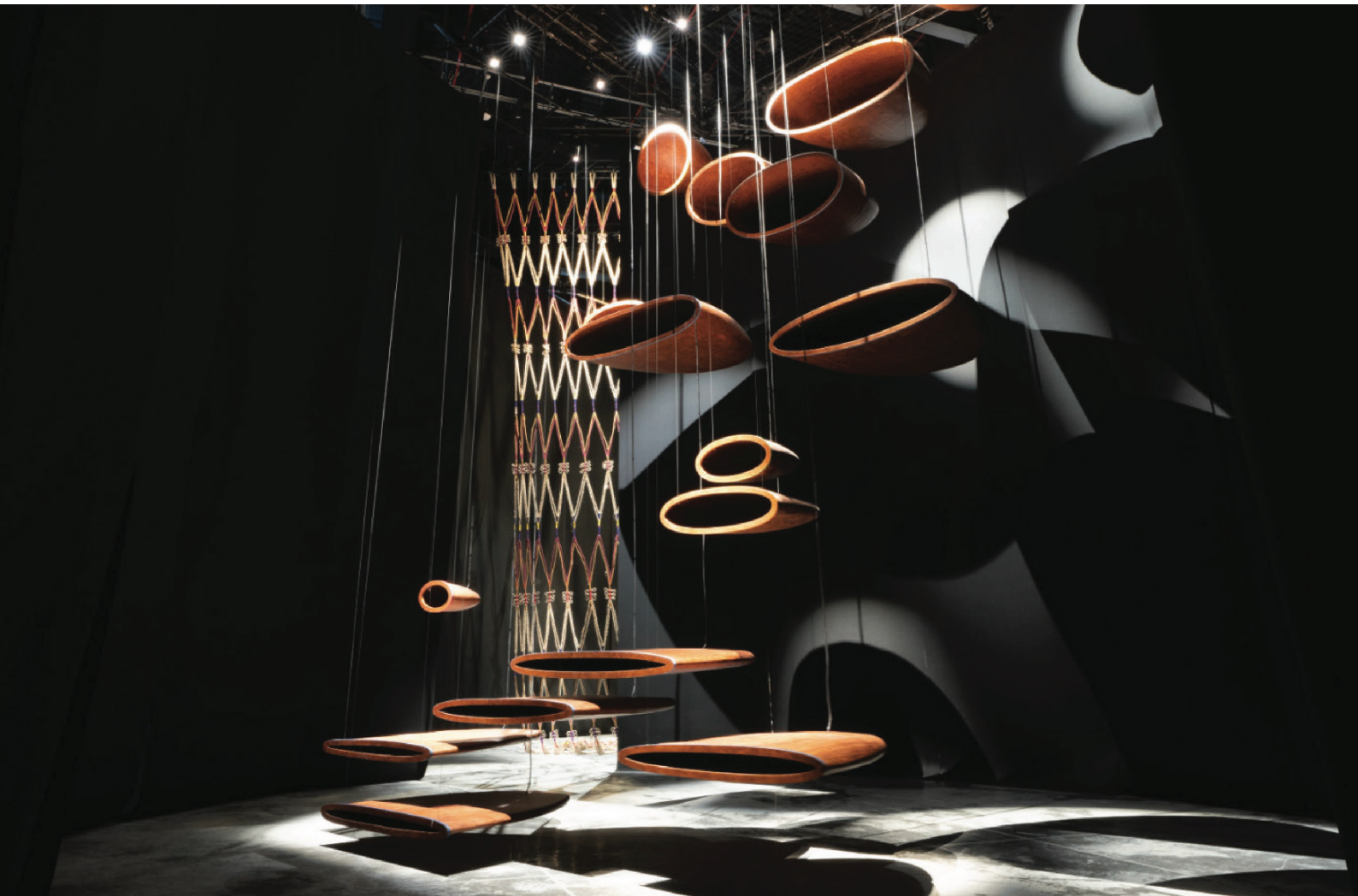


# Basmah Felemban

Portfolio 2025



أثر  
ATHR



# Basmah Felemban

b. 1993, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

## Bio

**Basmah Felemban** is a multidisciplinary artist whose work navigates the intersections of Islamic art, geometry, digital design, and speculative world-building. Rooted in a background as a self-taught graphic designer, Felemban earned her MA in Islamic and Traditional Art from the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London. She draws from Arab and Persian cosmographies, cartographic manuscripts, and philosophies from the 10th–12th centuries—traditions that blur the lines between science, mythology, and imagination.

Her practice combines meticulous design methodologies with contemporary tools such as video games, CNC machines, and digital mapping, producing works that range from secret languages and puzzles to interactive interfaces, digital video art, and sculptures. Felemban's research spans geology, genealogy, math, invasive species, and poetry as building blocks for world-building. This approach explores identity, migration, and the gaps in collective memory, particularly within her family history, shaped by oceans and service in pilgrimage.

Deeply influenced by her upbringing in Jeddah—its multicultural legacy and proximity to water—Felemban resists the external framing of Islamic art through a historical or Western gaze. Instead, her work embraces a forward-looking, speculative lens, grounded in the belief that imagination and futurism is essential for discovery and expansion.

Felemban's exhibitions include *Consecrated Networks* (Athr Gallery), *First House* (Islamic Art Biennale), *Worldbuilding* (Julia Stoschek Collection), *So it Appears* (ICA at VCU), and *Rhizoma* (Venice Biennale). Felemban has established herself as a curator deeply committed to fostering the Saudi art community, she has led projects such as *The Waves Won't Stop When You Leave* (2019), *RSH Festival* (2023), and the 9th edition of *Young Saudi Artists* titled *Biting Between One's Teeth* (2025).

Currently, Felemban explores video game development as an artistic practice, continuing to uncover the esoteric dimensions of the world—starting from the self and radiating outward—anchoring her belief that art is a vital existential tool for expanding human understanding.



# Vessel of Wreckage

2025 / OSAKA Expo, Japan /  
ATHR Gallery, Riyadh, KSA

The show is set up in a ship's basement, a control room of some sort - Wave Catcher is the central piece, an ancient machine used by the mythical creatures in my sci-fi world, they're travelling marine creatures that live solely to collect data and travel. The machine, Consisting of 16 vessels that correspond to the 16 sentences of the call to prayer, a synchronized call emitting around the planet one timezone at a time 5 times a day, with the help of the wave catcher, captains of the ship are able to collect data on distances between different points through listening to the sound of the Adan transmitting through bodies of water (seas, oceans, rivers), a vital machine to navigate the way through the sea.

A game console The Gömböc, the Turtle and the Evolution of Shape is a videogame taking the player through a test of survival, you control an atom with the goal of reaching atop a mountain where there's a table of mathematical objects that the player interacts with to change the physics of the environment, in the background you hear a lecture explaining the physics laws of the world, and the relationship of rivers, pebbles, and forms in understanding the ecology.

Surrounded by circular windows looking to the outside, Pulang is a video installation of 5 videos documenting my process of research from the reality and history of Palembang, the island my family comes from (Felemban), looking at the colonial history of this small island that feels almost mythical to me, where all I know about it is what I can hardly find online in English. Five videos documenting that research process from historical facts, to obscure ideas and connections in hope to draw a narrative of a lost family history.

Fish from the ground is a diorama made of resin sculptures and acrylic platform that reflects on the myth of the appearance of catfish in Wadi hanifa, a puzzling event for the local people of Riyadh when videos went viral that documented visitors hand fishing in muddy ground in a desert area with no running water sparked curiosity and raised questions about how this could be possible.

Those narrative driven works, oscillating between fiction and nonfiction are supported by paintings and drawings of mathematical graphs, manipulated images, and generated ones. The artist sets the stage to take the viewers in a moment of the daily life of her mythical creatures.





# Before Asphalt

2024 / Photographs and gouache paint  
47x64.5cm

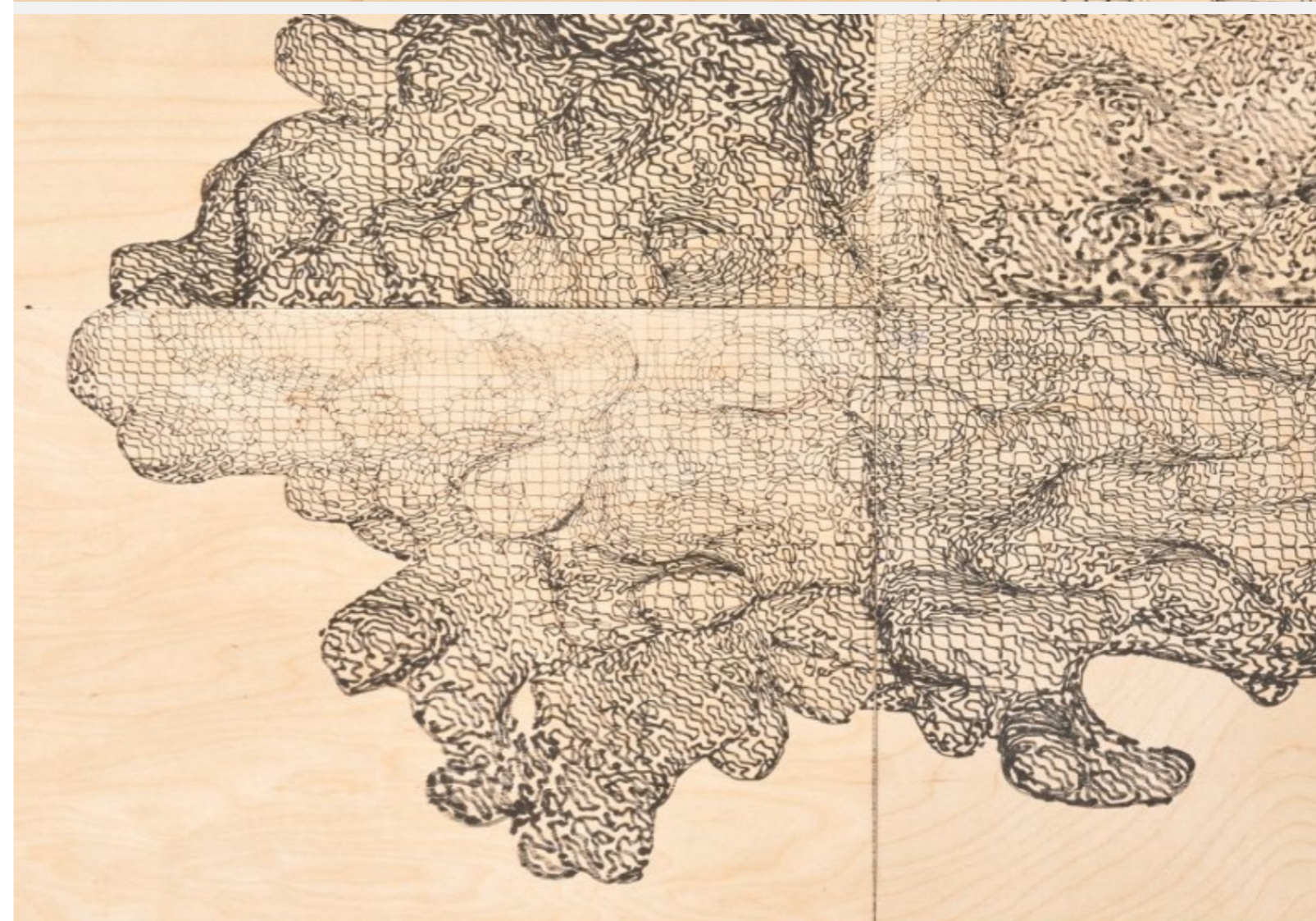
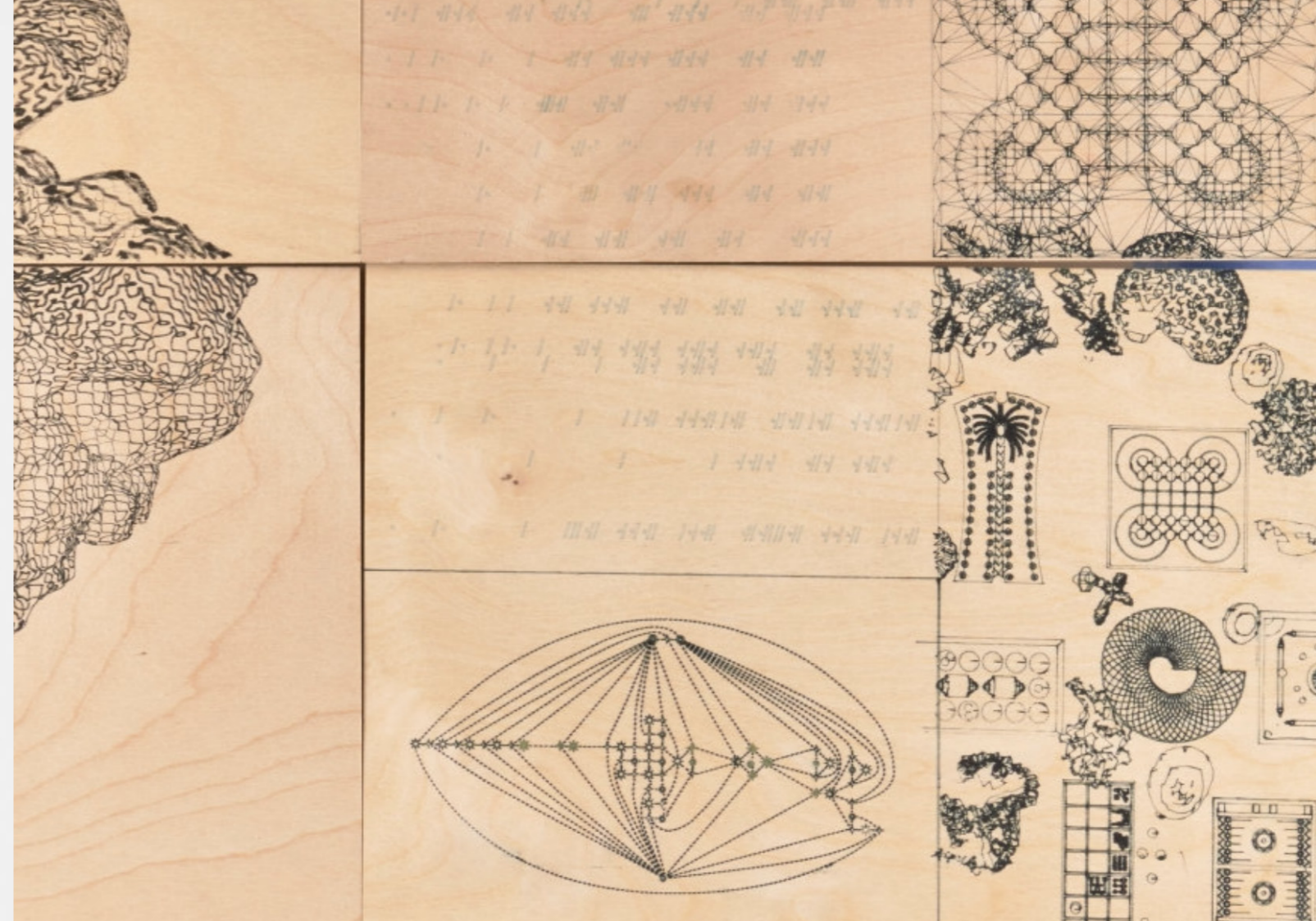
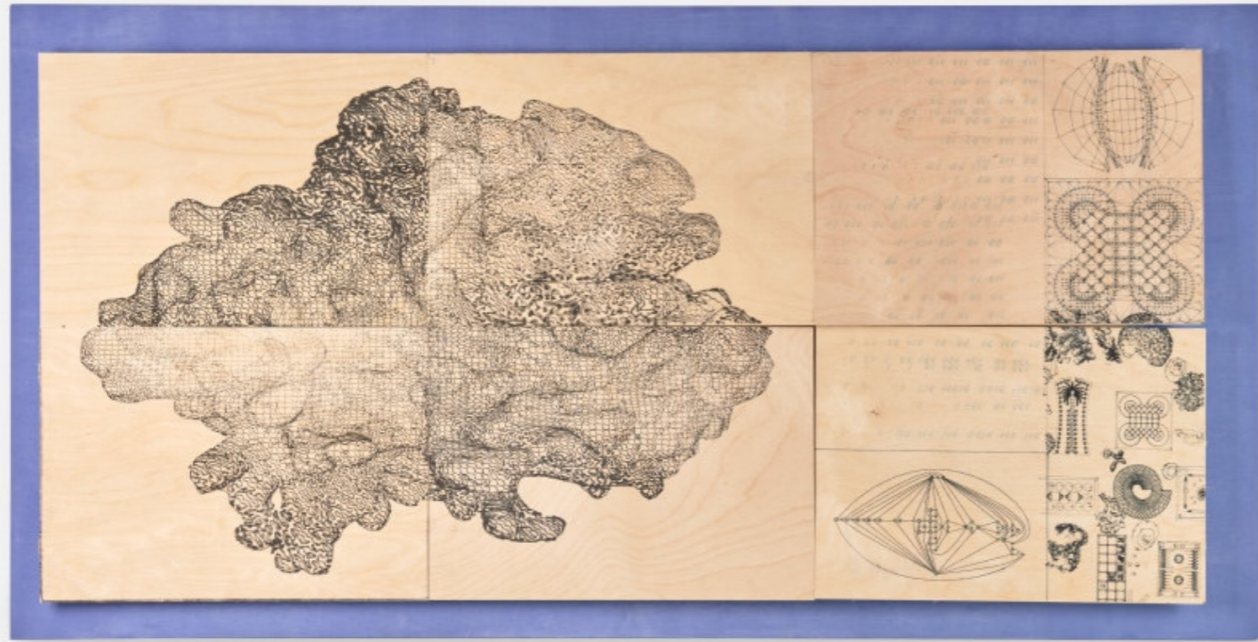
In this collection of photographs, the artist approaches potholes as portals. Taken by Felemban's father in the late 80s when he worked in the Jeddah municipality to document his before / after work on road maintenance, the artist makes her own interruptions by adding spheric gouache paint atop the potholes. In doing so, she attempts to explore a personal history of exploring construction and architecture to scan and/or designate portals as an escape plan.

