



ART

THE SPAN OF A DAY

Lebanese artist Chafa Ghaddar elevates the fresco technique to conceptual highs.

BY NAIMA MORELLI

Giornata is a term used in fresco painting to describe how much work can be done in a day. But for Dubai-based artist Chafa Ghaddar, who chose fresco as her medium, giornata symbolises the organic relationship man used to have with time. Time is a central theme in Ghaddar's show, *Your Sun That Kept Setting*, which will open at Sharjah's Maraya Art Centre on October 13. Fresco is one medium in the show, alongside drawing, photography and sound.

She conceives her works organically. "Sometimes a piece of plaster or folded paper would sit in my studio and a work might generate from there," says Ghaddar, who is fascinated by the idea of fragments. "A fragment is a piece of a bigger whole which has been lost or is not visible to us. It is something that has no beginning, no end, no contours. It defeats our linear perception of time."

Ghaddar's interest in fragments, scratched walls, and plaster is rooted in memories of her childhood home in the Lebanese countryside. While her first artworks at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts were conventional paintings, she increasingly felt drawn to murals, which led to studying the fresco technique in Florence.

Constricted by the limits of a canvas, she struggled with her first show at Galerie Tanit in Beirut in 2018. However, it inspired her to realise works like *Red*, a canvas that stretched across two walls of the space. Today, she is as comfortable in white-cube spaces in New York and Verona as she is with wide walls and site-specific commissions, like the one she realised for Art Dubai's A.i.R. programme in 2017. An elegant mural at Al Safa Art and Design Library, she used the classical ceramic technique Azulejo, influenced by Portuguese, Islamic, Chinese, and Spanish arts.

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Ghaddar's understanding of fresco has expanded from Italian Renaissance, but giornata remains a conceptual underpinning. "Mural painting pushes you to ask yourself what time and stamina will allow you to give every day."

***Your Sun That Kept Setting*, Maraya Art Centre, October 13 to January 10.**

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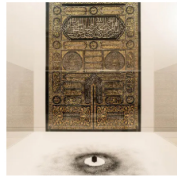
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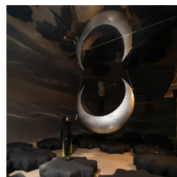
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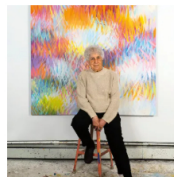
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