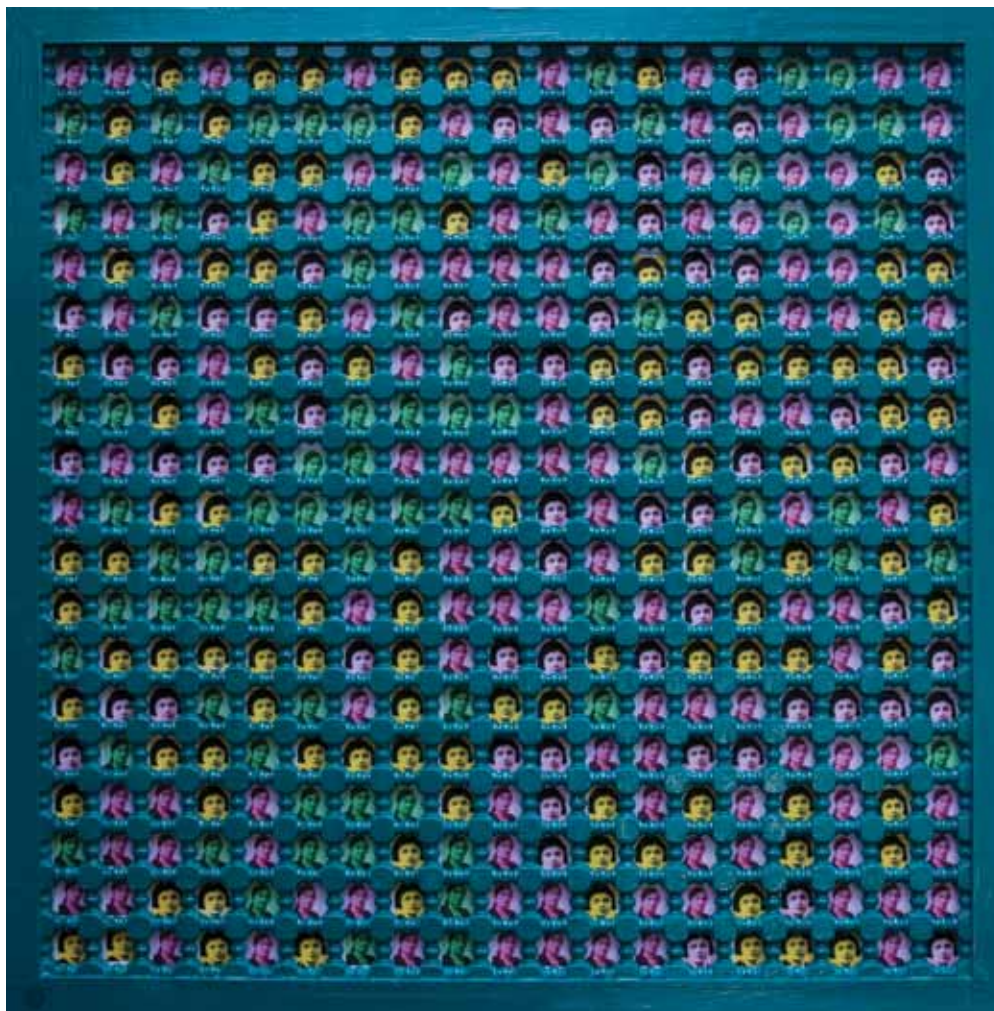


## An Interview with Fatema Mazrouie - Her works, vision and aspiration

*By Contemporary Practices Art Journal*



**Attraction**, 2010, 105x105cm, Acrylic and Collage Wood - Courtesy of Salwa Zaidan Gallery.

Fatema Al Mazrouie, a local United Arab Emirates artist that represents a new generation of artists that are crossing the borders in their art and taking the Emirati art into a new international level. At the first glance at her works (other than those dedicated to local environment) one can never identify/classify her as a local artist. With wide choice of colors, mediums and shapes of artworks she tackles the idea of individuality of personality and the socio-economic changes that

are occurring in her country since few decades. The authenticity of her art emerges from her boldness of her brush and her never-be-shy status of mind; Fatema is not drawing local environment coupled by calligraphy like many surrounding artist choose to, rather studies art experiments from the region and apply her own soul to the canvas. Following is a short interview shedding lights to her insight about the role of art in her life and what she wants to achieve through her experiment.