# Colour Scrolls

2024 / Digital print on Cotton fabric

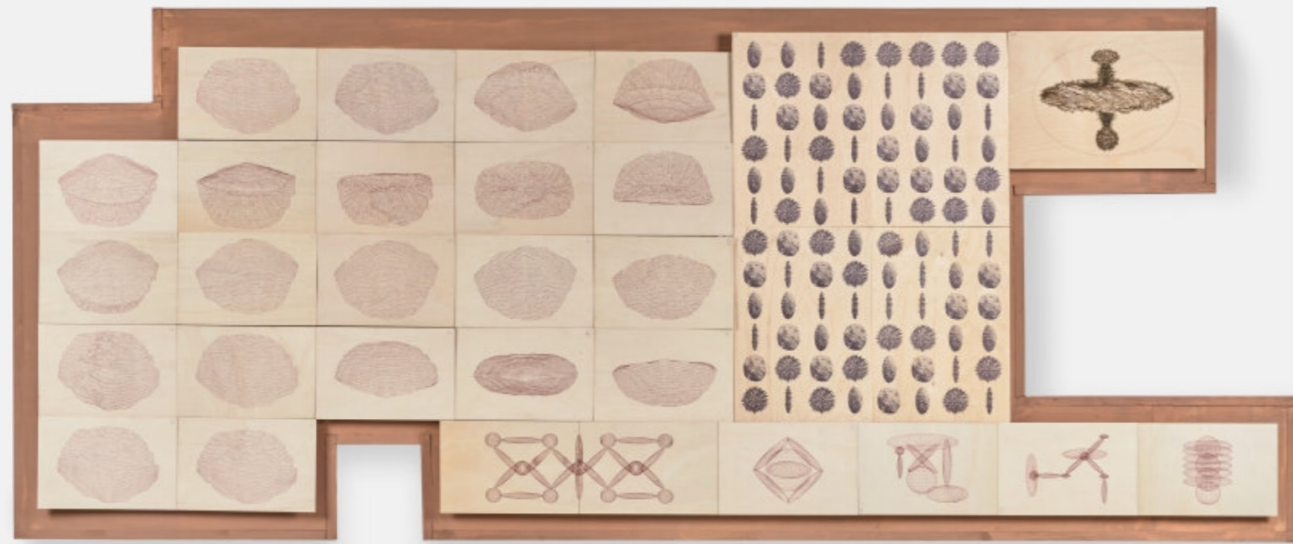
In this series, Felemban examines how language and culture impact the ways in which we understand color. She looks at color as a material reality in and of itself, drawing from influences including Al-Hussein bin Ali Al-Nimri, a scholar of literature and language from Basra who wrote 'The Polished' (Al-Mullamma' d. 385 AH. Considered one of the first linguistic treatises that specialized in the study of colors, he delves into the five colors that God Almighty created: white, black, red, yellow, and green, four of which he singled out for the sons of Adam: white, black, red, and yellow.





# Coral Cosmography Leaf

2024 / Plywood, ballpen



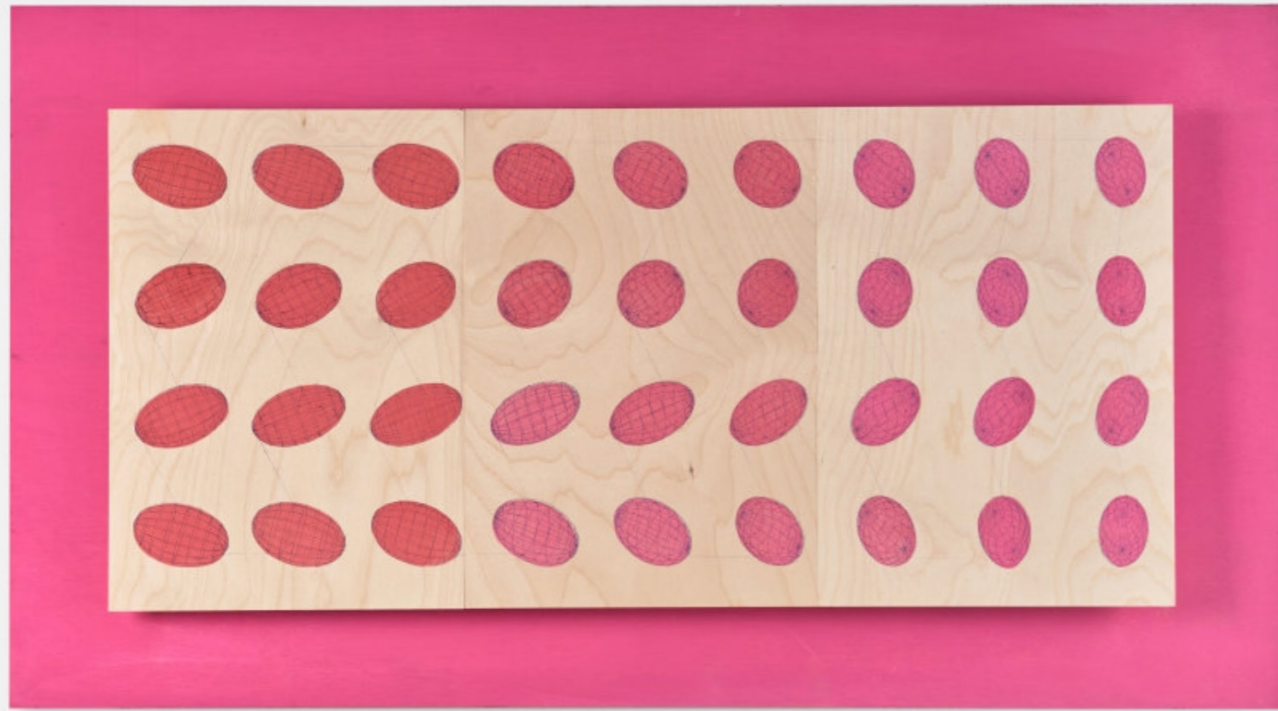
# Coral Sprite Leaf

2024 / Plywood, ballpen



# Coral Smart UV Map

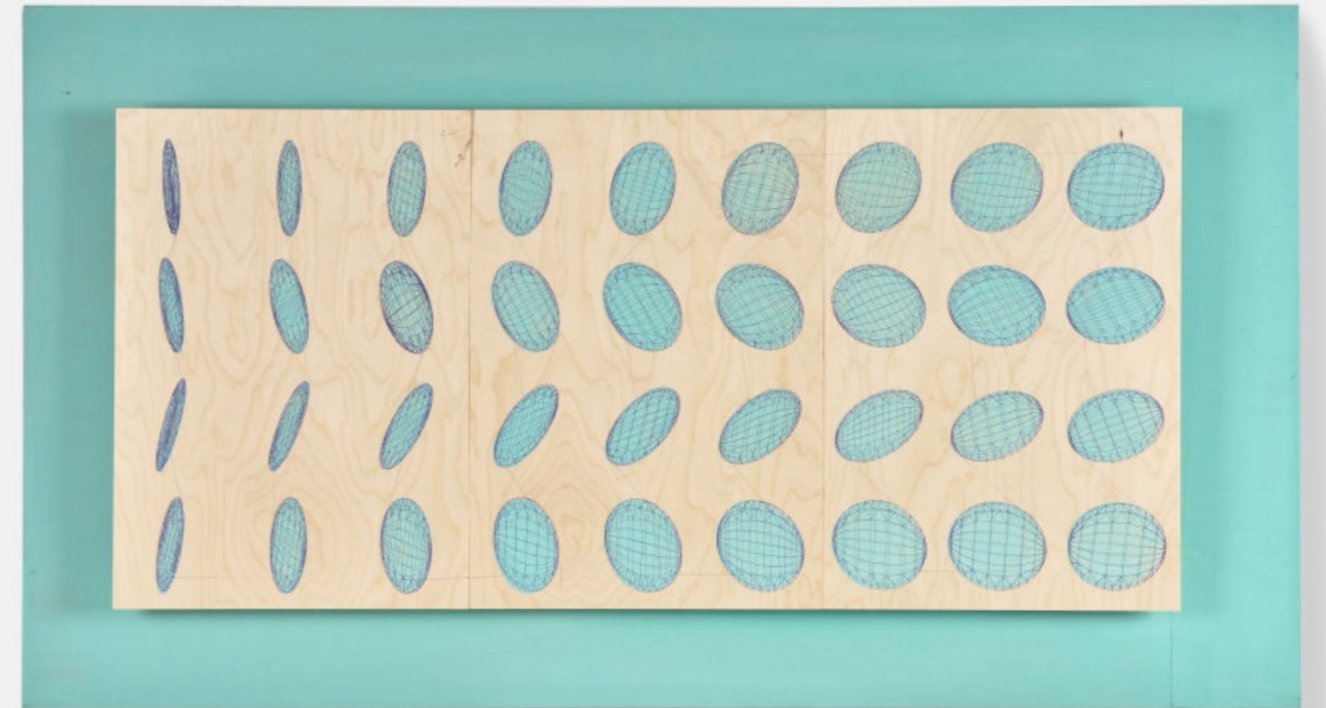
2024 / Plywood, ink pen



# Elemental Sprite, Blade

2024 / Photographs and gouache  
paint / 99x 51

The series represents the four elements that are on the extreme ends of how we look at a sphere morphing from the perspective of an atom measuring scale on the "Zing Diagram", a diagram used as the foundation of an alternative classification system developed by the founders of the Gömböc. In this layout, the elements are repeated in a grid used in game-making called a "sprite" which is the optimal way to include 2D moving images into game buttons.



