

Women's Art Movement in Oman

Oman began its journey into the world of art in the year 1975, with Stone Age cave drawings being discovered in the region around that time. In the southern part of Oman, graphics and writings were then discovered which were said to be dating back to the pre-Islamic period.

Although the paintings were told to be thousands of years old, it was not until the 1970s that artists in Oman started practicing art. During the country's revolution, they took inspiration from what they saw around them and used it to express themselves. The rugged landscape, the dunes, the architecture and the environment were taken to be their guidelines as they poured their creativity onto the canvas.

A major challenge faced by artists were the lack of facilities available at the time to learn art. With no studios, art schools or associations, they were left on their own to find their way into learning. As the years passed, the Youth Art Studio was established in 1980 allowing Omani youth to express their ideas and develop their talents. With the help of the government, the Art Education Department in the Sultan Qaboos University was established in 1991 and the year 1993 saw the opening chapter of the the Omani Society of Fine Arts to allow artists to hold workshops and exhibitions.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of Omani women artists. They were supported by the government and pushed to venture out of their comfort zone and try their hand at different forms of art. Women started practicing art further and participated at a fine art exhibition in 1989. The opening of the OSFA gave them more experience and encouraged them to do more and currently, the women artists registered at the OSFA outweighs the number of men registered at the organization.

An additional step of organizing annual exhibitions exclusively for women, both residents and citizens encouraged them further and is one of the main reasons for the amount of registered women artists in the OSFA.

With many women leading the way, they have contributed massively to the art movement in Oman and around the world. Artist Alia Al Farsi has exhibited in over 20 countries over a period of 20 years with art installations varying in different sizes and has been voted amongst the top Arab women. Her interest in furnitures and sculptures have allowed her to create masterpieces that have been exhibited in various museums and hotels across the world.



Sanaa bint Naseeb Aman Al Haib, has been a member of OSFA, youth studio and scientific club since 1999. "My inspiration and passion for art are deeply rooted in my heritage. As I delved deeper into understanding art, I found love for things around me, especially the women around me and our homeland and the aesthetics of Arabic calligraphy," she said.



The support from the Omani government has led women to follow their dreams in becoming accomplished artists by providing them with the required tools and education. In accordance with the fifth sustainable development goal, they have made the country proud by making use of the economic resources and building the nation further.

References:

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3. <https://www.omanobserver.om/inspired-by-omani-women-jewellery-and-handicrafts/>