

SHARE

Facebook

Twitter

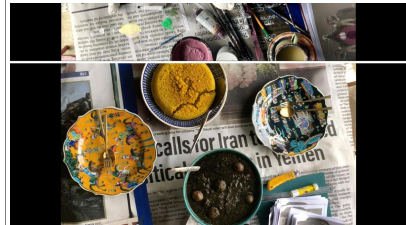
LinkedIn

WhatsApp

Print

Dubai artists document isolation experience in video by homing in on their dining table

Rami and Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian tackle the theme of time in new work



© COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS. Rami Hameed, Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian. From March to April 2020. © 2020. A work of fine art using various materials. Courtesy of the artists.

For the past month, nearly every day at lunchtime, these artists in Dubai have filmed a table at their house, starting at one end and moving slowly down its length from an overhead perspective.

The table as a site of eating, work and socialisation is the quarantine experience for many.

It is this, the pulled inside, that is investigated aesthetically in the new work by artists Rami and Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian. The six-and-a-half minute record of their life over the past month, from March to April, 2020 responds to the coronavirus crisis.

The table's crowded surface offers clues to their morning activities: computer cables; containers of paint; drawings and print-outs; and copies of *The Aelous* (they are subscribers) with its glimpses into the world outside their home.

Each day, filmed by Rami, the quiet, graphic one of the trio, are nestled between the objects.

You can see the work here



Since they moved to Dubai 11 years ago, the two brothers, Rami and Rakeb, and their childhood friend, Rahmanian, have been living and working together in their studio/home in Al Barsha.

They have separate practices, but are known best for the work they make together: surrealist collages made of newspaper imagery, which they paint onto with muted colours. Anthropomorphic assemblages and patterned design objects, and "floating paintings" or animations of their doctored images.

"Call us a creature with six eyes," says Rahmanian. "One person does one thing, while another comments with a totally different angle. Then we take their curiosity, and together..."



© COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS. Rami Hameed, Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian. From March to April 2020. © 2020. A work of fine art using various materials. Courtesy of the artists.

"Since the lockdown we have lived at our table," says Rami. "Sometimes you do not know whether you are eating food or colours."

Each view over the table is about 30 seconds; they edited the takes together so the scenes fade into one other. As the soundtrack they chant the days of the week, spelling in one tone: "Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday..."

The domestic scene is briefly interspersed with intertitles from Mahmoud Darwish's poetry and references to the landmark banian documentary *The House in Black*. The effect is one of monotony and also of things going too quickly – scenes passing by before you can finish taking them in.

Time is a frequent subject in their work, says Rakeb, the younger of the two Hameed brothers and the de facto spokesman for the group. "We are always talking about the non-linearity of time. That there is a difference between time and duration." Time, he says, is an "effect of the imagination" – different to the dullness of life, which the artists signal through their use of the newspapers, which appear like clockwork on their doormat.



© COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS. Rami Hameed, Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian. From March to April 2020. © 2020. A work of fine art using various materials. Courtesy of the artists.

The idea of turning their life into art, to put it broadly, is also an idea that floats around their practice. Last year, for example, they turned their gallery installation in one episode in Dubai into their studio for seven months, allowing the public to watch them in the creative process.

And from March to April 2020 up on the collages they have made over the past three years, where they take photos of what they call their "morning landscape" of coffee cups, papers from *The Aelous*, and odds and ends like food and flowers on the table. They then add to the images, drawing animal-like features on figures from the paper or bands of angles and swirls. Each image is successively retouched and re-photographed until the final work is a document of many moments.

But the three are quick to dismiss the idea of their work as purely reflecting themselves or their working methods; one has the sense that they have answered questions about their unique set-up one too many times before.

"The idea of authorship is Western," says Rami, pointedly. In their works, it is as if authorship is dispersed not only among the trio, but in the objects themselves.

The question for the video came while the three were in an airplane on route to Sydney to participate in the city's biennial in March. They were passing what they call "Tromeo" to each other or some of the thousands of A4 sized print outs from YouTube clips that they assemble into their moving paintings.

Their shared thinking about construction, as the former moved from one person to the next, taking an each other's ideas and achieving a life of their own. The experience of the plane also found its way into the final product. The camera's perspective, looking downward at the table, mimics the plane's vantage point.

"The idea of a 'third party' is a recurring theme in the video, taken from Darwish's poem Wednesday. Friday Saturday. "I had two paths," he wrote. "I would choose the third."

Perhaps the ultimate lesson of lockdown days is not monotony nor restriction, but the opportunity to make something new.

© COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS. Rami Hameed, Rakeb Hameed and Hesam Rahmanian. From March to April 2020. © 2020. A work of fine art using various materials. Courtesy of the artists.

SHARE

Facebook

Twitter

LinkedIn

WhatsApp

Print

EDITOR'S PICKS

Knowledge cuts previous challenges and rises up against lockdown

Arms to recognize government business to improve efficiency

Look who's now NBC payments for 'Pretty Hardy' had business

US rejects of major Chinese claims in South China Sea

A guide to the risk of the new and old world for the Arab world

THE DAILY NEWSLETTER

Sign up to our daily email

First Name

Send

MOST POPULAR

5.1 million views: 'Mafia' Daily Protests don't break cancer 2020

1.5 million views: 'Mafia' Daily Protests don't break cancer 2020

1.2 million views: 'Mafia' Daily Protests don't break cancer 2020

1.1 million views: 'Mafia' Daily Protests don't break cancer 2020

1.0 million views: 'Mafia' Daily Protests don't break cancer 2020

UAE	WORLD	BUSINESS	OPINION	ARTS&CULTURE	LIFESTYLE	SPORT	PODCASTS	PLATFORMS
Education	AFRICA	Banking	Editorial	Art	Fashion	Cycling	The Weekend	News APP
Environment	Asia	Finance	Opinion	Books	Food	Cricket	Shows/The Weekend	News APP
Government	Australia	Insurance	Cartoon	Music	Family	Football	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Health	Canada	Marketing	Energy	TV/Film	Travel	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Technology	China	Real Estate	Environment	Visual Arts	TV/Film	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Science	Europe	Startups	Healthcare	Visual Arts	TV/Film	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Oil & Gas	India	Supply Chain	Law	Visual Arts	TV/Film	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Real Estate	Indonesia	Trade	Law	Visual Arts	TV/Film	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts
Construction	Japan	Transport	Law	Visual Arts	TV/Film	Golf	Podcasts/The Weekend	Podcasts

