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Using the traditional textile *Sadu* as an element of the Kuwait traditions and representing it as a monumental modern art form

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This thesis was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of Wales for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

This is a practice based research, based on a representation of motifs related to Kuwait's traditions and heritage through *Sadu* textile; the research starts with determining the factors needed by *Sadu* in order to move to the monumental modern art form. One of these factors is the analysis presented by the artists of the first generation in Kuwait concerning *Sadu* and what was presented by Sami Mohammed in his "Sadu Project" in the Eighties. From another side, to present what affected *Sadu* through the globalisation concept and to benefit from the same in order to show Kuwait visual culture, analyse and develop the colour philosophy in order to reach a colour group that represents *Sadu* modern art.

This aspect of the research is bibliographic, along with other aspects, including a critical reflection on practice. The research begins by using Jacques Derrida's "Deconstruction" as a process to dismantle *Sadu* motifs as ornaments, symbols, colours and subject matter. It is original research as it is based on an interview with Sami Mohammed's, which revealed that, in the Sixties, he was one of the pioneer artists who used modern art as a different area in their art careers, while also building national abstraction in Kuwaiti art. The other interview is with Yahya Swailem, an art teacher and critic in Kuwait since the Sixties, who provided the research with an overview of the history of art in Kuwait.

The research aims at attracting the current and young generations to the heritages and traditions of their country by transforming the *Sadu* textile to a *Sadu* modern art form in paintings and increasing the art appreciation and their cultural awareness. The research title is also the research aim and the selection of it was based on the existence of words that contributed in refining the twentieth century art as modern art and monumental and Kuwait for determining the research location that is considered the base of the research and linking them with the word "representing" that also shows something new presented by this research.

Sadu was selected for this research since it is a major and essential part of the heritage and traditions of Kuwait and since it is a textile, it may be on a two dimension form and for what it witnessed through the art in Kuwait through the first generation artists. Sami Mohammed considered it a start to success in changing its form and making it more modern. The paintings produced in the research display *Sadu* motifs with a colour philosophy that is different from previous presentations, with a focus on large-scale paintings to gain a new meaning through monumental *Sadu* art.

Acknowledgments

Contents

Chapter one: Introduction to *Sadu* History

The research described in this thesis uses the traditional textile *Sadu* as an example of an important part of traditional visual culture, in order to investigate the nature and origins of the contemporary visual culture of Kuwait. It uses *Sadu* to explore ways in which the artist can take advantage of this cultural heritage to create contemporary artwork while still preserving traditional identity. The research has involved theoretical critical analysis, as well as the reflexive creation of artistic pieces that represent the researcher's response to the challenge and inspiration of traditional forms.

Centuries have passed since human beings discovered the many tools that helped to facilitate life, and since the industrial revolution this has transformed the life and development of the world. Humans have reached the heights of technology and development in food, clothes and life essentials; as well as the founding industries of machines, ships, high technology planes and even spaceships to learn about other planets.

According to Altaf Salem Al-Sabah,[1] these developments have had a negative impact on the identity and traditions of many peoples, for we are beginning to notice the disappearance of many crafts. Societies are beginning to forget the traditions and heritage that they inherited from previous generations, perhaps because they are more concerned with luxury, development and technology which enhance life, and communication between people. According to Al-Sabah, technology played a major role in society, until the concept of globalisation materialised and had both a negative as well as a positive effect. (Al-Sabah, 2000, pp.5-7)

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[1] Altaf Al-Sabah, President of the Sadu House and researcher in the fieldof Kuwaiti Sadu, wrote most of the books related to Sadu in Kuwait, and studied many aspects regarding ancient Kuwaiti society and the developments witnessed by ancient populations. She also wrote a book entitled "*Reading Concerning Kuwaiti culture and traditional arts*".

Figure 1.1 Kuwait map (http://www.intute.ac.uk)

The thesis will begin by exploring the historical social roots of Kuwaiti cultural identity, for such roots are the foundation of every society's heritage and traditions. The research will first discuss the factors that have helped society to explore its identity, such as having to struggle with nature; trying to find an appropriate environment; respecting and proving one's worth; and the desire to express oneself through handicrafts. Thus, this study requires the researcher to show some insight through investigation. Additionally, in order to prove any ideas about visual culture in Kuwait, it would be helpful to explore other cultures to discover any aspects that could be considered unique to Kuwaiti society. The Bedouin tribes in Kuwait and in the gulf region are Utub, Awazim, Rashaida, Anizah, Mutair, and Ajman tribes (Al-Sabah, 2006, p.12).

1.0 *Sadu* and Regions

Artistic attempts started to emerge in the country through the traditions and handicrafts which the people of Kuwait have known throughout their lives. In the early days of the State of Kuwait, there were two main ways of life: the marine lifestyle and the desert lifestyle. See figure (1.1) Kuwait map for details. The marine lifestyle used to prevail in the region overlooking the Arab Gulf, while the desert or land lifestyle was common in the regions bordering Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Certainly, when there is more than one lifestyle in a country, the society becomes multicultural. Such multiculturalism in the life[2], customs and heritage of any country reflects the civilised and rich character of the State; thereby creating diversity in the tastes, tendencies and modes of expression of the people.

This thesis adopts the word "*Sadu*" instead of "*Alsadu*" which is the original pronunciation in Arabic language, because "AL" in Arabic is an article in English, so "AL" in translations it will be "the", the word "*Alsadu*" will translated as "the *Sadu*", that is why the term "*Sadu*" was chosen instead of "*Alsadu*". Those living a land-based lifestyle resided in a desert environment with a very harsh climate that included extreme heat during the summer and severely cold temperatures in winter. People lived with their families in tents, see figure (1.2), usually made of goat hair, and learned to tolerate rain and cold in winter, as well as heat and desert storms in summer. They laboured in sheep grazing and trading, as well as fishing, and hunting using hawks. In the desert, the woman's main handicraft was spinning and making bags, rugs and pillowcases called '*Sadu*'. When the weaves were ready to be used, see figure (1.3) the man would take them to the nearest city to sell. This was how life took its course in the desert (Al-Sabah, 2000).

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[2] The studies made by Dr. Yacoub Al-Ghanim, the researcher in the field of Kuwait history, revealed that the Kuwaiti community is not constituted of Arabs only, but many other nationalities including Persians, Africans, Arabs and Non-Arabs of Iraq, who all contributed in the foundation of the society and are distinguished by their handicrafts, namely shipbuilding and so on.

Sadu, the traditional woven textiles, is made by the Bedouin women who worked in this craft to earn a living. They also practiced this craft to express their inner feelings and emotions, and to prove themselves. *Sadu* are characterised by their natural colours (colours from the Bedouins' environment), like white, beige, brown, and black in decoration, and spontaneous symbols that reflect the inner beauty of the Bedouin woman as in figure (1.4) (Crichton, 1998, p.20).

Gata, the tent divider in Bedouin tradition, is the most important item that families need. It is a wide piece of *Sadu* textile that separates men from women inside the tent (Bail Al-Shaar). The *Gata* may be the closest to this study's results with regard to the two largest paintings, as details will be given relevant to the *Gata* as a *Sadu* textile. The *Gata* reveals the capacities if the Bedouin weaver and the designs in the *Gata* as the *Shajarah* and other motifs (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.20).

Arab women in general, though particularly in the gulf region, were characterised by their care of the home. However, while the Bedouin woman was weaving the tent that was to be her place of abode, she was also working artistically and with a sense of taste. This is something that she would not have had any experience of until this point in her life; Bedouin weavers mainly mimic their forebears regarding *Sadu* designs[3]. All that she used to see was the desert and its creatures, besides the craftwork of her immediate family.

These details regarding the activities of Bedouin society, and the things they used to do at that time, are very important for the research that is related to *Sadu* because this thesis focuses on the importance of *Sadu* alongside the life of ancient generations. This look at society is no less important than the use of *Sadu* motifs as a focus for the research, as in addition to aspiring to obtain the resultant monumental *Sadu* art work, the thesis also discusses the issues of having few Bedouin weaving women of an advanced age. Al-Sabah

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[3] The Bedouin society inherited this handicraft and did not learn it through training. Girls acquire it from their mothers and grandmothers. This handicraft involves preparing the textile, wool and colours, weaving such motifs and symbols to obtain, as the final product, the Sadu weave.

stated that "In a survey taken in 1989 (Haddad and Abdul Raouf, 1990, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs) to study the present and future prospects of the craft, we found that of two hundred and fourteen women weavers 74% practiced weaving for economic profit, mostly for sale outside their homes" and continued that "the young generation of women of tribal backgrounds do not practice weaving" and the reason for that is that 90% of the older weavers said that they would love their daughters to learn weaving despite the different social situation, thus reflecting a deep pride in their artistic heritage (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.46).

This is considered this to be a highly significant fact that has not been generally perceived by Kuwaiti society. The feeling of regret for the loss of *Sadu* in the society has informed this study, hence the artistic aspect of *Sadu* has been presented, and not just its traditional and handicraft aspects. The reasoning behind this is because the *Sadu* motif has a symbolic, cultural and aesthetic significance, and the social, cultural and artistic aspects are complementary in Kuwait. Weaving was not the result of a sense of emptiness; in fact, the feelings, emotions and needs of the Bedouin woman resulted in such balanced motifs and symbols.

Kuwait is considered to be one of the Gulf countries that have a number of crafts and traditions. Kuwaiti society is made up of many people that came from the north: from Iran and Iraq, and from the south: from Saudi Arabia, and regions from the Arabian Peninsula, which is the centre of Islamic culture. This diversity points to the fact that a great number of the Bedouins live in the desert and are in constant motion, while another group of them live by the sea, earning their living from it and working in maritime crafts[4].

In Saudi Arabia, and especially in the Abha region, women in the past made use of the same *Sadu* ornaments used in weaving, but in a simpler way and in the decorative domain also,

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[4] Maritime crafts include shipbuilding, fabrication of fishing nets, footwear and kitchenware. Such industries were mostly developed by non-Arab Kuwaiti people (Interview with Yahya Swailem on 5/9/2009).

not solely in weaving. In their book *Abha Bilad Asir,* Al-Saud, Al-Anqari and Al-Ajroush (1989), refer to the past and the present of the Abha region located in the south west of Saudi Arabia, a mountainous region where the woman lived in a stone and mud house which she would take pride in improving. "Decorating the walls, windows and doors was part of the woman's work and led to much competition between women" (Al-Saud & Al-Anqari & Al-Ajroush, 1989, p.100) see figures (1.5 & 1.6). Bedouin women in the Abha region also used to work with dyes which she made personally, similar to the woman who weaves. She would select colours that made the family feel comfortable and in harmony, using a balance of blue, green, yellow and red (Al-Saud, Al-'Anqari, Al-'Ajroush, 1989, p.100).

This thesis views this as a positive aspect of Kuwaiti society, for it had refined its culture through many varied cultures and traditions. According to Yahya Swailem, [5] the result was the merging of the religious aspect, which is Islam, with the culture and traditions of both the Bedouins in the desert and those by the sea who are considered as the urban citizens (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

The two areas are not far from each other, for Kuwait is a small country with a very strategic location. It is considered a trading centre, where neighbouring countries would carry out their trade activities. The Bedouins would offer their merchandise in the civilised part of the country due to its closeness to the sea, for there were many trade ships from neighbouring countries, so they would earn their living from selling their crafts to buy food. In past times, the Bedouins sold *Sadu,* which were crafted by Bedouin women, to those living in the city. They also moved from one place to another to meet their needs by pasturing sheep, and selling products made from sheep and camels. *Sadu* was considered to be one of the most important crafts by those living in the cities, for they used them as rugs,

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[5] Yahya Swailem is an artist and researcher in the field of Kuwaiti art and patrimony. He wrote many articles that focus on the traditions and social roots of the Kuwaiti society during his research in the field of popular arts in Kuwait.

pillows or bags that were hung and filled with personal items or other things. At that time, *Sadu* were regarded as functional items with a great design. On the artistic side of *Sadu*, according to Crichton "In essence *Sadu* is a traditional Bedouin art within which on can see a great deal of variety in colour, design and technique through which one can distinguish differences of locality and cultural influences" (Crichton, 1998, p.13), See *Sadu* patterns in figure (1.7).

As for the blending of traditions in Gulf regions, the search for a visual culture is almost universal, and there is no great difference between countries concerning their traditions and the artistic movement in general. However, when the culture of the Gulf countries was starting to develop there was no proof of stability, and what was adopted by the Arab countries was also adopted by the Gulf region at that time. According to Fran Lloyd (2001), writing on the situation of the Arab peoples, "Visual culture has always been part of the struggle of identities, whether national, group, or individual". Lloyd adds, "This emphasis on imaging foregrounds visual culture as an active site of the renegotiation of identities and meanings, both for the artist and the spectator". This also applies to society in Gulf countries in the past because individuals at that time were searching for a sense of identity, and the Bedouin woman was searching for identity in her craft, in her taste, and in her sense for elegant colours[6] (Lloyd, 2001, p.19).

1.1 *Sadu* and its Disappearance

In this thesis, the researcher looks at *Sadu* patterns from a different point of view: by studying them from an aesthetic perspective. *Sadu* has many of the characteristics that are regarded as the basics of the Kuwaiti art, not as an traditional handcraft, but as an art

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[6] Lloyd conducted research studies in the Middle East and focused on the region of Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Egypt and not on the Gulf region. But there is a similarity in the nature of Arab men in general where some Syrian families originated from Gulf Bedouins and vice versa.

practiced by the Bedouin woman without her being aware of this fact, because Bedouin women at that time were weaving to produce *Sadu* as a functional item, things they needed for living, but in the art field in Kuwait or among the artists themselves '*Sadu*' was considered an artistic piece because of its patterns and colours.

Kuwaiti society has witnessed important technological developments during recent generations, but they should endeavor to learn more about the culture, patrimony, and tradition of their society and their identity because the development of civilisation is based on the culture of the society. These changes impose on us the obligation of knowing our culture. However, paying great care to tradition does not replace the importance of caring for modernity, and it is not an invitation to live in the past. It is a search into the roots of the nature and development of culture, which is considered a positive step towards understanding the developed human and their cultural world (Abu Zaed, 1987, p.6).

This perspective is the start of the rescuing a tradition facing disappearance and being forgotten altogether. Development and technology have played a role in building the concept of globalisation. Western modernity, as it is referred to in Kuwaiti society, has a very significant effect on new generations, and it is attracting them to a new western style culture. This is regarded in this thesis as a modern culture, where the identity of the west has differed and merged. New traditions have entered western culture due to a merging between the cultures, and through the concept of globalisation which is regarded as a very important factor in the spread of culture from Western societies.

As the new generation is attracted to modern things rather than to tradition, the *Sadu* was proposed as a subject matter in modern art, since the new generation is considered to have an important role in western culture, due to its effect on the direction of all kinds of art. Yahya Swailem revealed that he has lived within Kuwaiti society since the Sixties. Since

then, he has realised that Kuwaiti society[7] is open to other cultures and well acquainted with them. At the start of the Sixties, changes started to manifest themselves, as construction began to develop, and families transformed their surroundings and old houses into modern ones. Oil companies attracted handicraftsmen and others, as they thought it was a time for change and to look at life from another perspective. The focus turned to education and the building of new relations between Kuwait and other western countries from the political, commercial and cultural perspectives (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

The current generation is more conscious of the art of other cultures. This does not mean, however, that the previous generations were not conscious of these matters, but rather that globalisation only began in Kuwaiti societies during the last thirty years. There is nothing to prove that the concept of globalisation was present in Kuwaiti society before that time period.

Information concerning *Sadu* is very limited among younger generations, since their interests are directed towards technology, entertainment, Hollywood movies, and other things that are considered to be the popular culture of the West, and in particular the United States, which dominates the world in general. The establishment of the Kuwait Textile Arts Association in 1979, before it developed into the Sadu House, is widely seen as an excellent idea. But, as Yahya Swailem states, the members who established it did not use their best efforts to protect this handicraft and headed towards other areas, whether governmental or private, leading to the disappearance of this handicraft. There was an absence of strategy to

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[7] Kuwait Society: Abdulaziz Al-Sar'awi, lawyer by training, diplomat, and head of the Society of Social Workers from 1967-2003, remarks that the positive attitude towards change among Kuwaitis would not have prevailed had Kuwaitis not been ready for it psychologically and mentally. He notes that the "Kuwaiti mentality is characterized by open-mindedness, ability to renew its perspectives, flexibility and willingness to be affected by other nations' laws and ideas, especially when theses are pertinent to the development of the Kuwaiti community's welfare; these characteristics are the result of long and steady interaction with other peoples in pursuit of mutual interests." See Abdulaziz Al-Sar'awi, Dirasat Fi Al-Sha'oun Al-Ejtima'ia Wa Al-A'malia [Studies in Social and Labour Affairs] (Kuwait City: Kuwait Government Press, 1965, p.35).

support *Sadu*, leading as well to the lack of social awareness. If it had provided the community with books and publications that reflected this culture, then this would have been much better for its traditions and crafts. *Sadu* is relatively obscure, and the conditions of culture are such that it is likely to change. (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009)

1.2 The nature of *Sadu*

Most handicrafts are not measured by their easiness or difficulty, but by the feeling of the handicraftsmen towards them. They are used to ease the way of life, or are considered as an art practiced with passion, or as a refined hobby. They can also be a way of expressing the feelings of the handicraftsman or woman. In all its aspects, *Sadu* requires a great deal of effort. In this handicraft, in Kuwait heritage, traditionally Bedouin men only help women in the collection of wool, and then it are reluctant even shameful to interfere. Bedouin women alone go through the remaining phases as they clean, spin, colour, and weave the wool. Although Bedouin women exhaust themselves by weaving, they remain delighted by this activity which they love (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

Sadu ornaments are considered one of the most important characteristics of the textile itself that lend the simple touch of *Sadu* beauty. The main patterns were the *dhalla, alaein, uwairijan, dhrus elkhail, midkhar* and *shajarah*. And it is known that Bedouin women do not disclose a lot of information about the details and meaning of the designs nor they are aware of the significance of these patterns but they continue to copy these designs in their textiles and transfer them to the next generation through memory and deeply rooted traditions (Al –Sabah, 2001, p.40).

Shajarah is considered one of the most important textiles used by Bedouins in *Sadu* as patterns and that reflects the artistic ingenuity of the weaver. These patterns assume symbolic meanings which differ from other Bedouin patterns in their spontaneity and

diversity as shown in figure (1.7) in the middle of the picture that represents a *Shajarah* pattern. Usually the Bedouin women use symbols in this textile such as a comb, stars or *thuraya* as the weavers called it, an aeroplane, storms and erring motif and they are all weaved as geometric designs reflecting everyday objects from the weavers' surroundings all in one pattern in *shajarah* (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.41).

The designs of the *shajarah* include triangles, diamonds, squares, earrings, incense burners, scissors, scorpions, snakes, zig zags, camels, combs, aeroplanes and calligraphy. This range of designs represents the daily life of the Bedouin family and most of them are real and not from fantasy since all these symbols and designs were seen by the Bedouin women directly through their own eyes (Crichton, 1998, p.57).

Abu Zaed in his book *Bedouins' Heritage* stated that *Sadu* culture is characterised by the difficulty in making wool carpet. However, from the decorative point of view, we as regular people (not weavers) find this piece of cloth very spontaneous in its geometric decorations, which show how hard it is to do this craft. The attraction of a person looking at it gives it much more importance than simply being a craft. We believe that the younger generation should appreciate and feel the hardship of Bedouin life at that time: they lived in a harsh climate, which is very cold during the winter and very hot during the summer due to the desert location of Kuwait, forcing Bedouins to move from one place to another. Usually their homes are very small and compact so that they can easily move and dismantle them. Their homes are called Bait Alshaar "House of hairs" see figure (1.8). They are so called since their homes are tents made out of goat hair. The reason they chose this type of hair is because when it is wet, it clings and firms up, unlike camel wool or any other wool which falls apart when wet (Abu Zaed, 1987, p.23).

Knowledge of the traditional aspects of Kuwaiti culture demonstrates that there are many aspects that are neglected, for no one has developed them or even analysed and presented them to the younger generation. Some of these aspects include the *Sadu*, traditional dances,

and popular traditional songs. However, in the researcher's opinion, traditional poetry[8] is one aspect that has captured the interest of many in Kuwait until this day, for it is still presented through poetry competitions between poets in all types of media (newspapers, radios, and television). This shows that the community does not reject its tradition, but rather it focuses on the aspect that it can relate to.

Over a period of more than forty years, no academic or analytical studies on *Sadu* in the art field were conducted to save a tradition that is on the verge of being forgotten and lost, in order for it to become a very valuable craft in art that could be of great importance to the visual arts. There were some personal attempts, like those of the artist Sami Mohammed, the only artist in Kuwait who paid attention to *Sadu* in his own art, and who included them in his personal collection of Kuwaiti art and artefacts. As art is not one of the government's priorities in Kuwait, Sami Mohammed's attempts were not successful, although he continued working and producing such artistic work, but it did not receive the attention and care that would have given his *Sadu* experience an important theoretical and academic value. This is what incited Sami Mohammed[9] to change direction and focus on representing human suffering in life through sculpture, for which he is famous in Middle Eastern countries and around the world.

This thesis tackles the problem to which Sami Mohammed found no solution: making *Sadu* a part of modern art and explaining the theoretical aspect of it, while relying on some of the visual culture theories have not been applied to the Kuwaiti community. This research begins by reaching back to traditional *Sadu* motifs and translates them into a visual language more closely aligned with the tradition of Western abstract painting. In particular,

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[8] Poetry of Arabs and namely Arabs in the Gulf region is greatly affected by the conditions of societies. Poetry of Bedouins in the Gulf is different from the literary Arabic poetry. Bedouin poetry is called "Nabati poetry" and has a greater effect than other arts because it is related to eulogy. Some poems are written as a narration while others are real stories and wonders of a specific tribe. That is why the arts of Kuwaiti society are more appealing than other arts (Abu Zaed, 1987, p.21).

[9] One of his works sold at Christie's art auction in London on 2007 (more details in Chapter 4).

these works ultimately reflect a hybrid visual culture, bringing together traditional craft motifs with conventions drawn from painting in the second half of the 20th century (scale, high keyed colour, etc).

This method consists of taking the structural aspect of *Sadu* symbols and then starting to create a surreal environment on the canvas, which contains parts that are difficult for the regular audience who has no experience in art to aid comprehension.

It is very hard for the researcher to find anything written about art in Kuwait, which gave h motivation to address this traditional and artistic problem. Such written references concerning this field would give other researchers a greater chance to develop literary and artistic aspects, rather than just depending on research, interviews and other methods.

1.3 Research Question

What are the effects demonstrated by *Sadu* as a textile and how can they be transformed into factors that support *Sadu* in its presentation as a monumental modern art form. Essentially, what factors can aid *Sadu* in its transformation from a textile into a modern art form?

1.4 Hypothesis

Sadu, if transformed into a monumental modern art form on large scale using "Deconstruction" as a process, will be affected in a positive way. Modern art can be the common trait between the young generation and traditions. It can give visual culture a new meaning in Kuwait.

1.5 Limitations

1- All materials and patterns used in this study are related to *Sadu* in Kuwait and about Kuwaiti weavers only, although other general resources in the field of visual culture and art were also used.

2- The study shall be limited to one kind of tradition, that is, the traditional textile Sadu, in terms of its design and meaning only.

3- Focusing only on Sami Mohammed, as a Kuwaiti artist.

4- The interviews included in the study are limited to people working in the field of art, academics and experts only.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to create an impact on visual culture in Kuwait and raise global awareness of Kuwait's traditional woven textile Sadu, by using a part of traditional *Sadu* as a design that needs to be activated and developed in the art field opened up by Sami Mohammed's '*Sadu* project'. In doing so, how *Sadu* has been forgotten as an artistic icon of Kuwait's traditions and how it is no longer being used as a symbol of visual culture are exposed.

1.7 Need for the Study

There is a need to make Kuwaiti society aware of how important their traditions are, by representing them in an aesthetic form in visual art; and also to transform *Sadu* as a design, from its patrimonial old state, to current use in several kinds of visual arts in the era of technology. This can be achieved by deconstructing *Sadu* as an object, subject matter, motifs, symbols, colours, and scale, and then re-constructing it as a monumental modern art form.

In addition, the study seeks to discover what caused previous generations to have a pessimistic outlook on life, and to encourage the current and future generations to return to these traditional art forms and merge culture with art and society.

In this way, the level of visual culture in Kuwait will rise in quality, its meaning will become more understood, and visual culture will become widespread; as Kuwaiti society witnesses a renewed culture that is in keeping with time-honoured traditions.

1.8 The Importance of the Study

There are many educational and other institutions that could benefit from this thesis, due to its artistic and critical levels on the one hand, and its literal and traditional levels on the other. The importance of this thesis lies in informing about the lack of attention from the authorities to what Sami Mohammed achieved for art in Kuwait. It also clarifies the very important value of traditions in Kuwait, as well as presenting the suffering of Bedouin society, and it's starting of this craft and preserving it through the years. They did this by passing it on to their children in a positive way. This study adopts the perspective that the role played by the Sadu house the Kuwait Textile Arts Association, from their creation and until now, is very important, as well as what they have achieved in the educational and cultural fields.

This thesis represents the beginning of an educational and artistic movement, and the beginning of the movement to deal with the visual culture in Kuwait, which is considered to be the key to transforming traditions and crafts to modern art. Western societies regard art as one of the most important tools that helps to build a civilisation and shape a modern society at the artistic level, including literature, music, theatre, and visual arts. In the opinion of the researcher, Kuwait has a national treasure: its customs and traditions which promote the society to a higher level.

Figure 1.2 Women and young girls sitting in front of a gaily decorated tent divider. "Northern Kuwait 1932," © Middle East Center, St. Antony's College, Oxford.
Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.15

Figure 1.3 Sadu Pilows and rug (Midkhar pattern)
Sadu House Brochure. Kuwait: Kuwait Textile Arts Association, 2007

Figure 1.4 Weavers setting up the loom in the courtyard of the Sadu House, Kuwait, 1996. Weaving was usually a cooperative effort among the family and tribe. However, women would work individually on certain intricate designs, reflecting their particular talents and skills.

Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert, p.26

Figure 1.5 Sadu patterns on the doors and halls in traditional houses at Abha in Saudi Arabia.
Al-Saud, N. B., Al-'Anqari, A. M., & Al-'Ajroush, M. M. 1989. *Abha Bilad Asir*, p.101

Figure 1.6 Sadu patterns on the wall in traditional houses at Abha in Saudi Arabia.
Al-Saud, N. B., Al-'Anqari, A. M., & Al-'Ajroush, M. M. 1989. *Abha Bilad Asir*, p.109

Figure 1.7 Cross-section of divider curtain featuring details of the wrap-faced Shajarah pattern with various geometric design motifs such as earrings, insects and tents.

Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, pp.34-35
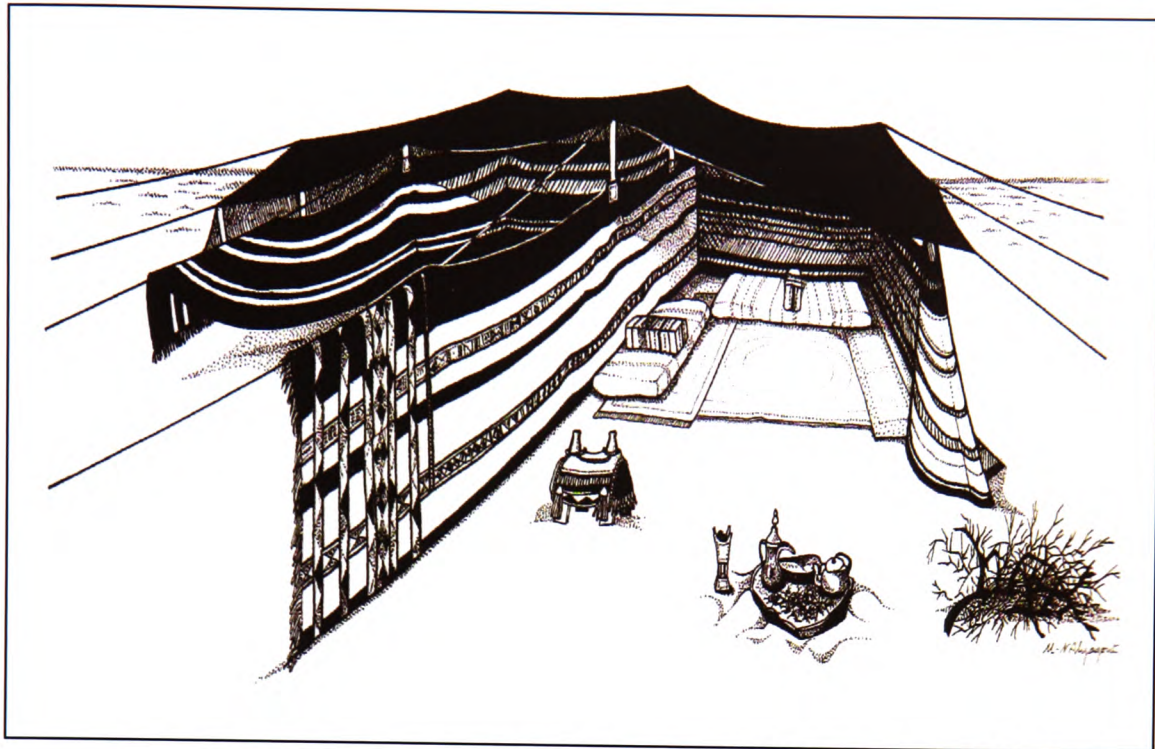
Figure 1.8 "Gata" Sadu patterns on the Bedouin tent divider in Biet Alsha'r (House of hairs)
Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.19

Figure 1.9 Monotype print, ink on paper, of Sadu patterns by the researcher (Musaed Albehairi) on 2004 at Illinois State University (Printmaking studio) IL, USA

Chapter two: Contextual review: *Sadu* and Art in Kuwait

At the current time, many artists in Kuwait want to read anything that is related to art in Kuwait, but very few resources are available. Most studies published in Kuwait focus on popular arts and there are very few books about fine art in Kuwait, whether in book form or articles.

