

## **The impact of the medical profession in the contemporary art of the Saudi artist Ahmed Matar**

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### **Abstract:**

In the last century, there was a growing attention to the Contemporary Art, and it was especially noticed, in the organizations, periodicals and among the critiques all over the world. Ahmed Mater is one of those Contemporary Art artists, a sparkling name in the Saudi visual art. He came from Tomah's Mountains paths and the depth of its loving and overloading sentimental clouds, which is framed in visual and spiritual beauty appetizers. This land of beauty, witnessed the beginnings of the glaring artist, who looks at reality with eagle eyes and creator abilities. He eliminated the static and dynamic and elements of the nature, and milts it in his passion furnace, adding to the same, a new dimension that goes side by side and aligns with his contemporary culture, without impacting the values of his surroundings. Thus his creativity stood out, in controversial but yet celebrated way Art in the life of the physician artist Ahmed Mater is a result of the daily vision, derived from a speech with a patient in the hospital, or a part of x ray that he sees many times every day, or may be the TV antenna, which represent for him and his entire generation in KSA, connection point with the outer world. A question was raised, what is the Impact of the medicine profession on the distinguished work of the artist, which was evident in his painting (x ray 2003), which lead the way to his breakthrough outside KSA, and launched a global interest in Saudi Art.

**Key Words:** Medicine Profession, Contemporary Art, And Artist: Ahmed Mater

### **The Study Issue:**

The appearance of a group of Saudi Artists, in the Contemporary Art, directed the global intention toward the Saudi Contemporary Art, generally and this category specifically, despite the difficulties, that faces this category. This artistic school stood out, with lot of effort, in the middle of the conventional artistic trends in KSA. However, this Contemporary Art School represents the Saudi community issues, since there are no Contemporary Art schools to include this trend. Many of the interested people wonder about the secret of excellence and creativity of this group. The artist, physician and photographer Ahmed Mater Alaseery "this phenomenal artist-so to speak-is inviting us to determine the research issue, and draft it in the following question: The Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art, by the Saudi Artist: Ahmed Mater"

### **Objectives:**

- Identify the life of the Artist Ahmed Mater and his bringing up background.
- Identify The Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art works of the Saudi Artist Ahmed Mater, through his works in that field.

### **The significance of the research:**

A new artist's generation emerged in KSA, representing a sudden attitude in the global Contemporary Art. This generation addresses global issues through his art. For example the development of Mecca and the impact of Islam, on the peace process in the Middle East. This generation is dragging a lot of attention worldwide, and there work is bought with remarkably high prices. This artistic school stood out, with lot of difficulty, among the conventional artistic trends in KSA, such: Islamic Decorated Writing Art, the conventional horses' paintings and others, which reflects the Arabic conventional culture. However this contemporary artistic school reflects the Saudi issues, whereas, there is no other contemporary artistic schools includes this trend, and those artists are satisfied with the few available galleries.

Those artists were keen on showing their talent to whole world after their continuous success. Among those the Saudi Artist Ahmed Mater, who opened his own paints studio in Abha. In the past his work was only displayed abroad, e.g. The British Museum and Venice Banally. He is the founder of the new upsurge in the Saudi Contemporary Art. He was the cofounder of the "Near Edge of the Arab world side" gallery, which has participated in whole Europe and the Middle East. On a TV interview Ahmed mater said, speaking of himself, (Between my the life of the medicine and the art, I was influenced by totally two different worlds, one is very practical and the other is very subjective, the experiences happens, and I live my artistic life, more than my medical life)

### **Research Questions:**

- 1.How the artist Ahmed Mater, was brought up?
- 2.The surrounding conditions, and the turning point in his life
- 3.The Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art, of the Saudi Artist Ahmed Mater

### **The research Limits:**

**Objectivity:** The Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art, by the Saudi Artist Ahmed Mater

**The timing:** This research was conducted on Muhrrrem and Safer on 1439 HA,

### **The Research Approach:**

The researcher used the Documentary Descriptive Approach, as an appropriate approach rather than other approaches.

### **Research Terminology:**

**Contemporary Art:** It is a group of artistic trends and directions that stared in the western world in the post sixties of the twentieth century eras, and lasted till our present time.