# Elemental Sprite, Disc

2024 / Photographs and gouache  
paint / 99x 51

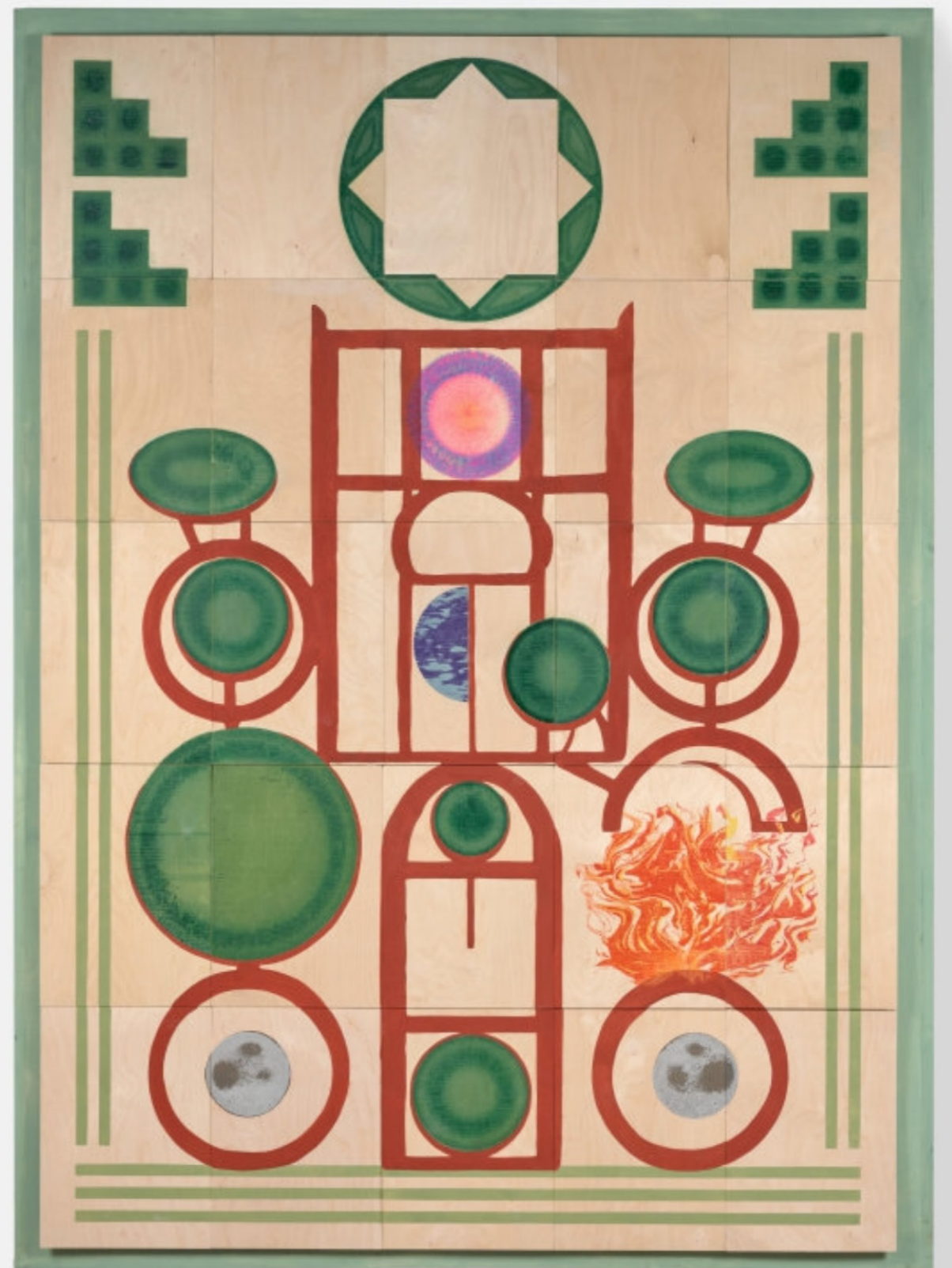
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# Fantasies of the End

2024 / Print transfer, natural pigment  
gouache, ballpen on gessoed plywood

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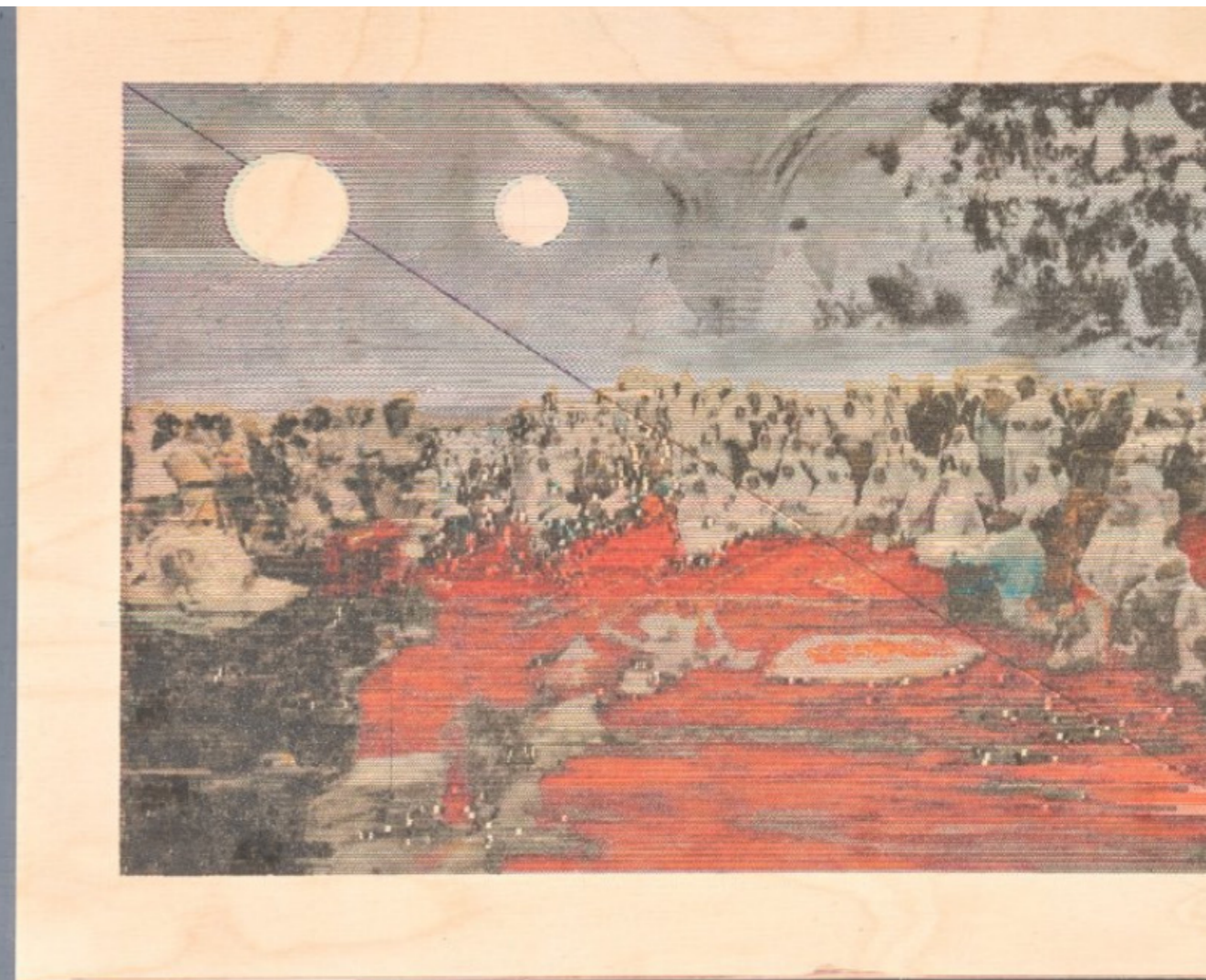




# Magadeer

2024 / Pen on plywood 49x61

In this work, the artist looks at the sacred act of pilgrimage as a form of data transfer. A way for, not only bodies, but culture to move across geographies. With such transfer, interruptions are inevitable. Magadeer references a song by the late Saudi musician Talal Maddah that was chanted by Indonesian pilgrims during Hajj in Mina who were under the impression that the song is a litany, a form of prayer or beseechment. While not originally intended as a religious song, its melodic structure and lyrics resonated with some Indonesians who mistakenly perceived it as suitable for religious gatherings, including Hajj. This phenomenon highlights the fascinating and often unpredictable ways cultural elements can transcend national borders and take root in new contexts, even if based on misunderstandings. It also demonstrates the potential for cultural exchange to occur organically, outside of formal channels. The artist recreated this scene from a viral video using AI and a stitched panoramic view. This event marks a turning point in the artist's world-building practice, connecting elements of ritual and symbolism and looking at interruption and error as tools equally meaningful in a world's logic.





# Sandbox

2024 / Wood, sand, 3D printing

This work takes its title from video game development lexicon. A 'sandbox game' is a video game with a gameplay element that provides players a great degree of creativity to interact with, usually without any predetermined goal, or alternatively with a goal that the players set for themselves. Sandbox games are often associated with an open world concept which gives the players freedom of movement and progression in the game's world.

The term "sandbox" derives from the nature of a sandbox that lets people create nearly anything they want within it. The work is formally and conceptually inspired by Sandplay Therapy, a nonverbal, therapeutic intervention that makes use of a sandbox, toy figures, and sometimes water, to create scenes of miniature worlds that reflect a person's inner thoughts, struggles, and concerns. By combining these two fields, the artist looks at the role imagination and narrative play in world-building.

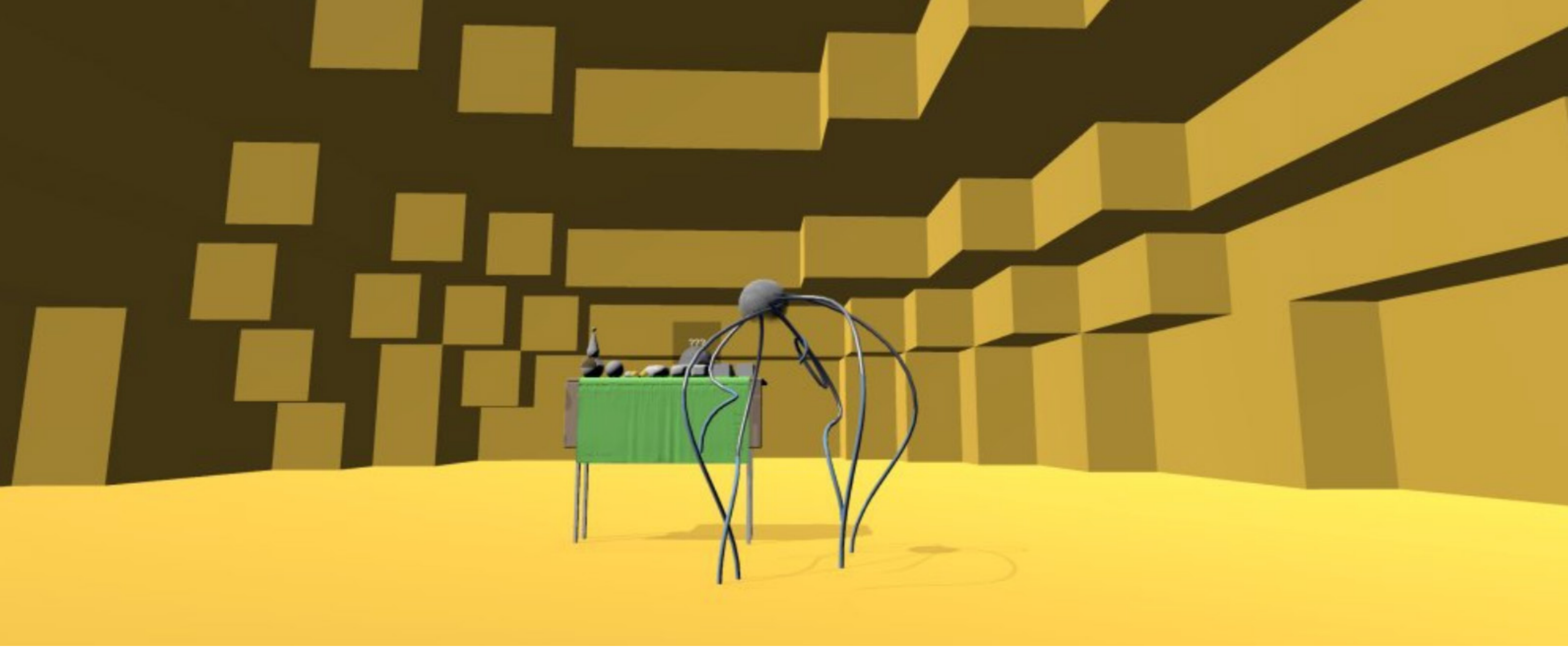
# Pulang (To Go Home)

2024 / Multimedia video installation

This video looks at the difficulties the artist faced in tracing the history of her family's migration to Saudi Arabia – often a quick journey with many dead ends due to scarcity of material and access. To bypass this, she resorts to the internet. Titled Pulang, which means “to return” or “to go home”, the video captures Felemban's attempt at understanding the migration of Indonesian families, particularly from Palembang, to Saudi Arabia which primarily occurred for religious reasons. Palembang, the capital of the Indonesian province of South Sumatra, suffers from a lack of historical record due to its fraught colonial history—Dutch control in the 17th to the 20th centuries left its mark on the city's infrastructure and trade, while the brief Japanese occupation during World War II shaped Palembang's landscape.

The catfish once again makes an appearance here, referencing the export of catfish from Indonesia to Saudi Arabia which marked a significant leap in diplomatic relations given that Saudi considers catfish consumption forbidden due to its bottom-feeding habits. However, it holds a significant place in Indonesian food culture. In the 1990s, the Indonesian government, in consultation with Saudi Arabia, designated catfish as the official dish for Indonesian pilgrims.





# The Gömböc, the Turtle and the Evolution of Shape

2024 / Videogame

This game is a collaboration with artist Jubair Ahmed. It creates an interactive experience that sheds light on the artist's treatment to 3D models in her Worldbuilding assets. Each model/object is an atom and a galaxy, following a fish's mundane exploration of reality. If you stick around enough, you discover a couple of gates that allow you to walk through a maze of the model's internal structure. The game hints at a door at the top through a camera tilt whenever the player stops interacting. The closer you get to that room, the louder you can hear Hungarian mathematician and engineer Gábor Domokos talking about the Gomboc, the first known homogenous object with one stable and one unstable equilibrium point, thus two equilibria altogether on a horizontal surface. Once you reach the room at the top, you're able to interact with a table of objects; moving them around and rearrange their order.

