

VERSES



Egyptian-American artist Kareem Rahma

Egyptian-American

The debut poetry collection from Arab-American poet Kareem Rahma shows the future in haiku



The cover page of Kareem Rahma's 'We Were Promised Flying Cars'

Arab News | Amman

Egyptian-American artist Kareem Rahma's latest project is an encapsulation of this polymath's experience and talents. "We Were Promised Flying Cars" is a book of haiku — poems consisting of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables — which Rahma then used his extensive experience of digital media (he's worked for Vice and the New York Times, and is a cofounder of Nameless Network) to promote, using an app called Cameo, which enables you to pay celebrities (many of whom really stretch the limits of that term) to read/sing/recite whatever you ask them to.

"I heard about (Cameo) maybe 16 months ago, and I really wanted to use it for some sort of art project but I couldn't figure out what," Rahma says. "I had the initial idea to have celebs congratulate me on publishing my book but (that) evolved when I realized it would be much more interesting and dynamic if the celebs read poems from my book. This really tied it all together with the themes of the book, because misinformation will continue to plague our society and eventually we won't care, because we'd rather be entertained than informed — which is already true, but I think it'll get more intense. The difference between now and then is that, in the future, we won't care that we're being lied to."

And so we have Anthony Scaramucci — a.k.a. The Mooch, briefly Trump's director of communications in July 2017 — reciting "Unnecessary Memories," which runs as follows: "Nostalgia is banned/Hindsight is 20-20/What's the use for truth?"

"The lack of self-awareness is truly magnificent," Rahma says. "Here is a guy who is a lying, sociopathic narcissist who made a name for himself by being a moron reading a poem about regret and the dissolution



Kareem Rahma

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Roni Helou brings sustainable fashion to Fashion Forward Dubai



A model poses with a dress designed by Roni Helou

The collection he showed used dead stock materials and discarded fabrics

Arab News | Dubai

Lebanon's Roni Helou is a regular at the region's definitive fashion platform Fashion Forward Dubai (FFWD), which was last held in October 2019. The designer is a graduate of Creative Space Beirut, and has shown at FFWD twice before. This time he is showing along with Hazem Kais at a presentation that showcases talents from his alma mater. As one of the few designers from the Middle East to address the issue of sustainability, his show was one that the industry was watching.

An avid human and animal rights activist, the designer said: "Ensuring the Roni Helou brand is as sustainable as possible is an ongoing mission for me. I've always believed in the importance of ethical practices and social justice, and I try to be careful when it comes to leaving environmental footprints behind."

The collection he showed at FFWD used dead stock materials and discarded fabrics. "The campaign images were shot at a landfill site to emphasize the

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significance of the issue... Given that the industry has a detrimental impact on the environment as a whole, I decided to face the