After the publication of "*Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*" by Zahra A.H.Ali in 2004, no other books specialised in art were published until the beginning of 2009. One book specialising in an area of art in Kuwait is the book called *Ma'aredh alrabee' fe alkuwait* (Spring Exhibitions in Kuwait), which is focused on the beginnings of Kuwaiti art and other precedent artistic activities in Kuwait's public schools. This book, written by Yahya Swailem,[10] is a basis for this thesis as it provides valuable information that is hard to acquire elsewhere. Swailem presented certain points of view that valued art and artists in the past.

In the course of an interview in 2009, Swailem was able to pass on to the researcher of this study previously unpublished information, together with other information that has been published only recently, and which casts light on the life of the Kuwaiti artist from the early days of the state's existence to the present day.

According to Swailem, if we wish to discuss the beginning of art in Kuwait in this research, we should start by considering the social aspects of the Kuwaiti family; subject to some social and religious restrictions, as is the case in the Arab region in general (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

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[10] Yahya Swailem is the director of Boshehri Gallery in Kuwait; he was previously the manager of Al-Adwani Gallery of the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature. Swailem practiced art in Egypt while studying fine arts before coming to Kuwait in 1962 to teach art education in Kuwait public schools in all its grades. He has written many articles that reflect his interest in the field of art in Kuwait and to some extent remedy the lack of research and writing about art in Kuwait.

As discussed in Chapter One, as regard to the land lifestyle, the people live in a desert environment which has a very hard climate. Indeed, the weather becomes extremely cold in winter and extremely hot in summer. People live with their families in tents usually made out of goat's hair, and can tolerate rain and cold in winter as well as heat and desert storms in summer. People there work in sheep grazing and trading, as well as fishing, and by having recourse to the hawk to hunt animals. In the desert lifestyle, the Bedouin woman's main handicraft is spinning and making *Sadu*. When textiles or rugs are ready to be used, the man takes them to the city and sells them. This is how life takes its course in the desert. According to Swailem, *Sadu* handicraft practiced by Bedouins is also an expressive medium in which the Bedouin woman communicates her feelings of joy or sadness. We can also see that the hands of the woman weave with great concentration because they've been practicing this handicraft continually and also because they need the pieces for other areas of life. This reveals that the expressive aspect, as a quality of the artist, is also present in the Bedouin woman indirectly. Swailem also mentioned that Bedouin women chose the colours unconsciously but in a balanced manner (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

Fine art came to light in Kuwait through certain efforts made in the twenties through to the forties of the last century. In fact, at that time, there was not an official authority assigned by the government to teach art and diffuse it throughout the country. Thus, as the researcher mentioned earlier, there were only individual attempts during that period: in other words there was not a Kuwaiti artist in official terms. Furthermore, the aforesaid attempts clearly reflect the environment in which the predecessors of the nation had lived and created their culture which was handed down through the generations. Therefore, the first artistic attempts were mostly handicrafts, and included the manufacture of the tools needed at home or in life in general (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

The use of straw in the manufacture of baskets, and the special designs and lines on dining tables, reflect the artistic sense of people living land or marine lifestyles. People started to appreciate art through handicrafts, and there were many attempts in this respect as every Kuwaiti citizen started to learn more about other cultures, including Arabic and Western cultures.

The Arabic culture was the Egyptian civilisation of the Pharaohs and the Iraqi civilisation of Babylon, while western civilisations were the European and American ones. What is meant by "other cultures" is the set of visual arts, tales and old civilisations. In fact, the Kuwaiti artist used to look at the pictures of all of these cultures and gradually started to be impressed by them. Furthermore, Kuwaiti public opinion regarding art has remarkably developed, thereby paving the way for numerous artistic attempts, including painting, sculpture and pottery. This was the beginning of the Kuwaiti art movement which lasted until the 1940s when the State witnessed a striking development that has changed the general aspect of Kuwaiti culture, and began to unleash progress and change. As a result, an Art Education course was added to the curriculum of public schools and this played a vital role in shaping the Kuwaiti (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

2.0 The Emergence of Art in Teaching

Teaching art began in the thirties through medium of "Arabic Calligraphy", as the Quran[11] was written in the Arabic language. Some Mullahs[12], as they are labelled in Arabic, used to teach individuals the basics of the Islamic religion and the Arabic language. That is how Arabic calligraphy and its beauty came to form the beginning of the sense of art at that time. Religious men did not object to that type of art, and as Swailem says in his book: "We can

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[11] The Quran is the central religious text of Islam.

[12] Mullah in Kuwait is a title of respect for a person who is learned in and teaches Arabic and Quran's laws(Swailem, 2009, p.10).

notice that religious people in ancient Kuwait such as Sheikh Abdul Aziz AL-Rashid, Sheikh Yousef Ben Issa Al-Qenaie, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Hamada and Mullah Rashid Al-Seif, were not against art, authorised it and some of them even encouraged it" (Swailem, 2009, p.46).

Islam has set particular boundaries to prove that this religion does not prohibit all art, just any painting that represents the soul of any human, animal and bird for example. As Mohammed Hejazi said in his book, "*Mawqef Alislam men alfenoon*" (Islam's Position on arts): "Islam does not forbid or prohibit anything that increases the beauty and goodness of life nor that increase humanitarian feelings". That means that the religious aspect encourages beauty and its expression in life in general (Hejazi, 1984, p.34).

Since Kuwait was established in 1613, many different groups of people have settled in Kuwait, equipped with their artistic experiences and skills that were inherited from members of society as time passed by, until the inhabitants of Kuwait developed their own popular culture and patrimony with regard to popular songs, folklore dances, *Sadu* handicraft and other professions and crafts previously practiced by the Kuwaitis (Swailem, 2009, pp.18-24).

Teaching in Kuwait began in the form of lessons given in mosques called *Katatib* in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was limited to the memorisation of the Quran, learning reading and writing, as well as some mathematics that the educated person might need in the field of trade and commerce. Some men also learned Arabic calligraphy and the first person to start teaching calligraphy in Kuwait was Mullah Qasem who came from Iran in 1883, followed by his brother Mullah Abdin in1887, it was subsequently spread by Mullah Rashid Al-Saqoubi who came from Saudi Arabia (Khazaal, 2002, p.23).

Civil education began with the establishment of the first semi-regulatory school Al-Mubarakia School in 1912, until other schools were established later on. Thus necessitating the establishment of the Knowledge Council in 1936 presided over by Sheikh Abdullah Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah, who together with the director of the Knowledge Council, Abdulaziz Hussein,[13] started a new resurgent era of education in Kuwait, and encouraged teaching art in public schools (Swailem, 2009, pp 41-43).

Auqab Al-Khateeb attended Al-Mubarakia School in 1936 and studied artistic works (namely carpentry) in the Industrial College of Bahrain. He also taught handicrafts at that time and refined the talents of students of carpentry in an artistic manner, teaching them how to feel the shapes and helping them to develop an artistic consciousness in the fabrication of some popular old games. He also developed an educational curriculum with his colleague Mu'ejib Al-Dossari who attended Al-Mubarakia School in 1938 (Swailem, 2009, pp 56-58).

Early in the fifties, Kuwaiti artists started to emerge but not in an official way. For instance, they began to put their artistic touches on the backgrounds of theatres, and in other contemporary ceremonies and social activities. In 1951, their presence grew stronger with the creation of the Teachers' Institute, which trained and graduated teachers qualified to run schools at the Ministry of Education. Before that date, Kuwait used to bring teachers in from Egypt, which was known at that time for its educational prosperity and growth. Certainly, the Ministry of Education used to bring teachers of different specialisations, including Art Education. When the Institute opened its doors, specialised teachers from Egypt were called on to train college students at the Institute in all majors including Art Education, thereby stimulating the artistic movement in Kuwait. When several Kuwaiti teachers of Art Education graduated from the Institute, their talents began to radiate. Among them was the Art Education teacher Mu'ejib Al-Dossari who also inaugurated his school

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[13] Abdulaziz Hussein (1920-1996), a prominent statesman, the Director of the Bureau of Education from 1952-1961, Kuwait's representative at U.N. from 1961-1963, and the founder of the Kuwait National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters. See Abdulaziz Hussein, Mohadharat A'n Al-Mujtam'a Al-Arabi Bi Al-Kuwait [Lectures on the Arab Society in Kuwait], 2nd ed., (Kuwait City: Dar Qurtas, 1994)

activity with an exhibition of his realistic works. Al-Dossari was the first male artist sent in 1945 to Cairo on a governmental scholarship to study visual art (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.34).

Later on, the Egyptian teachers started to encourage the Kuwaiti teachers who had a special artistic talent, and the first annual art exhibition held in Kuwait was *Ma'radh alrabee'* (Spring Exhibition) in which many Kuwaiti artists appeared, including Khalifa Al Qattan and Ameer Abdulridah. Those were the talents which paved the way for the emergence of various styles. Al Qattan was a realistic artist who used to reflect the lifestyle of Kuwait in his own works. In the Nineteen fifty three, Al Qattan received an offer to study Woodwork in Leicester College of arts and technology in England, supported by a scholarship from the government of Kuwait (Salman, 2007, p.48).

In the late fifties, now better informed about art in Europe, Al Qattan adopted the abstractionist style. The Spring Exhibition remained until the Sixties when this art was turned into a methodical art. Since then, art has been developing in Kuwait alongside the refinement of the artistic tastes of people (Salman, 2007, p.51).

Early in the Sixties, the Ministry of Education implemented a plan aimed at sending educational missions, including art missions. At first, students were sent to Egypt, but two years later, missions went further and the students were sent to Europe and the United States. The painters on these missions included: Mahmoud Al-Radwan – Fine Arts in Egypt in 1966 as well as in New York Studio School in1979; Moudhi Al-Hajji – Fine Arts, Egypt – Art and Design – England (Al-Hajji was the first Kuwaiti woman to enter the realm of fine arts); Safwan Al-Ayoubi who studied fine arts in Italy – Rome in the late Sixties (Swailem, 2009, pp170-172). The sculptors included: Sami Mohammed, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Cairo. He also studied in New Jersey, at Johnson's Atelier. There was also Issa Saqer who is considered to be one of the top sculptors in Kuwait, along with Sami Mohammed. Besides these, there were many other artists who promoted the level of arts in Kuwait during the Sixties such as Tareq Sayid Rajab and Ayoub Hussein. During that period, since

many American experts worked in the oil sector of the country, they used to live with their families in Kuwait. Thus, a brilliant idea was put forward and was the prime mover of art in Kuwait. The wives of those experts, who had artistic talents, suggested the creation of the "American Women's Exhibition"[14] (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

The Exhibition used to be held every year during the Sixties and it brought spectacular success to American women and to the Kuwaiti artists who participated in it. The artist Moudhi Al-Hajji worked closely with American women artists to organise the exhibition, and all Kuwaiti artists had the chance to exhibit their works. The exhibition was held every year and it contributed to the development of the art movement in Kuwait. However, unfortunately, this exhibition was subsequently suspended because many American artists moved back with their families to the United States (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

In 1967, the Kuwait Arts Association was established as per the idea given by several artists, including Khalifa Al Qattan who was the first Chairman of the Association, along with Bader Al-Qatami, Issa Saqer, Sami Mohammed, Mahmoud Al-Radwan, Ayoub Hussein, Ali No'maan; and the next generation of Kuwait modern artists, namely Jawad Boshehri, Abdullah Al-Qassar and Mohammed Albehairi. Those were the founders of the Association, which was aimed at calling the government's attention to the rights and demands of artists in Kuwait, and at facilitating art practices. A special building was established for the Association to facilitate the gathering of artists and to hold training sessions for talented people (Swailem, 2009, p.177).

There was also a showroom for annual exhibitions such as the activities of the Kuwait Arts Association. Furthermore, the Association was the official representative of Kuwaiti art,

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[14] The Exhibition of American Women contributed to the openness of society as men mingled with women and talked about artistic issues. This encouraged Kuwaiti female high school students at that time to attend the exhibition because they had been forbidden before to attend them in the presence of men.

since it reflected the artistic culture of Kuwait through the participation of artists in international exhibitions to represent the Association. Locally, the Association used to carry out two exhibitions per year: The first was the "Private Exhibition", which allowed the participation of Association members only, and the second was the "Public Exhibition", which allowed the participation of other talents and different nationalities (Swailem, 2009, pp 178-180).

According to Yahya Swailem, the Public Exhibition was characterised by the diversity and modernity of styles, particularly as the youth used to participate in it. In addition, the "Exhibition of Arab Countries" used to be held every two years to strengthen and expand the bonds between Kuwaiti art and the Arab countries, and to exchange expertise with Arab artists (Swailem, 2009, p.183).

These local and regional exhibitions which continued in Kuwait during the Seventies and Eighties, until 1990, changed Kuwaiti society and affected art and culture in Kuwait at large, due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In fact, the Iraqi regime destroyed much of Kuwait's heritage and culture, as well as the building of the Kuwait Arts Association and many cultural and governmental buildings (Al-Tememi, 1995, p.12).

Kuwaiti society was severely affected by that iniquity, since the Iraqi regime managed to devastate the ambition and prosperity that Kuwaiti society had achieved throughout the world. Many artists, top officials and innocent people were killed, thereby causing a cultural decline in the country, and the art movement remained paralysed until 1991, when Kuwait was finally liberated. Since then, Kuwaiti society, which was greatly affected by its moral and physical wounds, regained power and the art movement was revived (Al-Tememi, 1995, p.12).

Society repaired what was savagely destroyed by the Iraqi regime. Kuwait fully regained its cultural and artistic heritage, and has become the capital of Arab culture; after the strenuous

efforts made by the State to diffuse art at regional and international levels via the participation of Kuwaiti delegations in global organisations[15].

After the reopening of the Kuwait Arts Association, the names of the exhibitions changed. The "Private Exhibition" became the "Exhibition of February 25 – Independence of Kuwait", which is held every year in February. Also, the "Public Exhibition" was replaced by the "Exhibition of February 26 – The Liberation of Kuwait", which is held every year in April. Furthermore, the "Exhibition of Arab Countries" was replaced by the "International Biennale of Kuwait", which was held at international level rather than at regional level. Therefore, it is obvious that Kuwait was yearning to spread its culture throughout the whole world and not only in Arab countries, and a new generation capable of promoting art in Kuwait appeared (Swailem, 2009, pp185-189).

According to Yahya Swailem, in his experience as a teacher in art education for more than 30 years, the educational system of Kuwait has improved, and the Teachers' Institute has become an educational industry. Its duties were expanded and are henceforth known as the College of Basic Education. The required level of education has become a four-year baccalaureate and not a two-year degree as it was before. Besides this, the educational missions of college students have become focused on western countries only and there are no missions to Arab countries which specialise in art education (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

Furthermore, the development of art education was facilitated by new and innovative methods thanks to the art revolution which occurred in Kuwait after liberation. In fact, most artists were influenced by modern art and abstractionism, and it has become easier to learn about other cultures via the Internet. The IT revolution around the world generated an art revolution in Kuwait, since this the artistic style of some young artists has become

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[15] Capitalism in Kuwait is bridled by a strong welfare system. Besides education and health care, the government facilitates Kuwaiti people's access to housing and employment (A.H.Ali, 2004, 44).

influenced by technology in terms of the content and the layout (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

The first art exhibition at the Al-Mubarakia School was held in 1942-3and was organised Auqab Al-Khateeb and his colleague, the artist Mu'ejib Al-Dossari who displayed many works in the exhibition along with his students. During the exhibition, the poet Mullah Rashid Al-Seif, who teaches Islamic law and is known for his piety, recited a poem in which he praised the poet and artist Mu'ejib AL-Dossari, his art and his love for introducing art among the students. This proved that even the most religious of men appreciate art and do not reject it, instead they encourage artists who accomplish works that honour, not only education, but the state too. No other poet or religious man had ever praised an artist before or even nowadays (Swailem, 2009, pp 76-78).

After that, the Shuwaikh High-School was established in the beginning of the fifties, when the first annual exhibition was held in the Nineteen fifty two to the Nineteen fifty three. Shuwaikh High-School is distinguished by its immense construction where many important events used to be held. Its exhibition was highly-ranked and it is there where many artistic talents in Kuwait shone. One of the students, Tareq Sayid Rajab[16], won first prize, and the Knowledge Council decided at that time to give him the chance to be the first Kuwaiti student to conduct an academic artistic study, one that took five years (Swailem, 2009, pp 80-81).

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[16] Tareq Sayid Rajab obtained a Diploma in Arts then a Certificate of Education from Bristol University in Britain. He returned to Kuwait to work as an art teacher then he was chosen to supervise the archaeological excavations made by the Danish commission. He also studied archeology in Denmark and was appointed as the director of the Kuwait National Museum of Archeology (Swailem 2009, p80).

2.1 Spring Exhibitions and Official Art in Kuwait

The idea of the Spring Exhibition[17] came from Mohmud Humeda, who used to teach *Rasim* (Drawing) as it is called in Kuwaiti schools, in the Fifties up until the mid-Nineties, until the curricula developed and the name "Art education" surfaced. The history of the first Spring Exhibition goes back to the restoration of the Al-Mubarakia School in 1959. Exhibitions were held annually until 1967for the purpose of granting art all its rights from a cultural stand point. From the first until the third exhibition, the participation was limited to teachers and students. Following this, they were no longer limited only to education, but were also open to the public, not only art teachers and their students; as had been the case in the exhibitions of past years. Now they were able to display the aesthetical environment of the society, through their talents and their vision of beauty from an artistic point of view, and without determining particular subjects (Swailem, 2009, pp 82-92).

The exhibition enhanced the culture of society and many names outshone in it such as Ayoub Hussein, Tareq Sayid Rajab, Mahmoud Al-Radwan, Ahmed Zakariya Al-Ansari; and sculptors such as Sami Mohammed, Issa Saqer, Abdulhameed Esmaiel and others. After the third exhibition, Mahmud Humeda had the idea of establishing the "Free Atelier" as a studio that provides all of what the artist may need to practice his artistic activity. The group included Khalifa Al Qattan, Issa Saqer, Jawad Boshehri, Sami Mohammed, Abdullah Al-Qassar, Khazaal Awadh and others (Swailem, 2009, pp116-128).

2.2 The Art Debate and Increase of Art Awareness

During the seventh Spring Exhibition in 1965, Mohmud Humeda, who was an art critic and a teacher, cited Yahya Swailem in an article he wrote at that time, referring to what he said

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[17] The exhibition was in 1958 at Shuwaikh High School (founded in 1953 and now one of the main campuses of Kuwait University), then the most prestigious and architecturally beautiful institute.

about a dialogue and discussion between the sculptors Issa Saqer[18] and Abdulhameed

Esmaiel. Here, Saqer said: "I tend in the first place towards traditional popular subjects

because many habits will be extinct and we should commemorate them in art works".

Abdulhameed Esmaeil replied: "I don't believe so, I tend to make sculptures of animals and

I'm very interested in modern abstract art. This type of art does not lose its value based on

social and political considerations. The artist finds more freedom in abstraction to express

himself". This suggests that the thoughts and awareness of Kuwaiti artists has evolved from

both sides. Issa Saqer continues by saying: "I think we'd better start with traditional popular

subjects and patrimony then we can head towards abstraction and modern art".

Abdulhameed Esmaeil replies: "But the classical art expresses itself only and not the

thoughts of the artist." Next, Saqer interrupts him stating: "Every artist in classical art can

express within his limits and we cannot say that "Mona Lisa" for example does not reflect

anything from the spirit of Leonardo Da Vinci" (Swailem, 2009, pp172-173).

The foregoing conversations suggest the value of artist awareness at that time and the fact

that artists were prepared to enter into dialogue in order to show others that they are

conscious of art, and ready to develop it and represent Kuwait abroad through their art,

culture and awareness. This is only one dialogue among many that demonstrate the presence

of artistic discourse among artists, and that their work is based on their environment and

their mind is open to modern art and cultural exchange through art, patrimony and other

forms of societal culture.

At the end of this brief research study on Kuwaiti art, the issue of how to begin writing

about art in Kuwait and start to review, criticise is suggested. It is hoped that art will be

further elaborated on in Kuwait, to reflect the aesthetic vision and visual perception of

Kuwaiti society in the Gulf and Arab countries. In this respect, the Kuwaiti artist is now

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[18] Issa Saqer is known for his sculptures that express traditions like a woman in ancient Kuwaiti costumes and other traditions.

called upon to send a message to the world through his/her art in order to reveal the culture and heritage of their society. Besides, Kuwaiti artists must not forget the importance of traditions in his/her art works because they represent the national identity which distinguishes them from other artists in the world. It is indeed an identity which cannot be changed by technology, since the identity of every individual determines his place in the world and reflects the culture which he has preserved, and which will be handed down to the coming generations. Here lies the importance of art: as it comes from the society and goes back to the same society.

2.3 The Context of "Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction"

After tackling the history of art in Kuwait, the researcher moves on to discuss the only reference which presents the stages of Sami Mohammed's art. However, it is not in the form of a biography, but rather focuses on the philosophical aspect of the *Sadu* Project, which was initiated by Sami Mohammed in the Sixties. Zahra A.H.Ali's[19] monograph on Sami Mohammed is the single source of informed writing on the artist's work, titled "Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse".

Zahra A.H.Ali in her book says that, "The last forty years have witnessed the birth and evolution of Kuwaiti art. This can be considered as a sign to the sensitivity of modernity, for one could rarely find any methodological analysis and description of the accomplished Kuwaiti visual art" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.11). This is the starting point in the flaw which is depicted in Kuwaiti art at that time, and this is what was presented at the beginning of the chapter: the lack of relevant literature. It is worth noting that the study of Zahra A.H.Ali was completed in 2004, while the research for this thesis was carried out from 2006 until

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[19] It is worth noting that Zahra A.H. Ali is not an art specialist, but she is an assistant professor in the English Department in the University of Kuwait. She did this study, which is considered very important in the history of Kuwaiti art, due to it providing an analysis of the works of Sami Mohammed using semiotics.

2009, which means that for more than four years nothing new was produced; except for the book of Abdul-Rasoul Salman in 2007, which was about the artist Khalifa Al-Qattan. This book is a biography, which was published for the artist's memorial event, and it does not even contain a hint of philosophy or criticism.

Zahra A.H. Ali talked about the *Sadu* project from her own professional perspective, the semiology or semiotics, which is in general a sign as in Charles Sanders Peirce theory, and in Stanley Eugene Fish's theory, Interpretative community and codes as interpretative tools and anchorage which means the elements that restrict and control the favoured readings and restrain what Stuart Hall calls the 'intertextuality' which mean the connection relevant to themes (main subjects) that relates texts whether the text is oral or visual and between other texts 'unlimited semiosis' which a concept from Umberto Eco that means the connection through the implications or the connotations or through what Jacques Derrida calls 'Free Play'; the Semiosphere according to Yuri Mikhailovich Lotman is the Semiosphere and the Isotopy which is a concept of Gremas meaning the syntactic, semantic, thematic and eloquent categories that are repeated in a syntagmatically manner to guarantee the harmony of the speech. Under Zahra A.H. Ali's theory of Semiotics, Sami Mohammed's works have a symbolic and a psychological aspect that reflects what the artist sees in his imagination. This aspect is detailed in Zahra A.H. Ali's book where the author focuses on the artistic side of the popular heritage through *Sadu* and its relation with the artistic paintings of Sami Mohammed as well as the artistic works of the researcher in this study (A.H. Ali, 2004, p.11).

Zahra A.H.Ali tackled many aspects of Kuwaiti art, especially the art of Sami Mohammed, in a philosophical way which is related to semiotic concepts. She says that, "I aim at, figuratively speaking, presenting my study as a magnifying glass to clearly see the interpretation and analysis" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.12). She relies on semiotic concepts to

unravel the signs and codes in the works of Sami Mohammed. Thus, she notes that the aim

behind this study is purely philosophical, and it does not focus on criticising the art itself.

2.4 Interest behind Studying the *Sadu* Project

The concentration of Zahra A.H.Ali on the *Sadu* project was very important as it was a part

of what Sami Mohammed introduced throughout his artistic history. She focused on another

aspect, which is Sami's expressional side and what he was thinking of, and what he was

intending to do at that time to benefit and develop *Sadu* to become more than just an artistic

work. She focused on the *Sadu* project as the beginning of a modern art, through studying

and analysing *Sadu* from the objective, aesthetic and artistic aspects. In addition to building

back up the monumental *Sadu* art work after the *Sadu* project, and the high level presented

by Sami Mohammed through the use of patrimony in modern art. Zahra A.H.Ali paved the

way for this thesis by addressing the works of Sami Mohammed in the *Sadu* Project, and

analysing the signs used by him, even if they were more practical than realistic. This study

will present this aspect later on in this chapter.

Zahra A.H.Ali studied the birth of Sami Mohammed's Sadu Project or the "Utopian City

Discourse", as she referred to it. This is one of the first philosophical concepts related to

sociology, which means that Sami Mohammed had a futuristic vision at the beginning of the

Sadu Project. It is the preservation of the Bedouin heritage, that which is represented by the

Sadu, through modernity to reach the art which was referred to as "Utopian Art" by Zahra

A.H.Ali. She also considers that the project of Sami Mohammed regarding *Sadu* symbolises

in its essence a figurative multi-dimensional image for a civic utopia. The basic definition

of the artist for utopia is the liberation of the human essence from isolation in traditional

culture, which means that utopia for him, is equivalent to the movement unrestricted by any

constraint imposed by the era. The utopian speech of Sami Mohammed reveals that the

progression of the artist through his works using old patrimony will liberate him, until

reaching the optimal phase in building the concept and materialising of his art, and that is what the *Sadu* project achieved (A.H. Ali, 2004, pp 14-16).

Through this designation, she refers to the perfect state of art and Sami Mohammed's attempts at embedding abstract art, as well as what she called contemporary sensitivity which lies within, by using the traditional heritage (*Sadu*) to create new readings and interpretations. Zahra A.H.Ali described *Sadu* as "an art related to feminism". According to her, it is an art produced by Bedouin women, rather than men; however, the researcher of this study does not believe that it is related to feminism since the Bedouin woman works on it with her own hands to create a functional piece. This means that *Sadu* is a way to earn a living, and it is used as a rug or a bag, not only by women, but by all the members of the family. Accordingly, this thesis argues that it is traditionally made by women, to be used in both the Bedouin and urban life styles, and to sell it to the urban side in Kuwait that resided in the town centre at that time.

Sami Mohammed, through his aspirations for the Utopian City Discourse in his works throughout the *Sadu* project, does not restrict this art to women only because he believes it has complementary dimensions that represent the patrimony of a whole society, without being limited by gender or age. The researcher perceived that there is a series of works through which Sami Mohammed related the members of the society to *Sadu* in the background. This thesis will study many other works in this section. One of them represents a Bedouin woman with pieces of *Sadu* combined together in an unrealistic manner, which means that the *Sadu* is considered as an additional element to the painting that does not connect with the figure. Another painting represents an old man with a piece of *Sadu* in the background, while another is about a young man wearing the Kuwaiti national costume with a *Sadu* behind him. Therefore, we can conclude that Zahra A.H.Ali's presentation of Sami Mohammed's view is accurate, and the basic definition of the artist for utopia is the

liberation of the human being from isolation, and not linking *Sadu* in the art of Sami Mohammed to feminism.

Zahra A.H.Ali began by considering the birth of the Sadu Project of Sami Mohammed as the beginning of the formation of his idea to generate modernity through his "The Curves" collection which includes geometric designs. He started with abstract art at a time when most of the artists of the first generation tended to rely on realism to express the culture of Kuwait, rather than following western works which represented contemporary art at that time. This was due to the fact that the community did not have any culture regarding this kind of art. This is why using abstract art as a subject matter is not hard, but it requires courage and confidence which helps the artist to impose his/her abstract ideas on the community. At that time, it was an easy thing to do, since many artists, who were displaying and participating in exhibitions and contests, worked with either still life or landscapes from the Kuwaiti environment, or with the reality of everyday life; as opposed to the old and traditional community, for which artist Ayoub Hussein[20] was best known as a realist.

2.5 Beginning of Art Divisions in Kuwait

The book "Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse" relies on chronological order and historical events to explain how Sami Mohammed started "National Abstraction", as referred to by Zahra A.H.Ali. Sami Mohammed, upon finishing his bachelor degree in Fine Arts in Cairo, started focusing on the abstract aspect in Kuwait. Here, the transition from what Zahra A.H.Ali called the "National Realism", which was based on Kuwaiti art, to "National Abstraction", was started officially by Sami Mohammed

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[20] Ayoub Hussein: among National Realists, the oeuvre of Ayoub Hussein Al-Ayoub – over 600 paintings – is especially important and deserves close analysis; his work carefully transcribes the simplicity of life in the old Kuwaiti Fireej (Neighbourhood), giving it marked anthropological and sociological perspectives. Most of the 600 artworks are contained in Al-Turath Al-Kuwaiti Fi Lawhat Ayoub Hussein Al-Aboub. [Kuwait Folk Heritage in the Artworks of Ayoub Hussein Al-Ayoub].

in an intense way. He was unique regarding the abstract works he produced, such as figure (2.1) "The Curves" collection: 3 squares, produced in 1977. In this creation we notice the first representations of the original *Sadu* motifs and colours. Before accomplishing this work, Sami Mohammed produced many sculptures. In his sculpture called "Motherhood" produced in 1975, figure (2.2). Sami Mohammed tends to rely on realism, which means that it is abstract but realistic, depicting the figure of a woman and her situation in a realistic way. It is noteworthy that this work was due to the influence of Western art on Sami Mohammed. It is also evident that he was influenced by Pablo Picasso and Henry Moore. The fact that Sami Mohammed studied in Cairo, where the curricula of the college of Fine Arts are based on western art, is not bizarre since it is the most popular art in the world, and it is based on scientific concepts and has many references. This work was a result of what Sami Mohammed saw and he learned to build artistic character through "National Abstraction".

