

# Mohammad Alfaraj

Portfolio 2025



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# Mohammad Alfaraj

Saudi, b. 1993, Al Hassa, KSA

## Bio

**Mohammad Alfaraj** is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice spans filmmaking, installation, sculpture, writing, and photography. Rooted in the rich cultural and natural tapestry of his native AlHasa, Alfaraj's work is a profound meditation on the intricate relationship between humanity and the environment. AlHasa, an oasis that defies the harshness of its surrounding desert, serves as both the physical and conceptual foundation for his artistic exploration. This unique landscape, where life clings to the margins of aridity, informs Alfaraj's nuanced perspective on the delicate balance between survival and decay, resilience and vulnerability.

Drawing deeply from the indigenous materials and stories of his homeland—dirt, palm fronds, dates, and the oral traditions of local workers and children—Alfaraj creates works that resonate with a poignant, yet hopeful, reflection on the symbiotic ties between people and nature. His art, suffused with a poetic sensibility, transcends mere representation, becoming a dialogue that navigates the dualities of existence: creation and destruction, tradition and modernity, despair and optimism. Alfaraj's practice has been recognized through numerous exhibitions, including *Find Me Through the Fog* at Al Moftaha Village, Abha (2022); his solo presentation at Alserkal Avenue, Dubai (2021); and the critically acclaimed *I Love You, Urgently* at 21,39 Jeddah Arts Week (2020).

His solo exhibition *Still Life and Plastic Dreams* at ATHR Gallery (2020) further established his voice as one of Saudi Arabia's leading contemporary artists. Alfaraj's academic background in Applied Mechanical Engineering from King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals (2017) underscores his analytical approach to art-making, blending technical precision with a deep-seated reverence for the organic.

His early recognition came in 2015 when he was awarded first place in the student category at the Saudi Film Festival for his documentary *Lost*, a work that set the stage for his ongoing exploration of cinematic narrative.

His residency at *The Oasis Reborn* in AlUla (2022) is a testament to his continued engagement with the theme of regeneration, both ecological and cultural. Represented by ATHR Gallery, Alfaraj's works have been showcased at prestigious platforms including the Saudi Film Festival, Saudi Art Council, Sharjah Art Foundation, Art Jameel, and the Lyon Biennale, affirming his place in the international art scene.

## Statement

*I try to create work from the fragments I gather in this scavenger hunt we call life. A hunt for truth, love, empathy, poetry, and growth.*

*A photograph might lead to a sculpted moment. Bits of conversations can spark stories and characters. These become little monuments to a life that was lived - or could have been. Traces of the explosive condition of being.*

*All of it in search of a truth that lives somewhere between reality, creativity, and imagination.*



# The Date Fruit of Knowledge

Video / 2022

**The Date Fruit of Knowledge** is a stop-motion film created entirely on sand. It tells the story of a small bird and his friends on a quest to gain all knowledge at once - only to discover that true wisdom comes with time and experience.

Each frame is hand-drawn in sand, creating a mesmerizing optical illusion that feels as if it's unfolding live before your eyes.



>>> Mennour Gallery



# The Whispers of Today Are Heard in the Garden of Tomorrow

Installation with mixed media / 2024



**The Whispers of Today are Heard in the Gardens of Tomorrow** is a mixed media installation composed of photographs on fabric, palm frond sculptures, and a charcoal mural.

The photographs act as fossils of a vanishing agricultural life, capturing moments of a fading farming culture. The palm frond sculptures, made from discarded new palm sprouts, serve as imagined monuments to lives that could have been lived. The mural, rendered in charcoal from burned palm trees, carries the memory of what once was.

Together, the work reflects on the past with reverence and prays for a more hopeful tomorrow.