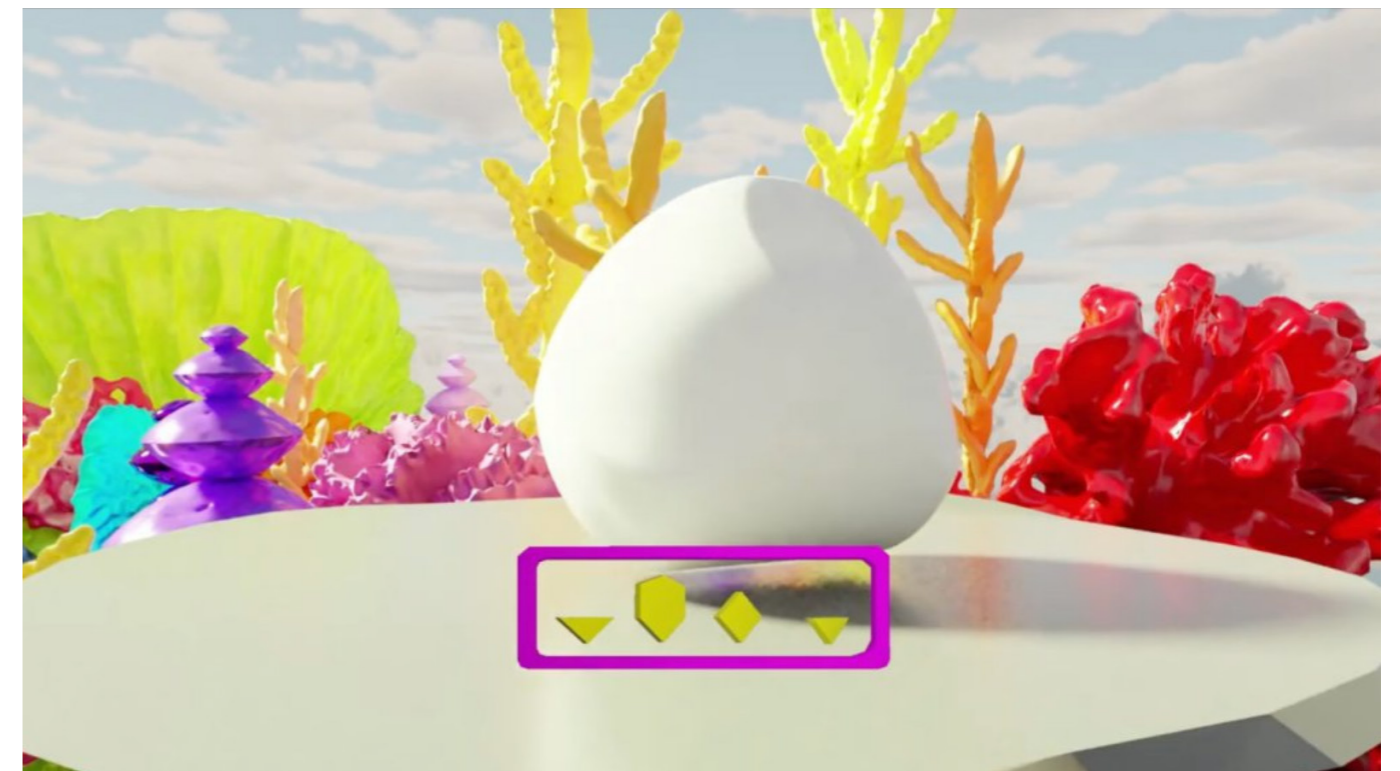
# The Jirry Tribe Stop

2024 / Interactive video installation

This interactive video game is presented as an elaborate cosmography where the player can help create input data for the Jirry Tribe by trying different variables of atom cells, and test their survival chances during extreme changes or disasters. The work is the artist's most comprehensive worldbuilding venture to date and is developed around stories she has scripted as a foundation for a new, simulated world with its own logic, language and order. Formally, the work is composed of surrealist tempered abstractions.

Semiotically, the rhythmic array of shapes, colors, and imagery form a complex system of signification developed by Felemban over a two-year period and programmed in collaboration with a team of 3D artists and game designers. In a world where unity is not the underlying order in everything, but rather duality and extreme paradoxes, a mythical creature called Jirry i.e. catfish, lives to maintain the order of this reality. To acclimate and survive, they developed deep knowledge in calculating data and probabilities, game strategy and problem-solving.

They are synchronized: their home is not a place but a continuous stream of collaborative practices — playing, singing and simply being together. Living in a flat world, in the middle of the Red Sea, the Jirry follows the Zingg diagram, which was introduced in 1935 to help geologists classify the overall shape of sedimentary particles like pebble crystals. According to this classification system, four forms are defined and mixable: bladed, oblate, equant, and prolate. Diagrams of the elements help them understand the system of which they exist in as higher creatures, and they use them to collect data that helps them navigate their migration.





# Voyage

2024 / Ai generated image, print transfer on plywood

In this series, Felemban prompts AI to generate biblical events drawing from the metaphors that often show up in her work as literary devices: birds, catfish, Wadi Hanifah in Riyadh, Wadi Rum in Al Ula.

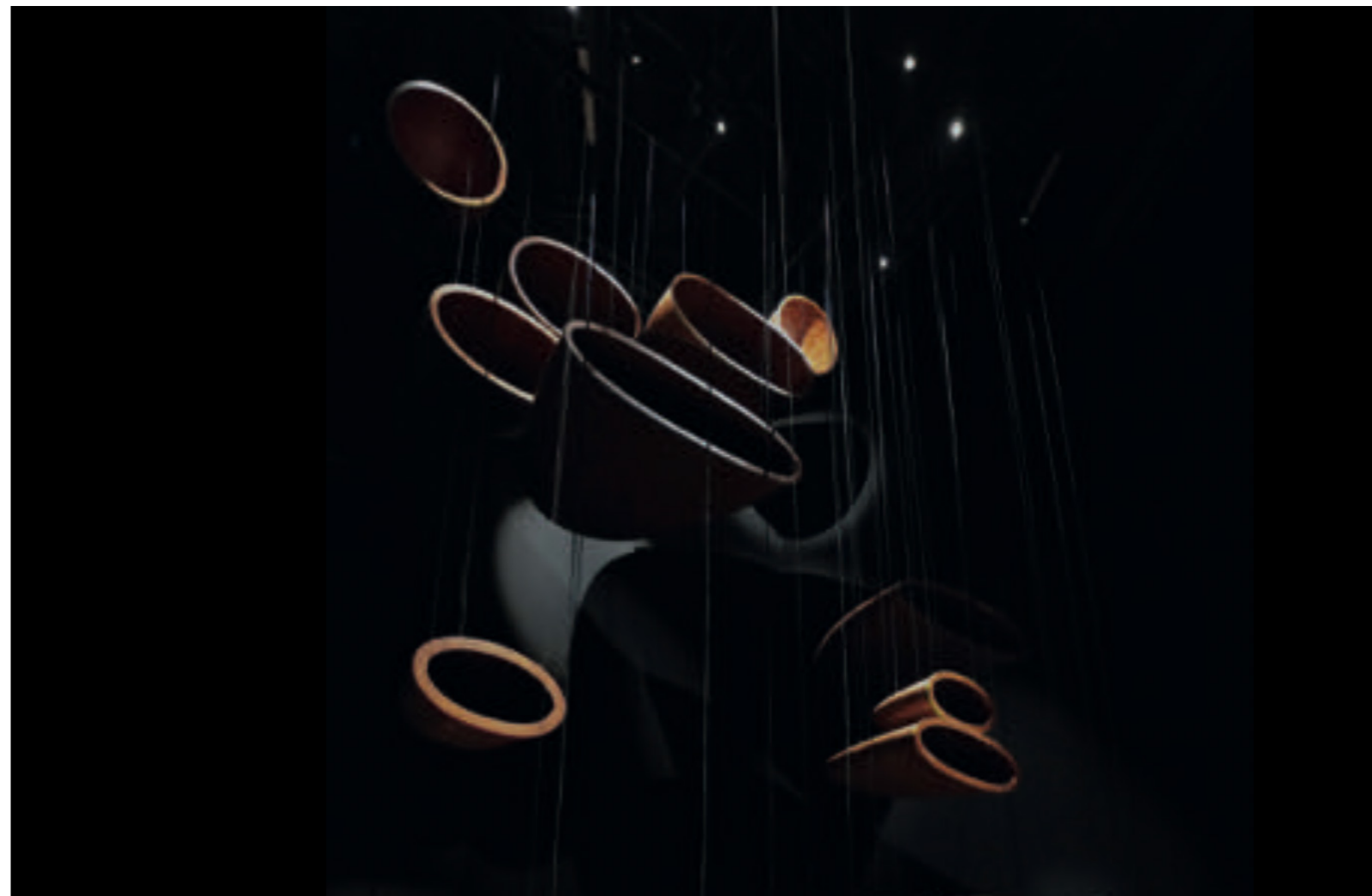


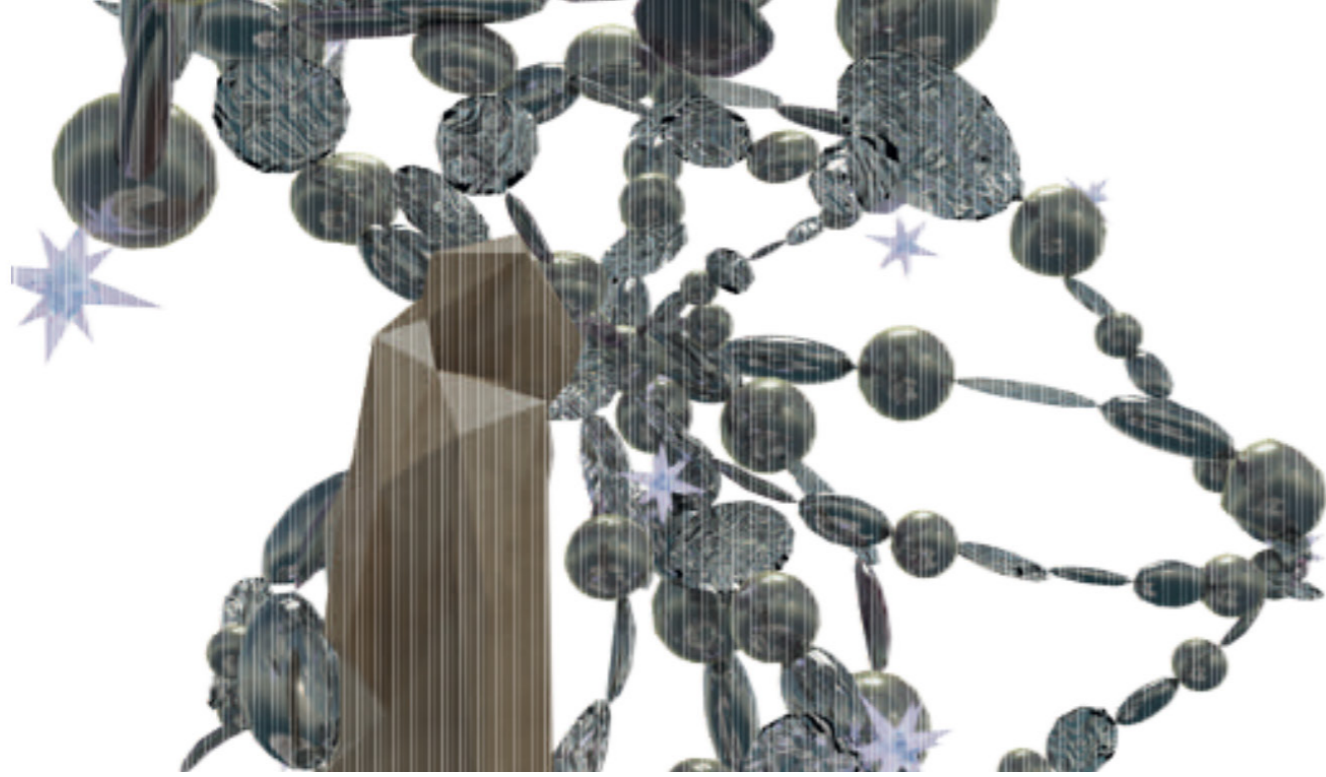
The work is essentially created as a mythological ocean travel guidance tool. This sound installation includes various signs and symbols, as an effort to represent the natural connection between contemplation and action that is expressed in the Adhan formula through sound, shape, color, and position (maqam). Firstly, in shape and position: oblong spheres represent the width of sound. High-frequency sounds are placed higher, while low-frequency sounds are represented by larger shapes placed lower. Secondly, in sound: taking the underlying melodies and tunes of the eight maqamat of the Adhan, isolating the ebbs and flows of the breaths in its recitation, hearing the Adhan sound as waves of the ocean. Additionally, in color, each trap in the installation, which is essentially a graph in space, is identified by a colored band that corresponds to the frequency color along the spectrum. Shaped like fishing traps traditionally used for fishing in the eastern region of Saudi, suspended spheres and oblongs almost like sound catchers, by the sea shore, listening, trapping the sound of calling to action that echoed five times a day for more than fourteen thousand years.

# Wave Catcher

2023 / Teak veneer and resonance speakers, various sizes

The installation consists of 16 sound traps, each representing a phrase from the Adhan. The dimensions of each trap correspond to the length of the breath, frequency, and melody of the phrase. These phrases are from 21 countries across Eastern Arabia, East Africa, Yemen, and coastal South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh). These lands are places where traveling dhows traditionally sailed in parallel for trade and Hajj travel. Each trap emits a sound that gives the feeling of ocean waves, an ode to all the travelers throughout time who were led by faith and motivated by their spirit. These sounds are, in fact, phrases of the Adhan from the mentioned countries.





# Tree

2022 / AR experience 3D model

Inspired by quite a peculiar scene in occupied Palestinian town Tel Arad in the Dead Sea, where salt concentration is over 10 times that of the ocean; an isolated island of salt hosting a tree, surrounded by turquoise water stands against nature.

The artist ponders this phenomena and questions what does it mean for an environment to be designed to self-righten, renew and rebalance on molecular levels? And how can fiction help us grasp the concept of nature adapting to natural disasters.

The tree in this experience is a three dimensional representation of a graph in Gabor Domok's paper on the evolution of shapes, specifically primary equilibrium classes, the graph indicate arbitrarily small truncations of the convex body, explaining how shapes transform into each other by creating one additional sink (equilibrium) or source (disequilibrium) and a saddle-point at a time.





The shapes growing on the sculpture are spheres, rods, blades, and disk, the four shapes that the Zingg diagram is based on, which is a system that classifies geological sediments to create a much deeper understanding of shape formation cycle of pebbles in nature, impacted by flowing water and fragmentation.

# The Large Ball Bearing Symbols

2022 / AR experience 3D model

The artist directly reference public artwork by German sculptor Ottmar Hollmann titled "The Large Ball Bearing Symbols", overlooking Al-Salaam Palace known by residents of Jeddah as 'The Spaceship' or 'The Octopus'.