Zahra A.H.Ali continues by saying that "Sami Mohammed regarded these two directions, realism and Abstraction, as two opposites that cannot be united" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.13). And that he should focus on abstract art. Figure (2.3) "The Curves" number 19, produced in 1977is a work that shows how Sami Mohammed is still seeking abstract art and the extent of the influence of western art, such as the works of Joan Miró. He included this work in a collection that he called "The Curves", which is very distinct, composition wise, as in the composition of figure (2.1). This explains that Sami Mohammed is facing difficulties in finding "National Abstraction", as Zahra A.H.Ali named it.

According to Zahra A.H.Ali, Curves 18 figure (2.4) reflects a soul in harmony, while "Blue and White" figure (2.5) reflects a mind in harmony and meditation. Both paintings required a creativity of vibrant colour and cheerful shapes, which seduce and attract its beholder. This is how Zahra A.H.Ali explains some of the works done by Sami Mohammed in his sculpture collection (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.14).

2.6 General Artistic Characteristics of the *Sadu* Project

This thesis focuses on Yahya Swailem's book *Ma'aredh alrabee' fe alkuwait* (Spring Exhibitions in Kuwait) and the personal interview beside Zahra A.H.Ali's book *Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, because they are the only references that critically discussed Art and Sami Mohammed in Kuwait, and the other references will not help this research because they are considered either biographical books about certain Kuwaiti artists and exhibitions catalogues. Zahra A.H.Ali explains that in his *Sadu* Project Sami Mohammed symbolises the concepts of public sympathy and not something individual. Sami Mohammed relies on the local motifs storage which can be easily understood by its observer. In figure (2.6) *Sadu Ornament* produced in 1980, he focuses on Sadu as a composition rather than a curve or geometric figure. Zahra A.H.Ali believes that Sami Mohammed "presents the nature of non-living things so that, at a first glance, it seems that he is depicting a swimming fish. The triangles of the *Sadu* seem to be the huge fin of a fish" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p15). This comparison to a fish is not necessary, however, since the local receptor of this production knows *Sadu* and its form.

She then drastically moves on from figure (2.6) that was produced in 1980, to a work that was produced in 1997 which is figure (2.7) *Sadu Triangles No. 6;* this jump is not helpful to the reader. More than 15 years passed between these two productions, during which Sami Mohammed produced a series of works which have one common concept and a clear direction. These works affected the ones previously produced regarding their subject matter and composition, and even their colour and context.

Zahra A.H.Ali continues to explain the sequence of Sami Mohammed's work and their general artistic characteristics. These characteristics include his artistic deviation which challenges the naturalistic and realistic approach adopted by many artists in the Gulf region. These artists chose *Sadu* as a mere object in their works on Bedouin life. Zahra A.H.Ali

says that Sami Mohammed's work in the *Sadu* Project included more than two hundred works, the largest of which was a painting of 120 x 120 centimetres.

This thesis focuses on building the concept based on the display of *Sadu* motifs in a shaping different from that of Sami Mohammed, but starting from what Sami presented in the *Sadu* project. Furthermore, this study concentrates on building the monumental *Sadu* art work through disassembling the *Sadu* into the subject, motifs, ornamental units, colours and scales because the surface is his starting point for ingenuity in rebuilding the elements in a modern way. The biggest works of Sami Mohammed were 120 x 120 centimetres in size and this is adopted herein as a limit for his works while the two largest works made for this research are 240 x 300 centimetres, as it was considered appropriate in completing the monumental *Sadu* art.

According to Zahra A.H.Ali, Sami Mohammed includes various *Sadu* artistic figures and ornamental units in all the works to attract and guide the observer to their symbolic and spiritual meaning. He wanted to, "tackle them not as a national cause with all its compositions, colours, and ornamental motifs per se (as folklore) but rather as the relationship between the artistic elements of folklore and its symbolism of dire cultural and social themes" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.17). She continues to say that "he tried to find an aesthetic expression which is equivalent to these themes by taming visual elements of *Sadu* in the appropriate way" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.17). Sami Mohammed's work had another aspect: his work was unique in the Gulf region. In the seventies, Kuwait, more than any other country in the Gulf, was interested in art and it helped its students to study the Arts. This helped Sami to be more aware of the road he chose to take to find contemporary art that would distinguish him from all other artists in the region.

Regardless of the fact that Sami Mohammed prefers abstract art, we notice that the motifs he uses in his works, as geometric figures, are not tools that express random things in nature. As was noted previously, Sami Mohammed was influenced by western art, but, as

Zahra A.H.Ali said, "he does not use algorithms, which are one of the favourite signs of western contemporary artists, who tend to avoid random aspects of life. He does not use calligraphy as well" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.18). She also refers to his symbolism as "Chronotopic". This means that they are related to a specific time and place. Sami Mohammed does not leave the observer of his art confused and wondering with incomprehensible symbolism. One example is figure (2.8) "A Bedouin Ornament No.1" produced in 1981. Since Sami Mohammed uses *Sadu* motifs, which have an international shape but a very strict meaning, they explain that communication between different cultures is not impossible, which is due to the simplicity of its symbolism and their geometrical shapes.

2.7 *Sadu* as a National Heritage

The subject of study of Zahra A.H.Ali is the *Sadu* Project of Sami Mohammed itself. However, she was obliged to study it deeper as a national heritage. She began analysing *Sadu* from a historical point of view, as well as its similarity with the cloth woven in North Africa, by referring to the Encyclopaedia Britannica 1966 under the entry Arts and Crafts. The subject became more anthropological than artistic, since she studied Sami Mohammed. She then exposed the details of the Bedouin community and the influences it was subject to in all seasons, including the hardships they faced in their lifestyle, other aspects of their life, the production of *Sadu*, the instability of Bedouin methods for securing a living, and other hardships similar to those of Gypsies all around the world.

If it is assumed that Zahra A.H.Ali focused on the historical aspect and analysed it from a semiotic point of view, then it should be hard for the reader to comprehend, since semiotics is not known to a large audience in the Kuwaiti community, and even in most western communities. Semiotics studies signs and symbols in communication between individuals and communities. Zahra A.H.Ali had studied the *Sadu* Project with a deep philosophical

method, then the benefit from this study shall be limited to two categories of the community: either those specialised in philosophy with enough knowledge to read philosophic terms regarding semiotics and utopia and other terms used in this study, or those, like the researcher of this study, who read this reference as a contextual review. The researcher believes that the *Sadu* project should be shown to everyone as it is related to art and traditions. This aspect is very important for the coming generations, and researchers should focus on this tradition to transmit culture to them, for this is their national heritage. *Sadu* is just one aspect of the culture, but if Zahra A.H.Ali would tackle the other aspects of this heritage (for example: music, folklore dances, stories and other things) in the same purely philosophical aspect, the reader would find it very hard to understand.

2.8 *Sadu* as a Feminine Art

Zahra A.H.Ali tried to prove that *Sadu* art is "an art for females" since it is woven by the Bedouin woman only. This is true; however, the woman made them to meet the needs of Bedouin men: as a headrest to sleep, a rug to cover the floor inside the tent, as bags that can be fitted on camels' backs and other needs stated in the book *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwaiti Desert* written by Altaf Al-Sabah (2006). This proves that *Sadu* was made for a functional purpose that facilitated the life of all Bedouins and had nothing to do with women in particular.

Regarding its relation to women, Zahra A.H.Ali talked about two of Sami Mohammed's paintings, which are part of his *Sadu* project, from a different angle. These two paintings are figure (2.9) "View from the Desert" from 1981and figure (2.10) *The Sadu Maker* from 1982. She says that the *Sadu* Project has two experimental directions: a stylistic direction and an intellectual direction. This thesis agrees with this point and will tackle this idea in the following chapter. The author continues that "regarding the stylistic direction, not many paintings depict weavers in a realistic way, for there are only two paintings in Sami

Mohammed's collection, which comprises more than 200 works (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.27). These two paintings depict weavers who are surrounded by patterns of their own art figures (2.9 and 2.10).

These two paintings present the Bedouin woman in general, and the weaver, since during the field visit to the Sadu House in 2007 undertaken for this study, to see what it was exhibiting to the public, there was one weaver. She was a Bedouin woman who was very hard to talk to, like most of the Bedouin women in Kuwait, and it was almost impossible to photograph her. During the interview with Sami Mohammed on September 20, 2007 in the United Arab Emirates, he mentioned how hard it was to communicate with these weavers during the execution of the *Sadu* Project during the Eighties, due to their traditions and customs. Sami Mohammed represents these weavers in his paintings by including some *Sadu* pieces made by them. In these two works, Sami Mohammed used the general form of the Bedouin woman and he did not relate it to Bedouin weavers at that time, since they refused to be the figures of these two works.

Sami Mohammed's work includes only the generalised form of the Bedouin woman, which is almost made up of one unified form, for all her body is covered in black, except for the eyes. This is a very important point, since in figures (2.9 and 2.10) Sami Mohammed represents the Bedouin woman with the front part of her head uncovered, which means that part of her hair was uncovered. At that time, i.e. in the Eighties, until today (2009), Bedouin women could not unveil their hair. The Bedouin customs and mentality have changed, and today's young generation of Bedouins in Kuwait, not the old generation, are no longer covering their faces, but their hair remains covered since it is related to their cultural understanding of Islam. The woman Sami Mohammed portrayed in figures (2.9 and 2.10) was not a real woman. He created her from his own imagination and not through a model. Unveiling part of the hair goes more than one hundred and fifty years back in Bedouin society. Mohammed Al-Hadaad talked about this in his study "Change and Stability in

Bedouin Culture". Abu Zaed the author talked about it too in his book *Bedouins' Heritage* published in 1987. In this study, Al-Hadaad talked about the customs of Bedouins which were influenced by the evolution of Kuwaiti society during the Eighties. He explained that the fact that the Bedouin woman covers her body and face is not due to Islam, but rather these are Bedouin customs. The face is covered by the "Burqa" (as named in the local dialect). This designation is given to the piece of cloth which has an opening for the eyes, and is usually black. It is still used to cover the faces of Bedouin women, since some still hold on to traditions and are not influenced by the developments and evolution in Kuwait and the world in general.

The other reason why it was mentioned that Sami Mohammed was not representing *Sadu* weavers in his works figures (2.9 and 2.10) is that the artist only wanted to relate the Bedouin community in his environment with his work. We notice that he produced three to six paintings with the same subject matter, along with those where a Bedouin woman is represented. However, in figure (2.11) *Contemplation of the Sadu*, in 1983, and figure (2.12) "Contemplation in the Desert" in1982, he represents a figure in the centre of the painting. This figure is of a Bedouin man. In figure (2.11), he represents a person looking at a piece of *Sadu* hanging in the background, while leaning on two pillows made from *Sadu*. In this work, the artist did not show the man's facial details, so you cannot tell whether he is young or old. In figure (2.12), he represents an old Bedouin man sitting on a rug made of *Sadu*. On his left, it seems that he is leaning on a *Sadu* pillow. Most of Sami Mohammed's works representing figures of the Bedouin society were aimed at relating the Bedouin individual to his own environment, which was represented by the *Sadu*, no matter if it were a man or a woman. The subject matter of the paintings is not representative of the weavers with their *Sadu* weaves, as stated by Zahra A.H.Ali, for Sami Mohammed does not only relate women with his works, but also an intellectual aspect rather than a comparative aspect of the Bedouin culture, which was represented by the *Sadu*.
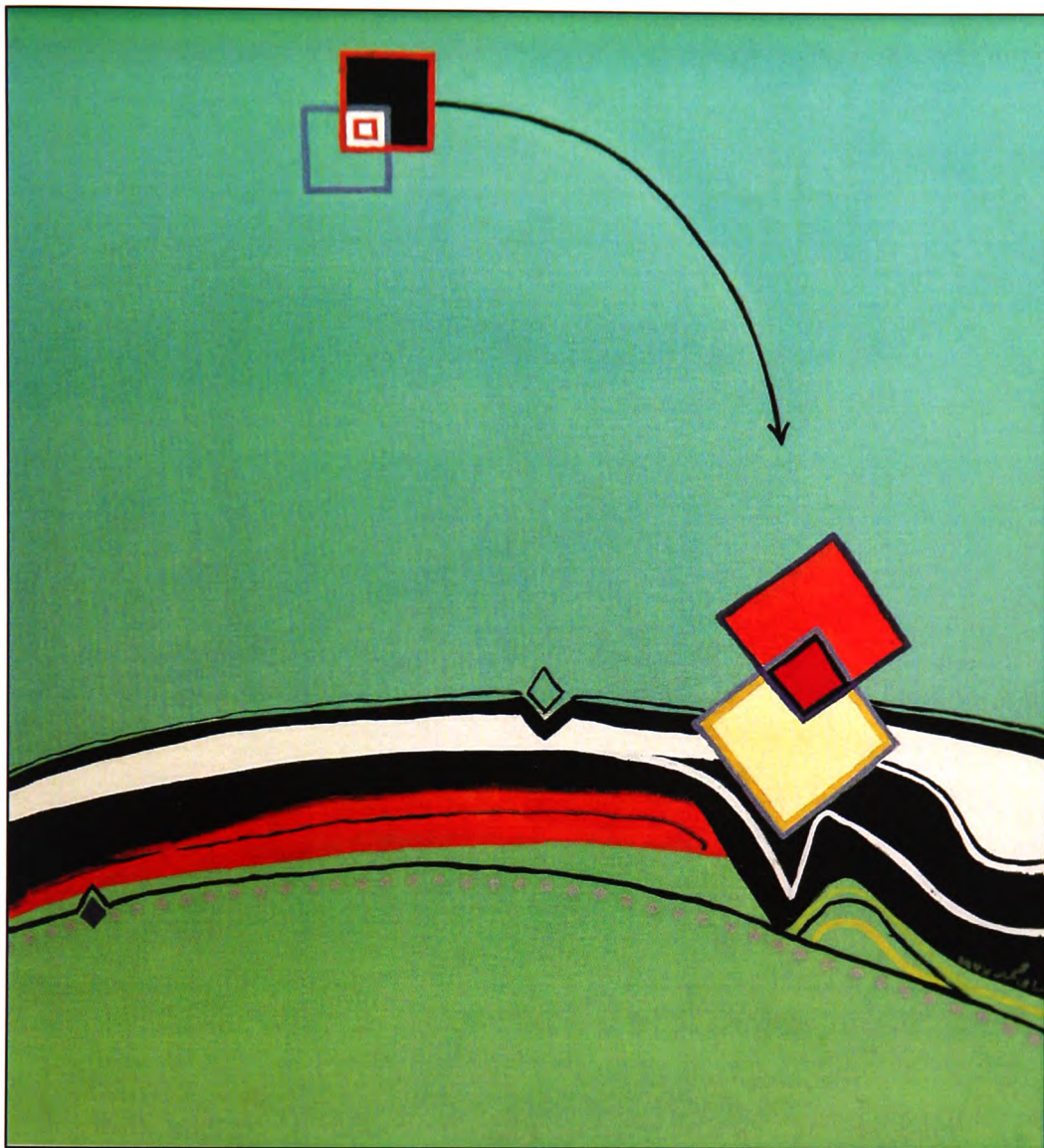
Figure 2.1 Sami Mohammed *Curves Series Three Squares* 1977, oil on canvas, 100X121 cm
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.129

Figure 2.2 Sami Mohammed, *Motherhood* 1975, bronze 70X60X65 cm. Collection of N.C.C.A.L the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature. Lost during an exhibition in Paris 1979.
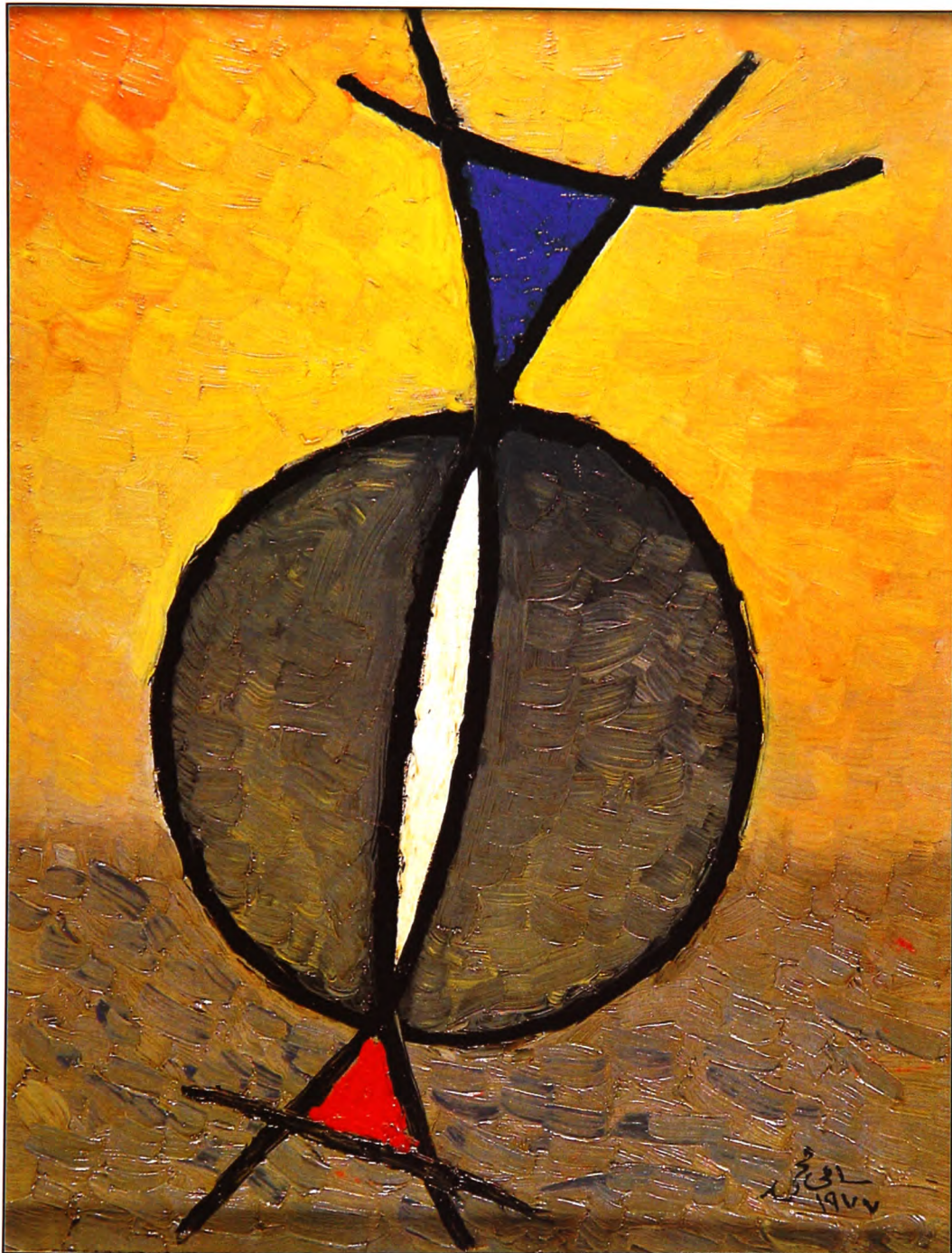Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.102

Figure 2.3 Sami Mohammed, *Curves No.19* 1977, oil on canvas, 35X25 cm
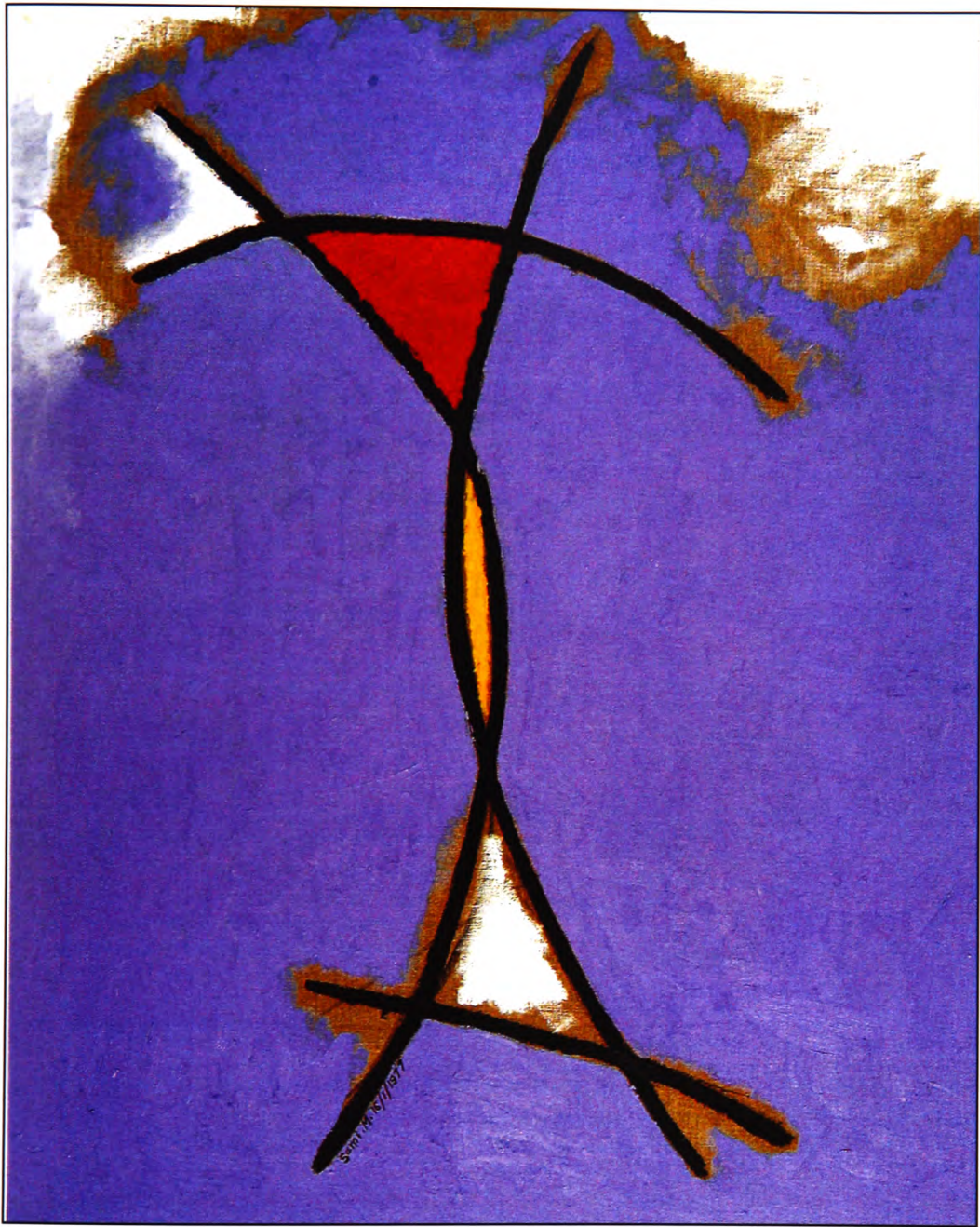Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.120
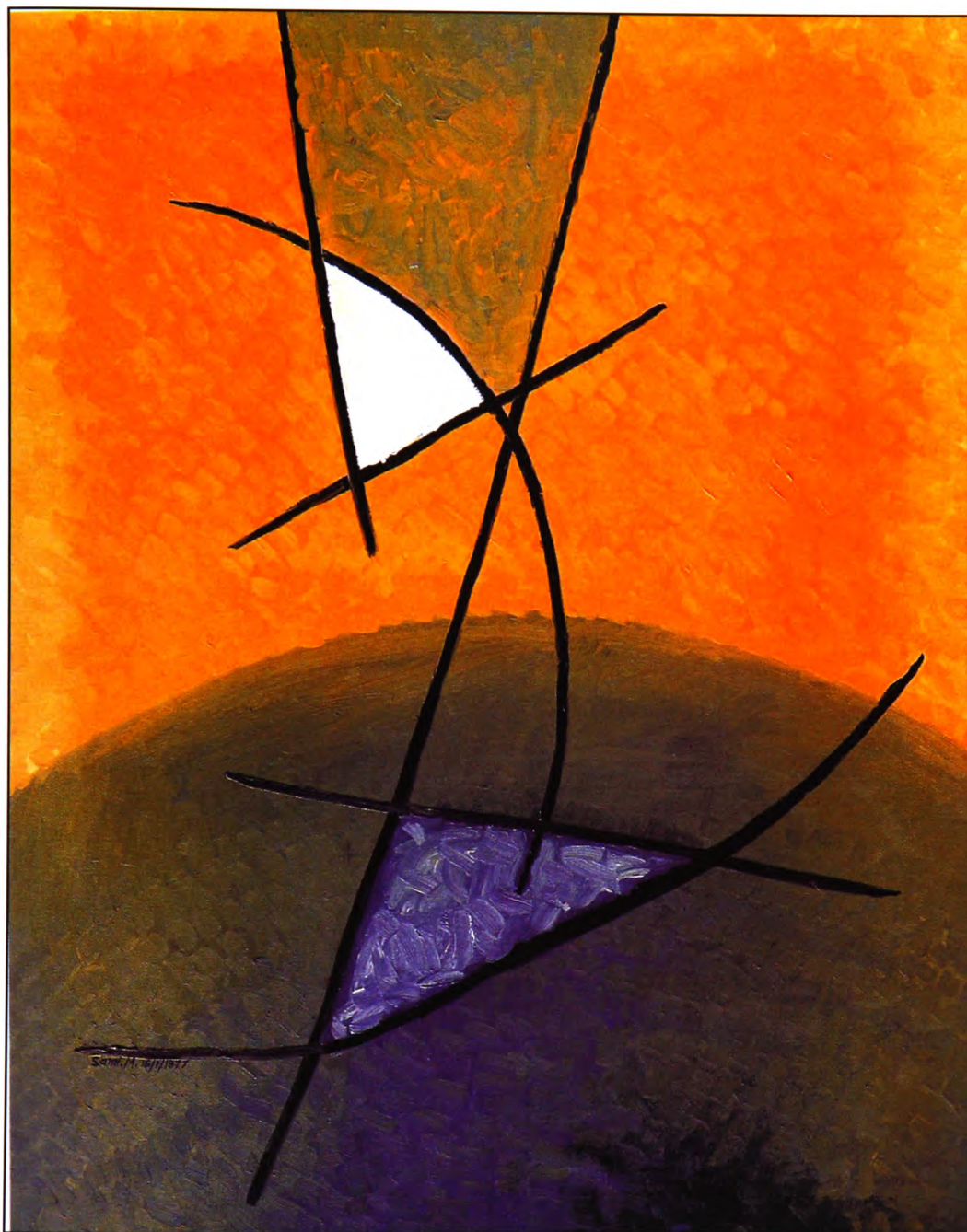
Figure 2.4 Sami Mohammed, *Curves No18* **1977, oil on canvas 120X100 cm**
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.121