DIRIYAH BIENNALE FOUNDATION, PHOTO BY MARCO CAPPELLETTI



# Limbs of the Past, an Offering of the Future

Installation / 2022

**Alfaraj's artistic and life practices** intersect and intertwine in many ways, nourished by many wells of inspiration, people and places, memories and dreams, language and nature, traditional and modern practices, and the complex relationship that connects it all to make our present complex, ugly and beautiful all at once. In his expressions, Alfaraj uses tools such as collaborating with nature, visual and acoustic experimentation, and reusing found objects and materials, with the aim of drawing people into a sensory and poetic experience, capable of making us feel and then think and change.

The work derives sanctity and spiritual significance through the use/reuse of natural and non-natural materials, and integrating them with drawings, words and shapes, as all of these elements carry within them the history and memory of those who touched, used and believed in them.



# The Face of the City

Paintings / 2022

**The Face of the City** explores the façade as a site of expression—mirroring how the walls of a city act as both unofficial records of its history and platforms for its residents' voices.

Rooted in community, this iteration is developed with facilitators and volunteers from diverse backgrounds in Jeddah, many of whom Alfaraj has previously collaborated with.

HAYY JAMEEL COMMISSION / FIRST PRIZE WINNER





HAYY JAMEEL COMMISSION / FIRST PRIZE WINNER

# The Speech of the Trees

Mixed Media Installation / 2022

AL SERKAL, DUBAI





**The installation evokes a poetic eulogy** to the once magnificent primeval forests, assembling charcoal drawings, field recordings, and found wood arranged as the carcass of a mythological woodland beast.

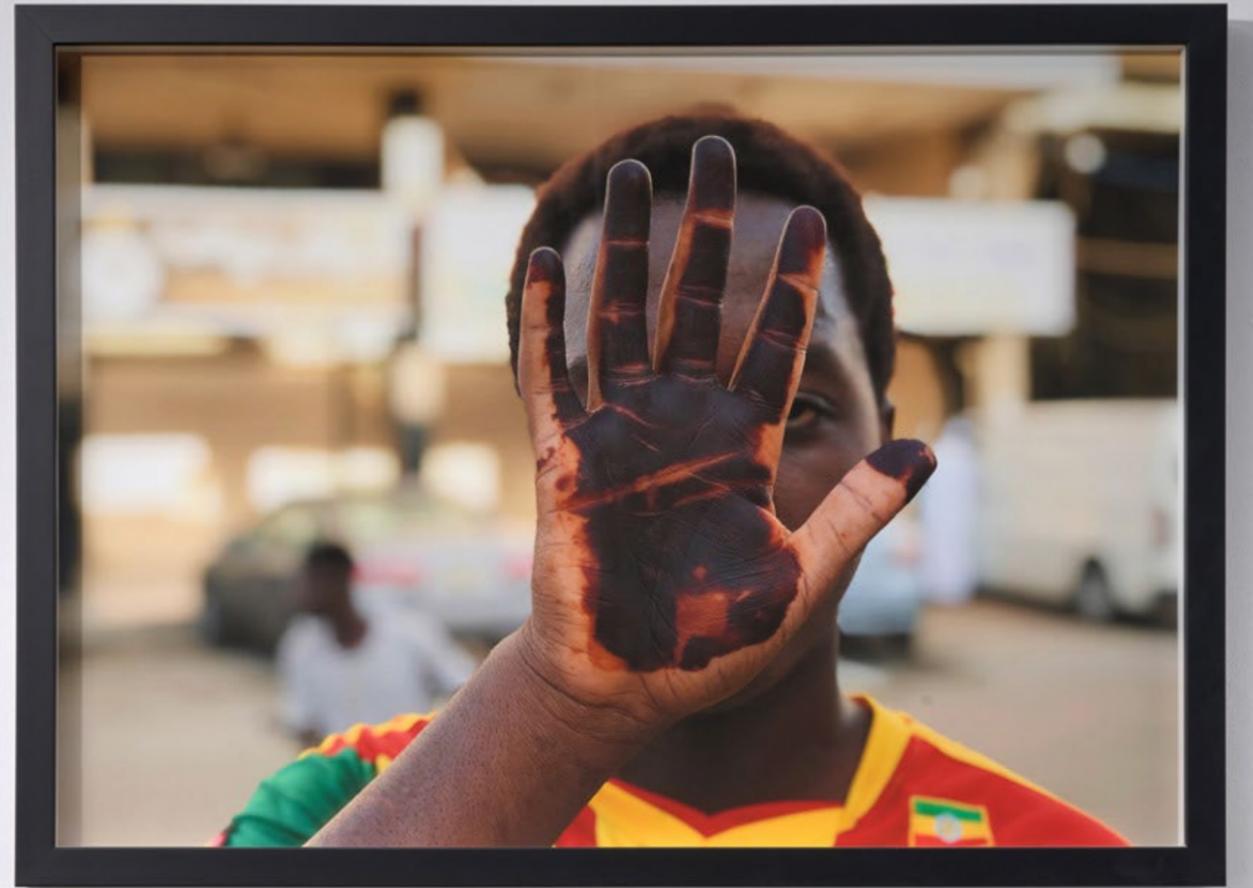
The artist attempts to meditate on an act of embodied listening rather than speaking about or to the forest. Working collaboratively with local community members, Mohammed erects stands of paper that use found charcoal to trace the charred barks, creating poetic replicas of the damaged forests within the gallery space. The skeletal form is embedded with sound recording of charcoal rubbing of the trees around Abha's landscape, creating sonic shadows of words. The installation make present a polyphony of contemporary and ancient narratives. In enacting a Pegan eulogy, Al Faraj make present a polyphony of contemporary and ancient narratives.

