Qais Al-Sindy

16X20X20

The white canvases and black frames used in Qais Al-Sindy's "16x20x20" are identical in size, and appear equivalent in every other way. Yet, the Baghdad-bred Californian collected the materials for the 20 16-by-20-inch paintings on view at Jerusalem Fund Gallery Al-Quds in various countries around the globe. That inspired the artist to explore themes of exile and fundamental humanity: The ingredients come from everywhere yet are essentially the same.

Executed in an expressionist style, the pictures mostly show colorful single figures on gray backgrounds. Al-Sindy gave them titles such as "Bring the Moon With You," and then enlisted writers to sketch his characters' stories in poems with the same titles. The paintings include the hopeful "Woman in Red" and the bereft "The Woman Who Carried Her Country Over Her Head," which is almost entirely black and white, save for a trace of gold. On balance, though, Al-Sindy's suite is more a tribute to migrants' resilience than a lament for their loss.

Qais Al-Sindy: 16x20x20 *Through Sept. 28 at the Jerusalem Fund Gallery Al-Quds, 2425 Virginia Ave. NW.*

Mark Jenkins
Washington Post

September 21, 2019.