

ART OF TEA MAYASA AL SOWAIDI

From 13 June to 13 July 2019 at SOBERING Gallery
“ART OF TEA”.

The exhibition aims to reflect and bring together historical narratives of the West and the Middle East and to demonstrate the cultural richness of Bahrain, where the art scene is growing with emerging talents and artistic energy.

Far from misconceptions, the important position of women artists in Bahrain is not new, regarding the cultural and unique specificity of the island country globally renowned for its natural pearl production. While men went fishing for months to find pearls, the country's responsibility was left to the female population who still hold today a great power in the society.

Not solely a self-taught painter, MAYASA AL SOWAIDI also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from the University of Bahrain and is currently completing her doctorate - with her research paper focusing on emotional intelligence - at the Management School of Grenoble, France.

“ART OF TEA” is an exhibition under the theme of tea where the artist explores its transcendence and essence by transforming it as a tool for artistic creation and expression. She builds metaphorical bridges between the art of ceremonial tea-tasting and aesthetical and visual art. Artifact of everyday life, tea is nevertheless one of the most fundamental products of globalization, historically significant and culturally important as a ritual experience, also spiritual, creating social unity.

Like papyrus or parchments, the tea leaves are immortalized on the eroded canvas, colored in imitation of the brewing water. Tea bags are integrated to the surface of the artwork and covered by recurring motifs of static birds anchored on branches, or keys and locks images. They reveal themselves as symbols of freedom to reach in our materialistic world of over consumption, as human beings or ‘non-beings’ reduced to numbers.



ABOUT MAYASA AL SOWAIDI

Her inspiration from the Food and Culture event held at the Bahrain National Museum led her to explore the unique qualities that tea holds and incorporate them into her pieces.

For MAYASA, the act of creating an artwork itself becomes a ritual, with the outcome of creating a sense of community bringing people together - that too for which tea is known. This desire for union and emancipation echoes the masses that were forbidden from drinking tea, since traditionally tea was initially reserved for aristocracy due to its rarity and price.

The artist explores in her artistic practice since 2005 her own freedom of expression and creativity, and the notions of harmony, balance and order as components of her apparent fragile collages.

Her pieces reflect her skills as a writer as well as that of an artist, each telling a unique story.

The somewhat mysterious paintings of Mayasa Al Sowaidi are composed of numerous linguistics inscriptions and signs, such as Latin writing, Arab calligraphy lining figurative human forms. Those human shadows with enigmatical black inked numbers are sometimes the core subject of her artworks, addressing issues of identity and togetherness.

As viewers, she questions us about self-awareness, the constant reference to the past, yet not discovering the meaning of our individual lives.

Thus, Mayasa reminds us that we have more that unites us than what separates us.

“Tea is a drink of rich heritage. Just as a collage relies on the recycling of used materials, so the tea leaves were given another chance at immortality, by affixing them onto a canvas for us to taste in another form, to sip art differently ».