# Fossils of Time, Fossils of Knowledge, Fossils of the City

Prints and Mixed Media Installation / 2022



**A photograph is a fossil of time** In continuing my multidisciplinary practice that intertwines different elements, stories and materials together, here I look at photography and the photograph as Fossils Of Time. A way of seeing and grasping a moment, in its spirituality and materiality. Tracing human life, dreams and struggles, by digging in life, extracting its symbols and language by experiencing it as a story archaeologist, that collect those traces, symbols, elements and materials. To transform it from the photographic to the sculptural, a physical three dimensional fossil of our moments and time on this earth. This work also traces a creative process, from where does it start, from where it takes its inspiration, to where it goes and how it materializes. A photograph is "this moment was there" A sculpture is "we were here, and this is our trace"



# My Mother's Braid

Installation / 2021

**This sculptural photograph** holds weaved palm leaves extended as a hair braid. The leaves are treated in a ritual done by the women from Hasa to their hair with henna and essence oils. "To pray is to hold on to our mother's braid that extends to the heavens."





**Still life and Plastic Dreams** is Alfaraj's first solo show, curated by Mayssa Fatouh. The exhibition is a metaphor on the state of Alfaraj's hometown and the world, an exploration of co-habitation of humans in a natural habitat, showing local self-contained agricultural practices confronted with mass extraction and extinction by the hyper industrialized era, radically disrupting and increasing the feeling of a precarious present.

Based on the premise of the ongoing civilizational paradigm shift we are partaking in, with the backdrop of weather and climate influencing our existence, ranging from daily life in a rural setting to apocalyptic visions of the future where the capitalist machine is the usurper of nature.

# Still life and Plastic Dreams

Installation / 2020

ATHR GALLERY, JEDDAH





# The Last Session

Photography / 2020

**The Last Session** is a photographic and sculptural series that explores themes of childhood and education. The work often captures abandoned schools and empty playgrounds, evoking a sense of nostalgia and loss.

While digital education has made learning more accessible, it also highlights what's been left behind. The physical classroom, with all its human interaction and shared experience, remains irreplaceable.



