

# The Majlis Gallery



Good Words



# Introduction

Contemporary Calligraphy is a genre that reaches beyond the disciplines of its traditional parentage. The word Calligraphy comes from the Greek “kallos” beauty + “graphe” writing. A further definition is “the art of giving form to signs and symbols of communication in an expressive, harmonious and skillful manner.” The practice was by no means limited to one culture rather being an underlying element of some of the world’s sophisticated societies from Japan, China through the Middle East to Europe and beyond. Often linked to the embellishment of religious and official documents, each culture developed its own individual codes of practice as to what was good or bad calligraphy. It is a fascinating subject that affords hours of pleasurable research.

So what is *Contemporary Calligraphy*? An interpretation could be “writing without rules” but it can be so much more, as demonstrated in this important collection of works from some of the world’s most sophisticated practitioners. Fluid, expressive and highly individual these “Good Words” flow from the hands and minds of their creators with an intensity of communication that transcends the readable written word. Here are works of visual beauty, utilizing symbols and gestures to engage and delight the observer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Collins". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

*Alison Collins*

We welcome the chance to share with you the skill and intellect of:

Abdul Qader Al Rais	3
Mimouni El Houssaine	8
Jamal Abdul Rahim	16
Abdallah Akar	22
Noureddine Daifallah	28
Khaled Al Saai	34



## Abdul Qader Al Rais



It was not as an artist that Alison Collins first met Abdul Qader but as a rather shy, softly spoken meticulous "official" at the Ministry of Labour who in 1976 inspected her application for residency in the UAE. A small biro sketch on a pad at his side was a clue to his other life, one that would lead to their paths intertwining over the ensuing 35 years. Can you imagine the Arab World without Abdul Qader Al Rais ? His creativity dedication and sheer talent are a visual testament to the values, aspirations and achievements of a man and a Nation. So much has been written about his life and his work, work that doesn't ask or need to be analysed, critical appraisal is inappropriate. All that is needed is a complete immersion into the poetic quality of his paintings, paintings richly full of honesty, integrity, tension and passion. His work is a true investment at every level.

The Majlis Gallery is honoured to be associated with Abdul Qader, working with him is a delight. As we got to know him we came to appreciate his wonderful sense of fun and whimsy. His eyes twinkle with a joy of life, his hands move in descriptive arcs even when not holding a brush. He is the ultimate family man who cherishes those close to him. He loves his farm and giving guests incredible juices made from the fruit it produces. He is always delighted to talk with people about his life, thoughts, and work but most conversations finish with a small shrug of self depreciation and a comment of "there we are" A man who is a master of his craft though he won't admit it.



Alwaw Series, 152 x 102cms,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2008



Alsakeena Serenity Series, 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2008 -9



Alwaw Series, , 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2008



Abstract Series, 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper



Alsakeena Serenity Series, 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2008 -9



Alsakeena Serenti Series, 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2009



Alwaw series, 152 x 102cm,  
Watercolour on Paper, 2008

# Mimouni El Houssaine



Mimouni is a dynamic painter and printmaker currently living in France. His work demonstrates a passionate evocation of his homeland Morocco and especially his Berber heritage. The artist compares his work to archaeology, and it is a very personal visual interpretation of ancient and traditional signs and symbols of Morocco.

As much as Mimouni's art draws from his study of traditional Moroccan iconography, it is ultimately memories of his childhood which he strives to capture in visual form. Many of the marks and symbols in his work are spontaneous recollections of ones he grew up with. Memory of the very texture of his homeland is equally important to the artist, and it is through the use of colour that he evokes these memories. The predominant browns, reds, yellows, and ochre of his work are the colours of his childhood. As Mimouni himself says, these colours are not aesthetic choices, but rather reflect his desire to remain close to the land of his origin.

In making visible his memories, and personal symbology on paper or canvas, Mimouni works in a spontaneous and intuitive fashion. The marks and symbols in his work are not premeditated, but rather the product of what he calls 'rapid writing'. He is expressing that combination of emotion, intuition and memory that he feels at that moment of creation. It is through this process that the immediacy, passion and evocative power of his art is achieved.