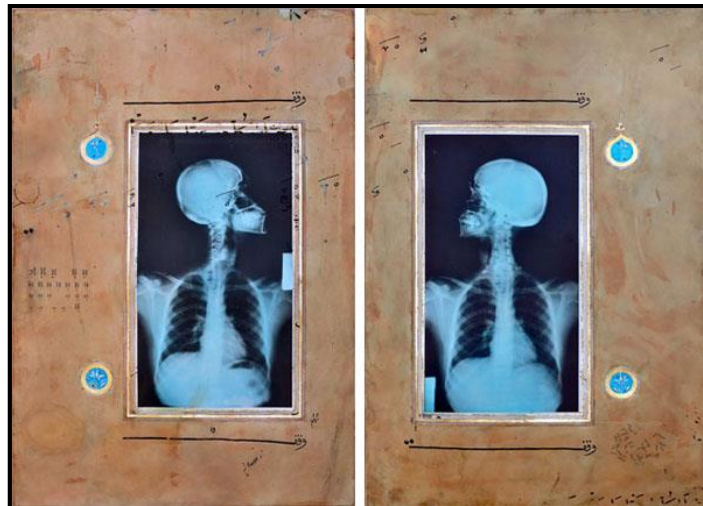
### **Theoretical Framework:**

To cover an introduction about the concept of the Art, what does it mean, and how it started? And then we shall show a glance of the Artist Ahmed mater. The researchers divided the same into three stages and reviewed the most distinguished incidents in each stage and their relevant circumstances, through those who lived those incidents with him. This way we can determine the most important variables in the life of the artist Ahmed Mater. Further the

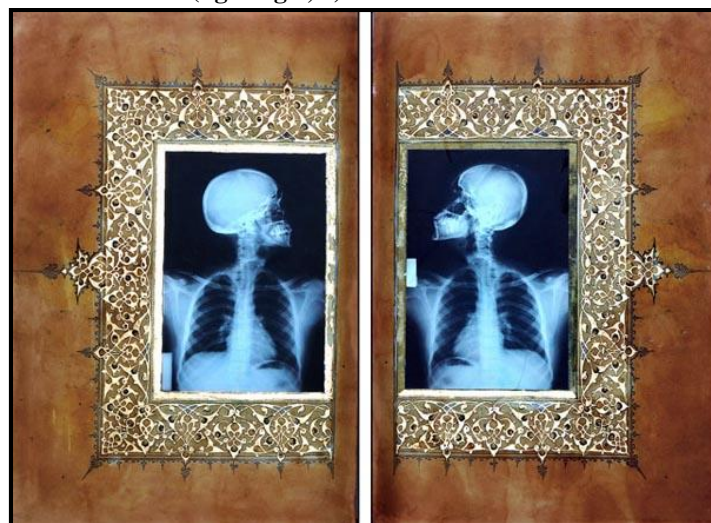
stages that were reflected on his art. We covered (12) artistic work of the most prominent works of the artist Ahmed Mater in which he used the X-ray with remarks. Among these works in 2008 he produced (lighting 1, 2), (lighting talisman 1, 2) and (X-ray derive). In 2009 he produced (lighting 9), (Mehrab- lighting), (cardio- lighting) and (Wakef- lighting3). In 2010 he produced (lighting- Ottoman Wakef), (Mehrab- lighting 2), (Surah- lighting) and (Human Evolution).



