Return to the Garden of Eden

An Iraqi artist is trying to inspire nostalgia for a lost world he yearns for through 44 paintings that will be exhibited at the Iraqi cultural center in Washington, DC on March 7, 2014.
Qais Al-Sindy, who lived between Iraq, Jordan and the US, is making reference to a Mesopotamian King in his art work, who was placed in a divine garden, the Garden of Eden, to guard the tree of life. Since old books claim the Garden of Eden was situated at the head of the Arabian Gulf, where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers run into the sea, the artist depicted the garden in his paintings in Iraq, where he originally comes from.

Traditionally, the derivation of the name "Eden" was from the Akkadian 'edinnu', derived from a Sumerian word meaning "plain" or "steppe". The plain here is the "paradise" which gains its connotations with the Garden of Eden and its heavenly pattern.
"That's why I depicted a fisherman from the south of Iraq standing next to his two boats in a meditation pause, showing his intention to use them to travel back home," Mr. al-Sindy said. "The facial expressions of this Southern fisherman are camouflaged. It could represent any person."
Using strong bright colors and modern expressionism, the paintings show sad figures that suffer from feelings of restlessness and a strong desire to return home. Mr. al -Sindy said the artwork is not limited to a specific time or place.

The lone figures, a common theme in Mr. Al-Sindy paintings, are ready to narrate their own tales, yet there is no specific era that they belong to. '"These sole figures keep the viewers always attentive since they are unpredictable. "Just let your soul float and follow them, they will take you through the path that leads to the Garden of Eden," he said. Meanwhile, in the many figures in some paintings, they are twisting together and sometimes relax with homogeneity and settlement.

"I am trying to draw attention to the figures in the paintings who are trying to say something, or that they are waiting for something," said the 46 year-old artist. “Maybe we are living our happiest moments but still there is this nagging feeling of something missing. We keep looking for more, yearning for our happiness that we once experienced or even we didn’t yet"
The artist sees the world as filled with unfulfilled dreams. However one cannot resist but chase those dreams in the hope to return to the Garden of Eden as he puts it. But it is like chasing a mirage."Every person has a dream and the dream is to return to a homeland. It is nostalgia and homesickness for a lost world. It is like chasing the phantom of lost paradise, a quest that has no limits.

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