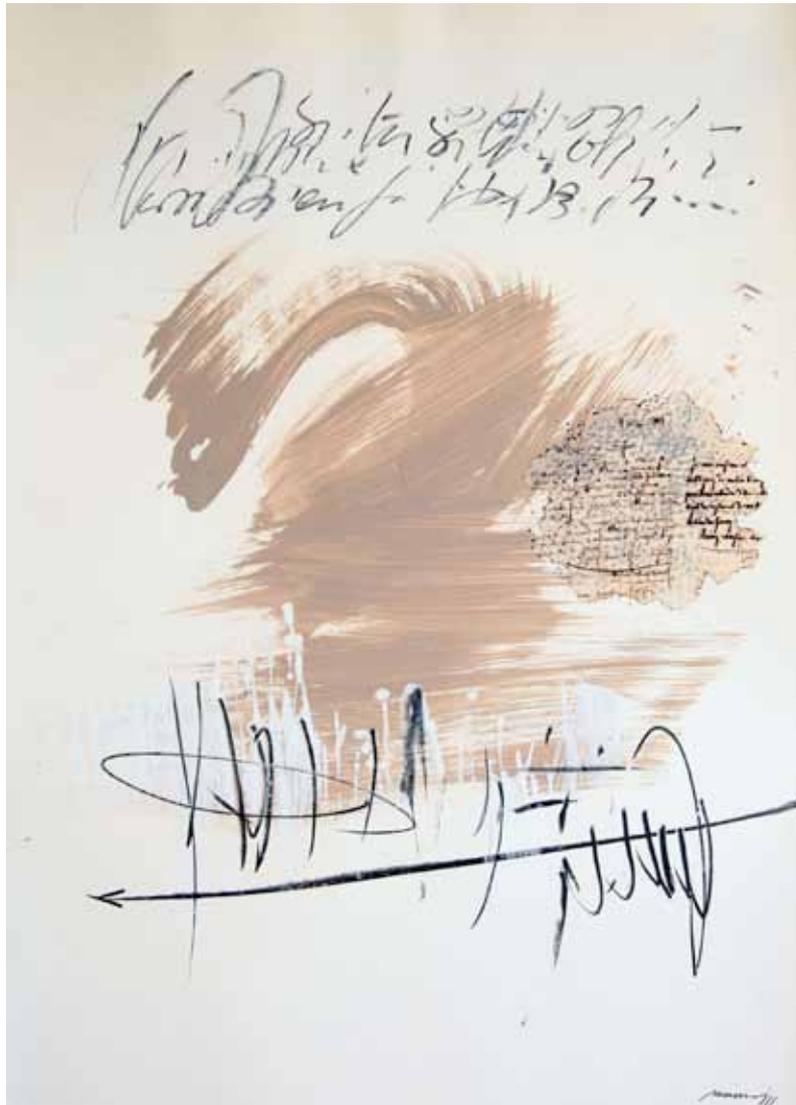
Untitled, 64.9 x 50.1cm, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2012