Figure 2.5 Sami Mohammed, *Curves No14 The Blue and The White* **1977, oil on canvas, 70X60 cm**
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.137.
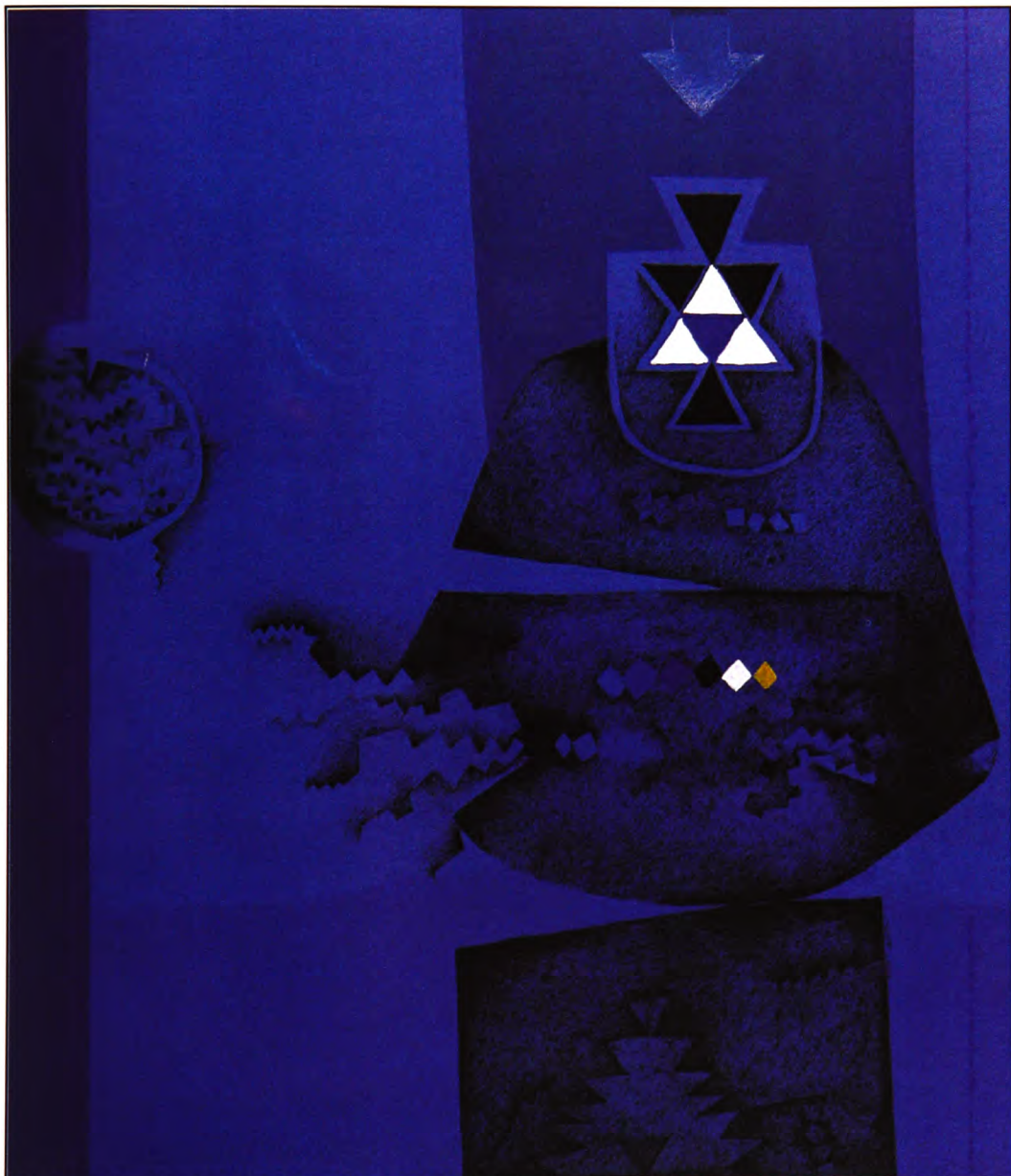
Figure 2.6 Sami Mohammed, *A Sadu Ornament* 1980, flash and Chinese ink on canvas, 100X100 cm
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.160
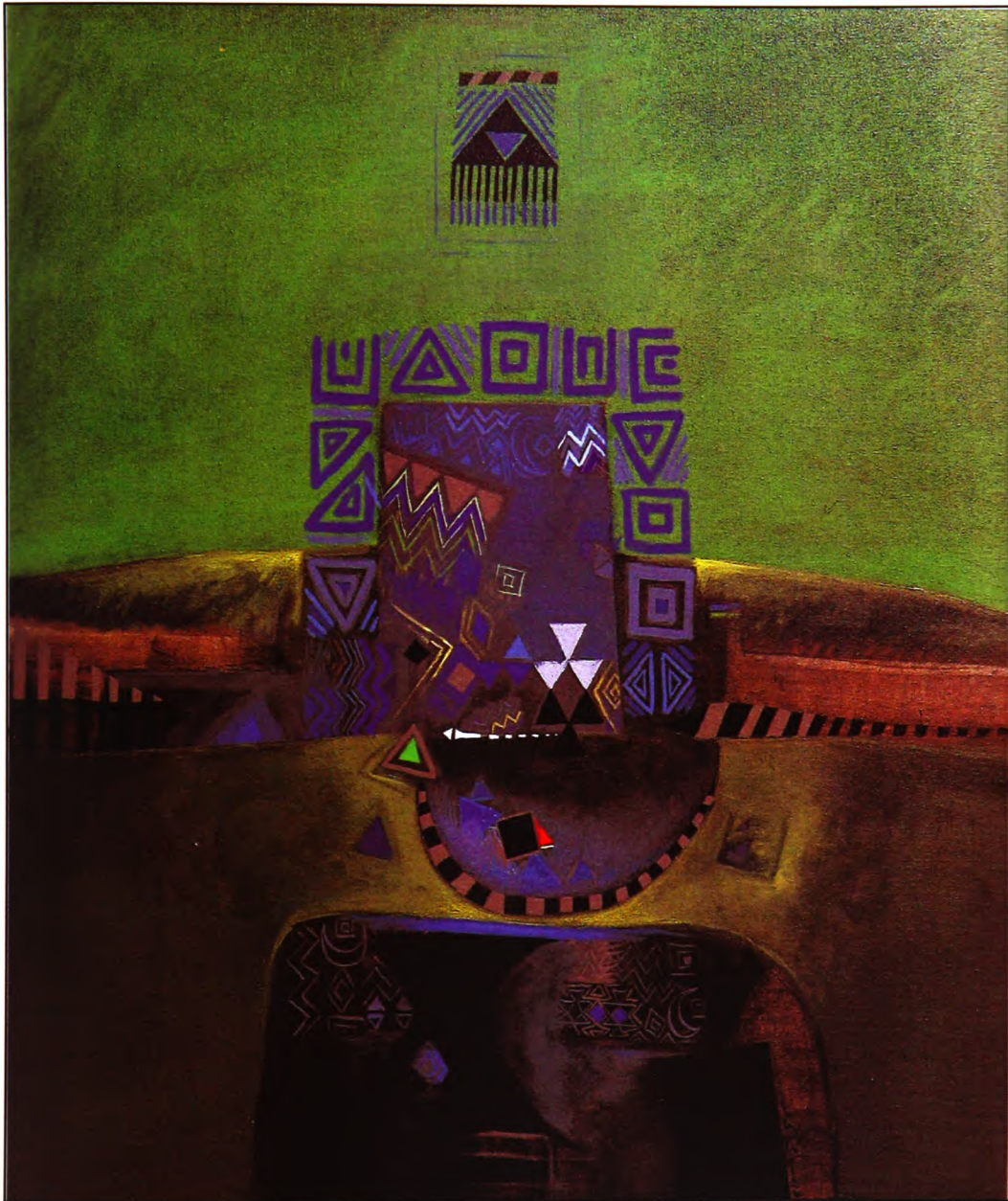
Figure 2.7 Sami Mohammed, *AlSadu Triangles No.6* **1997, acrylic on canvas, 100X100 cm**
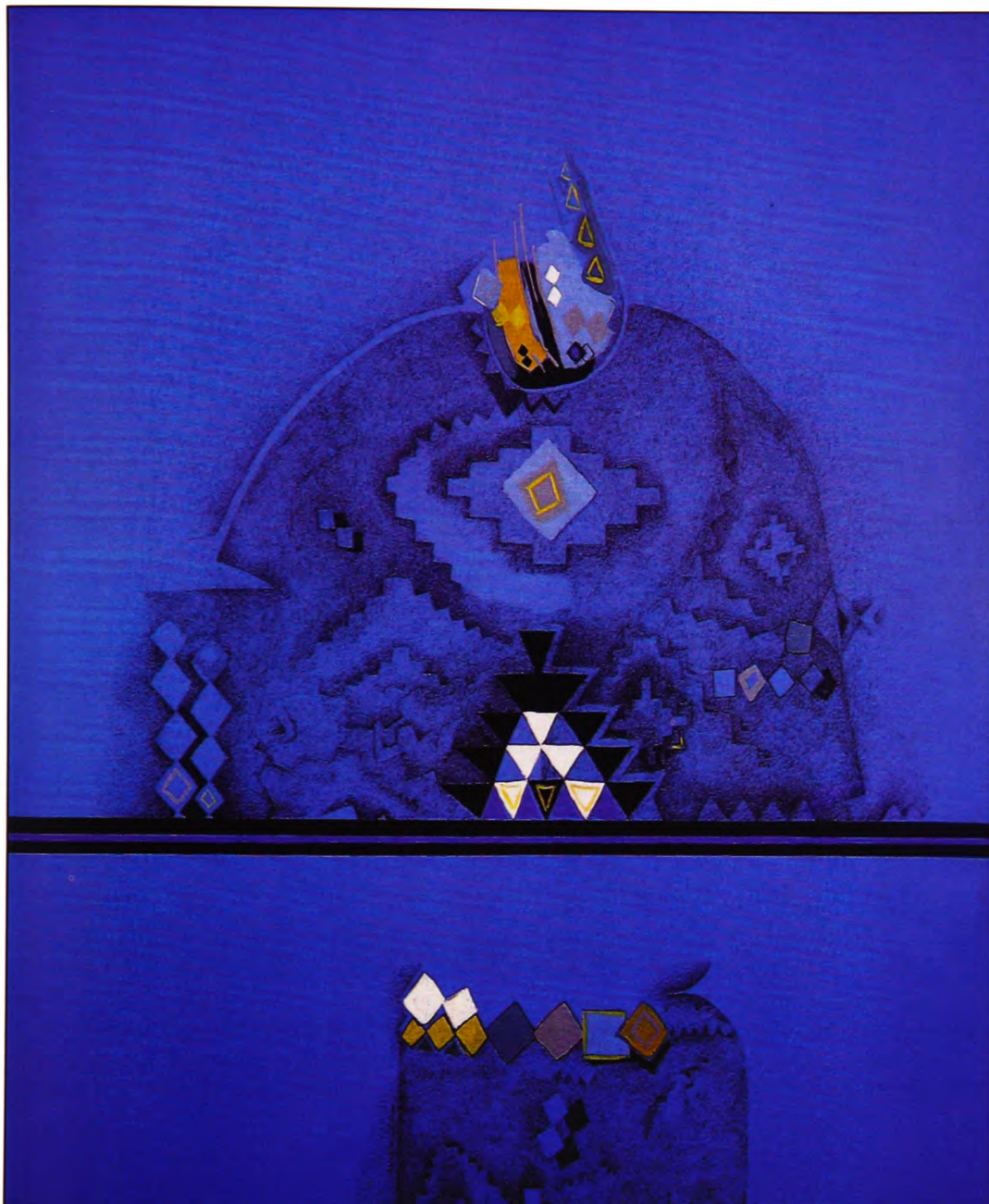Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.188

Figure 2.8 Sami Mohammed, *A Bedouin Ornament No.1* 1981, Acrylic and Chinese ink and flash on canvas, 100X100 cm. Collection of N.C.C.A.L the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature.

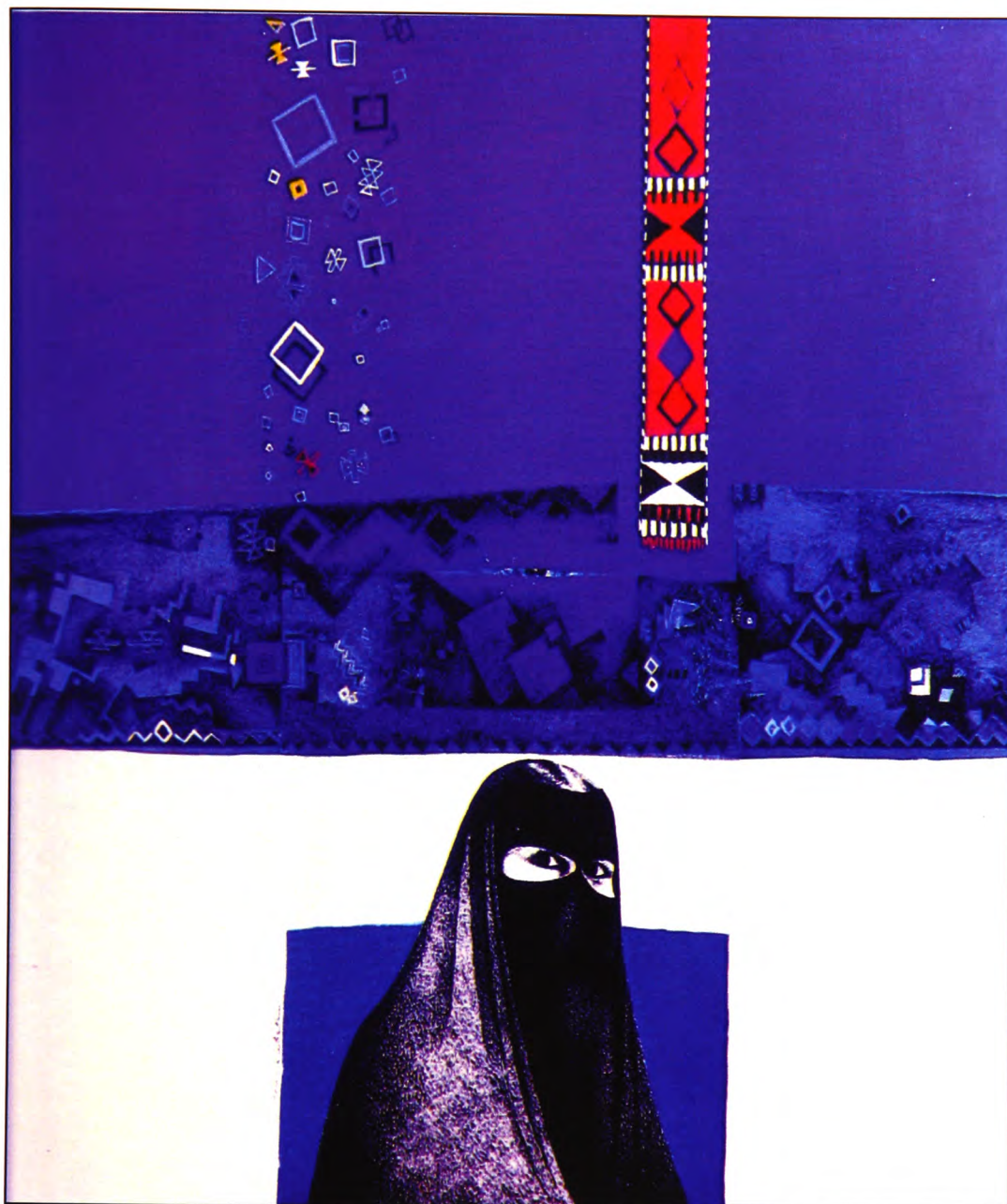Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.145

Figure 2.9 Sami Mohammed, *A look from the Desert* 1981, Acrylic and Chinese ink and flash on canvas, 120X120 cm. Collection of the Ministry of Public Works, for the Conference Palace – Kuwait, prined and displayed in all the villas of the Conference Palace. Lost after the Iraqi invasion in Kuwait on 1991.

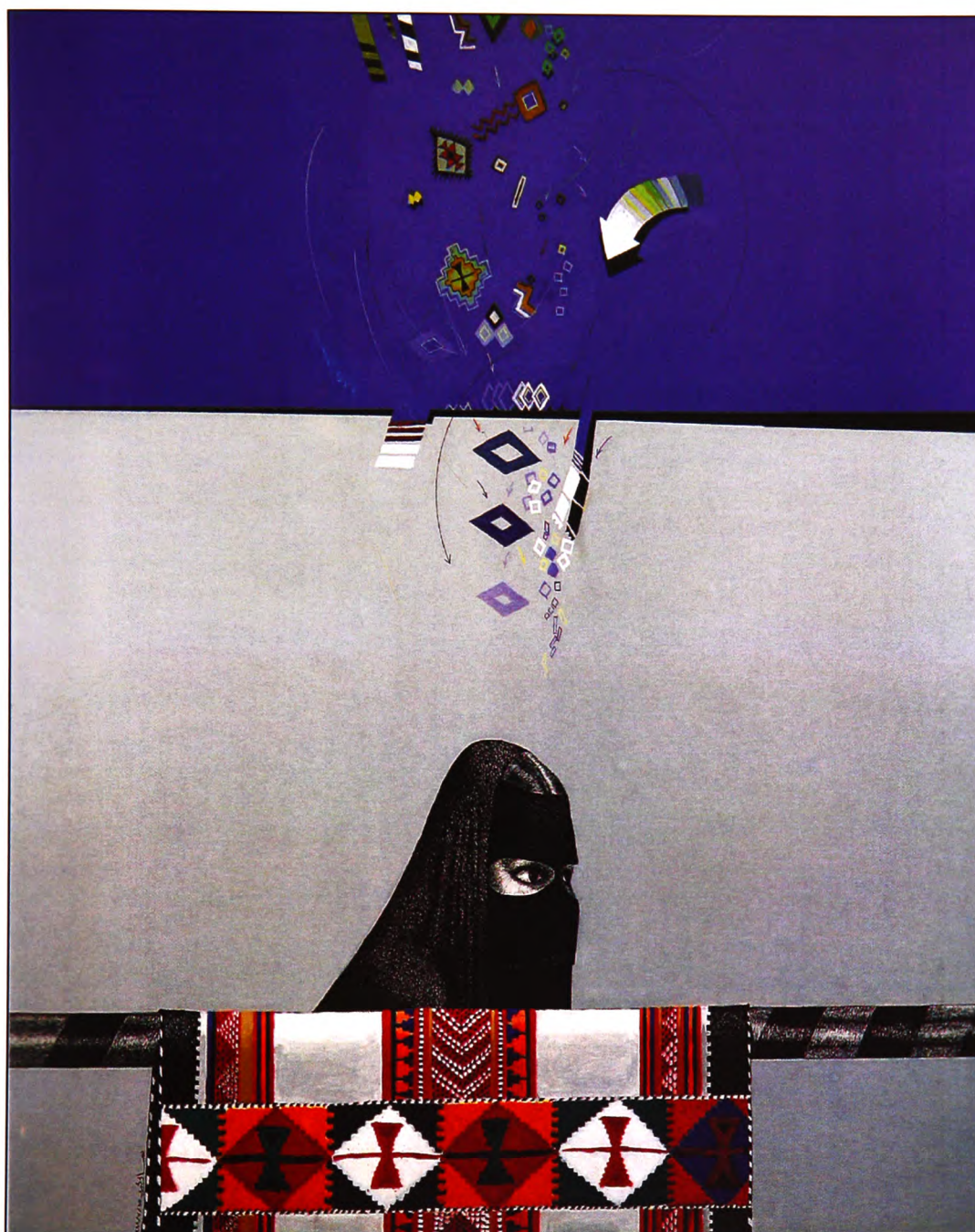Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.148

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Figure 2.10 Sami Mohammed, *The Sadu Weaver* 1982, Acrylic and Chinese ink and flash on canvas, 122X122 cm. Collection of Mr. Fouad Al-Ghanim – Kuwait.

Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.148

Figure 2.11 Sami Mohammed, *Contemplation in the Sadu* 1983, Acrylic and Chinese ink and flash on canvas, 122X122 cm. Collection of Mrs. Fathia Al-Khalid – Kuwait.

Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.150

Figure 2.12 Sami Mohammed, *Contemplation in the Desert* 1982, Acrylic and Chinese ink and flash on canvas, 120X120 cm. Collection of Mrs. Dalal Al-Khalid – Kuwait.

Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.146

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Deconstructions

The focus of this study on modern art, and what was presented in Kuwait as part thereof, is considered to be an important aspect of the methodology that will be adopted in this research. The ideas of Jacques Derrida appeared to be of benefit to the researcher in understanding the process of transferring *Sadu* motifs and symbols into monumental modern art form through Derrida's method of "Deconstruction". One reason for adopting this approach was that the researcher had previous experience of applying Derrida's ideas to experiments in artistic work with *Sadu* as a subject matter during his Masters studies in the United States.

3.0 Deconstruction as a Process

It is not considered that Darrida's deconstruction is an analysis, critique or method in the traditional concept of philosophy. The researcher uses it as a process in this practice based research to make the process of deconstruction more effective. In order to start discussing and thoroughly studying deconstruction, the researcher first defined deconstruction from Jacques Darrida point of view. In the "Letter to A Japanese Friend"[21] written by Darrida to Professor Izutsu, Darrida answered the question "What is deconstruction?" by saying "I have no simple and formalisable response to this question. All my essays are attempts to have it out with this formidable question" (Wood & Bernasconi, 1988, p.4). Darrida also says that there is no simple and clear answer to this question and he believes that the term deconstruction is complicated and hard to explain and needs a special language to be explained as it differs from one language to the other. This study does not aim at explaining everything in the "Letter to A Japanese Friend" in *Derrida and Difference* as details, and it is not easy to understand and re-explain as critics and academics said when they adopt the

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[21] For more about Darrida's "Letter to A Friend" see Appendix C.

philosophy of Jacques Darrida as an approach for their philosophic books in which they explain the theory of deconstruction.

Deconstruction has several meanings. Richard Rorty who is considered a prominent interpreter of Derrida's philosophy defined deconstruction saying: "The term deconstruction refers in the first instance to the way in which the accidental features of a text can be seen as betraying, subverting, its purportedly essential message" (Rorty, 1995, p.169).

Many researchers, critics and academics are still including new interpretations for deconstruction, believing that further explanation is better for the academic and philosophical field since the deconstruction may be a starting point for any of the academic fields whether in art or philosophy or any other diversified field that allows the transformation of philosophy into an approach that develops and changes any idea or study towards the best results.

John D. Caputo tried to put this concept in resume "Whenever Caputo deconstruction finds a nutshell- a secure axiom or a pithy maxim- the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquillity. Indeed, that is a good rule of thumb in deconstruction. That is what deconstruction is all about, it's very meaning and mission, if it has any" (Caputo 1997, p.32) as a primary level used in research such as this in dealing with *Sadu* in this practice based research where Caputo interpretation is almost close to the process applied by the researcher with deconstruction. There will be more narration using deconstruction in the next parts of this chapter.

At the beginning and in summary, the researcher uses deconstruction of *Sadu* by abstracting *Sadu* from its traditional form, meaning that this study disunited the *Sadu* motifs existing in the units and designs as a means of approaching the idea. For example, the researcher stripped *Shajarah* design from what it contains of motifs and geometric shapes. Usually, *Shajarah* design is formed of triangles, scorpions, snake symbols, camel symbols, zig zags, squares, diamonds, scissor symbols, earrings, comb symbols, aeroplanes and Arabic

calligraphy (Crichton, 1998, p.57). The researcher, through the deconstruction process disunites *Shajarah* design and uses factors in another way. For example, triangles are used in *Shajarah* in a repeated way through which, the researcher breaks such repetition and uses the triangle alone and uses five triangles only in order to build new a *Sadu* unit with different measures than the triangle used in *Shajarah*. Another example is the use of comb longitudinally in *Shajarah* and in one of the works in *Sadustic unit 3*, figure (7.17), where the researcher used comb symbols in a repeated way but in width and in a different way than in *Sadu* textile and the longitudinal form in *Shajarah* is not intended by the weaver but according to this study, the textile has a longitudinal form.

The other aspect is to disunite *Sadu* from its meaning as it was previously a functional item and now as an old handicraft, the researcher focused on changing the meaning to motifs, factors and units with colours that match the modern art in the history of fine art, in order to form a beginning with what was provided by Sami Mohammed to *Sadu* and a beginning in *Sadu* modern art that was a monumental icon as textile as a modern icon in modern art. The researcher will treat many examples that will show the *Sadu* position in the process of deconstruction as presented by Jacques Darrida and the researcher will present it as a process in another form.

3.1 Deconstruction as a New Modernism

In his book, entitled *The Truth in Painting*, (a title taken from Paul Cezanne), Derrida discussed the deconstruction and starts by asking some questions such as: "Does speech art theory have its counterpart in painting? Does it know its way around painting?" That's how he started applying deconstruction as a method in art. His questions were based on what meaning Cezanne gave to "The Truth in painting". Maybe he meant to talk about the truth of what is shown in the painting, and that even symbols in painting may have several meanings, not just one. In this context he stated: "The truth in painting" could mean and be

understood as: "The truth faithfully represented, trait for trait, in its portrait. And we can go from reflection to allegory. The truth then, is no longer itself in that which represents it in painting". We can see that Derrida is looking for many things to discover their numerous meanings (Derrida, 1988, p.21).

The researcher wishes to examine Derrida's questions before discussing the results of deconstruction. Derrida says: "The painter does not promise to paint these truths in painting, to render what he owes". All of Derrida's questions and opinions are meant to find the truth in painting through deconstructing its meanings and discussing many matters to reveal the path of deconstruction. From the truth, we move to the trait where he says: "So the question would no longer be "What is a trait?" Or "What does a trait become?" or "What pertains to such a trait?" but "How does the trait treat itself? Does it contract in its retreat? A trait never appears, never itself, because it marks the difference between the shapes or the contents of the appearing. And through Difference, One can reach Deconstruction" (Derrida, 1988, p.23).

Through these questions, Derrida starts by deconstructing the painting from its frame. It means that there is an important relation between the content of the painting itself and what is outside the painting, but each aspect has its meaning, different from the other. At this point, the link is made between what the researcher did and what Derrida meant. Therefore, the artistic works made by the researcher to achieve the monumental *Sadu* art form through huge works, apply the deconstruction in the separation of the meaning from the elements and the subject; in addition to the colour, where the researcher did not relate the colour in the original *Sadu* as a weave with motifs and symbols used in the execution of ornamental units of the *Sadu* in the painting.

Derrida continues by saying that the relation between the internal and external edges of the frame: "Without ceasing (that goes without saying) to space itself out, it play its card or its cardboard between the frame, in what is properly speaking its internal edge, and the external

edge of what it gives us to see, lets or makes appear in its empty enclosure: the picture, the painting, the figure, the shape, the system of strokes [trait] and of colors." This deconstruction is made to present a new path in dealing with painting or any artistic work focusing on the deep meanings of art (Derrida, 1988, p.24).

3.2 Deconstruction is not in the Shape but in the Meaning

The process of deconstruction facilitated the emergence of artists distinguished by the application of this theory and the increase of deconstruction awareness on which the works of those artists, namely Daniel Buren, Gerard Titus-Carmel and Valerio Adami, in addition to Arakawa were based. For an example of Valerio Adami's work see figure (3.1). James MacFarlane says about Derrida that he took the philosophy of art from a new perspective, after the theories of philosophers such as Kant and Heidegger[22] who had fundamental works and ideas in building a new opinion about Derrida. It is not easy to understand deconstruction, for its difficulties form a generally inaccessible tradition of thought and all that is related to art is usually associated with austere, "minimalist works and meaning". Those who are interested in modern art do not tend towards works based on deconstruction. MacFarlane says: "What is seen 'on' the painting is not the painting one sees. The artifice of painting makes itself plain", see figure (3.1). Looking at art works in the past is different from the era of deconstruction. Looking at paintings with the eyes is a normal thing,

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[22] Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was an influential German philosopher; Darrida was trying to translate Heidegger's term Destruktion ('destrucuring') from the German to French. Heidegger remains controversial due to his association with Nazism. Heidegger claimed that Western philosophy has, since Plato, misunderstood what it means for something "to be", tending to approach this question in terms of *a* being, rather than asking about being itself. In other words, Heidegger defined all investigations of being as having an historical focus on particular entities and their properties, or have treated being itself as an entity, or substance, with properties. A more authentic analysis of being would, for Heidegger, investigate "that on the basis of which beings are already understood", or that which underlies all particular entities and allows them to show up *as* entities in the first place. *(Heidegger, 2008, pp25-29)*

common among observers, but looking at the meaning behind the margins of the painting is the most important thing in modern art (MacFarlane, 1988, pp 77-79).

According to K. Malcolm Richards, Derrida, through his deconstruction philosophy, offers an overture toward a new complexity, to "understanding how our interpretations of politics, religion, or works of art are delimited by the structures allowing us to represent our ideas". Derrida was influenced by the German philosopher Heidegger while he translated his philosophy (De-structuring) from German to French, stating that the theory of Heidegger is not simply a negative act of destruction, but also a positive act as an example for the clearing away of something no longer useful. Deconstruction is "How to the signified leads us to just more signifiers" which means deconstructing a beneficial thing to reconstruct it in such a manner to be more useful in other aspects (Richards, 2008, pp 12-15).

3.3 Deconstructing Traditional *Sadu* as an Art Form

For the researcher, what Sami Mohammed did was wonderful. He was able to communicate through it his message, in transforming *Sadu* from a traditional weave into motifs in modern art form. Thus, the researcher deconstructed the work of Sami and then reconstructed it as a subject matter. *Sadu* in the field of art and in the painting of previous Kuwaiti artists was used as an object only with the same shape as the reality (as a functional item). The size of the works accomplished by Sami Mohammed and other artists did not exceed 120 x 120cm in scale. This is an important aspect in the reconstruction of the researcher of this study, painting as a monumental *Sadu* art form, whereby the largest work made in this thesis has a width of up to three meters. From another point of view and as another phase, the researcher deconstructed the *Sadu* as a weave, based on his subject as a functional traditional item. This is with regard to many aspects, such as the scale and the colour. The researcher created colours in order to construct a new colour set, blending in traditional and modern colours. In addition was the deconstruction of *Sadu* into motifs, where the construction of a dismantled

ornamental unit was focused on, which means that motifs do not constitute a base for the ornament inside the ornamental unit. They are external, which means they are added to the subject of the painting in the appropriate space in a different manner than the *Sadu* weave, where the motifs are located inside the ornament and constitute a base thereto along with the repetition.

These motifs constitute the base of *Sadu* in the works of the researcher through deconstruction. According to K. Malcolm Richards, "The mark is a visual sign, and here, we can see how Derrida's work may be important to the visual arts, because art is about mark making". Richards also stated that the deconstruction is based on the fact that the thing to be dismantled did not, and will not, reach the point of perfection, but it can dismantled a second time and reconstructed as such (Richards, 2008, pp 20-22).

This study suggests that deconstructing *Sadu* will not result in ornamental units in the new *Sadu*, but great attention must be given to the manner of achieving a high level of construction with regard to value. Monumental paintings always have a negative or positive impact on the viewer, based on the events related to the theme of the artistic work itself, whether it expresses war, peace, commemoration of someone's death or even the anniversary, or someone's birth. The work of Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*[23] expresses civil war in Spain, therefore, the monumental painting for the Spanish people is the memorial of a tragedy and mourning event. However, it is believed that for the new generation, it can mean the beginning of a new nation and a new era. These qualities distinguish the work based on a reality and a history. Richard says: "Deconstruction involves the momentary disruption of the structural values allowing for the smooth construction of a discourse. The researcher focused on deconstructing *Sadu* from many aspects being convinced that the

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[23] Guernica is a painting by Pablo Picasso, depicting the bombing of Guernica, Spain, by German and Italian warplanes at the behest of the Spanish Nationalist forces, on April 26, 1937, during the Spanish Civil War. The painting shows the tragedies of war and the suffering it inflicts upon individuals, particularly innocent civilians. This work has gained a monumental status, becoming a perpetual reminder of the tragedies of war, an anti-war symbol, and an embodiment of peace.(PBS.org, 1999).

result he seeks to achieve is more lucid, explicit and captivating as a monumental *Sadu* art (Richards, 2008, p.26).