**Contemporary Practices: First we would like to ask you the regular question about when did you started painting?**

**Fatema Mazrouie:** I drew my first pencil portrait at the age of nine. Since then I didn't stop painting all through the years.

**CP: Who are the artists that inspired you then and now?**

**FM:** when I was young it came from inside me, at that time the exposure was limited. As I grow older and started looking around me, I would say "Iranian art" had an significant effect on me without specifying a name, that is natural due to the extensive amount of work from Iran that are here in all galleries and it is clearly seen in my use of calligraphy. Internationally; I like Robert Rauschenberg, Mohammed Omar khalil (I consider him an international artist more than a region one) among other names.

**CP: How did you learn and develop your painting skills? Talk a bit about your experimentation with mediums and how you found your own personal style?**

**FM:** I moved from classic portraits in pencil into collage and mixed media, which I found more effective in expressing my ideas and inspiring me to bring my thoughts and beliefs to life. To date, one of the most educational methods I have applied is viewing the works of established artists and follows their progression and evolution through art.

**CP: What is your favorite medium?**

**FM:** I prefer collage, acrylic colors, mixed media, on board and canvas. Although I am not limited to theses medium. I love to consider myself as a free soul who is willing to experiment in every aspect to produce new works that reflects my vision.

**CP: How do you find the topic for the next work, describe the research process?**

**FM:** I look for things that inspire me and trigger my creativity whether it is through a book I am reading be it a novel, historic or poetry. I usually search for elements to support the ideas I have in mind and help



**Contradiction,** 2011, Collage, Calligraphy and acrylic on Wood, 168x112cm - Courtesy of Salwa Zaidan Gallery.

me better prepare my artwork. I find that one of the most inspirational sources for my art is international and Arab female figures. Surely, I draw a lot of ideas from my heritage and roots (most importantly from the late Sheikh Zayed who I did several artworks about). I am constantly on the lookout for pictures and mediums that provide me with the shapes that I need to build my artworks.

**CP: How does being an Emirati woman add value to your career and do you feel supported by the community? How does being an Emirati / Arab woman challenge you?**

**FM:** I must admit that being Emirati has in a way added value to my career and also motivated me to pursue my art even further. I strongly feel that the UAE is a great



**Nazikalmalaeka**, 2010, 121cm Diameter, Acrylic, Collage and calligraphy on wood - Courtesy of Salwa Zaidan Gallery.

supporter of female development in all fields especially art. This drives me to seek and fulfill my full potential through every piece I create and feel compelled to better represent my people to the best of my ability. Challenges are always there, being part of a conservative society, yet things are changing positively rapidly.

**CP: What do you hope to achieve as an artist?**

**FM:** I like my work to have deeper meaning than just colored canvas and find myself drawing attention to the issues that mean the most to me, to Arabs in general and to the women of the world. Sometimes the issues I focus on are problematic, however, I feel that it is my duty to make a significant contribution to humanity by expressing my personal perspective of the world around me. As far as Emirates heritage, I have made it my mission to reflect its issues in a novel way.

**CP: How did you launch your career?**

**FM:** I had to undergo a great deal of learning to develop my artworks enough to warrant public displaying and this is a continuous process. This meant that beyond the work I did to develop my art, I also needed an outlet that valued me as an artist to support and represent me in the art world. I found this support through a prominent local gallery where I exhibited my works publicly for the first time.

**CP: What did you learn so far in the process and what advice do you have for upcoming artists?**

**FM:** In my view, it is important to study art from an academic standpoint first; it is vast and one can get lost trying to find their identity in it. It also requires continuous research, reading and discovery of the different schools of art including modern and

