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ARTIST

Rafa' al Nasiri

IRAQ 1940-JORDAN 2013.

"Rafa Nasiri's vision is the poetic vision. His works testify to the speed with which thinking occurs, an immediacy that the art of painting can catch and convey.

Our spirit translates its illuminations, explosions through the hands of the painter who uses colours, lines, shapes to unveil the adequate traces of his mind. But this mind is not a void. It is not an entity independent of the world but it rather needs the world in order to be. The medium, the matrix, the catalyst, the mediator between the world and the spirit is, for Rafa, the canvas while it is being painted. The paintings do not describe, they are an inner vision made visible.

What we mean by 'the world' is, for Rafa, the cosmos itself. Like a boat which has been broken loose for its anchor, Rafa has obliterated all references to the objects

ARTIST'S WORK IN THE KHALID
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we know. From his former studies in China he retained the spirit of Buddhism; everything is spiritual. Abstract art is natural to him. He knows that the cosmos is full with the invisible, and that what we see, the visible, is always and only a sign toward the purity of the vision.

There's also fire in his work; he tells us about a fire that clears and frees the mind. His latest works are pure energy, a dark energy which is perfectly made present, so perfectly expressed that it becomes beautiful. Beauty, always achieved by his works, is the result of years of meditation on art and years of technical pursuit of perfection. Like a Japanese Zen master he reaches a great economy of expression. Like with great poetry where less is more, his works do not explain; they show. They are.

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And what are they? They are the surface of the tragedies we experience. There is earth, and there's exile, and there's pain, and there's compassion, and there's the war in Iraq, and there's history behind it all, all of that compressed, fused together, totally present in the large strokes of paint on his papers and canvases... As Bedouins can read in a few traces on sand the gender of a camel, the direction of the caravan, the rains to come, the drought that's going to bring death, the viewers of Rafa's paintings can also read the moment of history in which we are, the turmoil, the pain and the ecstasies of the soul of this Iraqi artist who is one of the greatest, the most meaningful among the artists living in the contemporary world."

- 'The Poetic Vision' by Etel Adnan, September 2004,
Rafa al-Nasiri - His Life & Art, Published by The Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 2010

Rafa al Nasiri set up and directed the [printmaking studio](#) and gave courses in graphic art from 1993-1995. Yearly exhibitions were organized, including [50 Years of Graphic Art](#).