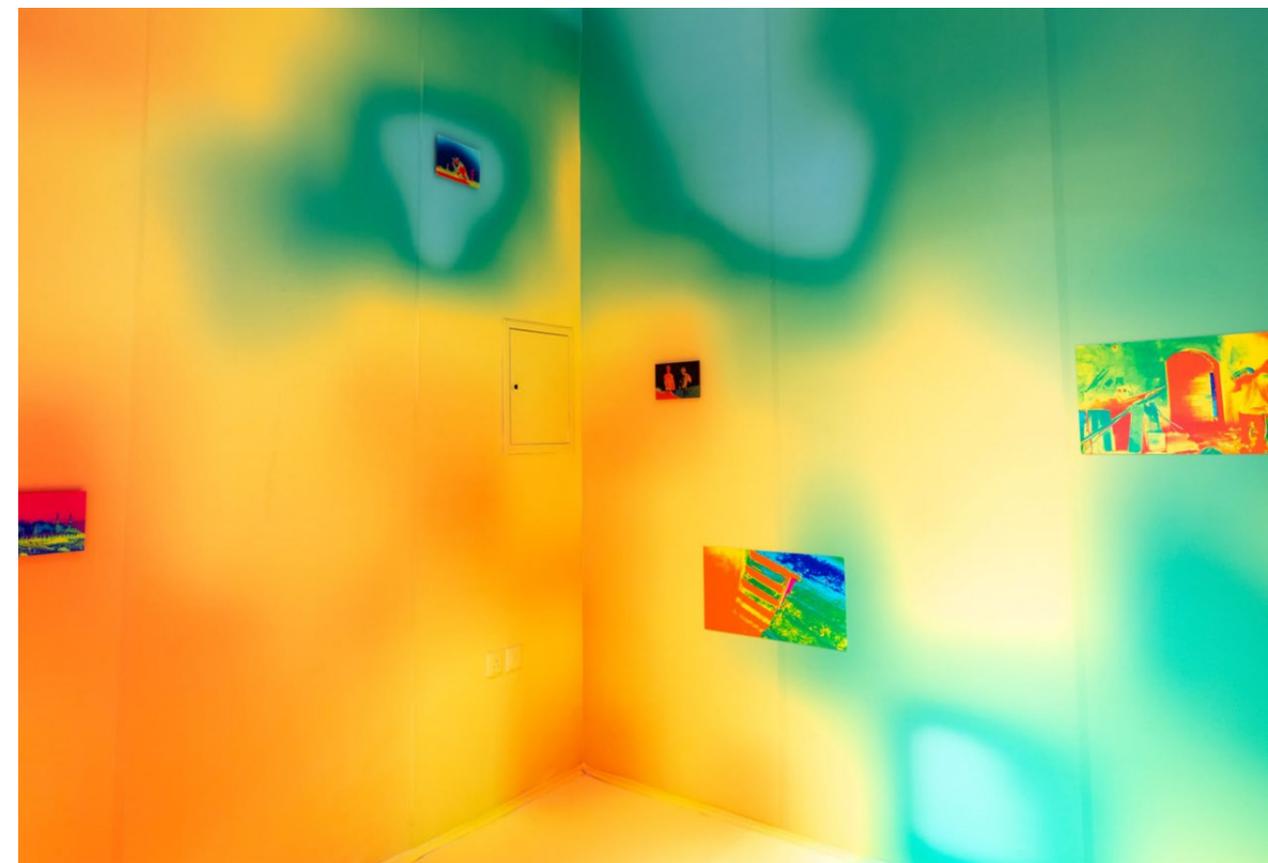
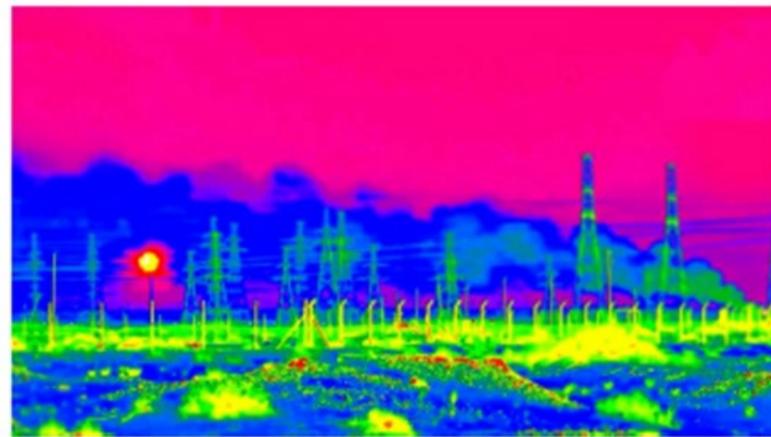