3.4 The method of "Framing" in Deconstructing *Sadu*

Richards refers to the "Frame" as was mentioned before, and to what Derrida said regarding the link between the frame and the painting in the deconstruction. According to Richards, the frame constitutes a part of the value of the work. He also asked: "What else frames how we perceive works at art?" Through this question, he clarified how Derrida dismantled the frame, and their relation with the painting, as well as how museums contribute in this action saying: "Museums may frame works of art as cultural treasures, traditionally with supporting narrative of triumph or attempt to make amends or restitutions for a historical event, in its memory". He also stated that galleries have their own policy regarding the frames because they focus on the artistic value more than the way of displaying the painting through the frame, in order to hit the headlines in the culture pages of newspapers. Richards says: "The media is one of the forces framing the representation of art" (Richards, 2008, pp.32-34).

The informative frame is important, but it comes in a phase that follows the display. The researcher deconstructed the parts of frames in previous *Sadu* works, including those of Sami Mohammed whose works are known to be framed. The researcher eliminated the frames from his works in this research because he intends to realise a monumental *Sadu* art with a modern sense. Therefore, he used the acrylic black to mark the borders of paintings. For the researcher, black is the basis of all colours in *Sadu*, in addition to the red colour, and he chose it to express the loss of this patrimonial heritage by the society. The researcher has a 'mourning sense' for the loss of *Sadu* due to the awareness of the new generation, and these works are the redisplay of *Sadu* in a new manner- granting it a sense for that aspect. With regard to frames and contemporary art, Richards says: "Even in works that don't have

a physical frame, as with many contemporary paintings, there is still a frame or limit between the work and the wall. In some clever cases, the frame is painted by the artist, as in the case of Georges Seurat in some of his pointillist canvases such as The Eiffel Tower (1889)". The artist is the one who can determine this, and decide what to add or exclude from the constructed image, in order to view framing as a subjective process (Richards, 2008, pp 34-35).

During the deconstruction, Derrida made the parts of the frames seem omnipresent. The scenes vary from one moment to the next in holding together the subject. Even in *Sadu* works, there is a similarity in colour and subject, but diversity in constructing ornamental units along with the use of symbols in a manner that best serves the construction. The symbols are linked to colours and spaces inside the painting, because presenting *Sadu* as a subject and object is based on the vision of the researcher, and his goal in communicating the idea of deconstruction in *Sadu*, along with societal traditions, into a monumental art work that includes a *Sadu* theme. Added to this are the motifs and symbols that awaken the awareness of the viewer to the artistic aspects of *Sadu*, in order to not remember *Sadu* as a weave only. Richards revealed that for Derrida: "The purity of any representation is marked from the beginning as a mark, something that is open to being read as a unit within a textual or visual representation and open to interpretation". Derrida believes that the coherence of the subject in the painting increases its value from the artistic aspect and with regard to the frame that has an impact on the aesthetics in the artistic work (Richards, 2008, pp 36-38).

3.5 *Sadu's* Mark as an Identity

While deconstructing *Sadu* as a subject, the researcher preserved the identity of the *Sadu* so as to prevent its transformation into an external form as something empty on the inside. This requires that the ornamental units shall remain based on original *Sadu* motifs, and not motifs with a traditional character, whilst its structure should give a modern feeling, which

means that is created in the present and not a part of the patrimony. The researcher seeks to attract the younger generation, with colours, scale of the painting and the classification of symbols in *Sadu*, and not by changing the subject matter and mixing époques of such ornaments- because that will veil the *Sadu* identity presented in a new style in the "artistic society"[24] in Kuwait. Contrary to what has been presented in the original *Sadu* inside the weave, the researcher avoids repetition, whether in the subject matter or even in the use of *Sadu* motifs and symbols. According to Richards, "A mark, in its structure as a replicable phenomenon, is made to bear ideas its material form cannot support," in the process of deconstruction or deconstructing *Sadu*, and, "The repeatable identity of a mark can, however, lead us into misrecognising a work of art" (Richards, 2008, pp 54-56). Any mark in deconstruction in this research represents the identity of the subject or the object. Focusing on the ornamental units as a mark is the inspiration of the subject matter and a balance for the identity of the *Sadu* between one work and another.

In aesthetics, the object in art alone has no apparent purpose, as stated by the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant (Richards, 2008, p.62). Aesthetics in *Sadu* is manifested through the simplicity of motifs and the spontaneity of symbols. This increases its artistic value and positively affects its diversity, whereas the process of deconstructing and analysing *Sadu* identity, proves that that its fabrication by the Bedouin woman in itself increases its aesthetic value; with regard to the spontaneity in choosing colours, and the balance of the ornamental lines, which is the centre of aesthetics in the work. Deconstruction, as formulated by Derrida in the Eighties was widely spread throughout America as the most important philosophy and it positively affected the field of popular culture. The qualities of *Sadu* itself, through its presentation by the researcher of this study,

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[24] By the term of "artistic society", the researcher looking forward to increase the art appreciations and awareness, in Kuwait as one of his goals.

are through modern art, and not as a realistic art as presented by artists of the first generation- except for Sami Mohammed.

3.6 *Sadu* Meeting Point as Method

There is a meeting point in the research that is considered in the research methodology and that helps greatly in the achieving the results aspired to in this thesis through updating *Sadu* as a subject and object at the same time and is called *Gata* which is a *Sadu* textile considered the most important for Bedouins since it is precious for the Bedouin family and precious for the Bedouin weaver owing to the time it taken in manufacturing it, the quantity of wool used and its composition in general. *Gata* is used as a patterned tent dividing curtain and its social importance is as a separation of private and public life, and the separation of men and women, was an important aspect by means of the dividing curtains. The men's side was where male visitors were received, while the women's was for cooking, sleeping and family activities (Al-Sabah, 2006, p.19).

The tent divider is very important for Bedouin females. It is regarded as an important part of the women's possessions and accompanied her to her marriage. The tent divider designation differs among different Bedouin tribes in the Gulf; the Awazim tribe called it *gata*, *lowh* and *mehjar*; the Mutair tribe and Rashaida referred to it as *ibjad*; the Ajman called it *ruwag*, *hijab* or *dhara*. In addition to the other Arab tribes of the north in Syria and Jordan that called it *mashnouf* or *saha*. But since what is recognised in Kuwait is the *Gata*, for the researcher it is the easiest in the region (Al-Sabah, 2006, p.20).

The length of agata is ten meters and its width is divided into five parts. The first as shown in figure (3.2) above is called *Al saif* or *shifa* and it is usually in black with a central design pattern, with a normal width of thirty centimetres and it is the part linked to the tent's upper surface. The second part is called *Al Ghadir* or *Afra* and is formed of white cotton with pattern with a width of fifty centimetres, the third and fourth part are both from after the

middle to the end of the textile and is called *Al ba'aij* or *abed* and is formed of black wool

in the upper half and white cotton in the lower half with a pattern in the middle and a width

of eighty centimetres, in addition, the fifth part is called *Almutaba* or *sifla* and it represents

the lower part of the divider and touches the floor. The upper part thereof is white and the

lower is dark brown or black with a width of thirty centimetres (Al-Sabah, 2006, p.21).

 The purpose of addressing the *Gata* in the research methodology is that it is considered a

monumental weaving in *Sadu* for its major social importance as a functional item and for

the characterised feature in black and white and the geometrical motifs used in it, in

addition to its relation with the artistic works accomplished in this research is the study's

focus on reaching a result that represents *Sadu* as a monumental modern art but as a

painting not as a weaving and that based on the research's concept it has through using the

process of deconstruction in order to recreate *Sadu* motifs as a subject and object, and this

study's focus on a painting's scale where the width of the painting is three meters and the

length two hundred and forty centimetres, in addition to adding another layer of canvas

stitched on the canvas basic surface of the painting in the form of a zig zag in order to add a

sense of *Sadu* textile to the art work.

3.7 Artists' Experiences in Deconstructive Art

Geoff Bennington[25] reveals that deconstruction and reconstruction characterise the process

of deconstruction that mainly relies on deconstruction, saying: "Painting. Not just that

painting is probably unthinkable without language," and that, "Deconstruction is not at all to

do with treating a painting like a 'written' text, 'reading' it etc". The process of

deconstruction is more difficult than construction in the opinion of the philosopher, the

scholar and namely the artist. Very few artists took deconstruction as their method in

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[25] Geoff Bennington is a lecturer in French in the School of European Studies at the University of Sussex. He translated Jacques Derrida's The Truth of Painting in 1987.

reconstructing the subject matter in their art works. Museums and galleries do not consider this area in artistic works, as well as auction houses that focus on the advertising aspect of the art and the art market. Whereas the work based on a particular philosophy may have much higher artistic value, with regard to the concept and the coherence of the idea, as well as the artistic critical aspect (Bennington, 1988, pp 6-7).

In the opinions of art historians, many artists use deconstruction in their work in an indirect manner such as Francis Bacon[26], Francis Gruber, and Jasper Johns, and according to John Griffiths[27] they have been superficially identified as Heideggerian – Existentialist or Derridean Deconstructivist. The philosophic aspect of their work is related to structuralism in cultural phenomena, and the criticism of their work has increased the awareness of beauty and human powerlessness and finitude. Most modern artists who adopt a philosophy in their works have been criticised, because the philosophy in art is only one aspect and relies on criticism to determine its advantages and disadvantages (Griffiths, 1988, pp 12-15).

Jasper Johns, in an interview with the BBC, declares: "I personally would like to keep the painting in a state of 'shunning statement', so that one is left with fact that one can experience individually as one pleases; that is, not to focus the attention in one way, but to leave the situation as a kind of actual thing, so that the experience of it is variable". We can see that the vision and the idea of the artist reveal that the work and approach of each artist is somehow influenced by a particular philosophy.

According to Simon Morley[28], Marcel Duchamp[29], along with Mark Rothko and Philip Taafee, an important critical aspect is represented through deconstruction and re-

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[26] Francis Bacon: (1909-1992/UK) 'Secondhand' images from various sources revivified by interactive allusions and dissolve from animate to inanimate and vice versa. Human figures trapped in framing devices.

[27] John Griffiths is a regular contributor to Art & Design.

[28] Simon Morley is an artist and freelance critic.

structuralism. For example, measuring the scale of Rothko's paintings reveals that he tends

to be "Deconstructivist" and build a 'spiritual sense' in his works and that deconstruction in

art is the process of using both theoretical and practical knowledge (Morley, 1988, pp 27-

30).

3.8 Deconstructing Zenghelis' Harmony

The artist Zoe Zenghelis[30] carried out a successful experiment in the opinion of Hugh

Cumming during his interview with her. Zenghelis is an artist specialised in designing and

construction, and tends more towards construction. She drew paintings based on a

philosophical principle related to Deconstruction, see figure (3.3). Zenghelis states that we

all start by thinking about the result of the painting: will it tend towards the aspect of

exploration of details or materials? Will it reflect the realistic image? Will it tend towards

abstraction in forms, colours, design or will it be a picture of atmosphere? Zenghelis

deconstructs the shapes and patterns of architectural forms and then restructures it in a new

form that could be represented as cubism or near the Russian Constructivists (Cumming,

1988, pp 33-35).

Many other resemblances disappear with the works of the researcher while deconstructing

Sadu not only in the shapes and patterns but even in the subject. Where the composition in

the works were transformed into a constructed form which means that constructed forms in

Sadu patterns were rebuilt and reconstructed in the shape of units and symbols, they are not

recurrent as in *Sadu* weave. Zenghelis states that she was influenced by Cubism and the

Russian Constructivists because, "One tries to take away everything that is not necessary

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[29] Marcel Duchamp: (1887-1968/Fr) The father of 'anti-art': of Minimal, Conceptual and Deconstructionist art.

[30] Zoe Zenghelis established herself with a series of visionary architectural fantasies for OMA. Her work is characterised by a dual sense of pure visual and architectural form.

and stay with the things that finally produce the result closest to what you want". She says that things that are not important to the construction are deleted during the deconstructing process. For the researcher of this study as well, some motifs are deleted from the *Sadu* that tends towards the ornamental side more than the geometric shapes. These motifs were recently added to the *Sadu* that were not present in the past. They are deleted from the constructions in this study, to guarantee the simplicity of the painting, and the balance of the identity of *Sadu* amidst the collection of paintings (Cumming, 1988, pp 36-37).

Zenghelis talked about her inclination towards simplicity and visual purity. And to Cumming's question regarding what she likes in abstraction, and whether deconstructing a structure or pattern is present in her imagination when she creates it, she replies: "It is in my head. I suppose that I deconstruct a pattern or a harmony step by step, covering up, adding, balancing, contrasting lines with shapes, shapes with colors. "It is intuition rather than intention and ideology" (Cumming, 1988, p.38). As for the works of the researcher, they are similar, but tend to collect *Sadu* motifs in order to display their ornamental units. The collection process is achieved through limiting the number of old *Sadu* motifs, studying them through sketches, then balancing between colours, lines and additions. Deletion occurs in the first phase during the collection regarding inappropriate shapes or motifs to construct the monumental composition. Symbols in *Sadu* represent the identity of the researcher's works because *Sadu* symbols made up the *Sadu* composition in the researcher's work on isolated details on the abstracted patterns.

3.9 Deconstructing Andy Warhol's Marilyn

Mark Lancaster[31] is a British artist contemporary of Andy Warhol. In 1964, according to the interview by Marco Livingstone[32] with Mark Lancaster, Lancaster worked with Warhol in

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[31] Mark Lancaster's Post-Warhol Souvenirs were on show at the Mayor Rowan Gallery, London on 1988.

the Studios of New York. Lancaster was highly affected by Warhol's sudden death on February 22nd 1987. He admired the work of Warhol in Pop Art. He entered a phase of deconstruction through the use of the icon made by Warhol of Marilyn Monroe. He deconstructed Marilyn through the work of Warhol then reconstructed the icon in 170 paintings with a size of 10 x 12 inches. The balance and additions made by Lancaster in his paintings were established through his love for Warhol's works, through his imagination and their mergence into his artistic culture which he acquired while studying art at many schools. Some paintings present Marilyn in Picasso's technique and style while others represent Dali's melting pocket-watches and represent a huge collection of 20th century art styles (Livingstone, 1988, pp 65-66).

What Lancaster did as shown in figure (3.4) is the deconstructing then merging in superimpositions and transformations of Marilyn's portrait, and focusing on unraveling subconscious motivation through the perception of the meaning as stated by Andy Warhol. That is how construction is made through passion, meaning that motives have a great impact on the assembled result in the imagination of the artist. This is how repetition is made through one theme, but regarding different subject matters in the mind of the artist. This is a different example from that which was provided with regard to the deconstructing process. This variety adds to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, as "Deconstruction" has many clarifications regarding the method of deconstructing and reconstructing in artistic works (Livingstone, 1988, pp 66-67).

John Russell Taylor[33] mentions, with regard to deconstruction, that "Deconstructionist in the most direct sense of the term: i.e. he literally takes things apart down to their basic elements in order to reconstruct them or leave them unconstructed". Many symbols and

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[32] Marco Livingstone is a Deputy Editor of the Macmillan Dictionary of Art as well as a freelance writer and exhibition organiser.

[33] John Russell Taylor is the art critic for The Times.

motifs should be unconstructed in order to secure the identity of *Sadu* in the painting. For example, it is difficult to reconstruct the symbol of the camel because it is related to Bedouin society. It is also impossible to delete the triangle shape from *Sadu* ornaments because it is a main shape in the construction of *Sadu* innovative units in this study. Deconstruction does not mean that the researcher can alter the identity of the *Sadu*; otherwise no painting would be related to *Sadu* in any subject or object (Taylor, 1988, p.44).

3.10 Deconstructing *Sadu* Briefly

The research methodology was discussed in brief in this chapter. The deconstruction of Jacques Derrida was referred to and deconstructing *Sadu* was focused on from many aspects. The objective aspect includes its historical meaning as a weave and a popular heritage from Bedouin society; dealing with it as a contemporary subject matter in art; neglecting the *Sadu* meaning in the art works of the first generation artists, where it was used only as an object in their paintings, presented in its real shape as rugs, pillows or bags and other shapes of functional items; and the benefit thereof through Sami Mohammed's *Sadu* project. As for the technical and artistic aspect, deconstructing is relevant for colours, structure and innovative units, while keeping the shape of original motifs in order to preserve the identity of *Sadu*; in addition to the use of motifs in the paintings, provided that they cover the largest space on the painting's surface[34] and go with the symbolic colours, such as grounds and backgrounds of the painting, and their balance with *Sadu* motifs. Based on this method, this study seeks, as a result for the artistic work, presenting the *Sadu* as an icon from one side and as a monumental *Sadu* art form from the other, in order to expose

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[34] The first support on which paint or any other media is laid is the 'surface' of a work of art. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Sadu in a modern way through his artistic culture and to contribute in the refinement of the

external view of Kuwaiti art.
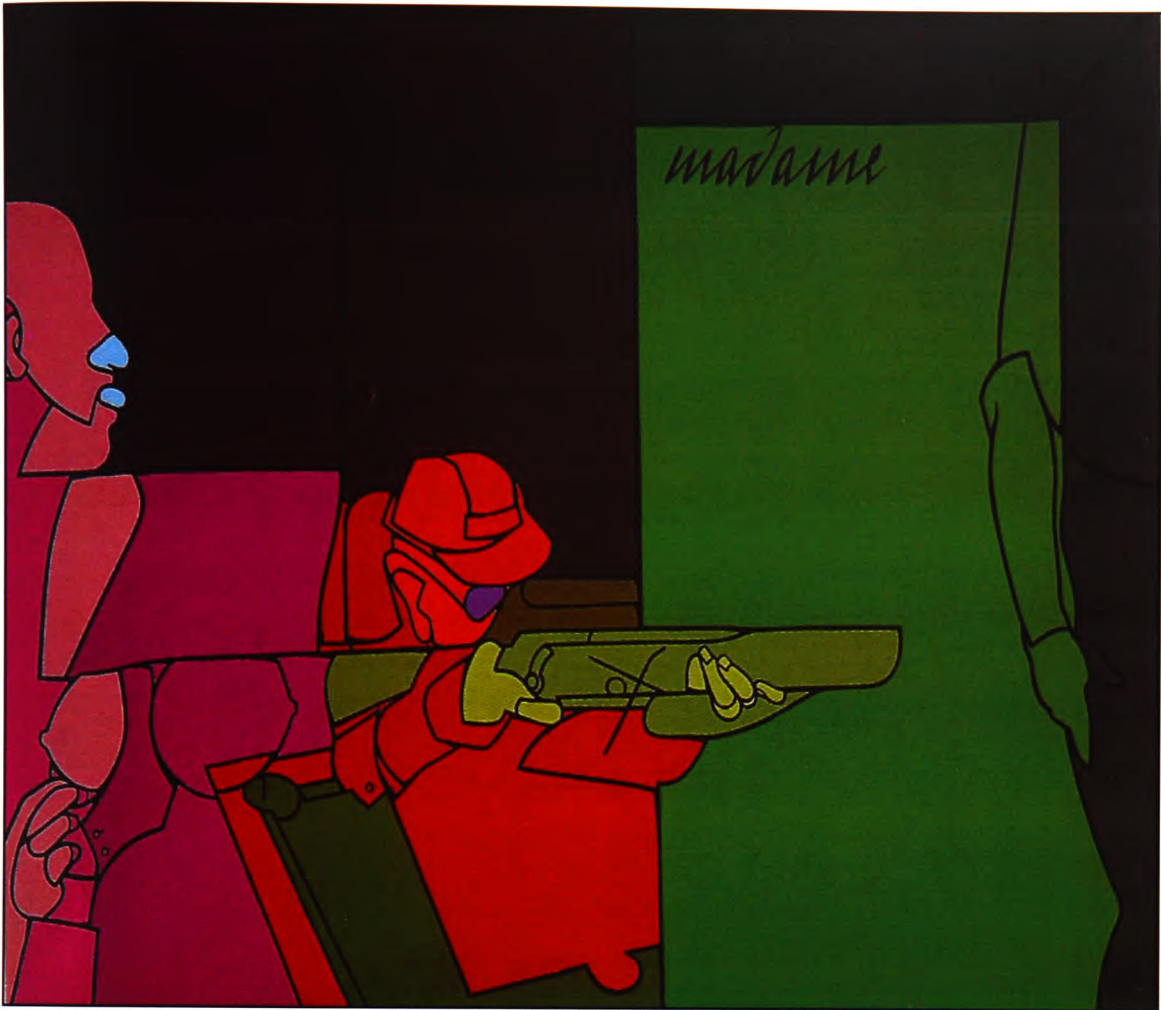
Figure 3.1 Valerio Adami, Monsieur Madame – 1976, Acrylic.
MacFarlane, J. 1988. Jean-Francois Lyotard on Adami, Buren and Arakawa. *Art and Design Magazine,* p.78
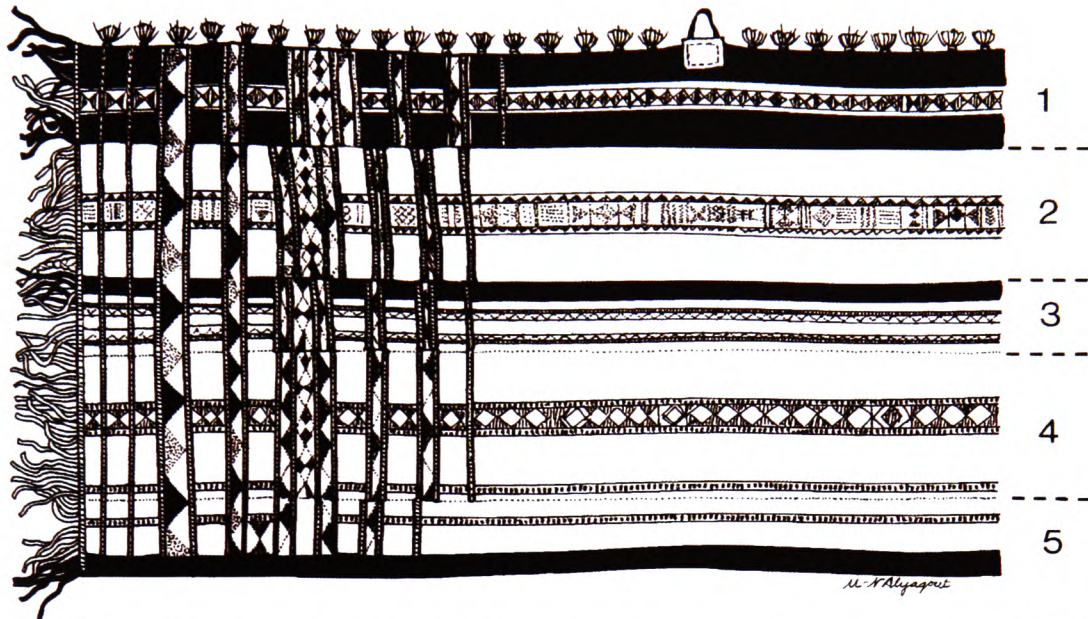
Figure 3.2 a Sketch of "Gata" the tent divider, showing the five strip parts that were swen together art identified.

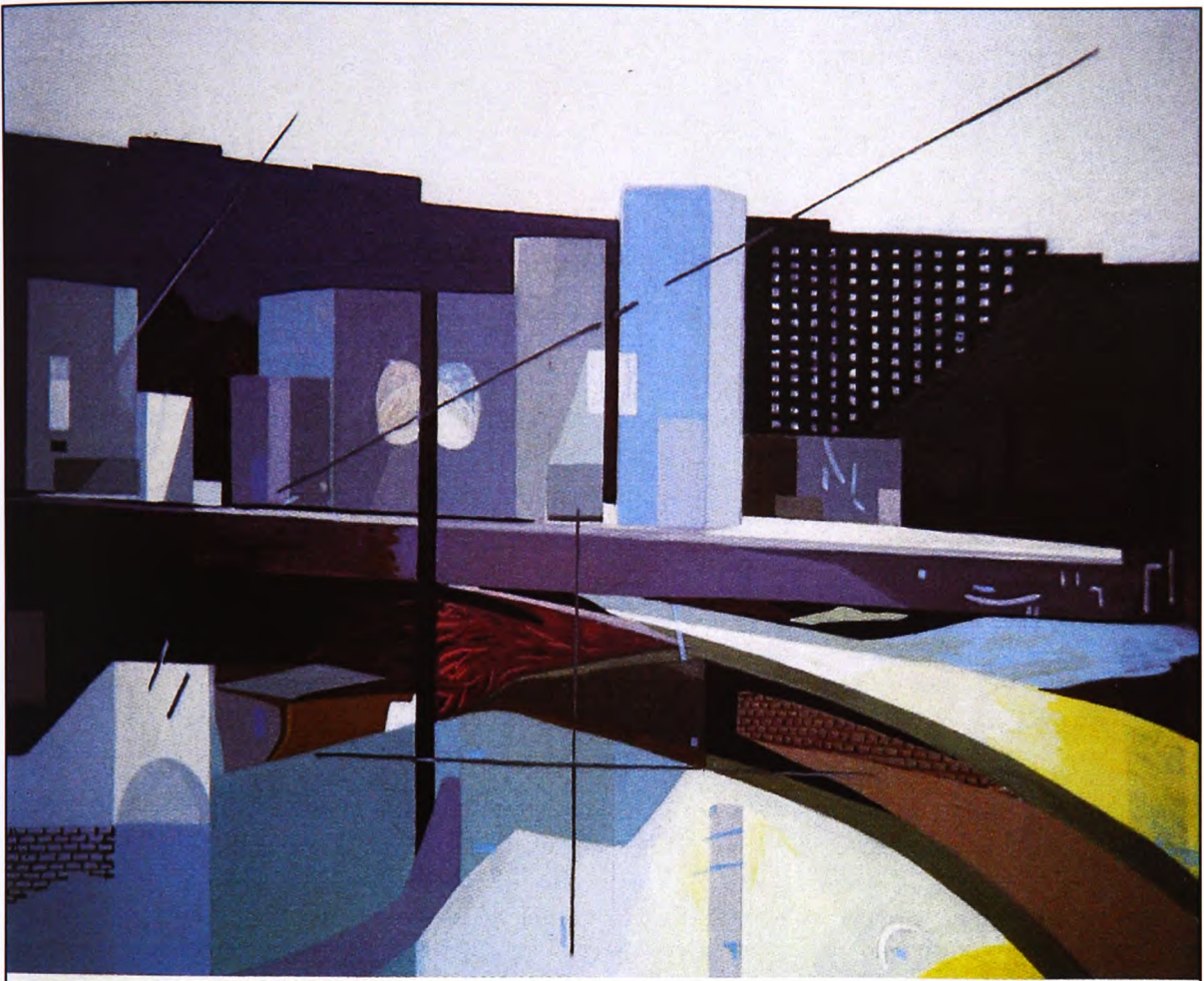Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.21

Figure 3.3 Zoe Zenghelis, *Urban Reflection* – 1987, oil on canvas
Cumming, H. 1988. The Elegance of Balance: An Interview with Zoe Zenghelis. *Art and Design Magazine,* p.35

Figure 3.4 Mark Lancaster, *Marilyn*, clockwise from top left: 15 Oct; 29-30 Oct/7 Nov; 29-30 Dec; 23-25 Nov; 23-27 Sept.
Livingstone, M. 1988. Mark Lancaster: Unmasking Andy's Marilyn. *Art and Design Magazine,* p.66

Chapter Four: The First Generation of Kuwaiti Artists and their Contributions to

Sadu

There were many works produced by Kuwaiti artists during the Sixties; yet the problem that any researcher faces when analysing the art of Kuwait, is the lack of references that cover the art side of Kuwait and even images of art works. Everything that was used in this study, and other accomplished studies prior, are just endeavours, and this means that the study has accomplished his study through interviews with some people specialised in art in Kuwait, and available catalogues. Actually, Zahra A.H.Ali, author of a book about Sami Mohammed, who was mentioned in the second chapter, says, "I was not able to prepare a complete list of the artists of the first generation since the Kuwaiti library lacks the references that visibly certify the art works of Kuwaiti artists except for Sami Mohammed" (A.H.Ali, 2004, p.59). Certainly, the researcher has also faced the same issue: a difficulty in finding adequate information to cover the part related to the first generation artists[35]. However, some names available to provide examples of the works of previous artists regarding *Sadu* in art are mentioned.

In 1972, Tareq Sayid Rajab used his reality to display *Sadu* in the background of his painting *(Fatat)*, figure (4.1), in which he painted a young girl wearing traditional dress, referred to in the local language as a *Thoub*, to celebrate the social events of Kuwaiti society. She also wears some gold jewellery on her head as those were also used at social celebrations. Behind the girl, we see a background of *Sadu* weaves, and here the *Sadu* is represented as a functional item (a tent divider) without being abstracted from its shape or

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[35] Artist and Sadu: Among Kuwaiti artists who appropriated Sadu motifs are: Abdulredha Baqer, Ahmad Abdulredah, Yousef Alqattami, and Abdullah Salem. I realise, of course, the list is not exhaustive; very few illustrated art books about the works of Kuwaiti artists are available. Except for Sami Mohammed, no Kuwaiti artist has yet focused his attention on Sadu to produce an extended cycle of abstract works.

even its colours. The tent was painted in a very simple way, and that means there were no details that present decorative units (Khazaal, H. 2002, p.198).