Untitled, 65.9 x 50.2cm, Mixed Media on Paper, 2012



Untitled, 65.9 x 50.2cm, Mixed Media on Paper, 2012



Untitled, 100 x 70cm, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2011



Untitled, 65 x 50cm, Mixed Media on Paper, 2012



Untitled, 75.9 x 57.7cm, Mixed Media and Collage on Paper, 2012



Untitled, 65.9 x 50.2cm, Mixed Media on Paper, 2012

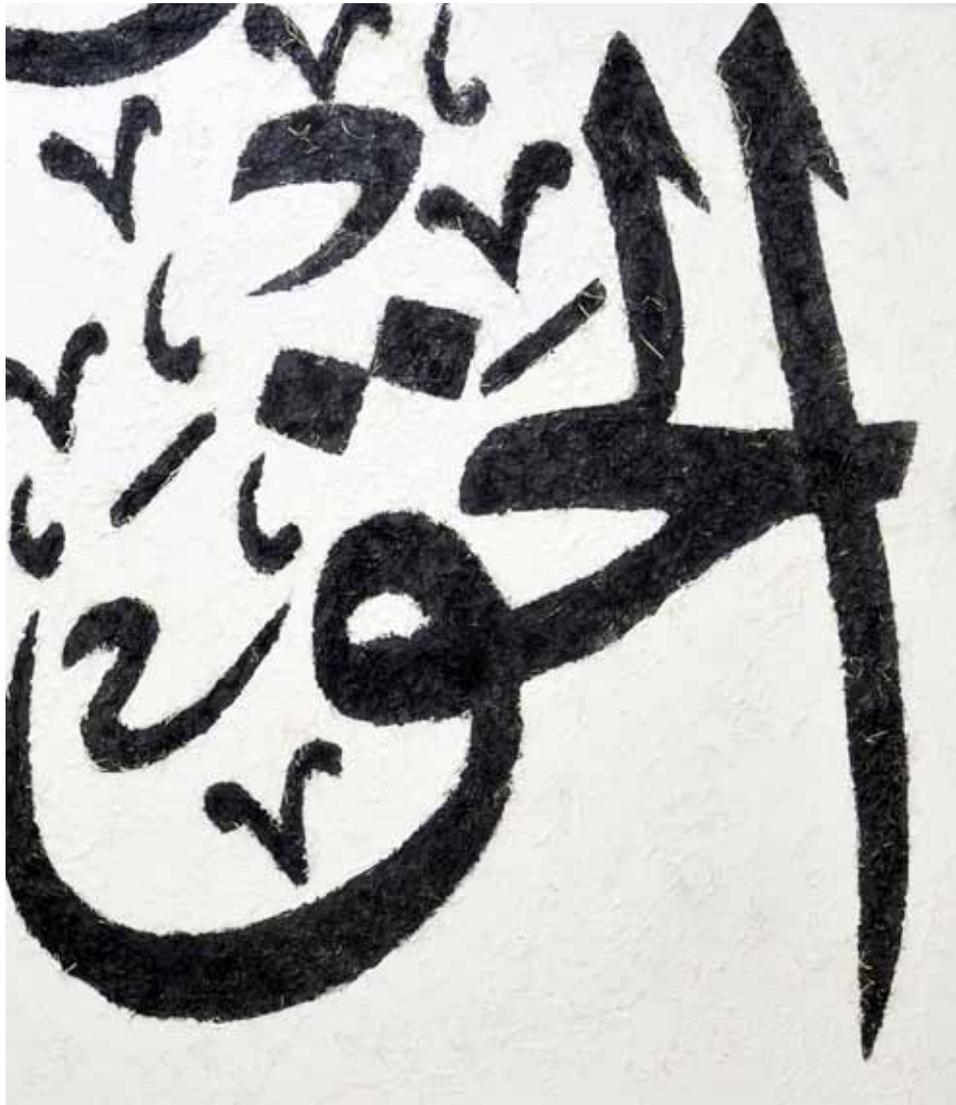
## Jamal Abdul Rahim



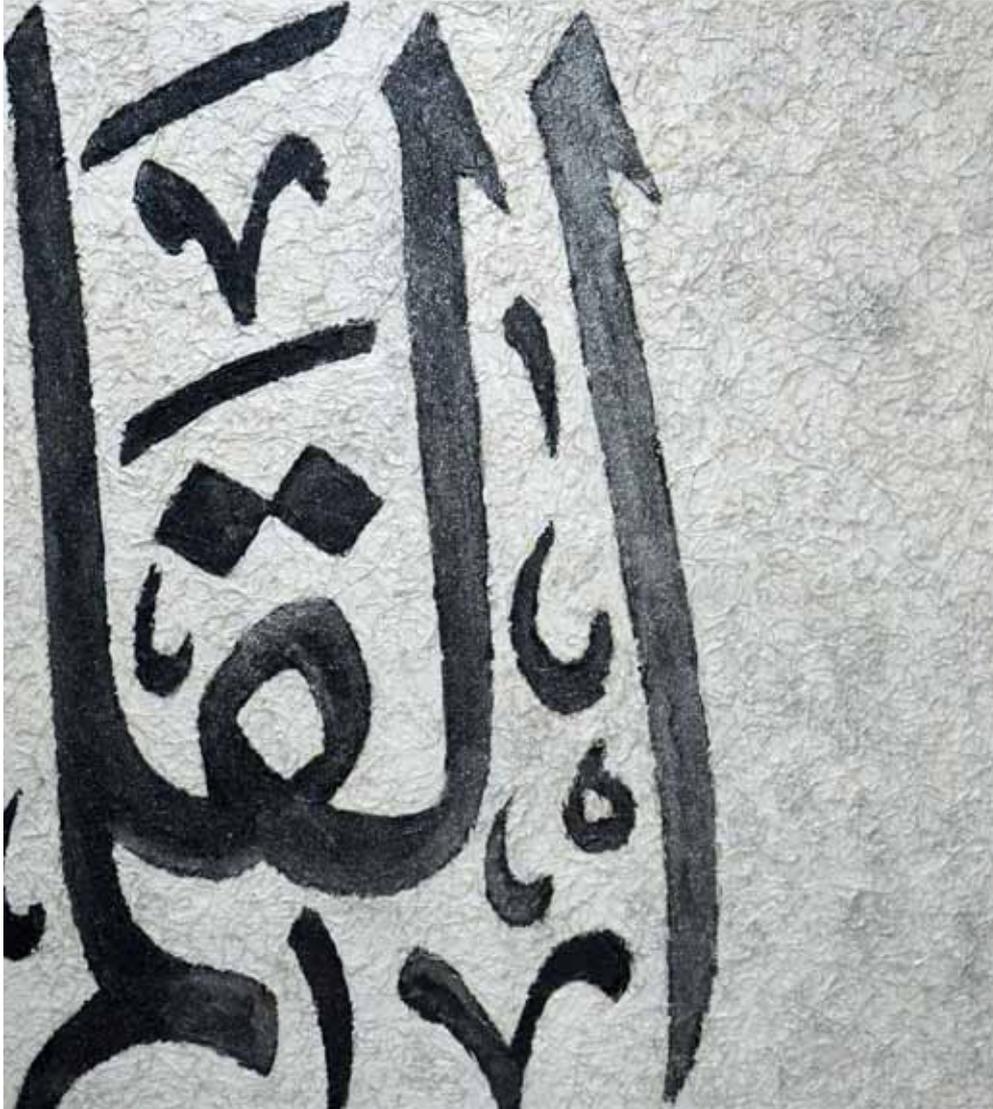
Born in Bahrain in 1965, Jamal Abdul Rahim has notched up an impressive portfolio of exhibitions, Kuwait, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Norway, Holland, Japan, Slovenia, Spain, France and the UAE to name a few. Originally a fisherman, Jamal always knew he was also an artist. His totally untutored journey into the creative world allowed him the freedom to experiment, discover and on occasions stretch the boundaries of conventional image making. It was the world of printmaking that first engaged him, his delight of feeling his way through the process coupled with his research through the history of art leading to some stunning large works taking a well-known figure or image, for instance the Mona Lisa or the Statue of David, and then personalizing it with colour and texture and often symbols of the Middle Eastern culture, Miro is also a prevailing influence. Black and white surfaces are dashed, splashed or stroked with colour. Simplistic sun imagery lies alongside swirls and waves which overlay photo etchings. Poetry and music also fascinate him. Jamal's modern touch, which is often applied in a seemingly random fashion, is only found in the most confident of artists. He is a master of the printmaking process but a fine painter and draftsman too, often presenting a series of etchings or paintings in highly original book form. More recently he has begun working in three dimensions, a medium that appeals to this physical but deep thinking artist who is fast becoming recognized as an important player in the Middle Eastern art world.