(Genetically Modified Emotions) using X-ray -2003 /135 ×105cm



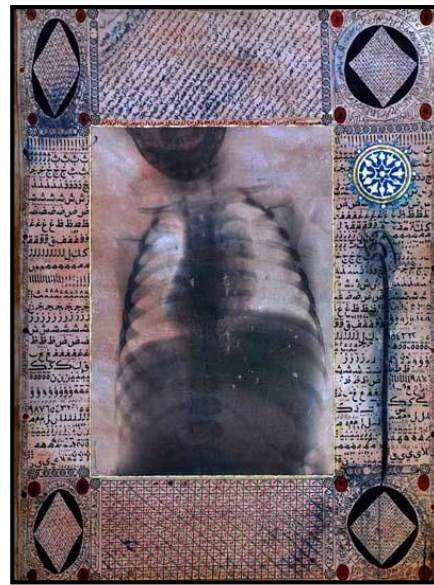
(lighting 1, 2) 2008/152×103cm



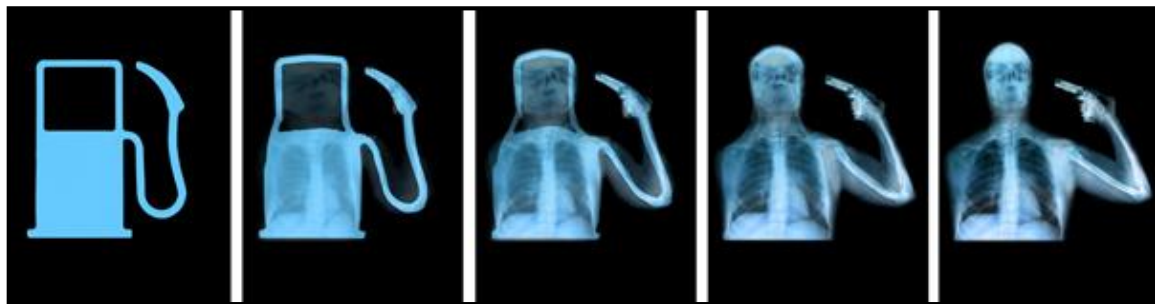
(lighting 7, 8) 2009/165×110 cm



(lighting talisman 1)- 2008 / 105×155cm



(lighting talisman 2)- 2008 / 100×70cm



(Human Evolution)-2010 /79.2×59.4cm

## Results and Explanations:

### The first Question: How the artist Ahmed Mater, was brought up?

His beginnings vary, he was born in Tabuk. His father was a military. His early life in Regal Almaa, the mountain village of Tihamah Aseer, the home land of his forefathers. The second stage was in Abha the regional capital of Aseer m where he studied his secondary school and his university study. There he started his artistic activities in Al Mufatha village.

### Second Question: what are the surrounding circumstances and the turning point in his artistic life?

The artist Ahmed Mater went through several stages that were reflected on his artistic life. He was born in military territory in Tabuk affected him and left its impact on his personality. His mother, the home painter and the writing artist introduced him to the Islamic and Arabic Art. She thought him; in his early age that, the art is the way keep his culture heritage and religion. These values became the base of his life style today and helped him to form his philosophy and vision of life. In addition, the amazing nature of his village, Regal Almaa affected him. His life in the village gave him traditional foundation to practice his life. However, when he moved from Regal Almaa to Abha, the modern Saudi city, to study the Medicine, made significant change in his life, which he expressed by saying, “the new globalization culture raised many questions in my head about my values due to my conservative beginnings and I

comprehended all these thoughts in my early beginnings and then I tried to destroy them. It was a dilemma that escalated due to this disturbance, then I started to discover my obedience to my religion and every around me. All this affected what I called the “the change” and opened the doors for the born of new experiences in my art. In 1999 he went to the Al Mufatha village, and there he had the chance to work in his studio, and also let him learn from the big artists. He participated in many conventional and contemporary painting galleries, including (landing on earth) gallery, in the summer culture club in Abha. He won several prizes including Abha’s fine arts cultural prize. In 2000 he met his royal highness, the Prince of Wales, who stayed for awhile in Al Mufatha village. The Prince studio was number (9) in front of Ahmed studio number (7). It was a turning point in his life in 2003m when Ahmed displayed his first painting, which used the X-ray in Al Mufatha. It was chosen for Colorful Competition, and displayed in Jeddah, Beirut, Sidon and Manama. He met the artist Steven Stabilton, in Abha. Their friend ship started and creative collaboration later, which led to the establishing the (Edge of Arabia) project. These are the circumstances of his life, which directly and indirectly was reflected on forming his own philosophy and vision which led to his raising as famous artist.