Realistic works have continued to represent *Sadu* in a natural way, and that coincided with the production of Sami Mohammed's *Sadu* project which represented *Sadu* in abstract form. In 1982, Abdulredha Baqer produced an art work in the form of subject and object; he used total reality in his work *Sadu*, figure (4.2). This reality means that he has not abstracted any element of *Sadu* and has presented it as a functional item and not as an artistic element. The work depicts four pieces of *Sadu*: one sack, two suspended mats and the last piece that consists of rugs. Baqer has had the courage to connect his work with *Sadu* only, and not with any other traditional object. This is an important point in representing *Sadu*, not to present it in a marginal or complementary way, but as a complete subject. That courage lacked abstraction (Khazaal, H. 2002, p.377).

The artist Ahmad Abdulredah, who appeared with other artists of the first generation, presented his own abstract expression after a long art history. However, he could not persuade the viewer that he is an abstract artist since he presents figures of the human body in a realistic way, but creates a special atmosphere dominated by abstraction around those figures, as in his work figure (4.3). Thus his concept of using *Sadu* in 1984, and the style to display it in this way, contradicted his other subjects; (Composition), figure (4.4). He presented *Sadu* in his work in a realistic way in the form of a *Sadu* bag suspended on a wall. In this work, he has not changed any part of *Sadu* even its position or the place in which it is located does not add any aesthetical feature to the *Sadu* itself (Khazaal, H. 2002, p.43).

Yousef Alqattami is one of the artists who added a lot to the national identity through Kuwaiti art, and he is famous for his works that include the traditional stamp of Kuwait. In his art works, he introduced many subjects and locations related to the old Kuwaiti environment from the Bedouin community, or even the urban community. He chose from the coast, sea works and the making of traditional ships as a theme in his art. Alqattami

presented a work in which he really represents *Sadu* as a functional item and that appeared in his work completed in 1988 (*Alhuodej*) figure (4.5). The name of this work is *Alhoudej*, taken from the local dialect, and means a small tent placed over the back of a camel so that the Bedouin woman can sit. Thus, the Bedouin man protects his family from the sun and other social issues related to the Bedouin society. We also see that Yousef Alqattami presents *Sadu* bags placed at the back of the camel, so that the person riding the camel does not slide, and also to keep some belongings inside, figure (4.6) in *Sadu*. Some of the last works of the artist in 1995 have also resulted from a view of pure reality by Yousef Alqattami through which he presented *Sadu* marginally in the theme of the painting (Khazaal, H. 2002, p.345).

The last work presented by the researcher concerning the artists of the first generation and *Sadu* is the work of the artist Sameyah Alsayid Omar. She is one of the pioneer artists of the Seventies. She completed her studies at Super School of Fine Arts in San Fernando in Madrid, Spain in 1971. Sameyah has focused on Kuwaiti heritage in her works; her painting *Tifla* is shown as figure (4.7). Sameyah presents *Sadu* in a realistic way in the daily life of Kuwaiti society. She painted a girl wearing her daily traditional dress, in an old house, and carrying a rose while she was sitting on a *Sadu* piece, and in the background we see a *Sadu* pillow and an old door inside the house. *Sadu* style was repeated as a functional item and a piece of furniture only, yet we can see how the *Sadu* colours can add a lot to the painting aesthetically and expressively (Khazaal, H. 2002, p.166).

To conclude the section related to the way the artists of the first generation presented *Sadu* in Kuwait, Kasimir Malevich in his essays about Art has explained his opinion about Academy and clarified the position of realistic arts, as it does not add anything to art, yet has a class impression in academy. He defended Supermatism which is considered, as he stated, the new reality in painting. Malevich has dealt with many topics in which he classified creative art, its existence and philosophy (Harrison & Wood, 2003, p173).

However, this section ends with the contribution of Malevich to modern art, and he connected this essay with the artists of the first generation, as none of them has the courage to present *Sadu* in a new style that expresses modern art and builds creative art in Kuwait. Malevich criticised academy a great deal. He considers that his art and philosophy started to develop when he freed himself from the frame of traditional academy and reality. Malevich says the transferring of real objects onto canvas is the art of skilful reproduction, and only that. He continues: And between the art of creating and the art of copying there is a great difference (Harrison & Wood, 2003, p.175). We find that the artists of the first generation have produced copies of what their eyes saw, and not what they felt towards these objects and this is the difference.

The products of Sami Mohammed's work agree with the statements of Malevich, which states: The artist can be a creator only when the forms in his picture have nothing in common with nature (Harrison & Wood, 2003, p.175). Herein lays the difference between what Sami Mohammed has produced, who is of the first generation, and what others did. In the next part of this study, the focus will be on Sami Mohammed, his *Sadu* Project and the National Abstraction that he generally started, as well as the relation of his productions to the theoretical side of this research.

4.0 Sami Mohammed and the Quality Movement of Art in Kuwait

So that the reader can become aware of some fundamental information about Sami Mohammed a certain amount of biographical detail is needed[36]. Sami Mohammed was born on October 1st 1943in the Sharq area of Kuwait, a place which contains some of the ancient

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[36] Sami Mohammed: Sami Mohammed (Al-Saleh) is an outstanding painter and has been recognized as one of the Arab World's leading sculptors. His sculpture is characterised by humanistic concerns, a macabre atmosphere, and it often deals with the subject's monumental struggle with annihilating hostile forces. His first solo exhibition was in 1995 in Kuwait, since 1962 has made art his career and has worked steadily in his studio at the Free Atelier (Al Saleh, 1994).

avenues of Kuwait. He completed his education through all governmental school grades in Kuwait. When he was ten years old, his obsession with art started, particularly in sculpture. He used to take sea stones and mix them with clay and his love of sculpture started. He started to participate in school activities with his clay works, and at that time, in 1956, the focus of government schools was directed to express what was then called Arab nationality. When he was thirteen years old, Sami Mohammed produced a work to commemorate the tripartite aggression against Egypt during the Suez crisis, which was the kind of subject that interested the students at that time (Al Saleh, 1994, p.18).

Furthermore, Sami Mohammed liked to sculpture Arab and Islamic iconic personalities, and he has also participated in symbolic and logo sculptures as in figure (4.8) called Education and Renaissance during the beginning of the Sixties. At the same time, he liked painting and was interested in realistic subjects where, as explained in a previous chapter, National Realism was controlling the artist's thoughts at the beginning. For example, as in figure (4.9), a 1964 work by Sami Mohammed called *Allaanj*, which means a traditional ship made of wood and it is a local name. Due to the arrival of some artistic magazines issued in Lebanon and Egypt at that time, displaying international and Arab art beside the Western art, Sami Mohammed became more interested in them. In figure (4.10), *The Violin No.2*, in 1965, Sami Mohammed started dealing with the reality that belongs to some international artistic schools and then he developed his sense of abstractionism; figure (4.11) *The Dream* and figure (4.12) *The Rubber Woman* and here we see Sami Mohammed's style passing through cubism and others.

4.1 Between Human Hardships and the *Sadu* Project

Sami Mohammed has defined his direction and focus to produce art works and translate his expressions to sculpture, which he considers to be his favourite field. His abstraction in sculpture started through what he likes about Henry Moore. He used wood in his sculptures

as in figure (4.13) and he sculptured national characters, such as the late Prince of Kuwait,

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as figure (4.14) which is considered to be a large-scale

piece of work. The personalisation of a character in that position reminds us of the Abraham

Lincoln memorial in Washington, D.C in the United States, where the work of Sami

Mohammed was very similar to the representation of the late American president, Abraham

Lincoln in figure (4.15), produced by Daniel Chester French in 1923.

In the Eighties, Sami Mohammed developed National Abstraction and started his *Sadu*

Project and a series of *Sadu* works, but his link to sculpting on the subject of Human

Hardships was attracting him more. In1983, Sami Mohammed completed a sculpture in

which he depicted the oppression, suffering and tragedies of the Palestinian people with

Sabra and Chatila, figure (4.16). Hence, Sami Mohammed has become obsessed with the

subject of human hardship. His work has become significantly widespread at Arab and

international art exhibitions, and he started to collect awards from the International Art

Biennial. However, his passion towards the Sadu Project has a special interest for Sami

Mohammed. He transferred *Sadu* to sculpture, and that should confirm Sami Mohammed's

interest in sculpture as in figure (4.17) and his preference for bronze ore, with which he

completed a *Sadu* sculpture that has a western stamp, as in figure (4.18). He always refers to

Sadu, even if the reason for Sami Mohammed's success, in the opinion of art critics, is the

sculptures depicting human hardship.

The Eighties was considered a golden period for Sami Mohammed due to the increase and

widespread span of his activities. The name of Kuwait was linked with Sami Mohammed in

international and Arab biennials. Sami Mohammed was still producing works that

represented *Sadu* during that period as in figure (4.19) and figure (4.20) through various

styles and materials, in order to express what Sami Mohammed wanted to deliver to the

audience. The repetition of Sami Mohammed's production of *Sadu* works, and the subject

of human hardships, had a significant influence on Sami Mohammed's focus in his *Sadu*

Project. Here he had many opportunities to cooperate with Sadu House for the research and development of his *Sadu* Project. In figure (4.21), we see the dimensions to which Sami Mohammed aimed to introduce *Sadu* to clothes, and develop *Sadu* weaves in rugs and other items that may prominently present *Sadu* to society.

The period of the Nineties was also full of accomplishments, but not as significant as the Eighties, however, that is normal because the life style had changed, and there are also time and social factors affecting the lives of all people. Sami Mohammed has produced a series of sculptures and paintings that express human hardships as in figure (4.22) and figure (4.23). They are considered as a significant positive addition to Sami Mohammed's art life through the widespread awareness and sale of these works as well as the change of his work place, as he transformed his house in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to a studio and permanent exhibition. All of that enabled Sami Mohammed to sell his works through Christie's, the famous auction company, for art auctions around the world. Until now, Christie's has sold three of his works in London; one of them was *Sabra and Chatila*, figure (4.16).

4.2 Details by Sami Mohammed

The researcher conducted an interview with Sami Mohammed on the 20th of September 2007. It was held at the house and studio of Sami Mohammed in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. It was a fruitful interview and included many important points, some of them did not deal directly with the research subject, but were connected with the status of in Kuwait, and the lack of exhibitions and other matters related to art in general.

Specific questions about Sami Mohammed's attraction to the subject of human hardship were raised, and they did not entirely concentrate on *Sadu*. It was discovered that Sami prefers to reflect the experience of human hardship, rather than culture and traditions. In his opinion, the issue of human hardship carries a message to all nations because the world is

full of stories of hardship, whether known or unknown. Sami stated that his *Sadu* works were just experiments and did not reflect what he still hopes to achieve with *Sadu* crafts. For the researcher, being in the same field of specialisation of Sami Mohammed, these crafts form a gap. Expression through *Sadu* may be taken to several levels and completed in different ways in terms of technique or raw materials and the number thereof.

When asked about the similarity between his works and those of Joan Miro, he mentioned being influenced by Miro at the outset. There was no awareness of global art in the Sixties in Kuwait, but just few magazines, and he perused books he would either bring from abroad himself or ask someone to send to him. He was also influenced by Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee among others. He said that similarity does not mean a drop in the value of the work. Every art work will have its own characteristics. Influence is important for building the personality of the artist. He should be acquainted with the works of other artists before him. When the works of artists living in different countries are gathered, some affinity or the same spirit and method may be detected: you are confident that they have never met. This is what is called in our culture "accidental identity of thoughts", meaning that two persons have never met but have something in common, which could be expressed in works, elements or colour.

Sami stressed the importance of the deep-rooted *Sadu* tradition in the Kuwaiti culture. *Sadu* is a craft exercised by Bedouin women who have nothing to do during the day but serve their families. *Sadu* craft was their hobby. They would do something they loved and inherited from their forefathers. This is why the importance of the research is linked in this study with the originality of its title because it contains *Sadu*. Everyone knows that there were no machines and no technology at the time (Mohammed, S, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

4.3 Sami's Action for Merging *Sadu* with Art

During the Eighties, Sami tried to take up *Sadu* art. He created *Sadu* designs in preparation

for weaving. However, the difficulty lay in the execution, for it was hard for Bedouins to

produce exactly the same design as they were used to weaving by instinct, and not

according to a harmonious design, which confirms the originality of *Sadu* and its nature as

an inherited work dating back 400 years or more. Bedouin women would recommend their

daughters to take up and not abandon the craft.

Sami added that the weaves and designs were executed much more easily than those

performed by instinct. The exhibition was inaugurated at the Sadu House in Kuwait. Forty

weaving pieces were produced according to designs performed and executed by Sami. Most

weaves were suspended carpets. On the inauguration day, most pieces were sold. Almost all

of the visitors were VIPs, including the ambassadors of foreign countries, the Sultan of

Oman and the senior sheikhs of Kuwait.

According to Sami Mohammed, many weaves are found around the world and some are

alike. However, *Sadu* in Kuwait is distinguished by its triangular shape which is weaved in

several forms and sizes that represent the Bedouins environment. Bedouin women transfer

their comb as a symbol of *Sadu* to balance the repetitions of that motif in weaving to

represents the simplicity patterns. The viewer did not know that that was only the form of a

comb. Repetition of the elements inside the fabric gave it more value and simplicity.

Bedouin women also adopted the shape of the scorpion which abounded in the desert.

However, the shape of scorpions was abandoned because the women found it difficult to

execute the details of the form on the woven fabric, which distinguishes the form used in

the weave as a scorpion (Mohammed, S, personal communication, September 20, 2007).

The comb symbol is one of the best motifs in *Sadu*, because it is a unit of triangles which

give *Sadu* patterns balance and a simple look, and also as Altaf Al-Sabah stated "Designs

and decorative patterns found in Bedouin weaving reflect the austerity of the desert

environment and are governed by the principles of Islam which restrict the representation of the human figure" (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.40).

Bedouin women tried in the past to incorporate human and animal figures into their weavings and there are a few *Sadu* with figures, in this study's point of view it is all about the knowledge of some of these Bedouin women of Islam which was very limited, because as Altaf Al-Sabah also mentioned regarding Bedouin women "Today they shy away from any representations of living matter. They restrict themselves to non-living items such as combs, scissors, aeroplanes or earrings. The reason for this is religious, as many weavers were told by the *mulls* that it is *haram*, or forbidden, to represent living matter in their weavings" (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.47).

4.4 Analytical Study of One of Sami Mohammed *Sadu* Works

This study deals with the analysis of a work by Sami Mohammed according to the method of morphology. This method discusses the characteristics of components of shapes, symbols, and colour in the object, assembly of features, and the relationship of these items or components together, in a way that forms the whole structure of the art work. Therefore, it adds the relation of parts and the effect of their reaction together in geometrical axis and determines the architectural relationships of balance and movement according to the spread of light and colour (Group of six, 2008).

The depiction of Sami Mohammed is characterised by two completely different trends. The first trend is surreal personification, as if they are preparatory drawings to his sculptures, in which there is a human hardship, his rejection to the idea of oppression, compulsion and death, and the idea of moving to the other world. The second trend is the one which this study is mostly interested in on because it is related to the research subject, which is surreal decorative and that is the stage of Sadu Project connected with *Sadu* decorations. The researcher believes that these represent the calm human soul with its pure beauty. In this

work, figure (4.24), we find that he constructed, through the elements, a geometrical structure taken from *Sadu* decorations, and a new colourful technique where he used strong and high-intensity colours and phosphorescent ones with potential light glow in his art work. The light springs from the inside of these items and is not reflected on them, and thus reflects for the viewer, universal beauty with its spiritual indications.

The researcher has analysed the painting through applying white sketch marks that represent the movement of elements used by Sami Mohammed, who reflected his work through a pragmatically stable structure, with its base at the bottom and extending to the last third at the top. He painted a rectangle, broken at the first third from the bottom, in order to change its right direction from the top, and form a pendulum movement from right to left and vice versa. This figure included cross lines in white and black, moving from right to left to confirm that movement, and to help balance the structure. We also find that the artist has painted at the top, a small rectangle whose base stands on the upper edge and in the middle and moves down to the left. This rectangle is surrounded by an orange highly intensified circle, and ends in red criss-cross lines that transfer the viewer's focus from the potential power at the top of the pyramid to the middle of the painting, without taking his or/her eye outside the upper frame.

We also find that Sami Mohammed has installed some lines and spaces in the background of the painting in colours differentiated by their intensity and grade, in order to confirm the pendulum's movement with its balanced sense. Sami Mohammed has painted parallel horizontal lines from the left side of the painting to the right in the first third from the bottom. The artist has also included some geometrical decorations of *Sadu* triangles in a reduced-intensity colour in the background of the work so that he gives the viewer an impression that these shapes are moving in harmony to change the tone sense in the movement of the painting as a whole.

While the curve shape, similar to a shell, in black and grey at the top of the pyramid diverts the viewer's attention to the left side, from seeing the right block to the left block in the space, balancing and confirming the pendulum movement in the art work. The dark colour with its grey, red and green levels has not affected the aesthetical impression of the painting for the viewer. Thus, the components of the painting shall interconnect in a harmonised movement. The art works of Sami Mohammed at their abstract level are only an expression about the clarity of self and soul.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology of the research and its relation to the productions of artists of the first generation, as well as the difference between their works and Sami Mohammed's works, the infrastructure of this research. This chapter also deals with Sami Mohammed's works, including his contributions to art in Kuwait and National Abstraction, some points of the interview held between the researcher and Sami Mohammed, and finally an analysis of an art work by Sami Mohammed. What distinguishes Sami among others is that all his works in the *Sadu* project are characterised by the surreal atmosphere of *Sadu* decorations. That means establishing either back or side spaces that enable the movement of *Sadu* decorations, and that is the difference between the researcher's works and Sami Mohammed's. In fact, there are lots of things that the researcher would like to discuss about Sami Mohammed and his works, however, in this research, the focus was directed at the research's goal which is aimed at producing a result concerning modern art that may complete the Sami Mohammed journey, and introduce a new method for using traditional *Sadu* motifs in modern art.

Figure 4.1 Tareq Sayid Rajab, *Fatat* 1972, oil on canvas
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.198

Figure 4.2 Abdulredha Baqer, *SADU* 1982, oil on canvas
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.377

Figure 4.3 Ahmad Abdulredah, *Untitled* 1984.
(Cited from http://www.q8art.net)

Figure 4.4 Ahmad Abdulredah, *Composition* **1984, oil on canvas**
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.43

Figure 4.5 Yousef Alqattami, *Alhuodej* 1988, oil on canvas
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.345
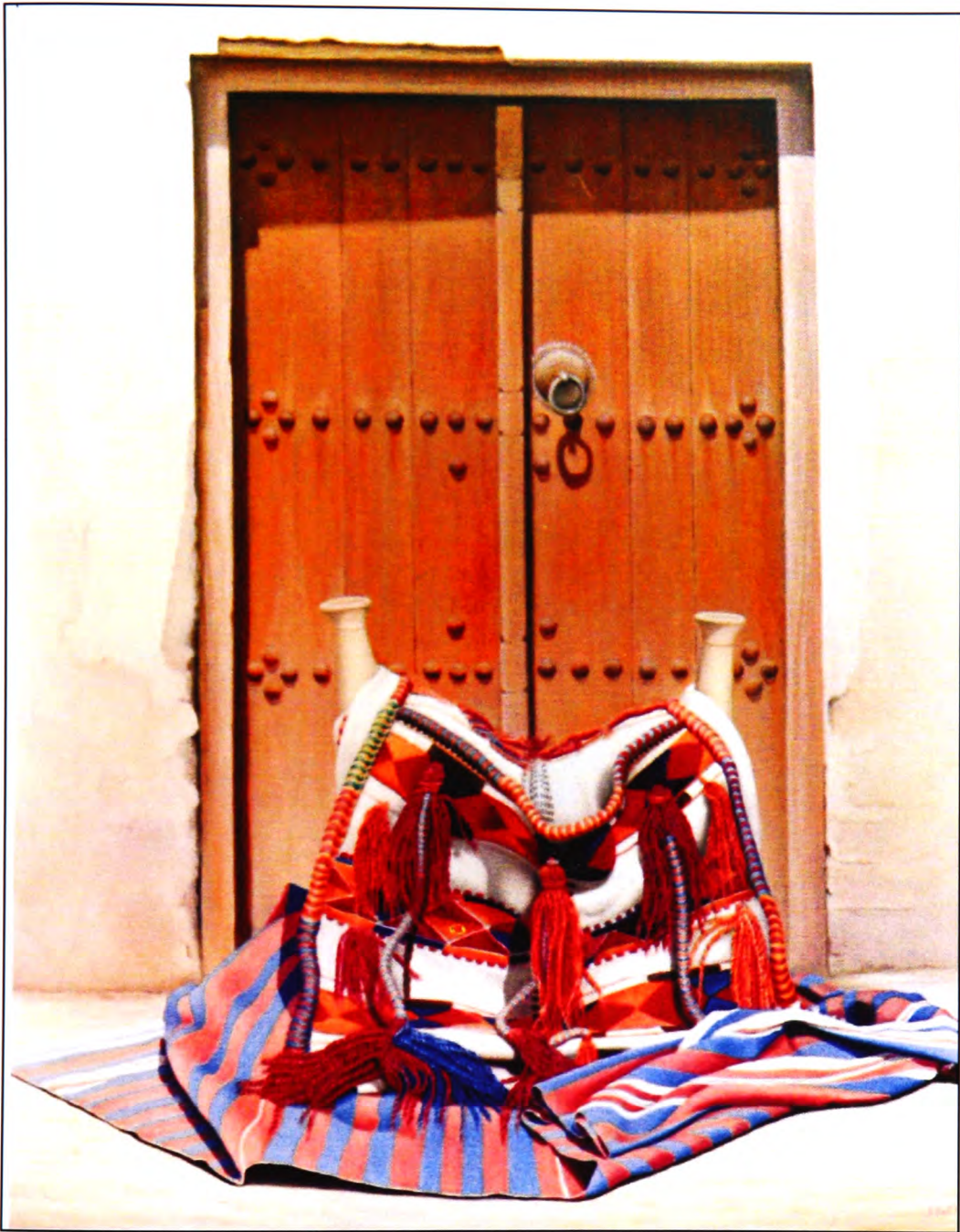
Figure 4.6 Yousef Alqattami, *SADU* 1995, oil on canvas
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.348

Figure 4.7 Sameyah Alsayid Omar, *Tifla (a child)* **1991**
Khazaal, H. 2002. *Folk Heritage and the Kuwaiti Visual Arts*, p.166

Figure 4.8 Sami Mohammed, during sculpting his work of *Alta3leem Walnahdha (Education and Renaissance)* 1964

Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.90
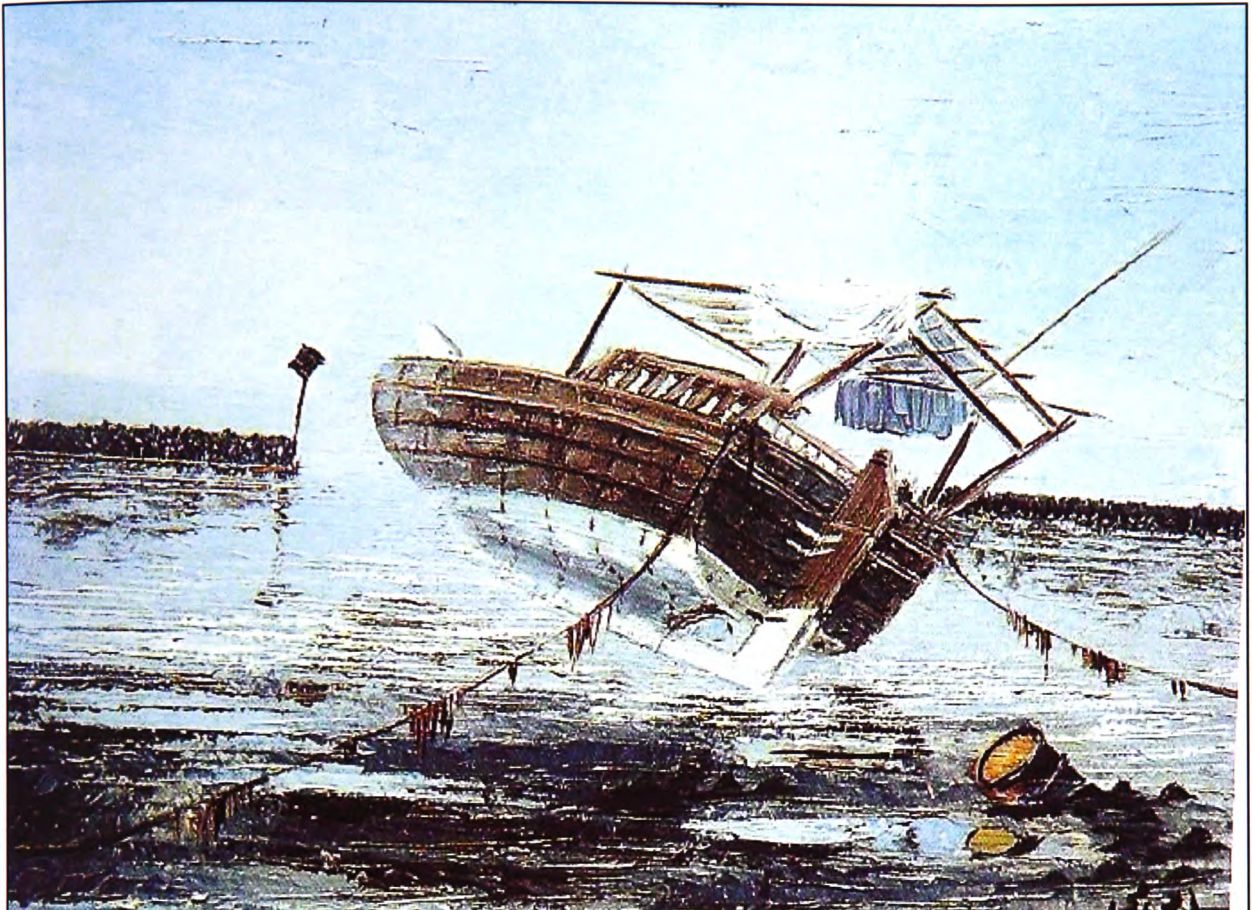
Figure 4.9 Sami Mohammed, *Allaanj (Old Dhow)* **1964, oil on canvas**
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.79

Figure 4.10 Sami Mohammed, *The Violin No.2* 1965, oil on plywood 77X70 cm
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.59

Figure 4.11 Sami Mohammed, *The Dream* **1972, oil on canvas 100X80 cm**
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.86
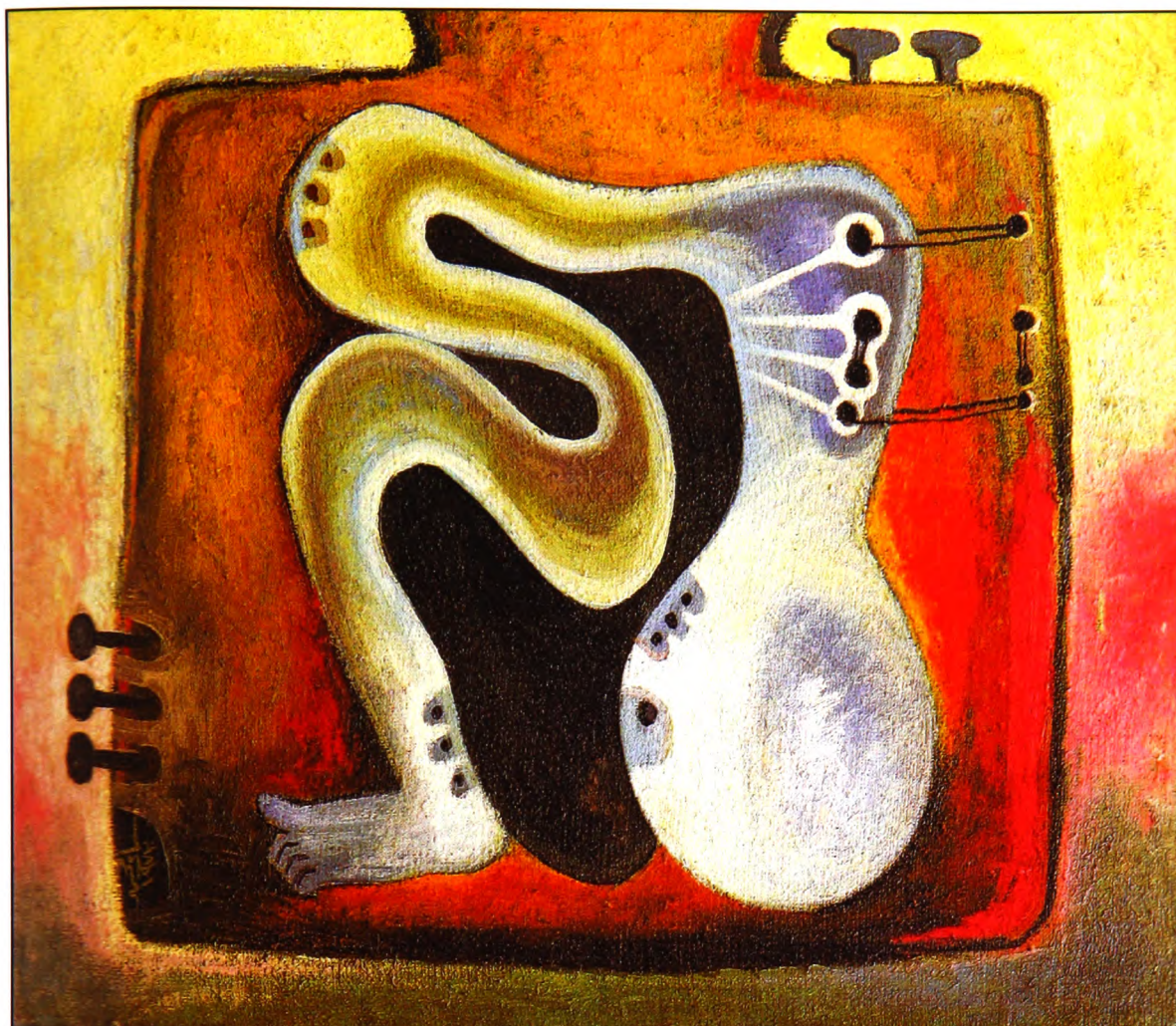
Figure 4.12 Sami Mohammed, *The Rubber Woman* 1973, oil on plywood 81X62 cm
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.96

Figure 4.13 Sami Mohammed, *Before Birth* 1977, Teakwood 165X90X65 cm. Collection of N.C.C.A.L the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature.
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.109

Figure 4.14 Sami Mohammed working on the statue of the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah in 1972 – Kuwait
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.317

Figure 4.15 (*Lincoln Memorial*) the Statue of the late American president, Abraham Lincoln, 1923 on the National Mall, Washington D.C., U.S.A. Photography by: Joshua Cogan

http://www.nps.gov/featurecontent/ncr/linc/interactive/deploy/html/still_photos/lincoln-statue.jpg

Figure 4.16 Sami Mohammed, Sabra and Chatila 1983, 72X25X55 cm, Bronze copy 1/6 collection of Mr Nasrullah Behbehani. Copy 2/6 collection of Mr Mohammed Al-Motawa, Bahrain. Copy 3/6 collection of Museum of Arab World Institue, Paris. Copy 4/6 Lost. Copy 5/6 collection of the artist. 6/6 sold recently on 2007 by Christie's auction in London.

Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.293

Figure 4.17 Sami Mohammed, *Group of Boxes Sadu* 1982, Assorted sizes, Assembeld painted wood.
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.135

Figure 4.18 Sami Mohammed, *Sadu Symbols* **1989, Bronze 40X15X20 cm.**
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.142

Figure 4.19 Sami Mohammed, *An Ornament from Bedouin Carpets* 1981, Acrylic and Chinese ink on canvas 50X50 cm. Printed as a post-card for the benefit of the UNICEF and distibuted all over the world.

Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.147
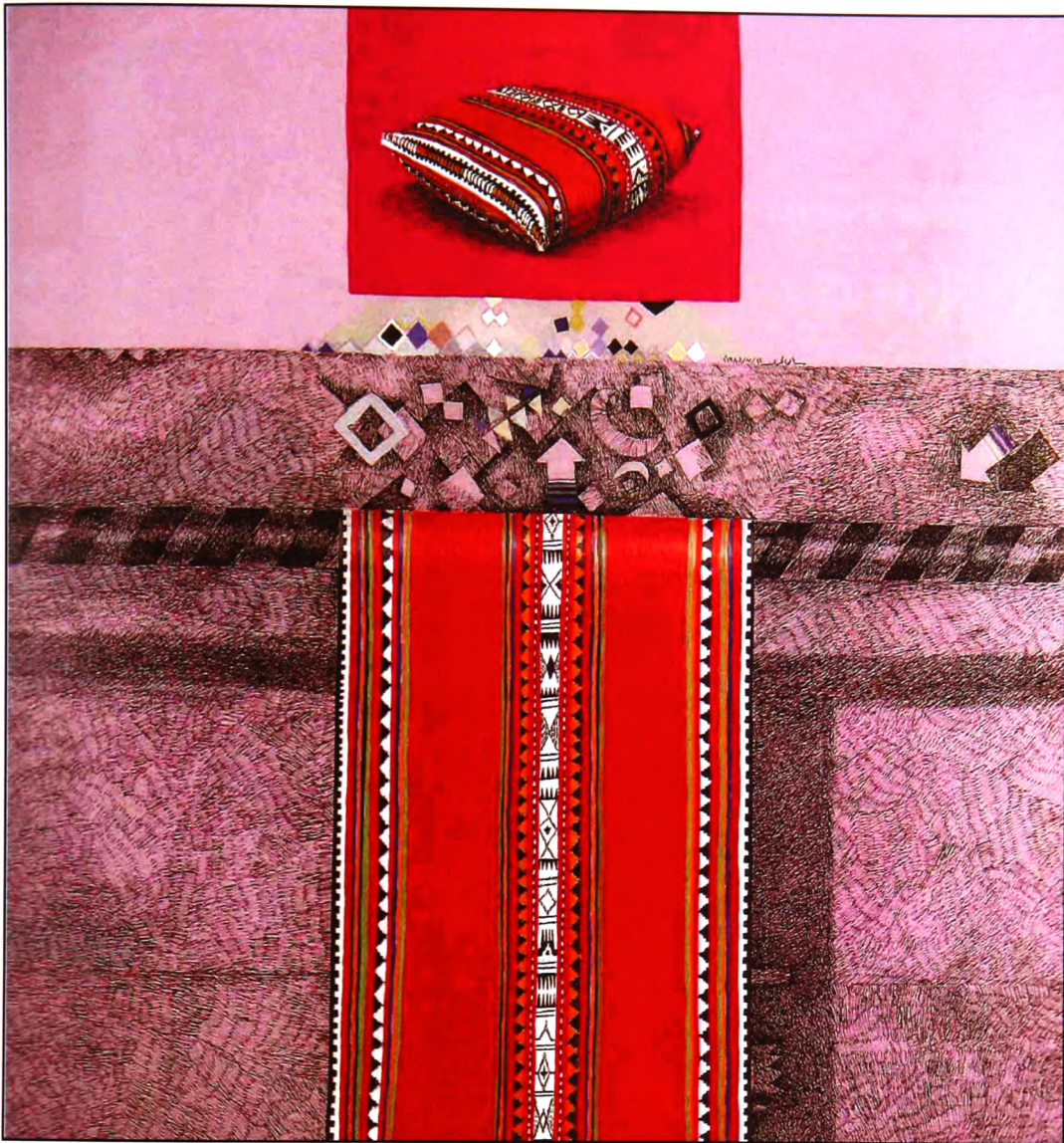
Figure 4.20 Sami Mohammed, A Pillow of Sadu No.2 1984, 120X120 cm, Acrylic, Chinese ink and flash on canvas
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.161

Figure 4.21 Part of "Sadu Project" some designs by Sami Mohammed for Sadu carpet and Sadu dress 1989
Al-Saleh, S. M. 1994. *Sami Mohammed and the Humanity*, p.168

Figure 4.22 Sami Mohammed, *A Throng at an Exit No. 2* 1999
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.105

Figure 4.23 Sami Mohammed, *A Throng at an Exit No.1* 1996, Bronze
Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.106

Figure 4.24 Sami Mohammed, *AlSadu Triangles No.45 AlSadu Octet V* **2001, Acrylic on canvas. (The researcher has analyzed the painting through applying white sketches marks that represent the movement of elements)**

Ali, Z.A.H. 2004. *Sami Mohammad and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse*, p.222

Chapter Five: Influences on *Sadu* until the 21ˢᵗ Century

Many factors have affected the culture of the Kuwaiti community. This chapter will deal with questions raised in this study regarding the influences that affected *Sadu* during the past two centuries. As this study's goal is not social but artistic, it will focus on these influences from the artistic and cultural perspectives.

5.0 Starting the Transition

No one disagrees that art in Kuwait is still considered new, since it started at the end of the Forties. At that time, Western art was entering into a new phase – modern art – as art had started in the West long ago, when Kuwait was still a desert not yet called Kuwait, and few of its citizens knew how to read and write. Western art influence on the world at that time was focused more on spreading internationally than locally. Thomas Crow says about arts at that time: "This was the most cherished assumption of high modernism in the Fifties and Sixties, which constructed its canon around the nation of opticality: as arts progressively refined itself" (Crow, 2003, p213). However, there were handiworks which relied on craft. Their purpose was, of course, facilitating life style, being sold and so on. The Kuwaiti community began with a simple general lifestyle but later developed rapidly and greatly. This development was definitely contributed to by the West during the period of British colonialism and before – with the presence of Greek sculpture ruins on Failka Island which is a Kuwaiti island – and as the Americans and the British discovered oil in Kuwait.

It is only a starting point, and those influences that affected Kuwait's traditions and heritage, especially Sadu will be considered here. What started long ago as a traditional handcraft, continued as such until the beginning of the Sixties where - as the researcher mentioned in previous chapters - Kuwaiti artists began to make it an object in their paintings. In addition, Sami Mohammed broke up its decorative units and used them in his paintings. The question is why did *Sadu* not move into art before that? The community's

perception of *Sadu* was only as a traditional craft, and the lack of spread of artistic awareness through the community helped with renewing that craftsmanship looking to it.[37]

5.1 Visual Culture did exist

First, this part of the study will not focus on explaining the concept of visual culture but it should be clarified. Malcolm Barnard presents many aspects regarding visual culture and starts by asking: "How do we know when we have successfully explained a piece of visual culture? Do we understand the concept of visual culture in the same way as we understand natural phenomena?" In fact, visual culture's field is wide and debatable. Barnard starts by introducing visual culture and says: "Visual culture in this sense is an inclusive conception. It makes possible the inclusion of all forms of arts and design as well as personal or body related visual phenomena, under a single term (Barnard, 1998, pp 2-5). This is a concept to start to understand what "Visual Culture" is, and the researcher of this study thinks that it is everything the human eye or the camera's lens see around them, whether made by nature or man.

It is understood that visual culture is not new to arts, which takes images and views as a source, since visual culture is also considered part of daily life. The Kuwaiti community is considered to be among the first communities in the Gulf region since the beginning of modernism and construction as a process of development in the Sixties until today. The visual side is considered as very important through construction, and even when planning roads. Looking at Kuwait from an aeroplane, one will see that it is planned with a great aesthetic aspect. The Kuwaiti community is also considered "open" due to its open-mindedness and travel all around the world.

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[37] This is the researcher's examination since there is no evidence on Sadu's development as an art and not as a craft.

Some members of the community travel abroad, just to take in the designs and styles from other countries, which they use to build their houses. Here we can see a form of development which entails turning away from traditions. This positively contributed in the developed community's view, but negatively affected Kuwait's traditions and heritage and the "Kuwaiti identity".

Fran Lloyd says about visual culture: "visual culture is part of the production of knowledge which is constantly open to new meanings, negotiated through points of identification and difference" (Lloyd, 2001, p.11). This is what this study refers to concerning the changes in the Kuwaiti community and when saying that it is open. The presence of the element of travel and knowledge of other cultures creates a visual culture that increases the community's culture, but affects Kuwaiti identity. The quality of these principles has a totally different feature from the community's habits; since all populations of the world know that the older generation holds on to their values and identities and often refuses change. It is the younger generation that welcomes change and detachment from the traditional identity. This occurs in all populations of the world. In Japan, for example, traditions for the older generation have their own characteristics to which they are holding onto, such as traditional clothes and even habits. The current generation, however, has become completely detached from these and joins western culture that is considered to be the most widespread around the world. The new generations have started forgetting traditional clothes and stick to western fashions that represent limited categories in the western community, not to mention haircuts and piercings in all parts of the body. There is even a change in the accent and language which is currently very popular in Kuwait and the Gulf region too.

Japan and other Asian countries are not the only ones affected by western culture; the same can be said for many countries around the world. Kuwait is definitely going along the same path as Japan with regard to identity change. Religion is probably the only thing that still

limits these changes. We notice that the new generation is greatly influenced by western culture, and does not appear to care about Kuwait's indigenous culture; although all teaching curricula in Kuwait are designed to have their foundations in Kuwaiti culture. However, the 'street; and media are the ones challenging these curricula. When any new generation person looks at a billboard on the street about a singer or an actor, he or she examines and checks this advertisement, looking carefully at the person featured. They looks at the general appearance, clothes, jewellery, hair, position, makeup and even the emotion of the person in the advertisement, and the last thing to be recognised is the advertised object or product. This type of viewing, referred to here as "visual analysis", was not present in the past.

If it is the new generation's tendency to look at anything interesting around them, transferring traditions to them would be hard, unless there is a modern way or concept that presents these traditions in an interesting way. In fact, there are many attempts to do that, and these are presented in this chapter.

5.2 Kuwaitis' Visual Awareness

It is known that the visual aspect is more effective than other aspects - auditory and written. Before 1981, the Kuwaiti community had only 2 TV channels – KTV1 and KTV2. Channel 1 always broadcasted whatever was Arabic related and Channel 2 was in English with Arabic subtitling, whether it was a TV series, movie or program. Both channels used to stop broadcasting at nine o'clock in the evening, i.e. the community members would not watch the TV after this hour because they would not see anything except the end of transmission screen - usually multi-colours stripes. The point of adding this information about KTV is to explain the aspect that community members had a visual culture through watching both channels and in both languages, thus facilitating the transfer of western visual culture to Kuwait. The second aspect is the magazines that were published at the time. The most

important is *Majalat Al-Arabi* (Al-Arabi magazine) that published information about the world's populations, famous places, thinkers, artists, actors and other issues in which the individual started becoming interested. This magazine came second on the list of those most read after the daily newspapers. This gave the Kuwaiti artist at that time an image of some things related to other cultures, such as Greek columns, flowers fields in the Netherlands, rural houses in France and bullfighting in Spain. The magazine was usually read during the day or after 9:00 pm, i.e. after TV broadcasting had ended.

After 1991, a vast opening up occurred through satellite TV channels that were very limited in 1988. Only a few houses in Kuwait had a satellite receiver for certain channels, including the CNN news channel. What is meant by openness is the attraction of the Kuwaiti community to these many channels, which contributed towards decreasing the price of the satellite receiver as they began to proliferate. The community started watching and listening to events around the world via the 24 hour broadcasting channels. We noticed at that time the decrease in the rate of reading magazines, among which were *Al-Arabi* and other cultural magazines. It is clear that the pictures shown on TV are more attractive, easier, and more comfortable for the viewer, than reading and looking at a set of photographs and in addition having to skim through them.

All that was said regarding the awareness section is the main influence on traditions, especially *Sadu*. Watching all these visual resources blinded the Kuwaiti community to the old crafts, traditional stories, songs, folklore dances and others because they do not have such an attractive style. And even if they are represented on TV they are presented in an "old fashion way" unlike modern western culture. The display by Sami Mohammed of this tradition in his paintings is considered in arts as creativity, but on the receiver's level it is considered as not being attractive, and not understanding what the artist is presenting. As already mentioned, Sami Mohammed's abstract of *Sadu* was surrealistic and not direct, so it was hard for the viewer to understand it and consider it as a Kuwaiti tradition. The viewer

has visual culture, but not the artistic culture in order for them to understand what surrealism is as well as other artistic movements.

Beit Alsadu (Sadu House) had an understanding of that, but it did not attract the community. In it are few Bedouin women weavers, weaving and doing their activities. No advertisements were spread to introduce the weavers at the Sadu House to the new generation. As in figure (5.1) and figure (5.2), we see that Sadu House has transferred *Sadu* from a craft into equipment that the person needs in their personal life such as folders, office equipment and even some products used as souvenirs. These are attempts that only the visitor would know about as the products are not being advertised anywhere else but only at Sadu House. There are some lectures, textile training courses etc, but they are few during the year, beside certain limited written recourses. Kuwaiti people were still not interested in these activities; during the researcher's visits to Sadu House he recognised that most of the participants on the textile courses are non-Kuwaiti participants. In 2006 after the opening of the AUK (American University of Kuwait) and the other western universities in Kuwait, the researcher appreciates the encouragement that offered by the universities to their students to attend seminars, participating, and volunteering at Sadu House and the other places that represents Kuwait traditions. When the person who wants to buy a *Sadu* product sees them in the traditional markets, they think they are original. Unfortunately, not only tourists but also Kuwaitis themselves do not know that it was manufactured in India and Pakistan, and that they are low quality designs of *Sadu*. Herein lies the role of Sadu House which should advertise and educate people about *Sadu* designs, decorations and even the fabric it is made of, in leaflets or advertisements or on television or even in publications. There are very few people who know and can differentiate Kuwaiti *Sadu* from others that are non-Kuwaiti, Saudi, Iraqi or even Syrian.

5.3 A Leap in Media that Increased the Level of Visual Culture

In August 2007, the first private TV channel - Alwatan TV - with a Kuwaiti theme, started broadcasting with an interest in making traditions one of the channel's priorities, but in a modern way. The channel's staff is mostly made up of young people, which is a good point for the new generation, because they are the ones who construct the channel's strategy. All what is broadcast on the channel is, as stated, 'Kuwaiti themed'. Since the channel wanted to be 'special' from the beginning, it brought an Indian professional director to make a Flash clip shown for seconds between programs. For the clip to be traditional they chose Sadu House as a filming location. The Indian director filmed a Bedouin woman weaving and took shots of Sadu House from the inside, in addition to just glances of *Sadu* shapes. The result was very precise and valuable with traditional music in the background, played traditionally but with modern tunes. And of course the Bedouin woman was completely covered while weaving. This clip is less than 30 seconds but it summarises an important part of the tradition of *Sadu*. The channel's shooting and broadcasting is modern, so as an audience we can understand its current success in Kuwait. Its strategy is to care for Kuwaiti tradition and represent it in a modern way, with a style accepted by the younger generation because it is exciting and mixes their country's tradition with modern music for traditional tunes. Figure (5.3) represents snap shots of that flash.

What Alwatan TV presented was not only an advertisement, but also a work of art, since it is related to the visual part for the viewer. Thomas Crow says about modern art after the Sixties: "Art is involved with so much more than visual appearance, as television has very little to do with the eye, radio with the ear" (Crow, 2003, p.214). It is related to the modern representation or display and not the content. For example, if an artist wanted to present something new as a piece of art and not a subject or object. It is possible that modernism is the way this object is displayed, or it could involve using materials that could contribute to modernising the display of the piece of art. It is possible as well to display subject matters

related to the tradition, but the way that tradition is displayed in the piece of art is not traditional, whether realistic or abstract, yet just different. When Andy Warhol used Marilyn Monroe as in figure (5.4) in his art as a subject matter in 1962, almost everyone knew who Marilyn Monroe was and had seen her in movies, photographs and so on. But none had seen her as Warhol presented her in his work: which is modernistic in display. Other personalities and events were also the main focus of Andy Warhol's works such as *Jacqueline "Jackie" Kennedy, Elvis Presley, Flowers, Campbell's Soup Cans* and others. The researcher of this study finds that this is what characterises Andy Warhol's work in the Sixties, and before him Marcel Duchamp.

There has been a big change in the Kuwaiti community's visual culture, but the problem is that the concept has an effect and not an existence. This means that there is a visual culture in which the Kuwaiti community is characterised, but as a concept it is not widespread and or well known. This study is the beginning of focusing on the Kuwaiti community's visual culture. What proves that visual culture is present in Kuwait is familiarity and travel of community members around cultures of the world, and the presence of artists such as Sami Mohammed, a painter and sculptor in the Sixties, who knows western art. His imitations of some artists and artistic movements prove that there was a profound view that led to creating a group of images in the artist's mind for use in some of his works.

5.4 Globalisation and its Effect on *Sadu*

Globalisation has had a big effect on art in Kuwait, and always through visual culture because it is the easiest resource for the Kuwaiti community. Undoubtedly, globalisation appears like any influence that invades a culture in any community of the world. The effect is either negative or positive. For sure, globalisation during the Sixties affected Sami Mohammed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sami Mohammed knew many things about western art through the books and magazines he used to get from Lebanon and Egypt.

If we take the source of this information featured in magazines, we find they are from western sources that arrived in Lebanon and Egypt via the spread of arts in the Middle East. We find, for example, that many people know who Picasso is, but have never seen him or his works because they are not interested in art at all, and they only know him because his name is mentioned everywhere.

What this study is attempting to reveal about globalisation[38] is the spread of a name, information or picture to the entire world through many uncountable sources that reach the community in general. But the person might not know this name, place, picture or even international brands. In fact, talking about globalisation is very interesting. Writers and thinkers are still writing and researching about it, and most of what is known about the Kuwaiti community and globalisation is in the political aspect only and not artistically and culturally.

Globalisation had a positive effect on Sami Mohammed and his art. Sami Mohammed appears to have been influenced by Wassily Kandinsky and his style in dealing with motifs, and thus distorted some *Sadu* decorations dominating the general atmosphere in Miro's paintings, elements, simple codes and other subjects that made Sami Mohammed's arts international. The result of that was the selling of three of Sami Mohammed's art works through Christie's auction house in London via Dubai. This is the globalisation that transformed Sami Mohammed from a local artist into an artist whose name reached many exhibitions and art agents around the world.

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[38] The use of Globalisation in this study is intended not as a thorough investigation of the concept, but only insofar as it, as an analytical tool, contributes to further exploration of the notion of dominant cultural tends, aesthetic preferences and visions of social space in visual perception and Kuwaiti art.

5.5 *Sadu* and the Visual Revolution

Globalisation affected the world's populations through popular culture and aesthetics based on the visual revolution. Communities are now only attracted to modern culture because globalisation contributed in building the concept of modern culture. For example, if we look at *Sadu*, the subject of this study, and how it was at that time an old piece of the Bedouin community made by Bedouin women and a symbol of all that was Bedouin. Therefore, *Sadu's* moral value was high because it is an old craft reflecting the Bedouin tradition. After the Sixties and the industrial revolution, which can be referred to as the "oil revolution", the community seemed more open because of the legacy of British colonisation and its transfer later into a British and American partnership responsible for oil in Kuwait[39].

As explained in chapter two, it all started with artistic activity through "the American ladies exhibition" based on the idea of some wives of American oil engineers in Kuwait who had the talent, and were demanding to participate with Kuwaiti artists in displaying their culture through their works of art. This is the type of globalisation that made most of the community members forget Kuwait's traditions and culture. It is important to mention that during the Sixties, Andy Warhol was at the peak of his level in spreading pop art throughout the world.

Sarat Maharaj and Stuart Hall debated on modernism and post-modernism. Of course aspects of this debate mentioned globalisation, transformation of cultures in world populations into modern culture, colonialism effect, and post-colonialism's position regarding this change or transformation. This study does not seek to mention much of this information, but some might give the reader an insight into globalisation's effect on *Sadu* through the visual revolution. Hall and Maharaj mentioned an important issue when Hall said that "the post-colonial is not the end of the colonialism but is what happens after the

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[39] For background material, see Musa Ghadban Al-Hatim, Al-Tatawer Al-Iqtisadi Fe Al-Kuwait: 1946-1973 (Economic Development in Kuwait: 1946-1973) Kuwait City: Kuwait Univ. Press, 2001)

end of the national independence movement" (Hall & Maharaj, 2001, p11). This is what the study mentioned at the beginning of the discussion about globalisation. There was a transformation revolution after colonialism; i.e. "the American ladies exhibition" in the Sixties is an extension to the Kuwaiti community's transformation, and not merely participation.

Aesthetics were mentioned as what is holding the new ideas and views in the transformation of the community's look at modern culture. Of course, the debate issue is that museums contributed to the visual revolution. Hall talks about modernism's effect on the community: "This nation of a modernism that is to be found inscribed on the face of everyday life, in everyday fashion, in popular culture and in the popular media, in consumer culture and the visual revolution" (Hall & Maharaj, 2001, p.13). This is globalisation's basis in the attraction of the Kuwaiti community for modernism in contemporary life.

Finally, Stuart Hall explains the collapse of anthropological definition in the issue of culture as a way of life and says: "It is connected with the attempt to construct the world as a single place, with the world market, with globalisation and with that moment when Western Europe tried to convert the rest of the world into a province of its own forms of life", (Hall & Maharaj, 2001, p.18). Many of the issues Stuart Hall raised in that debate about globalisation and modernism have informed this current study, and because there is nothing related to globalisation and the range of its effect on *Sadu*. Therefore, the researcher decided to take what is being included among western resources and use it in this part of this study. Because in the latter applies what is run in these references and what happens in the Kuwaiti community's culture. In the end, globalisation runs this world as one place and not as countries and continents – which is the goal of globalisation - by affecting the world's cultures. As previously explained globalisation negatively, and not positively, affected *Sadu*, because it revived modern culture and changed the Kuwaiti community's outlook on

other cultures through the visual revolution, which built the new concept of a visual culture in Kuwait.

5.6 Summary

Finally, why did art change? The simplest answer is to say that the world changed, even conceptions of human subjectivity itself have changed (Dawtrey et al.1996, p.6). It is clear that most of the people around the world have been influenced by globalisation, even slightly. Conservative peoples have lost some of the values preserved by their ancestors, as globalisation has entered all societies through the younger generations; since they were the ones who desire the modern culture, particularly the culture connected with the West and generally with the world. There are many things in Kuwait to which the society still adheres as a result of Islam which sets the borders that raises the level of humanity. Kuwaiti traditions have also helped the religion in forming the shape of Kuwaiti society, which has a special and open identity, even if it has forgotten some of its heritage. However, through this research and the ones presented thereafter, there may be a restoration of the society culture. The identity of the pre-oil society will be re-presented to form an identity of modern society, and there will be an establishment to that identity. Moreover, the development of culture to conform to globalisation has had a positive effect on Kuwaiti culture.

Globalisation has been presented and debated in this study to prove the effect of modernism on the community's culture on the one hand, and the attraction of the community to the western culture thereby forgetting traditions and heritage it inherited from ancestors on the other. Through this study the researcher hopes to change this orientation and allow globalisation to affect *Sadu* positively by spreading *Sadu* via a modern art approach in the world, besides continuing what Sami Mohammed started, using *Sadu* ornaments in his paintings.

Figure 5.1 Sadu merchandise at Biet Alsadu (Sadu House) Kuwait
Sadu House Brochure. Kuwait: Kuwait Textile Arts Association, 2007

Figure 5.2 Sadu merchandise at Biet Alsadu (Sadu House) Kuwait
Sadu House Brochure. Kuwait: Kuwait Textile Arts Association, 2007
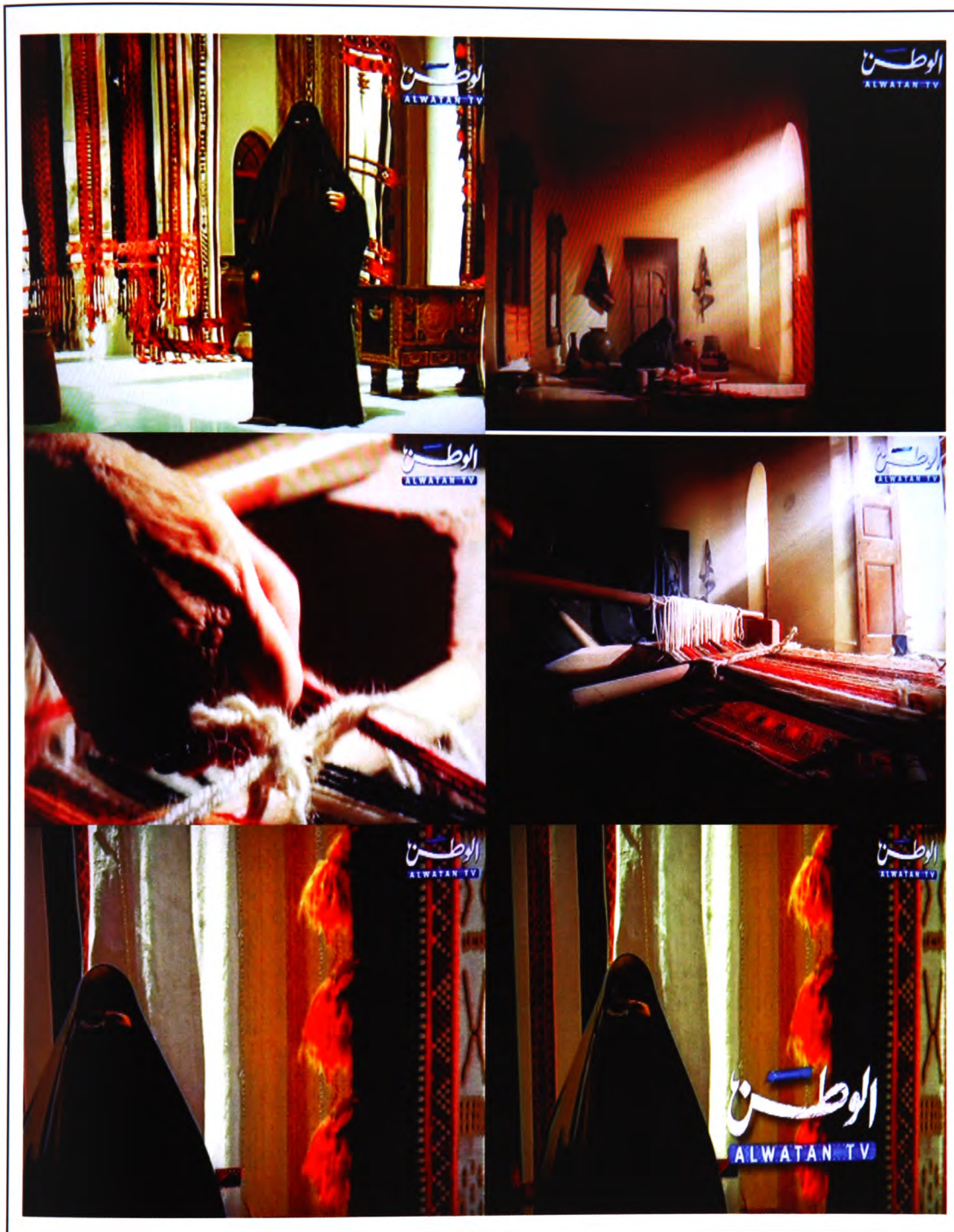
Figure 5.3 A snap shots of the Sadu flash on Alwatan TV – Kuwait
(Captured by the researcher from Alwatan TV channel on March 12th 2008)

Figure 5.4 Andy Warhol, Marilyn Diptych 1962
Hickey, D., & Bluttal, S. 2006. *Andy Warhol "Giant Size"*, p184

Chapter Six: *Sadu* and Colour Revolution

6.0 Bedouins' *Sadu* Colours

It has been established that most of the decorative units of *Sadu* have basically focused on

simple geometric shapes that essentially depended on the principle of proportionality and

regularity. Therefore, most colours used in those decorations are significantly obvious due

to the wide space of those geometric decorations that are usually based on triangles.

