

CONNECTING CULTURES

Sheikha Alyazia's

Arab News | London

You are searching for treasure. Several potential locations are marked with an 'x' on your map. You move methodically from site to site, always to be met with disappointment — never striking gold. Are you, in following trails set by others, missing the treasure 'hidden' in plain view?

This is one of the conundrums posed in the artworks of Sheikha Alyazia Bint Nahyan Al-Nahyan, whose inaugural solo exhibition in London presented a thought-provoking range of work fusing the ancient past with modern life.

Her "Mishmash Trails" featured cave-like shapes cut in marble, with the treasure taking the form of imagined ancient eastern coins, reflecting Arab, Roman and Phoenician influences. She described the coins, embedded in the marble, as symbolic of the great treasures buried in secret locations that were sought out and fought over by many.

Al-Nahyan named her exhibition — held at Pi Artworks from June 25 to July 7 — with the opening line of Percy Bysshe Shelley's famous poem "Ozymandias": "I met a traveller from an antique land." (Ozymandias is the Greek name for the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramesses II.)

The poem, published in 1818, imagines a meeting between the narrator and a traveller who describes a ruined statue lying in the desert. The description of the statue is a meditation on the fragility of human power and on the effects of time: "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings/ Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!/ Nothing beside remains: round the decay/ Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare/ The lone and level sands stretch far away."

"Maybe a positive thing from looking to the past is that it proves it is only human to repeat the mistake and the lesson," Al-Nahyan said. "Study-

ing the past is a realization of human nature, individually or in groups, right or wrong. This natural feeling of connectivity is something I usually aim for."

There is humour in some of her work — particularly the depictions of old commercial airline advertisements from the 1950s and 60s with ancient figures superimposed in the frames. They certainly give the viewer pause for thought about how much our world has changed in the short time since air travel became widely available.

The exhibition's curator, Janet Rady, said of Al-Nahyan: "She has been practicing art from a very young age and is self-taught. She is incredibly talented, and you see this in the wide range of her work, which uses all sorts of different media. I can't necessarily call her a pop artist or a collage artist or an installation artist; she is in fact all of these things, but it is the concept behind her work —

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SHEIKHA ALYAZIA BINT I

connecting the past — which is important — The UAE's UK ambassador, Waheed Al-Nahyan, was opening and he part of Al-Nahyan's work classic wooden bo



Guests at the exhibition

Emirati artist Sheikha Alyazia Bint Nahyan Al-Nahyan's inaugural solo exhibition in London titled 'I Met a Traveller From an Antique Land' connects cultures and time periods through art and poetry



Sheikh Mohammed bin Nahyan Al Nahyan, the UAE's ambassador to the UK, and the curator Janet Rady attend the opening of the exhibition at Pi Artworks

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Cinema Akil founder brings the ma

Butheina Kazim founded Cinema Akil in 2014 as a platform for independent cinema. Her next goal is to expand the Cinema Akil concept from Dubai to the region



The entrance to Cinema Akil

Arab News | Dubai

Butheina Kazim has brought the magic of art-house movies to Dubai, through her project Cinema Akil.

Having worked in television, radio and film acquisitions, Butheina Kazim founded Cinema Akil in 2014 as a platform for independent cinema. For Kazim, who has also produced her own film "Letters to Palestine," the project is about more than just watching films, it's also for building community.

She introduced the concept with pop-up screenings, but since last year Cinema Akil has a permanent theatre in Dubai's art district on Al-Serkal Avenue. Step into the 133-seater theater, and you are transported to an old-school picture house.

"The permanent space allows us to release films every single night of the year. The programming is often exclusive and can't be seen elsewhere," said Kazim. But the pop-up format will always be part of Cinema Akil. "Our



Cinema Akil's theatre in Dubai

nomadic life allows us to reach different communities by bringing free p