

Visual and Symbolic Analysis of Naiel Mulla's Experience in Saudi Graphic Art: A Case Study

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the experience of Saudi artist Naiel Mulla in the field of graphic arts (printmaking), recognizing it as a pioneering artistic journey that contributed to establishing this medium within the local visual arts scene since the 1990s, and opened new pathways for print-based expression in Saudi Arabia. The study adopts a visual and symbolic analytical approach by examining six selected artworks that reflect the diversity of techniques and methods employed by the artist—from linoleum, wood, and zinc engraving to the incorporation of textural materials and hand coloring as independent expressive elements. The findings reveal Mulla's deep visual awareness and his ability to harmonize local cultural symbols (such as palm trees and Arabic calligraphy) with emotionally charged abstract compositions. The study also highlights his key role in introducing the printing press to the Kingdom, marking a turning point in the development of local printmaking practices, alongside his international participation that helped position Saudi graphic art in global professional platforms. His works serve as a visual mirror of identity and belonging, and as a tangible expression of a comprehensive artistic experience that merges technical mastery with multilayered symbolic content.

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