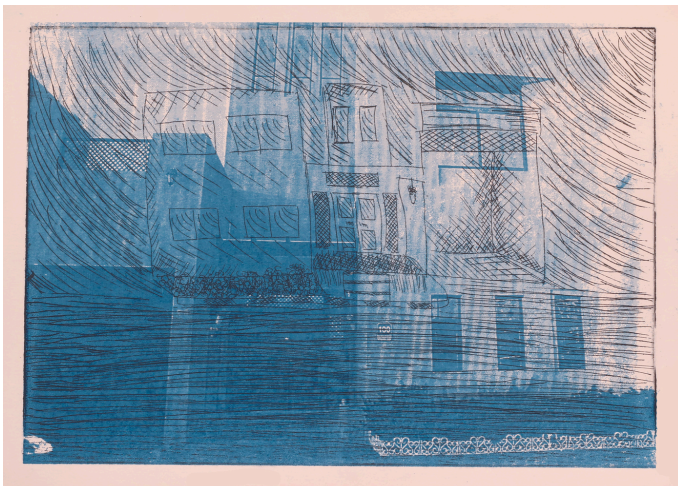
House No.2 - البيت رقم 2



House No.3 - البيت رقم 3



House No.4 - البيت رقم 4

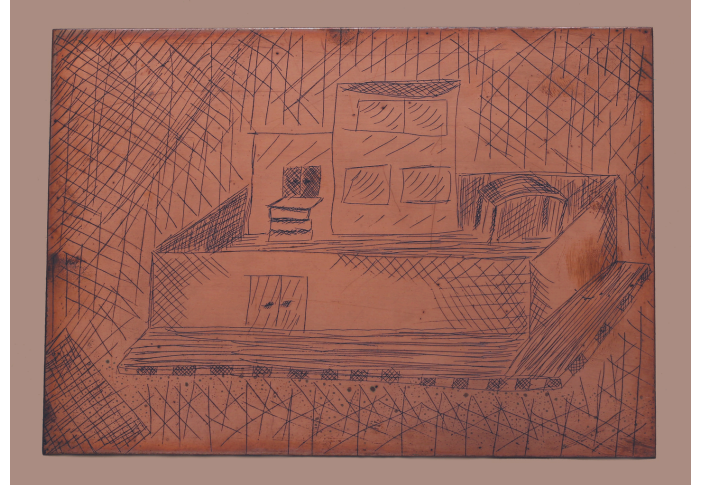


House No.5 - البيت رقم 5

2016
Etching and silkscreen print on paper
23cm x 17cm



البيت رقم 1 - House No.1



البيت رقم 2 - House No.2



البيت رقم 3 - House No.3

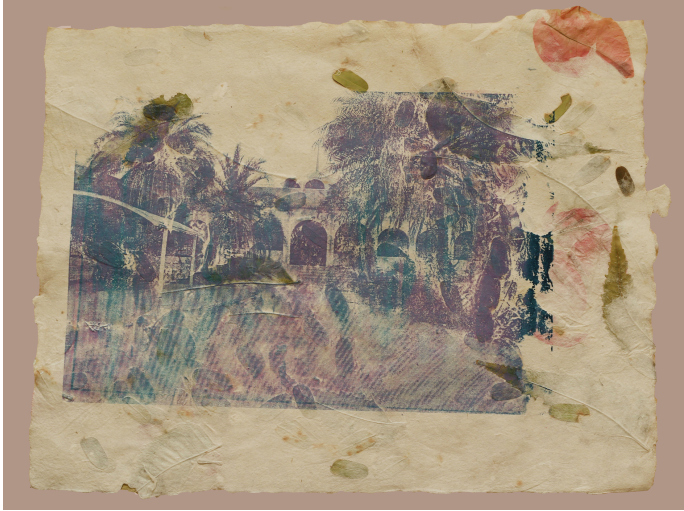


البيت رقم 4 - House No.4



البيت رقم 5 - House No.5

2016
Etching and silkscreen print on paper
23cm x 17cm



البيت رقم 1 - House No.1
2016
Silkscreen print on handmade paper
28cm x 22cm



البيت رقم 5 - House No.5
2016
Silkscreen print on handmade paper
28cm x 22cm



بدون عنوان - Untitled
2016
handmade paper
28cm x 22cm



بدون عنوان - Untitled
2016
handmade paper
28cm x 22cm



Al Meena St – Al Zahiyah – E13 – Abu Dhabi



+971 54 442 5127



gallery@qanazea.com



www.qanazea.com