### **The Third Question: The Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art work, of the Artist Ahmed Mater**

On reviewing the life of the Artist Ahmed Mater and the different stages that he experienced. And upon reviewing his production and the historical stage of his work, that he produced in 2003 and the use of X-ray, are evidence of the Impact of the Medicine Profession on the work of Ahmed Mater, after joining the university to study and after practicing his profession in his first year and the years after. This impact is evident in the following points:

**First:** we shall refer to his first meeting with Steven Saplton, where he focused on Ahmed’s vision and the medical instruments. He said about this meeting, “My first meeting with Ahmed in Al Mfutaha village for arts in Abha on March 2003. He was setting in a corner in his studio, wearing white spotted in colors dress. He was surrounded by a big number of his medical instrument in form of X-ray, anatomy diagrams and medical prescriptions, competing to gain its place among black writing ink bottles. There were also boxes of colors, atomizer and Islamic Art books. He told me about his double life as physician and artist has awakened his creation energy, and motivated him to discover what is human in its nature in his big religious, cultural and political disturbance period. He showed me in a lot of enthusiasm his latest painting. Layers of expressing colors on painted in human form with X-ray with religious symbols. There were a lot medical notes printed on it .He explained then by saying (this is an anatomy for the social, cultural and religious changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century)

**Secondly:** After 2003 the paintings Of Ahmed Mater, especially, which used X-ray as symbol of this new winter collection of painters. His commitment toward defying the conventional thoughts and materials was promising of the emerging of the Saudi Contemporary movement. That painting, including the X-ray, was a genuine and instinct of Ahmed world, which is full reference to his medical practice. His breakthrough after that was through number of works using x-ray which was the center of attention all over the world and the reason for his worldwide fame. Among these works in 2008 he produced (lighting 1, 2), (lighting talisman 1, 2) and (X.ray derive).In 2009 he produced (lighting 9), (Mehrab-

lighting), (cardio- lighting) and (Wakef- lighting<sup>3</sup>). In 2010 he produced (lighting- Ottoman Wakef), (Mehrab- lighting 2), (Surah- lighting) and (Human Evolution). All these works are evidences of the Impact of the Medicine profession on Ahmed Mater, as it was an essential part of most of his works.

**Third:** despite the artist Ahmed Mater, is an artist who practiced the visual art and participated in several conventional galleries, we noted that his painting (Genetically Modified Emotions) using X-ray, was the real breakthrough, especially, when the British Museum bought this painting. Many of those who met Ahmed Mater, and spoke of his work, were witnesses on the Impact of the Medicine Profession on his work. Among those (Prince Khalid Alfaisal), who said “he used the doctor stethoscope to examine the secrets of the place and diagnose the beauty of inhabited mountains, with clouds. He discovered that art is as humanitarian work, as medicine is. He woke by his brush and cameras the sleeping angles; he predated his time and found himself an international spot through his painting (Genetically Modified Emotions) that was made by x-ray when the British Museum bought this painting. (Steven Saplton) also said the same, when they met for the first time in his studio in Al Mufataha. (Ahmed Alomran) also realized the same when he expressed his impression of his work (Human Evolution). (Lind Mark) and (Finicia Poter) also said “the painting that included X-ray, was genuine and instinct reflection of Ahmed’s world, which is full of references to his medical practice, his time in the mosque and his experience of living the Islamic culture”. (Henry Heming) said Ahmed Mater work is a combination of auditions and preparations. He added that it includes working on paper and cloth which evidence his importance as Saudi and Physician. Among his most well known work, the work that he executed using the disposed X-ray, by the hospital, may be they were outside patient center, or directed to the wrong section. Most of the time his painting on these photos, adding texts from (Grey’s Anatomy book), verses, or religious sayings. This work is within his searching, to explore the relation between the varying concepts of the human body. Thus he equalize between experimental scientific analysis and spiritual contemplation. And by adding the X-ray to the subject, he implies to the common human attributes, which is clearly evident in (Illuminations), which is his biggest contribution in “Edge of Arabia”. In the view of the aforesaid, we can conclude the Impact of the Medicine Profession on the Contemporary Art, by Ahmed Mater

### Recommendations:

- The Contemporary Saudi Art is a leading experience, that contains lots of beautiful meaning and unique experience, and researchers should work on researches with Contemporary Saudi Artists and publish these researches to make people familiar with those Artists and this Art, which contains a lot of content and concepts.
- Extensively writing articles about these experiences and conducting interviews with them, to spread the knowledge of these experiments, and not limit things to the academic aspect.
- Since, most of the Contemporary Saudi Artists, works in governmental sector or the private sector, which implies understanding the impact of these professions that they do and practice daily, on their artistic work.

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