Arabic Calligraphy Collection 2, 180 x 180cm, Mixed Media & Acrylic on Canvas, 2012



Al-haq, 200 x180cm, Mixed Media & Acrylic on Canvas, 2012



Al-qalam, 200 x180cm, Mixed Media & Acrylic on Canvas, 2012



Arabic Letter Waw1, 18.5 x 8 x 31.5cm,  
Alabaster Marble, 2011



Allah2, 12 x 25 x 30cm,  
Black Galaxy Granite, 2011



Arabic Letter Black Sad1, 21 x 5.5 x 25cm,  
Granite, 2011



Arabic letter Haa, 21 x 30.5 x 17cm, Bronze, 2012

# Abdallah Akar



Abdallah Akar was born in Tunisia. He arrived in France in the late 1960's to study Science at Paris V11 University but it was after meeting Iraki Ghani Alain in 1980 which cemented his passion for calligraphy.

In 1986, he had his first public exhibition of contemporary works. In subsequent years he has held numerous solo and group exhibitions, lectures and courses. During the early 2000s, he completed an Installation: 16 textiles richly decorated with calligraphy, a tribute to the Pre-Islamic poetry, followed in 2007 by a publication of Poèmes Suspendus (Muallaq'at) edited in both languages, French and Arabic.

Abdallah Akar is always searching for a renewed rendition of the calligraphic language, exploring mediums such as fabric, canvas, wood and even glass. He shows his work extensively in Europe and is a well known artist on the Middle Eastern contemporary art scene.



Pourquoi as tu laissé le cheval M.Darwich, 130 x 97cm  
Tech.mixre sur toile, 2012



Masque pour Magnoun M. Darwich, 89 x 116cm,  
Technique mixte sur toile, 2010



L'encre du corbeau M. Darwich, 89 x 116cm  
Technique mixte sur toile, 2010



L'hiver de Rita Extraï Mahmoud Darwich, 146 x 92cm, Tech.mixte sur toile, 2011



Carnet de notes N.Qabani. 130 x 97cm, Tech.mixre sur toile,2012

## Noureddine Daifallah



Noureddine Daifallah was born in 1960 in Marrakech, Morocco where he still works and lives. Daifallah studied at the Marrakech School of Arts as a sculptor however painting is his passion.

Daifallah works with traditional Arabic Calligraphy, with a contemporary interpretation, thus breathing new life into the noble art form. His unique approach through playing with letter formation, expresses a beautiful contrast to his intricate handwriting, thus evoking emotion and beauty from the Arabic script.

Daifallah's first exhibition was when he was 17 and since then his works have been exhibited in his homeland of Morocco and throughout Europe. His works have been acquired by such institutions as the Sharjah Art Museum in UAE and the Museum of Marrakech. He is currently a Professor of Fine Arts in Marrakech.



