

A Brave New Saudi: Khalid Zahid

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Jou Pabalate



Aesthetic Resonance.

From Sheikhs on carousels capturing the simplicity of faith, car-door winged dolls sparking hope, to a beating dome installation that rendered him the meta pied-piper of Jeddah, Khaled Zahid is a Saudi contemporary artist who knows how to merge concepts and the familiar together, leaving viewers amused and provoked at the same time.

Zahid considers himself a messenger, using art to reflect on local social issues defining the current paradigms in the Kingdom. One such example

is the “Beginning/End” installation, a deconstructed pump that meditates the past while looking towards a diversified future.

Zahid has exhibited in cities like Moscow, New York, and Abu Dhabi. His artworks have been widely circulated on social media. Case in point, his Amal Doll, became the celebratory symbol of choice when the ban on Saudi women’s driving was lifted.

The Holy Decibel he unveiled at the Shara exhibition with Ali Chaban, caught the attention of international curators, and will soon be shown at the Sharjah Biennale. It cuts through the noise that overshadows Islam by elevating the conversation to an intellectual level that is explored through a multisensory art experience.

Zahid does art in a way that doesn’t feed on typical dissidence but rather, inspires overt dialogue, and here lies his ingenuity: *“I don’t cross red lines — you need to think smart as an artist. I walk on red lines to bring and lure people in. Their interest rises when they see you doing something that’s on the fringes. The moment you cross it though, you will lose your audience, the art galleries, and the shows.”*

Khalid Zahid’s work is set to be displayed in major festivals in the region, and will most likely find its way to the art capitals soon. And through him, the world will discover that there’s more to contemplate about Saudi Arabia than meets the eye.

“You need to be a smart artist, your work needs to be a balance of two things: you should have a strong concept, a shock factor, but delivered beautifully.” – Khalid Zahid

Instagram: [KZ_art](#)

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