

Vian Sora

I must not forget and yet I must forge a new life as an artist by touching the hearts of those around me. That is the central theme of my art. I have lived many lives in a very short time and my paintings reflect my journey. It's a journey filled with lessons – both vivid and subtle, and as with many people's lives, filled with love, sadness, joy and angst. I, like many of my fellow artists, no longer live in the Middle East due to war and cultural upheaval. Yet, we are scattered around the world, still creating and preserving our rich heritage while absorbing new cultures. This is a bridge that I cross every day in my art – the one from the past to the present and how to reconcile the two. How to educate and inspire my audience and at the same time preserve a shared history across cultural divides is my biggest challenge. Simply put, my passion is life and my art is the work of my soul. It is how I express all that I have experienced, my visual voyage filled with emotion.

My art is hugely character-driven with symbols and images that have hidden meaning. It comes from both my spiritually and my dreams – which are at times so vivid that in the light of day they come to life through my hand on canvas. My art gives me the gift to bring to life the colors, shapes, shadows and symbols of our world. I truly believe that art is not worth doing unless it attempts to touch us deeply and nudge us gently to remember our humanness and connection to one another.

Much of my work is from mystical sources that I grew up with in the Middle East and my homeland Iraq. With its rich history and traditions, the Middle East is ripe, fertile ground for life – both real and imagined. I was raised among artists in a thriving art community. I spent years with my mind immersed in great art, literature and music, and months on archeological digs with my hands steeped in the past. I try to show both beauty and history by combining my deep respect for the civilizations of the past – from the colors of Baghdad, its arches and ancient ruins to my most recent work in America that is lush with color and peaceful women in pose.

Women are a central theme in my work – women of all cultures – women of ancient and modern times. Women covered and uncovered. For women, more than anyone else, bare both the fruits and the burdens of civilizations both past and present. I believe that women are silent spiritualists and their journey is a constant struggle for survival even in the best of times. As a woman, I recognize the inner sanctity of all life, how to respect life, acknowledge the contribution of life surrounding us and how we must all share this planet. I use this knowledge to create my art and also to improve my own personal life.

Oils are my favorite material to work with and my favorite tool is my painting knife, I use it to sculpt the figures and shapes I use on my canvas at the start of any painting. In the creation process, I also use a mixture of materials including solids and oils that create a near-leather texture imbedded with engravings for a 3-D effect. I then add color through brush strokes to flesh the characters out. My technique is one of oils and paste on canvas, but there are no limits in the creation process of my art in terms of materials. Hues and deep tones convey the mood and even its temperature. I depend mainly on oils, acrylics, colors of the earth, to create a complex and highly careful treatment of shades and polished textures that express my feelings through a special use of paint carefully to result in a kind of dreamy and epic tones of color.