Thinking about architecture and public sculptures in a post-floods and droughts fictional world, where the mystical natural elements start to come together to regenerate and heal.





# The Eleventh View of Time

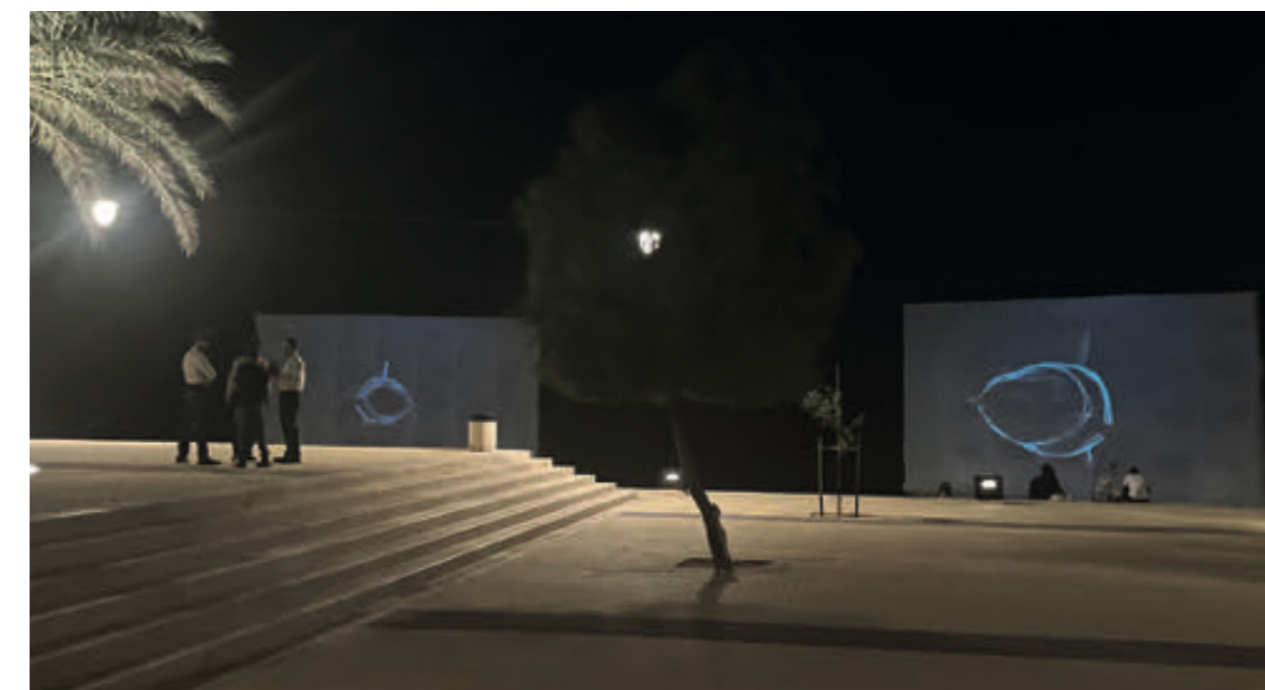
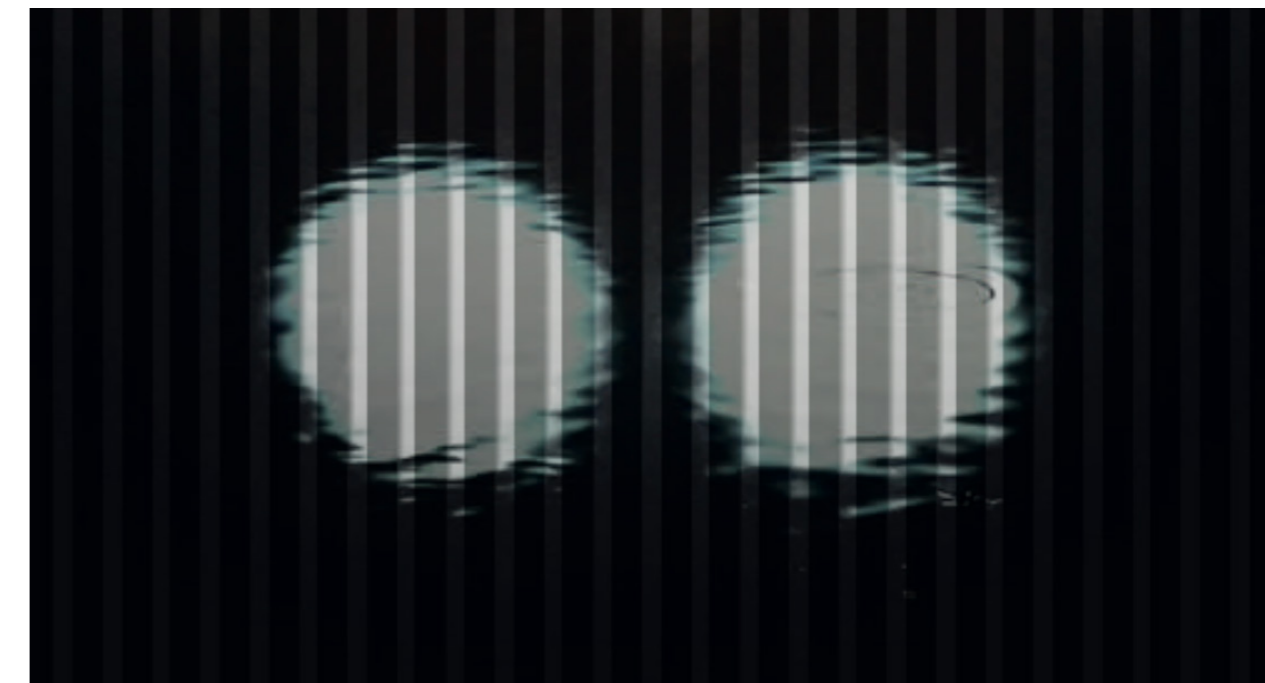
2022 / Two channel video projected on floating screens

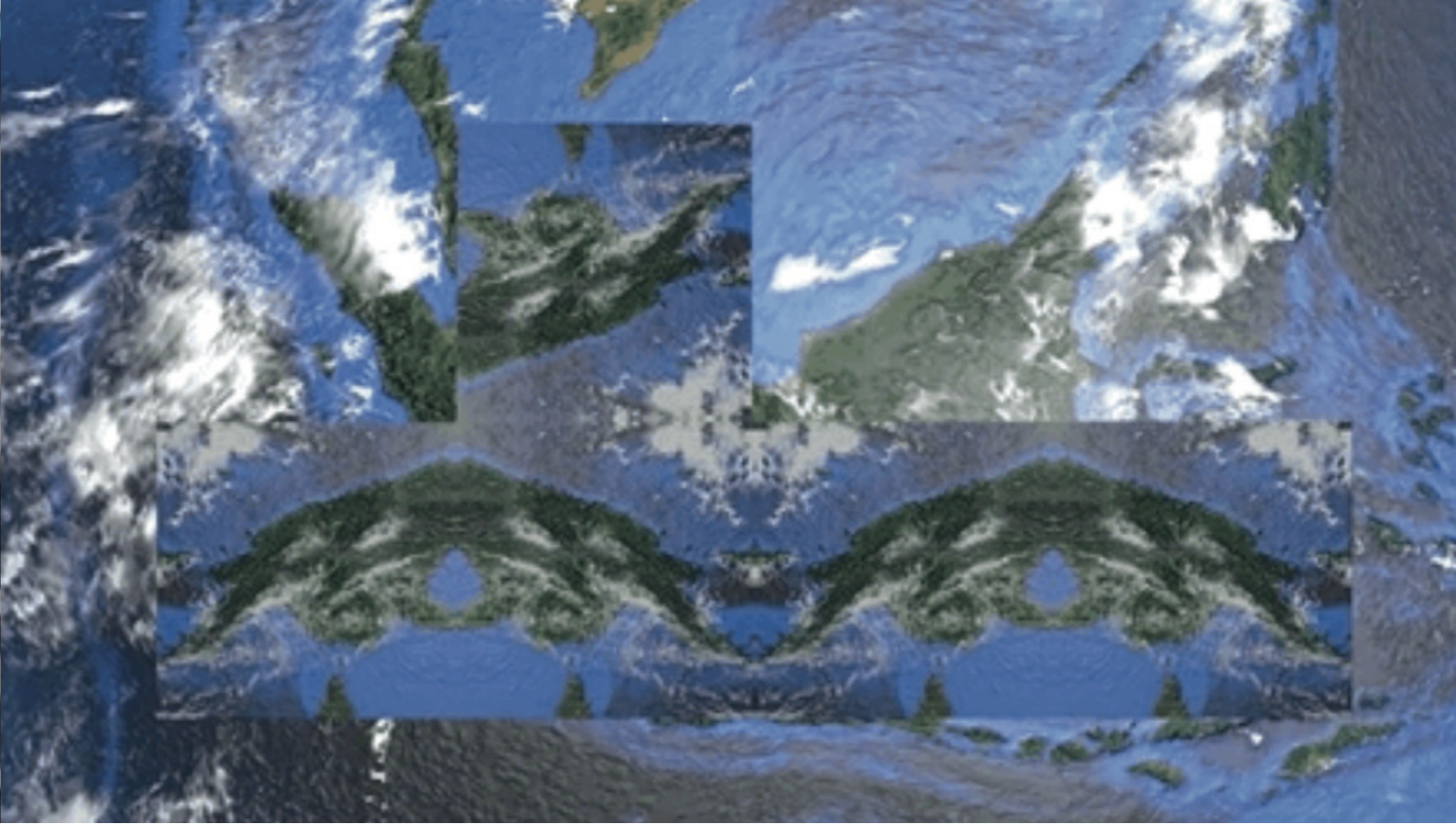
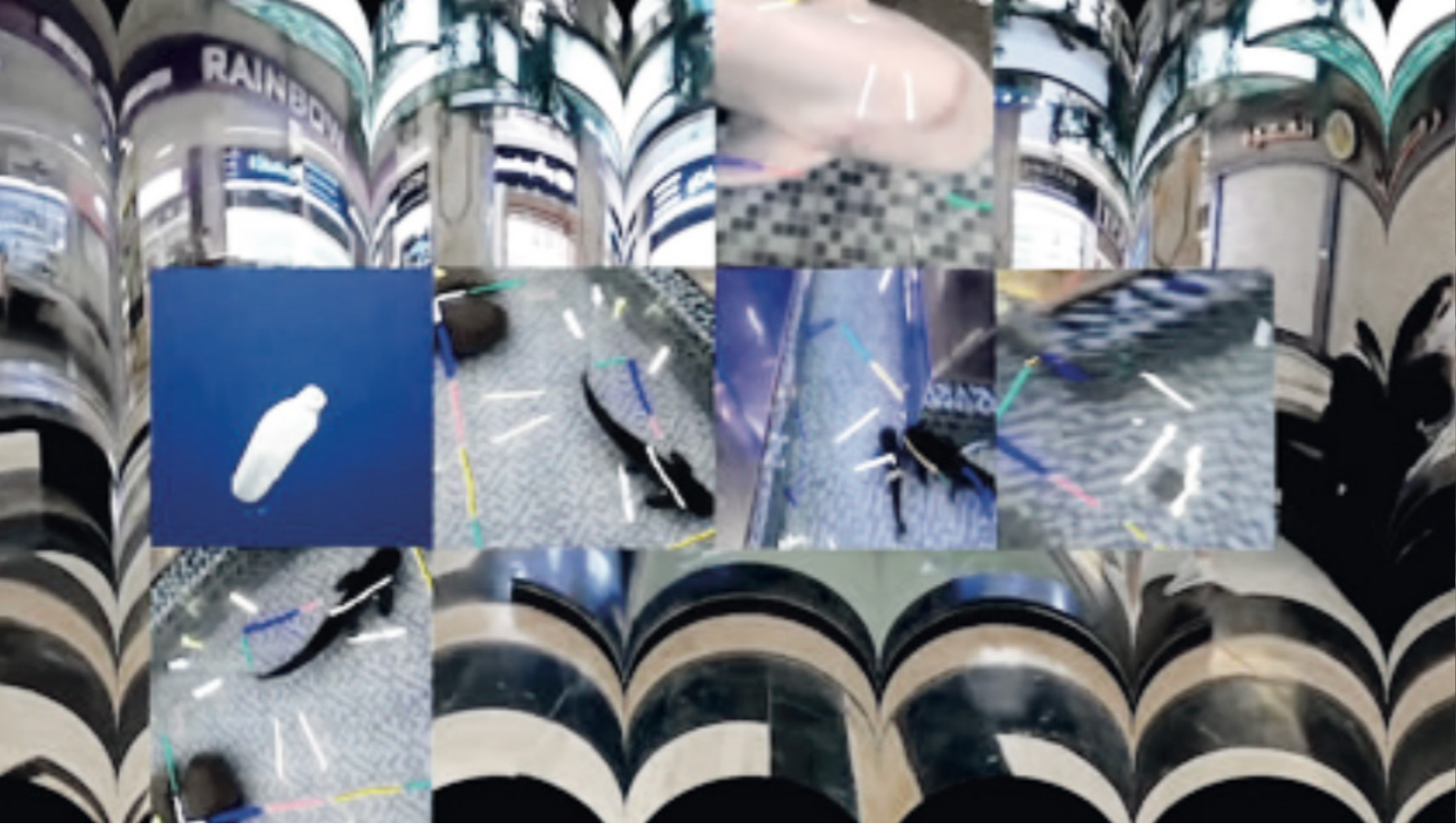
In *The Eleventh View of Time*, artist Basmah Felemban seeks to build an imaginative world, looking beyond the human to offer a different perspective on the city.

For this change of perspective, Felemban narrows the scope to a circle of vision, as we have when shining a flashlight into the dark. Just as nothing can be seen beyond its directed light, here nothing is known of a wider world consisting of interconnected systems. Time is also reduced to “flashes” of now, without past or future.

The viewpoint she takes, however, is that of the catfish. Rather than taking the audience deeper into their own world, they instead enter into that of another species, embarking on the surreal story that brought these fishes from their original home to the middle of the Najd’s desert, through a video projected in the middle of the Ringing Bird Lake in Al Ha-ir, Wadi Hanifa.