Sans titre, 113 x 76cm , Technique Mixte sur Papier, 2011



Sans titre, 40 x 73cm, Technique mixte sur papier, 2008



Sans titre , 56.5 x 76.5cm, Technique mixte sur papier, 2008



Sans titre, 77 x 113 cm , technique mixte sur papier, 2008



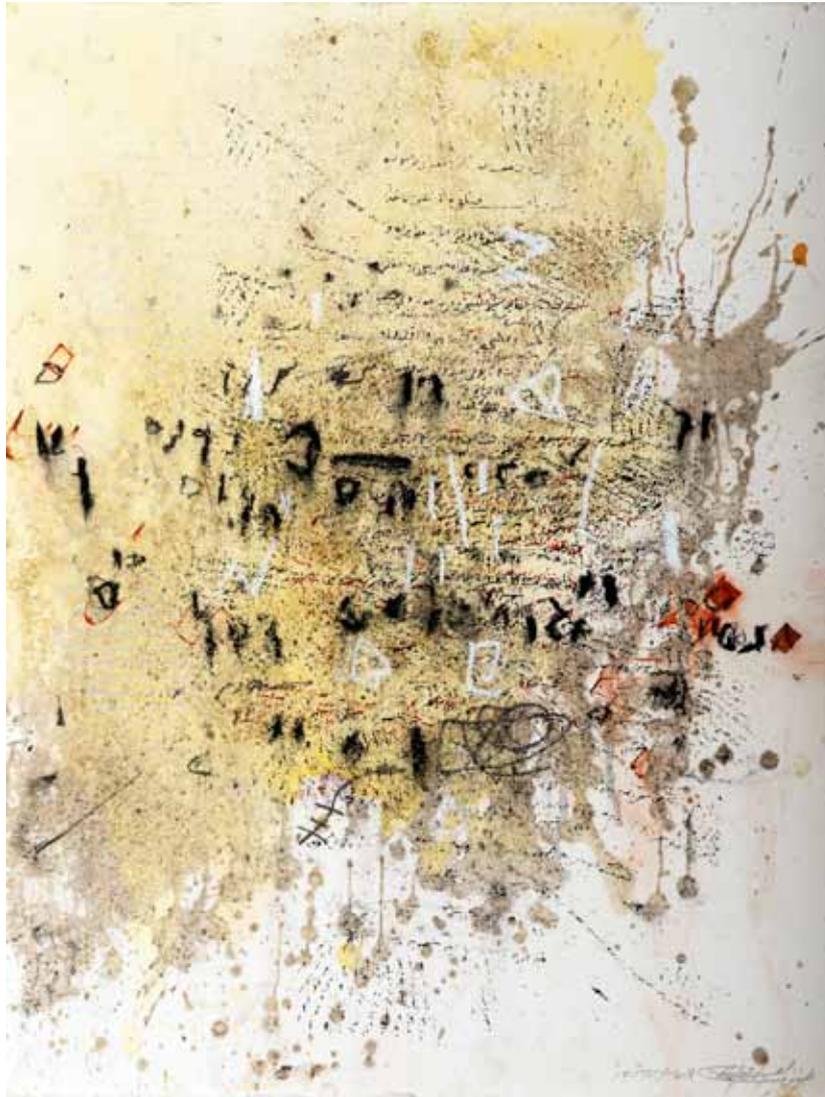
Sans titre, 56.5 x 76.5cm, Technique mixte sur papier, 2008



Sans titre, 66 x 150cm , Technique mixte sur papier, 2011



Sans titre, 80 x 121cm , technique mixte sur papier, 2013



Sans titre, 66 x 50cm, Technique mixte sur papier, 2011

## Khaled Al Saai



Khaled is a man wise beyond his years. Deeply contemplative and quietly confident he is not only a driving force behind modern Arabic calligraphic practice but also a passionate advocate of a wider understanding of this formidable art. Recognition of his rightful place in the genre comes not only from art houses, museums, universities and collectors world wide but also from fellow calligraphers who on numerous occasions have awarded him the title of Master of Calligraphy in both modern and traditional categories. Initially this ability to stride the role of being a painter and a calligrapher was a dilemma until with maturity he accepted that the two exist along side, no decision had to be taken, in fact the discipline of conforming to the edicts of the seven "pillars" of Arabic Calligraphy, Thuluth, Naskh, Tualeeq, Kufic, Diwani, Diwani Jali Jali and Regga feeds his abstract spirit allowing his painterly being to soar. Khaled's fascination with the written word was kindled and nurtured through growing up in Syria, in a family to whom creativity, visual, musical, poetic and edible! was part of daily life. His work is often a reflection on the emotions of freedom and discovery associated with his childhood.



Incense, 35 x 120cm  
Acrylic on Canvas, 2013



Weaving with Light and letters, 90 x 125cms,  
Acrylic on Canvas, 2013



Dream area, 120 x 35cm,  
Acrylic on Canvas, 2013



My Town, 75 x 55cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2013



Township, 75 x 55cms, Acrylic on Canvas, 2013



Untitled, 75 x 55cms Mixed Media on Canvas, 2013 (Dyptich)



Untitled, 75 x 55cms Mixed Media on Canvas, 2013 (Dyptich)



Untitled,  
Mixed Media on Clay, 2013



Untitled,  
Mixed Media on Clay, 2013



Untitled,  
Oil and Acrylic on Clay, 2013



Sonata of the Desert, 100 x 50cm, Mixed Media on Canvas, 2007-2013

# The Majlis Gallery



The Majlis Gallery, P.O.Box 42885, Al Musalla Roundabout,  
Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, Bur Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.  
Tel: +971 4 3536233, Fax +971 4 3535550, [www.themajlisgallery.com](http://www.themajlisgallery.com), [majlisgallery@gmail.com](mailto:majlisgallery@gmail.com)