



## Interview with Khaled Khreis

A well-known artist and Director General of the Jordan National Gallery



Khaled Khreis, Between light and darkness, Acrylic on wood, 120 x 120 cm

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**You are a well-known artist in Jordan and at the same time the Director General of the Jordan National Gallery, could you kindly tell us more about yourself and what is your background?**

I was born in Jordan, where the ancient monuments and exotic landscape aroused my senses and inspired me to be an artist since childhood. I Studied Art and Education in Egypt then I went to Spain to do my Masters Degree, followed by a PhD from the University of Barcelona. I also studied Graphic Art in Italy and Mexico. I came back to Jordan and started teaching Art in 1993. I also worked at the Ministry of Culture and Darat Al Funun, after that



### On the street



I taught for 7 years at the University of Petra. Since 2002 I have held the post of Director General of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts. To date I have held 16 solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions and competitions. On an international level, I obtained the first prize in Juan Miro international contest in 1985 and the Commander of the Order of Civil Merit awarded by Spanish King Juan Carlos in 2004. Locally I received the National Award for excellence in the art 1995.

**What inspires you and how has your practice changed over time?**

I am inspired from the environment around me, from moments and events that are meaningful to me and from life itself. I also think that artists should constantly evolve and adapt their style whereby the entire world has become interconnected and we are influenced by great art and artists and different historical eras.

**What art do you most identify with?**

I consider myself as an expressionist and I also like abstract art; so between these two directions I can see myself as an artist.

**What is your preferred medium and why?**

In painting I usually work with water colors, acrylic, tempera, gouache, collages and mixed media. I used to work with oil colors but for health reasons I stopped. In print making I work with different techniques of etching and lithograph but for sculptures I work with various materials including stone, wood and metal.

**Do you prefer to work in a small or large medium?**

I like to work with small and large sizes. However, when working with water colors my preferred size is small but when working in acrylic I prefer larger sizes.

**What would you call your style?**

I can't label my style but here in Jordan they know me as an abstract artist.

**Who is your art role model?**

Goya, Velasquez, Picasso, Rembrandt, Miro and William Turner.

**Which of your artwork pieces is your favourite?**

The one that is from the permanent collection of the Jordan National Gallery entitled *Southern Scream*, 150 x 450 cm, I painted it in 2006 in an expressionist style.

**What's your most embarrassing moment?**

When I hear a compliment knowing that it's not true; this shows hypocrisy.

**What do you dislike about the art world?**

There are many intruders in the art world and unfortunately they have the authority to impose their opinions and decisions.

**Your last solo exhibition was entitled *Dialogue of the Dot*, how would you describe it?**

In my last solo exhibition *People, Places and Traces* at Nabad Gallery—a space where I love to exhibit—I portrayed these three subjects, and here I return to focus on one of them—people. At the beginning, I perceived teaming multitudes of shapes, all crammed together; that eventually took me to the dot, in different sizes, directions, colours and textures. Every time, the dot carries me to a dialogue with itself, within a specific space in which it is the fundamental element, and in all its various states that I mentioned. The dot continues to remind me of crowds sometimes, or of stars and planets, and of everything that moves in this universe. Occasionally, the dot transports me to either natural or man-made visual scenes around us, to excessively simple objects sometimes, or to interconnected and accumulated objects at other times. Colour, in its different shades, harmonies and dissonances, is an important element in the dot's prominence. Thus, I feel that I have not yet exhausted the persistence needed to continue my journey with the dialogue of the dot.

**What is your dream project?**

My dream project is to dedicate my whole time to paint and express myself and thoughts.

**How would you describe the art community in Jordan?**

The art scene is developing but in a slow process and there is lack of communication among the artists themselves and the society at large.

**Should art be funded?**

Art should be funded by the official and non-official institutions: an example that comes to mind would be the Renaissance time in Italy.



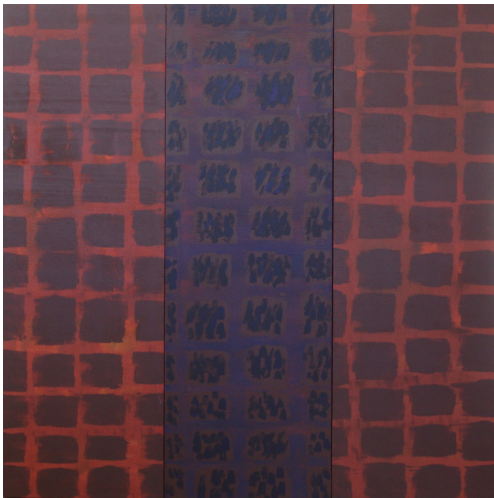
## Rawan Al Adwan

A well-known Artist, painter and ceramicist from Jordan based in London. She has a degree in Fine Arts. Al Adwan is a member of the Richmond Arts Society London, House of Lebanon foundation in California and the Jordanian Artist Union.

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### Captions

1. Khaled Khreis, Contemplations, Acrylic on wood, 150 x 120 cm
2. Khaled Khreis, Dialogue of the dot , Water color on paper, 40 x 40 cm
3. Khaled Khreis, Landscape, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 120 cm
4. Khaled Khreis, Triptych , Acrylic on wood, 150 x 120 cm
5. Khaled Khreis, Figures, Acrylic on canvas, 80 x 80 cm
6. Khaled Khreis, Between light and darkness, Acrylic on wood, 1 M x 1 M

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