The surreal and thought-provoking narratives are based on the Indonesian author Ikhda Ayuning Maharsi Degoul’s collection of poems, “The Gold Fish”, that traces a journey of self-awareness and rebirth from the limited world of a fishbowl to a freedom that was difficult to achieve. This latest work is a continuation of Felemban’s recent investigations into the river fish that inhabit different valleys in Riyadh, raising questions about the origin and immigration story of these particular citizens of Riyadh, as well as general questions about our concept of time and humanity’s relation to the world.





# A Myth is a Collective Dream

2021 School desks, mdf,  
and Augmented reality

"A Myth is a Collective Dream" is a portal to the matrix of Magadir, the artist's sci-fi world, a space she builds to understand her lost family history, the role of imagination in rewriting it, and the ways humans have resorted to bridging the gaps in the collective memory.

Basma Felemban presents a multimedia installation that explores physical and mathematical existential concepts in her worldbuilding process, creating a reality based on a series of found videos from the internet, diagrams, audio files, and 3d models that can be accessed through augmented reality.



The foundational setting of the world she builds, and its laws reside on the Gömböc, a shape created in response to the question if there can be a geometric figure centered on only one equilibrium point and one disequilibrium point, resembling the state of dissociation that causes lost memories.

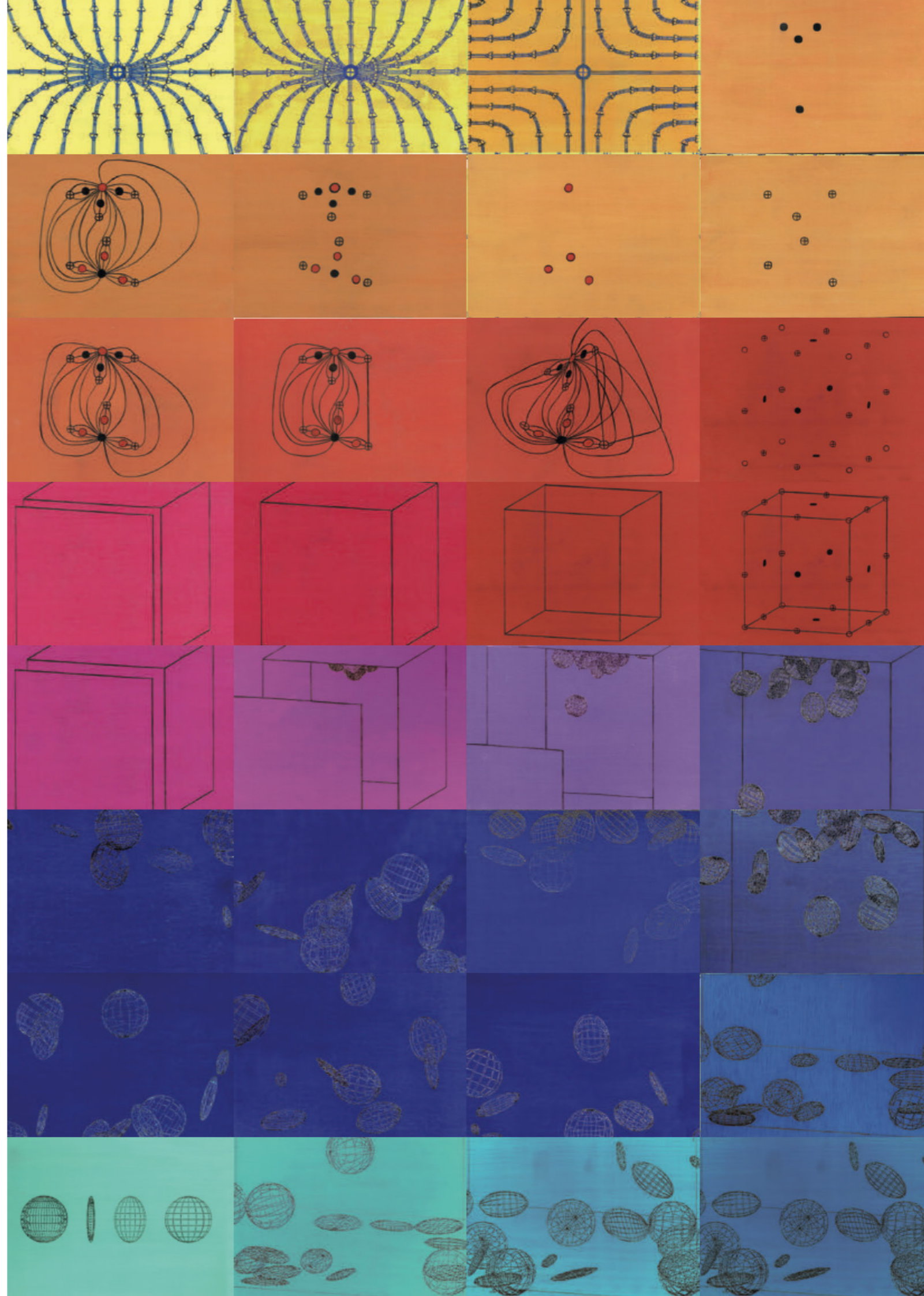
# Genealogy Of Convex

2021 / Laser etched gessoed  
plywoord and natural pigments

This series of laser-etched pieces documents the artist's method of creation, using strings of light and past natural elements as creation scrolls. The pieces show different graphs deconstructed into animated frames from academic papers published by morphology professor Gabor Domokos, who is a constant collaborator with the artist in her world-building process.

The gömböc (pronounced "goemboets") is an elegant and impossible form that rose to distinction as a mathematical innovation in 1995 by mathematician Gábor Domokos and engineer Péter Várkonyi. The research duo collected data of pebbles on the shores of Greece using the Zingg diagram, a system that classifies geological sediments into spheres, blades, rods, and disks. They counted the equilibrium and disequilibrium sides and points of each pebble to create a much deeper understanding of the shape formation cycle of pebbles in nature impacted by flowing water and fragmentation.

The gömböc has motivated research about the evolution of natural shapes. While gömböc-shaped pebbles are rare, the connection between geometric shape and the number of static balance points appears to be key in understanding natural shape evolution.

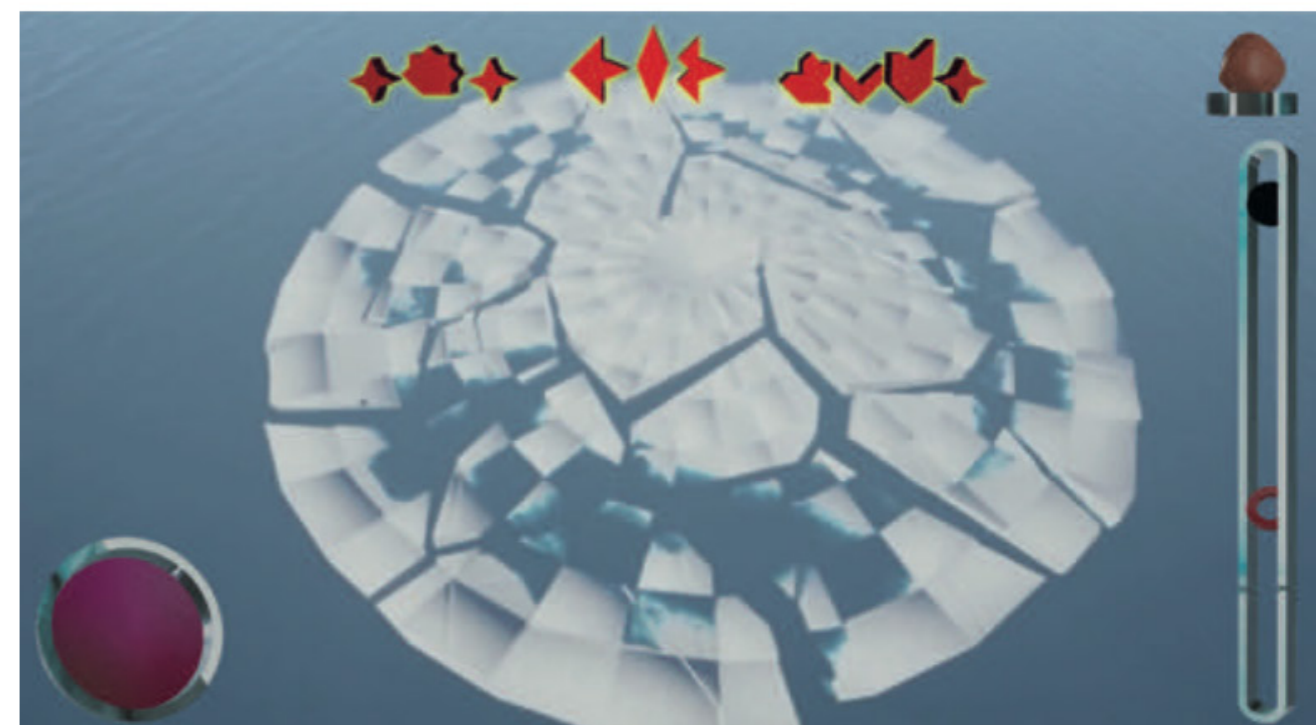


# The Jirry Tribe Stop

2021 / Video Game

This interactive video game is presented as an elaborate cosmography where the player can help create input data for the Jirry Tribe by trying different variables of atom cells, and test their survival chances during extreme changes or disasters. The work is the artist's most comprehensive worldbuilding venture to date and is developed around stories she has scripted as a foundation for a new, simulated world with its own logic, language and order. Formally, the work is composed of surrealist tempered abstractions. Semiotically, the rhythmic array of shapes, colors, and imagery form a complex system of signification developed by Felemban over a two-year period and programmed in collaboration with a team of 3D artists and game designers. In a world where unity is not the underlying order in everything, but rather duality and extreme paradoxes, a mythical creature called Jirry i.e. catfish, lives to maintain the order of this reality.

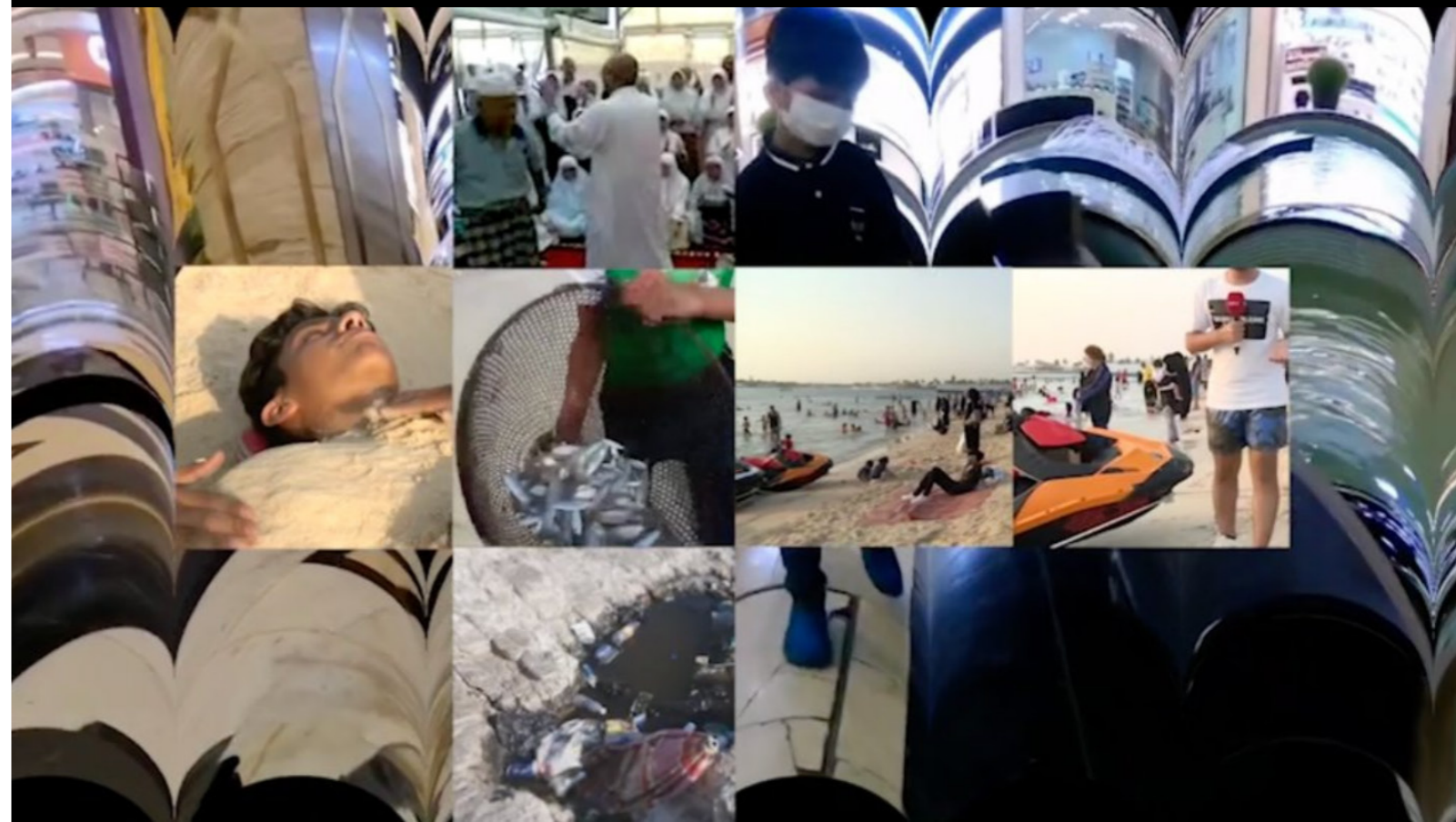
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# A Myth is A Collective Dream

2021 / Multimedia Video Installation

Basmah Felemban presents a multimedia installation that explores physical and mathematical existential concepts and creates a reality through a series of found videos from the internet, diagrams, audio-files, and 3D holograms that can be accessed through augmented reality. Through data analysis and research, Felemban began to establish a database that allows visual components of this world to connect with each other; and, additionally, for the stories of this world to form numbers, followed by shapes and colors. Through 'world building,' Felemban attempts to write a story via Augmented Reality displaying signs and symbols that reduce the deep dimensions of reality and memory recollection.



