16x20x20 **An Exhibition by Qais Al-Sindy**

Qais Al-Sindy has been on journey. A journey of the body and the mind, but most of all, a journey of the heart. A journey that began and some might say ended in Iraq. A journey that began again, and some might say has not yet ended, in America. A journey of the hand of the artist, in service to the heart of the artist.

Qais Al-Sindy's paintings are born of his memories, leavened by his experiences and osmosis of the world around him, translated through his mind and heart to his hand, into paint on canvas. After so many years, his technical skill with brush and knife has enabled him to foreground the images and messages his expressionistic paintings convey.

The figures that appear in Al-Sindy's paintings have their own memories and stories to tell. Some of them are his own stories, some he interprets from others. And some are dreams.

In the exhibition ***16x20x20***, Al-Sindy explores themes of the sameness and the diversity of the exile experience. These exiled figures carry burdens, memories, souvenirs, tokens of lost lives and loves, and a place called home. His canvases are dense with imagery; shapes and forms piled in painterly gestures into heaps of color, as if these figures have about their persons a disparate assemblage of bags and boxes, cellos, violins, pearls, all the precious detritus of a life left behind.

This is not, however, chaos, but rather the orderly passage of a journey from one life to the next, made in hope. Note the verticality of the images; note the black lines corralling the forms, giving them dignity and even a certain serenity to carry them along their pilgrimage to a new life.

Twenty canvases telling twenty stories. Twenty verses with the same refrain: I had a life, I have a life, I will keep on living.

The works' titles provide a chorus to these songs of exile: ***Departure, My Precious Pyramid and My Dog, The Red Violin of My Grandfather, Pearls from Homeland Paradise, Bring the Moon with You*** and ***How Long Can My Soul Stand*** segue into ***Expectation, Quiet Dawn*** and finally, ***Let's Begin Again***. For ***The Woman Who Carried Her Country Over Her Head***, Qais Al-Sindy has painted her anguish, but also a place to rest.

Dagmar Painter
Curator, Gallery Al-Quds
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