# Heat

Installation / 2019

ATHR GALLERY, JAX

**HEAT**, is a visceral account of climate crisis in a region already inflicted by a harsh climate, Heat elides the present and the future to caution against complacency. Everyday scenes of shepherds and labourers are made alien through the technology and aesthetic of the thermal image. The narrative provides a new lens on current conditions, showing the hardships exacerbated by rising temperatures.



## Education /

- \* 2017 King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dahrhan, Saudi Arabia.  
BA Degree in Applied Mechanical Engineering

## Solo Exhibitions /

- \* 2025 'Seas are Sweet, Fish Tears are Salty', Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE.
- \* 2025 'Art Basel Parcours', Mennour, Basel, Switzerland
- \* 2023 'The Date Fruit of Knowledge', Mennour, Paris
- \* 2020, 'Still Life and Plastic Dreams', Athr Gallery, Jeddah, KSA.

## Selected Group Exhibitions /

- \* 2025 Once We Were Gardens, Kravas Estate Kampos, Chios, Greece
- \* 2024, More Than Meets the Eye, AlUla, KSA
- \* 2024 ORBIS TERTIUS, Paris
- \* 2024, Art Basel Paris
- \* 2024, SAMOCA, Riyadh
- \* 2024, Diriyah Biennale, Riyadh
- \* 2024, Bamako Encounters, Biennale of Contemporary African Photography, Mali
- \* 2022, Find Me Through the Fog, Al Moftaha Village, Abha, KSA
- \* 2023, Net Zero, Ithra
- \* 2023, Blur of the Wells, ATHR Gallery, AlUla
- \* 2020, HEAT, Very Public, Riyadh. KSA
- \* 2020, I Love You, Urgently, 21.39 SAC. Jeddah. KSA
- \* 2019, Islamic Arts Festival 22nd edition, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, UAE
- \* 2019, Surface Tension. Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
- \* 2019, In the Presence of Play, Historical Jeddah, Jeddah KSA
- \* 2018 The Clocks Striking Thirteen. Athr Gallery, Jeddah. KSA
- \* 2017 Safar, 21,39 SAC, Jeddah, KSA

## Residencies /

- \* 2024 Delfina Foundation, London
- \* 2023 Kamel Mennour, Paris
- \* 2023 Alula Artists Residency
- \* 2019 Can Serrat, Barcelona

## Awards /

- \* Medalist of Emerging Artist in Art Basel, 2025.
- \* Hayy Jameel Facade Commission 'The Face of the City', 2022.
- \* Winner of Crossway Foundation competition "Encountering another world", 2015.
- \* Honorable mention in Plural+ youth video festival. 2015. New York. USA.
- \* Golden palm in Saudi Film festival 2015 for LOST, Student category.
- \* Winner of Colors of Saudi photography competition  
Development and advancement section, 2012.

## Bibliography /

"I Love You, Urgently" gains global attention and unprecedented public engagement in its first month- Saudi Gazette report, 2020. <https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/589780>

Sharjah Art Foundation Presents Group Exhibition "Surface Tension" by Ayesha Sohail - Harper's Bazaar, 2019 - <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/art/exhibitions/sharjah-art-foundation-presents-group-exhibition-surface-tension>

New Sharjah Art Show brings together emerging artists to explore the present moment by Anna Seaman. The National  
<https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/art/new-sharjah-art-show-brings-together-emerging-artists-to-explore-the-present-moment-1.887274>

Building walkers, heritage art realm to captivate Jeddah Season visitors - Saudi Gazette report 2019