# The Journey in Creatures by God

2017 / Wood veneer / 120x120cm

Carrom is a traditional Indian board game with a design that includes a compass in the middle where the seeds are arranged to be hit by the striker when flicking it. The artist redesigned the board in wood veneer, first to fit within the proportion of the moon (represented by the compass in the centre) to the earth (represented by the whole board); and second, by using maps of the ocean from Piri Reis's 16th century manuscript 'Book of Navigation'. In this, he mapped all the places he explored, as well as explaining in a poetic language the knowledge and tools that a sailor needs when he's in the heart of the ocean. The game of Carrom requires understanding angles, motion, distance and tactics, aspects that one needs to learn while travelling across seas, a journey that has been used as a symbol for self-discovery in much of literature.

Part of the artist's series inspired by The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect, a compendium of Islamic philosophy written by the 17th century Islamic scholar Mulla Sadra.





## The Journey in God by God

2017 / Engraved copper / 60x60cm

Part of the artist's series inspired by "The Transcendent Philosophy of the Four Journeys of the Intellect", a compendium of Islamic philosophy written by the 17th century Islamic scholar Mulla Sadra.

## The Journey from Creatures To God

2017 Laser engraved on coppered plywood with gilded embellishments and a rotating mechanism / 65x65cm

# The Journey from God to Creatures by God

2017 / Gouache on variously  
treated paper

(The journey in how pluralities were emanated from the unity or the observation of the stages of the creatures from the highest to the lowest)

This painting is based on a manuscript by the 13th century scholar, Zakariya al-Qazwini, titled 'Wonders of Creation' (Aja'ib al-makhlukat wa ghara'ib al-mawjudat). In this book al-Qazwini takes us through the nine heavens in a mystical yet precise and observational way, descending to earth and travelling through mythical lands and introducing its inhabitants and environment. In Qazwini's mind, making an encyclopaedia that stretches your imagination and entertains your soul will only bring you closer to God if you understand that he's capable of so much more than we could ever imagine. Inspired by the illustrations and text in this encyclopaedia, I composed the painting to symbolise ascending through the heavens as well to try to understand the days of creation, to reach a level of transcendence where we understand God, Mulla Sadra's final stage 'with God'.



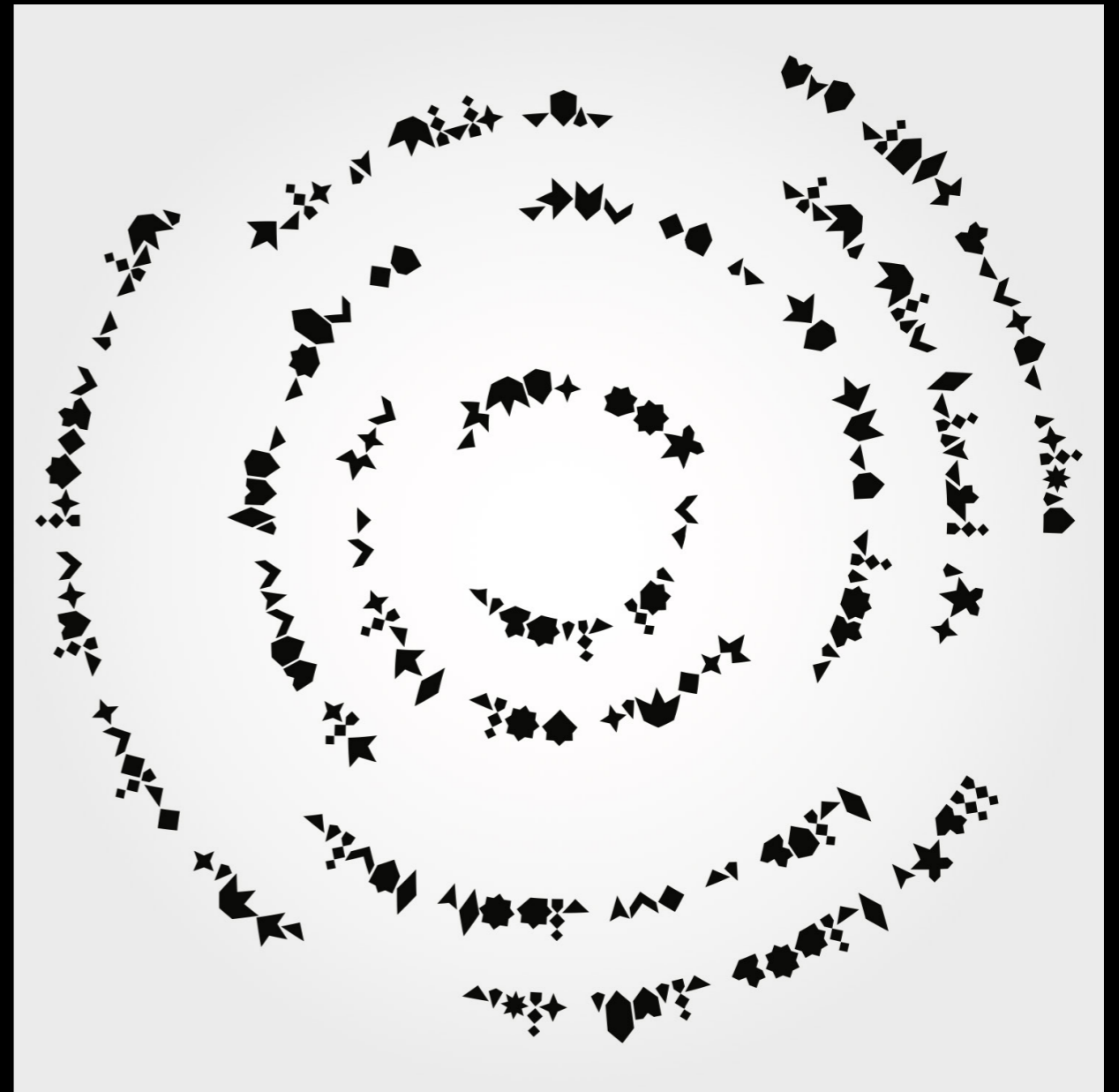
# Qif Bil Tawaf

2014 / Silkscreen printed on paper  
65x65

Qif Biltawaf is a poem by Omar bin Abi Rabi'a; one of the finest poets in Quraish tribe in Makkah. He was a charismatic personality raised very closely to his mother helping her run his fathers many assets, for that reason, he was very comfortable around women from the Harem.

Omar as a poet was a man who's chased and loved by women sometimes, and a hopeless romantic in others. Both way, he took advantage of Hajj season to attract beautiful women from all around the world by showing off his father's wealth while performing Umrah.

One of his most famous poems that was sung by many classical Arab musicians is Qif Biltawaf "Stand while circling" referring to circling the Ka'aba, where he was seducing a woman and trying to make her say where she lives to meet her after performing pilgrimage.



# Qais & Laila

2014 / Silkscreen print and pencil  
on fabiano / 152x112

The work is an encoded conversations that took place between two characters in literature, the artist encoded to further add a layer of secrecy to the illicit relationship. She immortalizes the story once again by suggesting that even today, their love would still be forbidden; that the two would only experience stolen moments, and encrypted whispered feelings.

The code to create the language was formed by dissecting an Islamic geometric star. The work is an attempt to begin a conversation on censorship, prohibition of the most basic human rights and need, such as love, by those whom misinterpret and abuse religion.

An encoded message between two prolific figures in Persian literature: Qays and Layla. The story of forbidden love became popular in Persian literature in the 12th century, with many adaptations throughout history.

أ	ب	ج	د
هـ	و	ز	
ح	ط	ي	
ك	ل	م	ن
س	ع	ف	ص
ق	ر	ش	ت
ث	خ	ذ	
ض	ظ	غ	



# Pre(ab)sense

2014 / UV digital print and cutouts,  
150x150

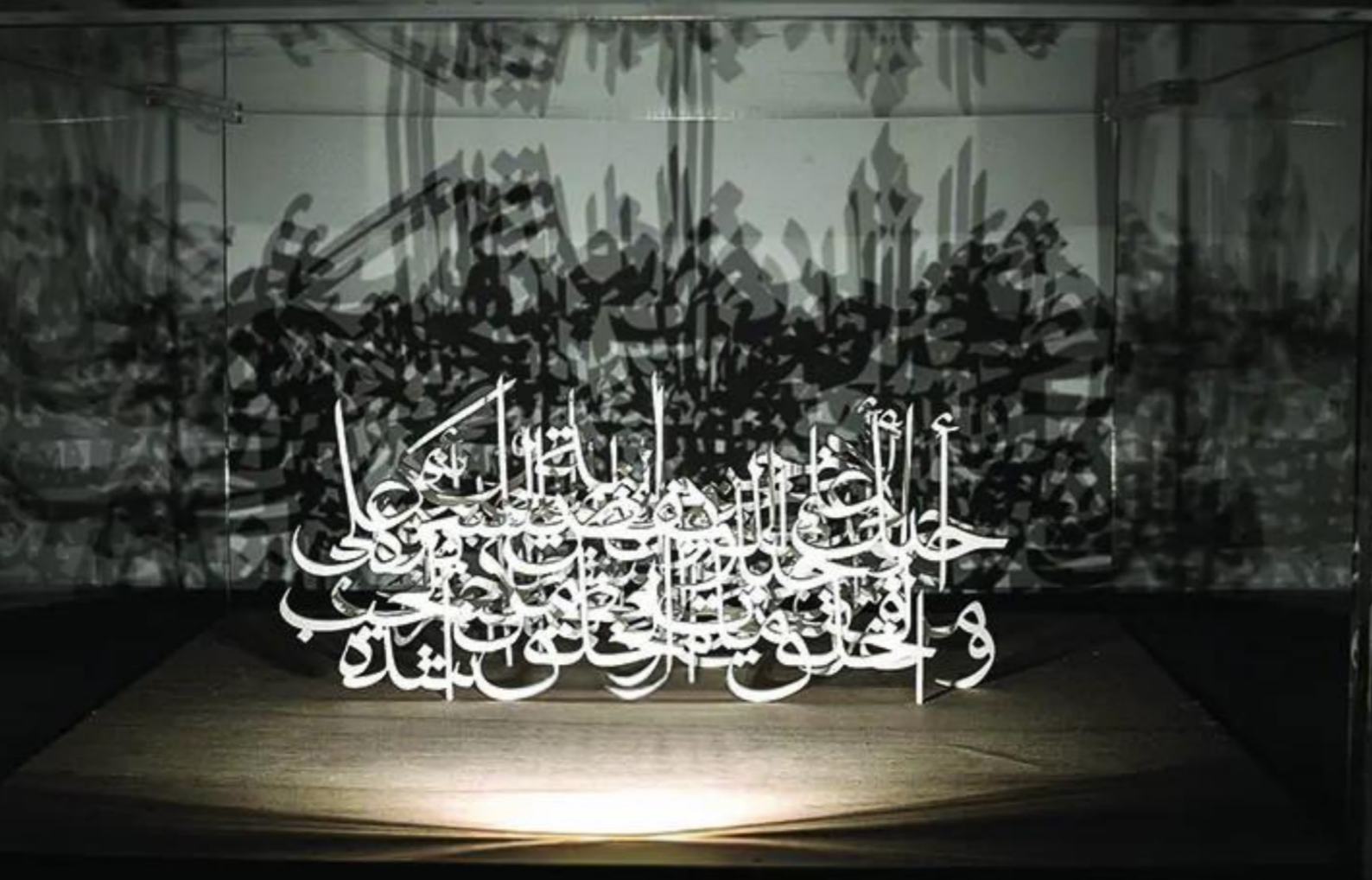
Pre(ab)sense is about the truth of the conscience of being – to de- cipher the paradox of absence and presence of the human condi- tion. Through the artist's studies/research, she realizes that absence is not the antonym of presence rather than a part of it! \* Nothing- ness lies coiled in the heart of be- ing - like a worm.

Using a broken-down Islamic motif to symbolize presence or exis- tence and then cutting specific elements of that motif to create yet another design of (the absence of the pattern).

The artist speaks about the harmony in paradoxes, and being in peace and a part of the archetypes of existence Pre(Ab)sense is a codependent conscience. The supposition creat- ed is a harmonious state of being.

\* *Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness*





"He brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living and brings to life the earth after its lifelessness. And thus will you be brought out" ar-rum (19)

Prophet Mohammed pbuh said "read the Quran and beseech it's wonders", reading it is key to understand it. It was brought to people as a linguistic miracle and therefor only through linguistic we can unlock the deep, hidden meanings in it.

The artist was a Quran memorizer in her childhood and because of that her passion to understand more about it grew along with her as she was constantly told to read it by heart to understand it purely and then say it out loud.

\*\* Quran could be interpreted by its utterances deviating from its initial concepts into other meanings that go alongside and commit to the laws of observation and frontiers of thought, and exalt the Lord and deem him above fault and error.

From this principle the artist read the verse "he brings the living out of the dead and brings the dead out of the living" from a rather personal perspective, one of the most simple yet complicated human experience which is love, the inspiration for most ancient and modern poets. The installation forms of different poems put in the order of love, loss, love, loss as an interpretation of bringing life out of death and death out of life.

What's interesting is that in the referenced verse there is no act of death mentioned, they were all acts of bringing life to or out of something.

