



Karima Ben Otman wants her artwork in your house – from your desk to your bed

Tell us a little about your background.

I was born in London in 1972, my father is Libyan and my mother is Jordanian. I was raised in England until the age of nine and then we moved to Jordan, where I remained until I finished high school. I went on to study fine art in Italy. Since I graduated in 1998 I have worked as a professional artist and resided in Jordan, the UK, France and now Cyprus.

Are you more in touch with your Jordanian side or Libyan side, or are you pretty equalised?

I have never lived in Libya so I am definitely more in touch with my Jordanian side as I lived in Jordan from for ten years or so. All my teenage memories and experiences are based in Amman.

What inspires you?

Mysticism and spirituality are very important forms of inspiration to me. I am inspired by people, humanity and the human condition; the cultures that I have met during my travels are a form of inspiration.

If you weren't an artist what would you be?

A scientist of some sort, in the medicine field. I would focus on finding a cure for fatal diseases.

We hear you're putting your artwork on products like notebooks; anything else? Will those products be available for purchase?

My first product is a limited edition notebook with my fish design on it. My aspiration is to make gift items and things for the house or office such as stationery, dinner sets and linens. I do plan on making my products for purchase as I would like as many people as possible to have a piece of my work!

You're based in Cyprus; what took you there and why do you remain?

I moved here around a year ago and set up my own gallery in the traditional downtown area. After the hustle and bustle of cities such as London and Paris I realized I need to base myself in a more laid back environment in order to steadily create. Relaxation allows for the better flow of ideas and I find nothing is more relaxing than sitting by the sea, watching the sunset.

Favourite thing to do after you finish a project?

Travel. If I am fortunate it will be to a destination I have never been to before. Now, though, I'm preparing myself for the Florence Biennale, an art exhibition taking place in Italy where I will be representing Jordan, so I have no time to think about what happens after!

What's it all about?

For me art is all about communication and inspiration. Artists communicate through their work their experiences in life. They inspire others through paintings, works of literature or performances. This inspiration serves to enrich our existence and add more meaning to our lives.

What do you believe?

I believe that life is a gift that comes only once and that you must make the best use of your abilities in it. That it is up to us to face the challenges of our birth and existence. That all radicalism only creates hatred. That humanity should unite under one roof of peace, respect and love for one another while maintaining individual beliefs and cultures.

If you had the attention of the entire world for 60 seconds, what would you most like to say?

I would like to tell people to put down their guns. Stop all the killing and destruction and start communicating to create a better world for our children. I would tell people to respect Earth, to stop being so wasteful and start existing in harmony with our natural surroundings.