It is He Who brings  
out the living from the  
dead, and brings out  
the dead from the living

2015 Lasercut plexiglass / 30x14

# Love

2013 / White acrylic ink  
on plexi / 110 x 110 cm

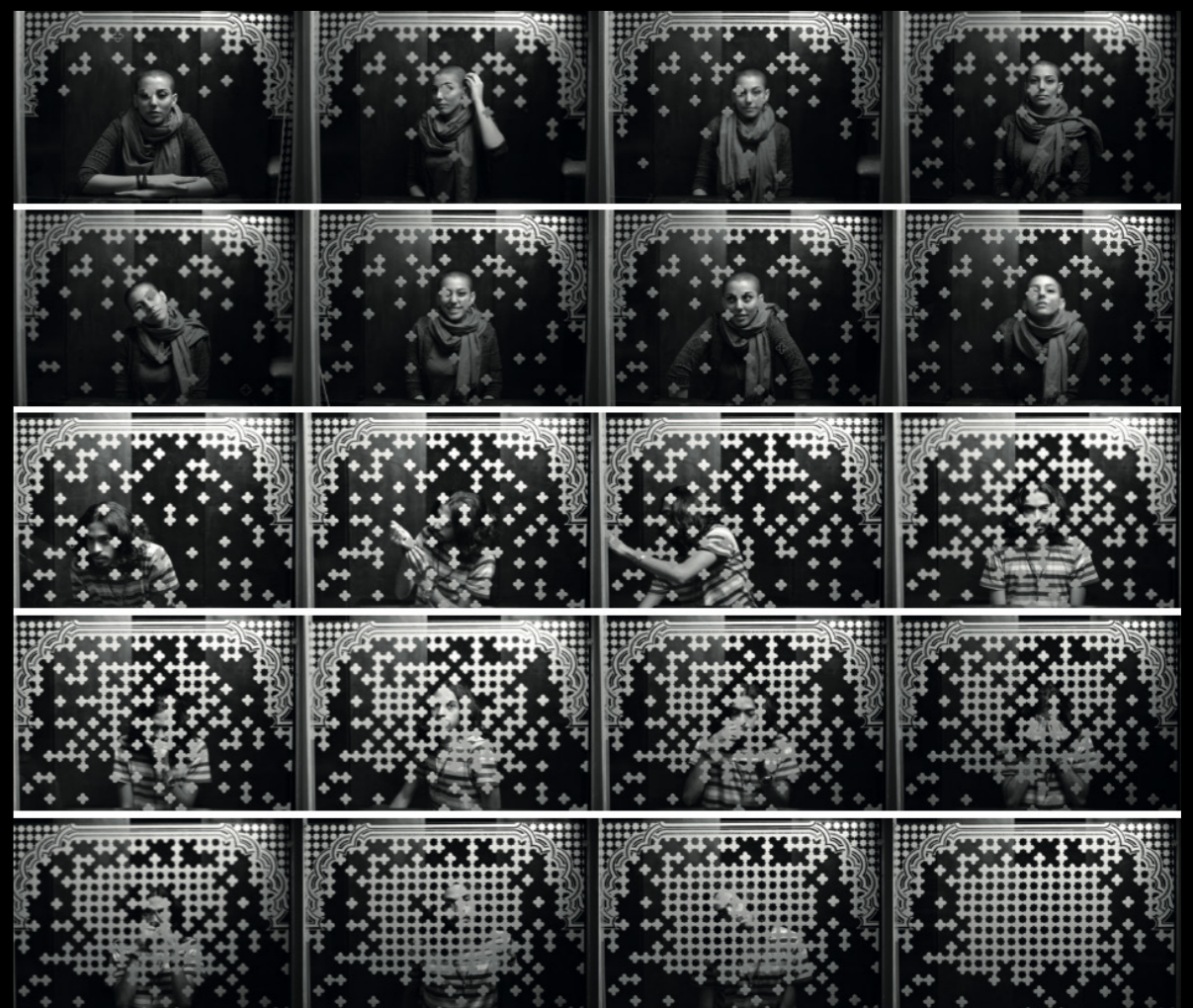
No discussion about Islamic art and spirituality can be completed without taking into account the importance of music. The qaw- walis (or Sama') dance, which is a vocal musical performance of sufi poetry with instrumental accompaniment, generates ontogenetic plenitude and a blissful, ineffable and inscrutable state of spiritual enlightenment. The spiritual states evoked by classical music are closely related to the spiritual states (ahwal) of the Sufis, and through Sufi tradition to the spirit of the Holy Scripture (The Quran).



The dance's repetitive nature is both transcendent and spiritual, thereby losing its material essence. This dance is critical in the artist's understanding of Islamic sacred arts (Geometric Motifs, calligraphy, and Arabesque) and their representation of our conditions as humans (Repetition, Balance, Symmetry, Compatibility). This series explores the paradoxes that exist in our being: love and hate, mortal and immortal. It tries to find a place where they coexist not contradict, through the exploration of different methods of visualising text and literature.

# Sidana

2013 Stills from process video /  
Acrylic and white marker  
on plexiglass



# Sidana

2013 / Acrylic and white marker  
on plexiglass 120 x 90

The pattern in Islamic art resembles an endless sea of geometric shapes, with no core beginning, and no end. Although the impression of infinity is true, as the pattern can go on forever, the impression of no starting point is not. It is but an illusion, for all creation has a beginning, even our infinitesimal universe.

This idea led me on a journey of self-exploration; to question how we can separate who we truly are at the core, from who we have been shaped to be? Once stripped of all the trappings of life; our history, education, culture, experiences, what is left? These 'ornaments' build continuously with our every waking hour, as a pattern can spread continuously, but we must remember that there is always a core, a starting point, the purest state in which God made us and delivered us into this world. I believe that from the moment we are born, we spend the rest of our lives searching for this purest self, a search disguised as all of our relentless attempts to be happy, but all we are really doing is trying to find ourselves.



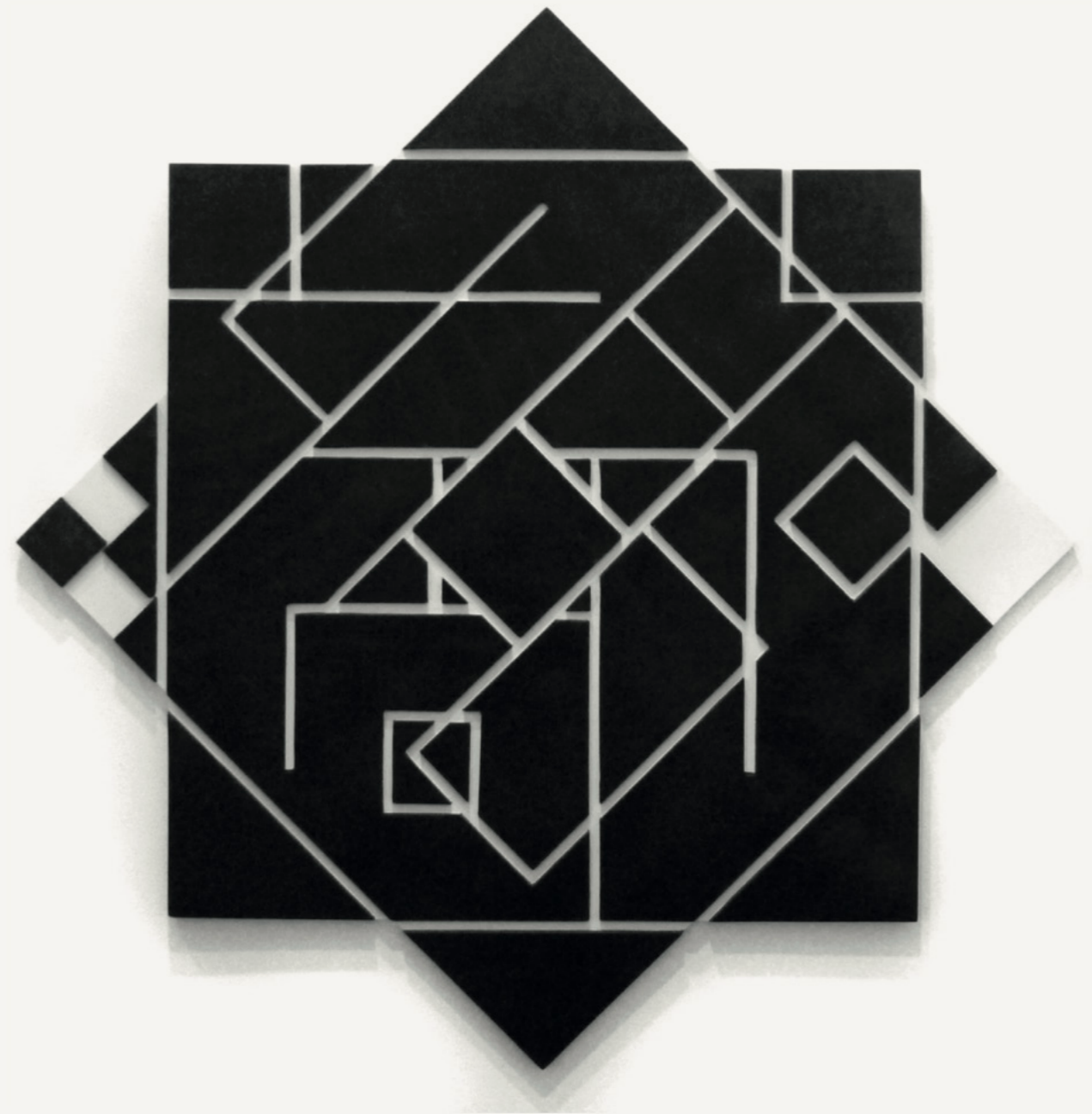
# Jeem

2012 / Acrylic paint on layered  
plywood / 115 x 115

Jeem is inspired by a poem written by the Sufi scholar Mohammed Abdul Jabbar Al-Nafari on the science of letters:

*A letter leads the way to intention, H, heaven, H, Hell  
He said to me 'who are the people of Hell?',  
I said 'the people of the outer letters  
He said to me 'who are the people of Heaven? I said 'the people of the inner letters  
He said what is the outer letter? I said 'wisdom that does not lead to work  
He said what is the inner letter? I said 'wisdom that leads to truth*

The poem sheds light on a fascinating and mysterious aspect of the Arabic language. Many Islamic scholars believe that there are two facets to every letter, al-zaher - an outer facet and al-baten - an inner facet. The outer relates to the function of the letter in every-day use. The inner relates to the hidden character of the letter; Ibn Arabi said "letters are like a nation of individuals, each with his own duty and obligation", implying that each letter has its own existence and personality, that is longing to be acknowledge and admired



# Education

Masters Islamic and Traditional Art, 2013, Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London, UK

# Solo Exhibitions

2025 OSAKA Expo, Osaka, Japan Vessel of Wreckage, ATHR Gallery, Riyadh, KSA

2024 Consecrated Networks, ATHR gallery, Jeddah, KSA

# Group Exhibitions

2025 Art in the Kingdom (Fan Al Mamlaka), SAMOCA, Riyadh, KSA

2024 Common Grounds, Curated by Jumana Ghouth, Mega Studia, Riyadh

We Saw an Endless Cycle, Hayy Jameel, Jeddah, KSA

2023 First Islamic Arts Biennale, Diriyah Biennale Foundation, Jeddah, KSA

So It Appears, Institute for Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA

2022 World-building: Gaming and Art in the Digital Age,

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist Julia Stoschek Collection, Dusseldorf, Germany

2021 The Secrets of Adelaide , 21'39 Saudi Arts Council, Jeddah, KSA

2017 Desert to Delta, AMUM, Memphis

Prince's School of Tradition Art MA Graduation show/ PSTA, London, UK

Letters, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

2016 Parallel Kingdom, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston

2015 Anonymous was A Women, Hafez Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

[Insert Range Here], ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

2013 Show of Faith, Katara Cultural Village, Doha, Qatar

Parallel Lines, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

Rhizoma, Edge of Arabia, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

A Line In The Sand, Artspace, Dubai, UAE

The Beginning of Thinking is Geometric, Maraya Art Center, Sharjah,

UAE Show of Faith, Katara Cultural Village, Doha, Qatar

2012 Designed, Riyadh, KSA

Geek Fest Jeddah, Jeddah, KSA

Loud, Desert Design Gallery, Khobar, KSA

Saudi AAT, Rochan Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

Young Saudi Artists Exhibition, ATHR Gallery, Jeddah, KSA

Journey To The Heart of Islam/Create & Inspire: Young Artists and Hajj, London, UK

2011 It's All About Fashion, A&A, Jeddah, KSA

Modern Arabic Typography Exhibition, The Courtyard, Jeddah, KSA

Society, The Courtyard, Jeddah, KSA

# Talks

2025 A New World History: Nonhuman Perspectives in the Gulf Art

AGSIW X Culture Summit Abu Dhabi

2019 Stories, Sounds, and Senses in the City, Saudi Design Week, Riyadh

2018 Exploring themes of self-expression through Street Art In Saudi -Talk Saudi

Cultural Days -New York

2017 Cosmos in Art -Talk, Desert to Delta Symposium, University of Memphis

Desert to Delta -Panel, Brooks Museum -Memphis

2015 The Effect of Culture on Visuals -Panel, Saudi Design Week - Riyadh

Symbolism in Islamic Art -Talk, TedXRadwa - Yunbu

2014 A Hidden Language -Workshop, ATHR Gallery -Jeddah

Street Art in Saudi from an Anthropological Point, Saudi Design Week -Riyadh

2012 Esoteric Art, and its Place in Contemporary Art , PechaKucha V.1 -Riyadh

# Collections

Greenbox Museum

Al Mansouria Foundation

Basma Al Sulaiman Collection

# Awards

2014 Arab Women Award, UAE

2012 Third place in Edge of Arabia's Create & Inspire Competition, KSA

2010 Second place in Beat the Heat, Roshana Mall Graphic Design, Jeddah, KSA

# Art Fairs

2025 FRIEZE, London, United Kingdom

2018 Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

2014 Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

Abu Dhabi Art, Abu Dhabi, UAE

# Curated Exhibitions

2025 Young Saudi Artist (YSA), ATHR Foundation, Riyadh, KSA  
2019 The Waves Won't Stop When You Leave, (group exhibition)  
Jeddah Season at Historical, Jeddah

# Residencies

2025 Art Explora Residency, Paris, France

# Bibliography

The Saudi Artist Bringing Islam to the Contemporary Art World, Aug. 2019 by  
Roisin Tapponi, Mille World

A Look at 26-Year-Old Saudi Arabian Artist Basmah Felemban, 2019 by About  
Her, Art & Books 4 Saudi Artists Open Their Studios In Jeddah And Riyadh,  
Aug. 2019 by Rebecca Anne Proctor, Harper's Bazaar Arabia

300 artists hone their street art and graffiti skills, Jul. 2019 by Saudi Gazette  
Hend Al-Mansour names 5 Saudi Arabian women artists to watch, Mar. 2018  
by Elizabeth Macbride, Arab News

Felemban: Meet the 'aesthetic freak', May 2015 by Ream Jazzar, Arab News  
50 Years of Self-Representation in Saudi Women's Art, Apr. 2015 by Adnan Z.  
Manjal, Hyperallergic

Language Of Human Consciousness, 2014 by Wided Khadraoui, Art Asia  
Pacific Magazine Athr Gallery comes alive with 'Ramadan Nights', Jul. 2013 by  
Hina Zahir Imam, Arab News Basmah Felemban: Every leader is an artist, May  
2013 by Mariam Nihal, Saudi Gazette

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