Bedouin woman started to weave using simple *Sadu* colours, or colours that were dependent

on the places where the Bedouin family had settled. Therefore, *Sadu* weaves lacked other

colours; some of which are colours of flowers and the like. Anne – Rhona Crichton, in her

mid-Eighties study of *Sadu* weaves in Kuwait, writes; "Camel, goat and cotton yarns, used

by the Bedouins for weaving, are never dyed and used in their natural colours of white,

beige, brown and black" (Crichton, 1998, p.20). Those were the main ancient traditional

Sadu colours. Since that period, Bedouin women have developed other colours, and have

used other warmer ones such as red and orange to spread delight around her, and to react

towards the hardship and austerity of the desert environment. Through that, Bedouin women

would reflect an aesthetical and artistic sense; see figure (6.1).

Red is one of the favourite hues for Kuwaiti Bedouins. It is possible that the use of red

refers to the colour of blood, and is thereby being presented as symbolic of life. The

meaning of family and relationships among members of the tribe has had a major influence

on Bedouin society. Family and kinship relations bind the tribes of Bedouin society together

(Abu Zaed, 1987, pp 33-35). Amy Buttler Greenfield says that before the presence of the

blue, yellow or green colours, the colour red existed, being the colour of blood and fire. In

many cultures, red was significant to the human being: for the Neanderthals, they buried

their dead with red ochre, the Cro-Magnons painted their caves with red, while ancient

Chinese considered red to be a lucky colour and symbolic of prosperity and health. As for

the Arab world, it was sometimes construed as a sign of divine favour and sometimes considered as the mark of the damned, but above all as a male colour emblematic of heat and vitality (Greenfield, 2005, p.2).

As for the appearance of those colours, whose resources are, as Crichton mentioned, from the flowers or plants of the desert, Crichton says, "Today, more use is made of chemical dyes bought in the local souks. These acid dyes come from India and come packed in powder form" (Crichton, 1998, p.20). There is no doubt that Kuwaiti society connects with India on its commercial side, and the goods come to Kuwait in a variety of different kinds. Crichton adds; "The most popular dye colours are red, yellow, orange, blue and green. Prior to 1984, these dyes were used without the addition of an acid" (Crichton, 1998, p20). Crichton has listed many colours that were absent from Kuwaiti Sadu. They are yellow, blue and green. Yet, they were used in other countries like Iraq, Syria and Jordan. Green was sparingly used in Kuwaiti Sadu in the late Eighties. In the previous chapter, the effect of globalisation on Sadu was mentioned. We see that chemicals and acids have added a manufacturing factor to the Sadu industry, and Sadu was no longer limited to naturally produced colours.

Because Sadu was originally a product of naturally produced colours, the Bedouins have extracted their colours from plants and flowers of the desert, in addition to the original colours of camels and goats' hairs, which are usually black, beige, brown and white. Therefore, it becomes clear that those limited colours are mainly traditional and naturally present in reality. Even the colours of desert flowers are very limited and only include red, yellow and orange. When this study of the colours of Sadu, it was found that they were very limited because of Sadu's natural production and hence it could not provide any assistance to a modern painting that could attract the attention of the young generation. That generation appears to prefer stark and light colours whose sources are mostly industrial

rather than natural, such as green with its different levels from medium to light and stark and other colours in the same method.

Figure (6.2) presents a piece of ancient *Sadu* weave in its traditional colours and decorations. Here we find that none of these colours attracts the attention, as they are natural ones that do not contain any industrial factors in their production. It is an ordinary product in its colours, although one finds a peculiarly modern feel. See figure (6.3) the researcher does not mean that its modern side is the result of machines or the industrial revolution. However, the addition of orange and the lack of dark colours make it more modern than figure (6.2). Through that, it has been found that *Sadu* colours number not more than five to six colours if we include white. The palette in figure (6.4) indicates that the *Sadu* was not free from those colours. In addition, paintings, where the Kuwaiti artists of the first generation have presented *Sadu* as an object, have included those colours only and there was not another single one other than those presented in this palette.

The palette in figure (6.4) presents the black goat wool hue in the industry of *Sadu*. This black is usually bright. There is also the black camel wool, which is usually pale. Red and orange were taken from desert flowers. Beige and brown are the original camel colours, as camels have four different colours. They are beige, white, black and brown. We see that when all these colours shape the *Sadu* decoration, we get the original *Sadu* shine. It is abnormal to see *Sadu* in bright, pink or phosphoric colours. However, these natural colours provide the dependent form of *Sadu* that distinguishes it from other kinds of weave in the Middle East region.

6.1 *Sadu* within the Recent Philosophy of Colour

We can mention Joseph Mallory Turner the English artist, and the high colour value in his works, during his artistic career (1775 – 1851) as mentioned by Faber Birren in his book. Birren states that he is the greatest colourist of all time whereof he says "Turner was a

unique, original and independent thinker in the history of colour art". At that time, Turner was characterised by his colours in which he is more distinguished than the French artists at his epoch. However, he was not famous like them, yet due to the fact that he worked individually, Eugene Delacroix was very impressed with Turner's works. In 1966, during a Turner exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Monroe Wheeler the director of the exhibition said, "Presumably, none of the present-day abstract painters whose principal means of expression is light and colour had Turner and his life's work in mind, but looking back on their revolution, more than a hundred years later than his, we see a kinship". This comment reveals that the colour value of artists prior to the twentieth century' art had a glamour and a value tending to aesthetics more than the normal vision of the painting (Birren, 1986, pp 8-13).

The artist's philosophy of colour evolved rather the artists' studios were opened to experts in order to study the colour value of the artist, from the English experts Thomas Young and James Clerk Maxwell, to the Dutch Hermann Von Helmholtz; in addition to America's leading expert on physiological optics, Ogden N. Rood. When the art of the twentieth century emerged, the artist was thinking about the value of colour. In this respect, Birren mentions the manifestation of Fauvism during the colour revolution, and among the most prominent artists in this regard, is Henri Matisse. It is interesting to reveal these historical matters regarding their influence in art, in general (Birren, 1986, pp14-15).

Moreover, the Op Art did not last as mentioned by Birren, still its influence remains important with regard to colours. Birren argued regarding the truth of the Op Artist and his method in using the colour where he said, "This is particularly true of what have been called "colour fields" paintings, many of which display simple colours in large areas and are childishly naïve in colour choice". Of course this happened for a reason because, "Much of Op Art has been based on the phenomena of simultaneous and alternate contrast," which is true because even the colour affects both the artist's feeling and reaction through his

painting. Among the important sources in the field of colour philosophy is Josef Albers, who used to deal with phenomena such as simultaneous, alternate contrast, afterimages and the effects of transparency, as well as optical mixtures of colour. There are many phenomena that emerged in colour philosophy and its evolution whereof Albers says, "In order to use colour effectively it is necessary to recognise that colour deceives continually" (Birren, 1986, pp 18-20).

This is relevant to the colour, but one cannot omit the influence of vision in the field of colour vision, as in the lightning and its position, in addition to the impact of the paintings' colours. By carrying out research regarding *Sadu* and the colour studies in order to transfer and develop it within this studies' works, it is necessary not to show the *Sadu* weave in a public place, except in the market. Even the markets should be normal traditional markets, and not a shopping centre, for the purchaser has a vision that differs from his vision while visiting a gallery as well as presentation under fixed lighting. This is what shows that the development of the *Sadu* colours shall be included in the field of lighting and vision; whereof James Clerk Maxwell reveals a valid point of view when he said, "In effect, light energy and colour may be out there, but as one light crosses the threshold of the eye, the brain takes over and does astonishing things with it", which is to say that even the black colour does not mean anything to *Sadu* painting in the works of Sami Mohammad when used and seen by the spectator of the *Sadu* weave, and even the researcher himself, due to the presence of a different perspective relevant to the black colour in *Sadu* motifs in the painting. This is what reveals the colour value in the completed paintings, as well as what grants it privacy as to the vision of the colour in the *Sadu* weave, because vision under bright and dark conditions holds a number of unique features; brightness and darkness are associated with light and illumination. Whiteness and blackness are associated with surfaces (Birren, 1986, pp 24-26).

In this respect, psychologists say that warm colours are considered as hard colours while cool colours are considered as soft ones. Regarding the tough climate conditions in Kuwait, the Bedouin woman tends more toward warm colours which perhaps reflect her mood resulting from the tough climate. The colour choice of the Bedouin woman, as mentioned in chapter two, shows that it constitutes a spontaneous choice and not a deliberated one. However, this spontaneity is attributed to both her psychological structure and her life endurance within that tough climate. According to what Birren said, the human vision in general is considered as a colour whereof one eye can see a red card whereas the other eye sees a blue paper. The eye will concentrate on the red paper for a longer period than the blue one (Birren, 1986, p.30).

The emphasis in this study on the part of developing colour, in order to construct a monumental *Sadu* art form, does not concentrate on establishing the units and using *Sadu* motifs and symbols only. However, it takes a different direction from previous artists who used colour in their paintings, whether they were among those who show *Sadu* in their paintings or Sami Mohammad's paintings under its real form. The researcher of this study stresses granting larger spaces for colour in the paintings of large size. David Katz said that, "As an encouragement to abstract art, it should be understood that colour takes precedent over form, pattern and design," and he carries on, "Colour, rather than shape, is more closely related to emotion", and this is what is relevant to the Bedouin woman and the *Sadu* weave on one hand, and the artist on the other hand; in addition to what he aimed at from the use and choice of the adequate colours to be part of *Sadu* in his paintings (Birren, 1986, p.31).

For example, the style of the artists who emerged in the Sixties as being known for their use of spaces in spreading colour in their paintings as symbolic, whereby critics considered some of them as Op Art artists: Kenneth Noland preceded by Ad Reinhardt and finally Peter Halley. All these artists are characterised by the symbolic colour in which their work

reflects what philosophers and psychologists had said regarding colour theory, thus there is the reaction of the artist on the one hand and the intellectual union as a connection with the colour on the other hand. In this regard, Birren says "there are two remarkable phenomena in the process of seeing with eye and brain: color constancy and a human sense of illumination". At the beginning of this section it was mentioned that the aforementioned artists are distinguished from the other artists of the twentieth century by the colour philosophy in their work, or colour phenomena, which enriched the critical side of the art with regard to the latter connection with the scientific side (Birren, 1986, pp 34-36).

The researcher intends, through using bright or phosphoric colours in some of the works, especially large scale, to reveal the expressional side concerning his view towards originality, by creating the contrary of what is shown in the *Sadu* weave by means of the Bedouin woman- by colours related to the nature of the Bedouin life itself and the appearance of these traditional colours due to the naturalistic route, whether to sell that weave in addition to the fact that is possible to get these colours; but it is urged to use these colours as it is easy to get them from the Indian markets that used to include industrial materials in the colours' structure, thereafter colours became various. However, Bedouin weavers in Sadu House during the Eighties continued to use the original colours without changing them believing that the colours they choose are the ones that belong to their environment, as well as because the Kuwaiti society was used to it revealing what their mothers and grandmothers had made when they started this craft. Considering it as popular heritage they refused to misuse it, till the *Sadu* manufacture multiplied and Pakistan started to manufacture it using colours different than the ones used in the Kuwaiti *Sadu*, due to the fact that manufacturing is cheap and the sale of them is easy because they are not handcrafted (Al-Sabah, 2006, pp 62-67).

The philosophy adopted in this study differs because it uses *Sadu* in the field of the visual art as a painting, without being related to the weave itself, in order to protect it as a popular

heritage. For example, if the researcher decides to manufacture a *Sadu* weave made from the colours used by most of the recent artists, he will misuse the heritage and underestimate its historical value because it is difficult to modify 'the originality' from the researcher's point of view. In this particular research, advantage was taken of *Sadu* in the works as a theme, and the *Sadu* motifs and symbols were studied in order to reveal that this tradition may become a contemporary art; presented in a way that increases its value and identifies it as an icon in Kuwaiti society and a universal icon. Furthermore, is the placing of emphasis on revealing its original colours, in addition to the resulting attraction of the monumental *Sadu* art form and to reflect the contemporary context of art in a Kuwaiti culture.

The act of joining *Sadu* colours with a large scale increases the value of the colour for the spectator. This space is considered as an 'outlet' for the researcher whereby the decorative work is not considered to be pre-eminent for *Sadu* itself. However, the colour surfaces create an environment inside the painting in a way that reflects the complex units along with the motifs, namely the symbols used in any paintings by the first generation of Kuwaiti artists until Sami Mohammad. In this regard, David Katz says, "the way in which we see the colour of a surface is in large measure dependent on the intensity and wavelength of the light it reflects". Moreover, the German psychologist Ewald Hering reveals in this respect "Seeing is not a matter of looking at light waves as such, but of looking at external things mediated by these waves; the eye has to instruct us, not about the intensity and quality of light coming from external objects at any one time, but about these objects themselves". Therefore, colour and lighting other than that reflected on the painting, but the colours' lighting plays a role regarding the harmony too (Birren, 1986, pp 38-39).

The choice made for this study to compose the two largest art works with a width of 3 meters and a height of 2.4 meters, was intended to present a study of *Sadu* through motifs and symbols, and the construction of a new unit; thus proving the value of Derrida's Deconstruction in reconstructing and exposing *Sadu* weave in a monumental contemporary

form. With regard to large areas of colour, Katz reveals that, "The more of a picture we perceive, the clearer the impression of the illumination which the artist is representing". He adds that: "The color of a small area of a picture signifies nothing in itself; it contributes to the illumination-impression only when it is grasped as part of the whole" (Birren, 1986, pp.45-47).

6.2 *Sadu* and the Work of Yves Klein

With regard to the impact of scholars' studies of art and colours, Jane Alison established a new vision of the philosophy of colours through modern art, based on the Yves Klein[40] philosophy where the works of Klein were based on colours more than creation and elements, as he used in some work the same colour. Klein said during the opening of his exhibition, "The Monochrome Adventure", in 1985: "Through colour I experience a feeling of complete identification with space. I am totally free". What Klein meant by freedom is the freedom of feelings that lie within the artist. As for Alison, she indicates that, "this psychological potency of color is occasioned by the unconscious or 'instinctual drives' erupting into a culturally determined symbolic language, where its transgressions pose 'a menace to the self'". That was also the goal of Supremacists such as Malevich and Rodchenko. But for Klein, he discussed many other aspects where, "his diverse practice encompassed painting, installation, performance, actions and phantasmagorical utopian visions for future". We can relate this to the goal behind Sami Mohammad's *Sadu* project with regard to the colour and the subject matter (Alison, 2005, pp 12-13).

Alison questioned whether black and white are considered as colours. Newton does not count them as colours, contrary to Goethe who believes that they are very expressive

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[40] Yves Klein is a French artist, studied at the Ecole National de la Marine Marchande and the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales. Between 1948 and 1952, he travelled to Italy, Great Britain, Spain, and Japan. Klein settled permanently in Paris in 1956 (Alison, 2005, p178).

colours. The same applies for Andy Warhol in his work, *Shadows*, in (1978-1979) and the philosophy of colours that he used, and for Joseph Beuys[41] and his dramatic way of expression through colours, as well as his use of the colour grey in the Seventies. Alison said in this regard that Beuys was, "Aware of the body of thinking that was gaining acceptance, namely that his subject would come to be seen as a systematic project of mourning for the Holocaust and a working through of his own traumatic war time experience," as he is a contemporary of the Second World War. We can conclude that the colour has an impact on the expression of any event lived by the artist. But it is also possible that the artist does not intend to use a specific colour but his feeling controls his palette (Alison, 2005, p.18).

In the *Sadu* works published in this study, the colour black is used based on the concept of sadness about losing such traditions. The colour black does not necessarily reflect mourning. In fact, it reflects the lack of using the black in *Sadu* weave currently. This is due to the fact that the foreign workers, who come from outside Kuwait, mainly from India and Pakistan, near to Iran, lack the special sense that the Bedouin woman   enjoys. If we consider her indirect choice of colours used in the old *Sadu*; then foreigners do not really feel the *Sadu* itself, in other words, they do not share the Bedouin woman's culturally engrained aesthetic sense. Their environment controls them, where they use the colours that they deem appropriate for their view toward the *Sadu*. In fact, they apply the principles that they have learned and used in their own countries. Herein lays the effect of colour in *Sadu*. The abundant use of the colour red in the paintings published in this study reveals the colour's identity for *Sadu*, on the one hand and for the Bedouin community on the other hand. It is an expressive colour having human roots in the Bedouin community, as

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[41] Joseph Beuys from 1947 to 1951 Joseph Beuys trained at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, studying sculpture. He became a Professor of Monumental Sculpture there in 1961 and continued teaching until 1972 when he was dismissed following numerous controversies concerning his pedagogic style and his refusal to limit the number of students in his class. (Alison, 2005, p172)

mentioned in the first part of this chapter. The focus on the colour details in this study's works shows an insistence on highlighting the identity of *Sadu*'s colour, and a rejection of the method of producing *Sadu* used nowadays by foreign weavers.

Changes in colours are natural even in Andy Warhol's works. In the Fifties, the colours that were mostly used were candy hues and light colours, until they changed in the Sixties and became manifestly darker and more complex. Alison also stated that his aesthetic of beauty has quite often been discounted at the expense of foregrounding his radical critique of commodity culture. Changes may be made by any artist based on his feelings towards colours, ideas and subjects, whether from a negative or positive aspect (Alison, 2005, p.25). Yves Klein's works are very expressive through the colours he used, and he is considered the foremost colourist of the twentieth century. Alison also talked about how he used colours in a kitschy polychromatic palette. In 1962, she linked a shade of blue to him, and revealed that his palette of colours derived directly from commercial samples of industrial paint purchased at a hardware shop. Klein framed his aesthetic production within the realm of kitsch, and formulated the early monochromes and inverted the concept of kitsch, by combining its basic conditions with avant-garde strategies. This method contributed to the reformulation of the language of colour in art works where Klein says that each colour is a 'presence', a living being, as if colours live and die then relive dramatically through the life of colours (Alison, 2005, pp 36-38).

According to Alison, "What Klein imagined is a utopian state of existence in which sensibility replaces object-relations". Klein aimed for colour perfection, as described in this study, regarding Klein's focus on the colours' details in the artistic work (Alison, 2005, p.42). The object of Klein's work through modern art history shows how the colour affects the artist, and reveals his culture through a concept having philosophic, more than aesthetic, dimensions in the field of art. Alison has given many examples of artists that appeared with Yves Klein and that focused on creating a new theory concerning colour in modern art,

namely Louise Bourgeois, Bas Jan Ader[42], Joseph Beuys, James Lee Byars[43], William Eggleston, Dan Flavin, Bruce Nauman, Anish Kapoor[44] and Andy Warhol. There are many other artists for whom colours had value in their works.

While the twentieth century's artists used to challenge themselves through their modern art and colours, the Bedouin woman in Kuwait used to weave *Sadu* in its traditional colours, and she was not affected by anything external to her own culture and society. However, she developed the colour collection by adding the colour green, for instance, which did not exist previously. This addition contributed a positive aspect to the colour philosophy of *Sadu*. The green has given more harmony to the old weave. Green is a secondary colour and completes the colour collections. That was the traditional aspect of the weave till the late Eighties. Then, this art moved from the circle of Bedouin woman to the commercial factories that do not take into consideration the aesthetic aspects in the *Sadu*.

6.3 *Sadu* and colour theories

After clarifying the relationship between colour and *Sadu* and the Bedouins, colour will now be addressed as a theory together with some of its historical aspects. Joseph Albers treated many aspects of the study of colour from the psychological, theory and philosophy perspectives, in addition to presenting the behaviour of the human eye as to how it receives colours in any case, the lighting available to the eye in order to see this colour, the distance taken by the eye, the background, the surrounding colours and other matters that require testing in the studio and the medical laboratory. Albers also examined how the human sees

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[42] Bas Jan Ader from 1963 until his early death in 1975, Ader lived and worked predominantly in California. The 36 works that make up the artist's entire oeuvre are listed in Paul Andriesse's monograph published in 1988 to coincide with a retrospective exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (Alison, 2005, p172).

[43] James Lee Byars from 1948 to 1956 studied art and philosophy at the Wayne State University and the Merill Palmer School of Psychology (Alison, 2005, p173).

[44] Anish Kapoor came to the UK in the early 1970s where he studied at the Hornsey College of Art, London, before graduating from the Chelsea School of Art in 1978 (Alison, 2005, p177).

the colour and how he imagines it upon hearing of it. And since red is the most important colour for Bedouins and the affecting colour in *Sadu*, Albers says that upon mentioning the colour red to fifty people, he expects that the fifty people will have the colour red in their minds, and even if these people have seen the red colour such as the red of the Coca-Cola trademark and that is spread all around the country, all these people will differentiate the red colour from others (Albers, 2006, p.3).

This means that the colour does not facilitate differentiation but as mentioned Albers, that even if the same circular trademark of Coca-Cola is presented in red with the writing in white and the persons focused on this mark, therefore, as said Albers, "each will receive the same projection on his retina, but no one can be sure whether each has the same perception" since the matter is related to eye behaviour towards this mark with reactions for every person, in addition to other issues that changes the reception of the eye of these colours. He also mentions that "the important fact that the visual memory is very poor in comparison to our auditory memory" (Albers, 2006, p.3).

Albers also mentioned many important issues in colour theories and colour systems saying that "a factual identification of colours within a given painting has nothing to do with a sensitive seeing nor with an understanding of the colour action within the painting" and that means that the colour has a total privacy even if it is considered of the most important factors of the painting, and that persons may hear a single tone but may not see a single colour (without special devices) unconnected and unrelated to other colours and that Kandinsky read in depth the art in 'what counts is not the what but the how' (Albers, 2006, p.5).

Colour has many aspects and it is difficult for the person to trust the colour he sees since the other person next to him may see the same colour in a different form and sensation, and the effects are always whether the light or hue or all of them occur simultaneously though in varying strength (Albers, 2006, p.9). In the nature of colours, we have the light, lighter,

dark, darker and even light intensity and lightness. In addition, lighting is considered one of the important factors that affect the personal perception of colours. Albers says "it is true that only a minority can distinguish the lighter from the darker within close intervals when obscured by contrasting hues or by different colour intensities". Designers and painters are in the minority meant by Albers since they deal with colours more closely in comparison to ordinary people that see colours daily (Albers, 2006, p.12).

Colours are related to the things the person loves or hates as this applies to everything in our daily life but this differs naturally when it comes to colours since as people, when we change our mind about a certain colour or rectify this opinion, this will reflect on many matters related to this colour, to the different aspects thereof whether on a board or clothes or car or others. This shows that colour is related to a person's daily life not as a theory and a study but in his behaviour and feelings (Albert, 2006, p.17).

Albers carried out many experiments and studies about colours, but based on most of them, it appeared that the relation of colours with each other makes them darker or lighter and the relation of colours means the place, area, background, light of the colour and other matters that shows the environment in which the colour exists. Albers says:" Additional experiments with light colours on light grounds and dark colours on dark grounds prove that the light of a ground subtracts in the same way that its hue does", adding that "from this, it follows that any diversion in hue among colours as in the light-dark relationship can be reduced if not obliterated visually on grounds of equal qualities (Albers, 2006, p.21).

There is a major importance for the three primary colours that are red, yellow and blue and their effect on the human eye. One theory maintains that the nerve ends on the human retina (rods and cones) are tuned to receive any of the 3 primary colours, which constitute all colours" (Albers, 2006, p.23). Primary colours were used in most of the paintings published in the study since the *Sadu* motifs need to be remarkable and clear for the eye not as a colour but as a form since these motifs in textiles took a spontaneous and simple form

always in *Shajarah* design" and that is usually in *Gata* characterised in presenting its motifs in white and black only. Therefore, the researcher of this study proved this in his works in order to add to his paintings a *Sadu* theme and to be consistent in the *Sadu* identity in the work. But what differs in this current research is that the change should be balanced to reach the *Sadu* modern art aspired to by this study to be a monumental art form was the *Sadu* textile previously. This change and development appeared in the research through a new path in colour by mixing a new group of colours that matches the ambition of this study in addition to what attracts the new generations of vital, light and phosphoric colours. Since the approach of this study is "practice based research", the researcher tried to mix primary colours in one painting in *Sadustic unit 9* in figure (7.40) and that it is considered that it represented in *Sadu* unit a new form and characterised colours that are included according to him under the monumental art form.

Finally, Albers shows the changes in practice upon dealing with colours:

Changed and changing light- and, even worse, several simultaneous lights; reflection of lights and of colours; direction and sequence of reading; presentation in varying materials; constant or altering juxtaposition of related and unrelated objects.

Adding that "with these and other visual displacements, it should not be a surprise that the sympathetic effect of the original "ideal" colour combination often appears changed, lost, and reversed" (Albers, 2006, p.42).

When considering the colour theory field we can contemplate whether the vision of the Bedouin women of colours at that time, meaning by when nomads used to live in the desert, was the same as the colours seen by the Bedouin women in their textiles? This question is very important, but in order to focus on the aim of this research, this question will be left for other research. The introduction of the theoretical side of colour is to clarify the strength of colour and its effect on the person dealing with this colour whether it was the Bedouin

women or the *Sadu* textile or the researcher of this current and his paintings and the colour culture is of the very important matters in studying any side in the visual arts.

Albers provided many studies of colour theory of which "Munsell Color Tree", "Ostwald Color System", and "Birren Color System" are three and said: "it seems worthwhile to distinguish 3 basically different approaches to colour based upon the different interests of the physicist, the psychologist, and the colourist" , adding: "To indicate only a single difference: whereas the primary colours for the colourist (painters, designers) art, as we know, yellow-red-blue, the physicist has 3 other primaries (not including yellow), and the psychologist counts 4 primaries (the fourth being green), plus 2 neutrals, white and black" (Albers, 2006, pp 65-67).

As weavers, Bedouin women tend towards the natural colours or the colours that are extracted from the nature in which they live such as black, white, red, dark brown and the white colour is not very snowy since it is a natural white from the camel and sheep wool. In addition, the researcher thinks that the colour green added a new form for the *Sadu* textile and the blue is very far from the environment of the Bedouin women in Kuwait.

6.4 Colour Systems and *Sadu* as modern art

As the researcher stated about the colour bluffing of the eye, all these colours apply also to them" Aristotle onwards "the surface appearance of colours is very deceptive" (Gage, 2006, p.7). The colour may be different for Bedouin women compared to what we see at this moment even if we see that the old textiles weaved in old times by Bedouins may be seen differently by the manufacturers thereof as regards the colour.

John Gage stated in his book *Colour in Art* that artists have a great diversity of views even about similar aspects of colour, and exemplify this diversity in their work (Gage, 2006, p.9). Aristotle mentions that colour should be studied not only blended as pigments as the painters do, and Newton says "Colour was simply a manifestation of various wavelengths of

light, but visual artists continued to think of it as far more complex than that" (Gage, 2006, pp 16-18). A lot has been said about colour and every opinion has always a special path whether a philosophical, scientific, critical or artistic one or any others. Colour is the most important means of expression for the artist. In this study's works the *Sadu* colours were changed in order to the aim of creating a modern *Sadu* art and this requires a change to many aspects of the painting and even in the thought processes before even commencing the painting, and for this purpose, what was applied to art in the early twentieth century should be applied now which changes the relation between the colour and the form as in the non-representational painting, "As Kandinsky recognizes, the removal of traditional subject matter raised the question of what was to replace it. One answer – and perhaps the most important one was 'colour'. Colour became a subject; it was what viewers looked for in painting, but, contrary to what is sometimes said about abstraction, it did not upstage form" (Gage, 2006, p.101). Therefore, this study focuses on making paintings based on the fact that the change in colour serves the form by confirming *Sadu* as a subject matter that is why these paintings give *Sadu* a new form that serves the *Sadu* and does not cancel it as traditional subject matter because the researcher of this current study thinks, as a self-experience in doing sketches before paintings that the *Sadu* theme is the secret in increasing the value of the painting.

The Russian theorist Nikolai Tarabukin in 1920 says modern painters emerged through their method of dealing with colours and even the materials type through which these colours are used and in which the artist's feelings are shown. In early modernism, house paint is considered of the main materials for artists like Picasso and Ripolin, even more, in 1912 Ripolin named it "the health of colours" due to its directness and durability. In the Fifties and Sixties most European artists visited New York not only as they say it had "stolen the idea of modern art" but also since New York was a city that provided these raw materials in the best quality and the lowest price. The British abstract painter John Hoyland was one

such artist who tried, for example, new media in the United States and was the first to use Acrylic in his paintings in England in 1963 (Gage, 2006, pp 124-125).

In chapter seven, the researcher of this study will show the reason of using Acrylic as a raw material for colours used in his paintings in addition to using something similar to house paint in his huge works and are from the American brand Ace Hardware Paint. This material also gives solidity and power to the colour used in the large scale paintings that need a large quantity of colour materials. It also reflects to what extent that this study is concerned in dealing with a painting's subject in order to create a *Sadu* modern art approach praised by Sami Mohammed since he did not use these materials and his dealing differs in his paintings as to the use of *Sadu* to be a part of the Kuwaiti art. The researcher made a quantum leap in *Sadu* art according to Sami Mohammed since what Sami offered to *Sadu* through art is considered "Per-Modern". When this study aimed at transforming *Sadu* into a '*Sadu* modern art' it went beyond the modernising phase and reaches through this approach *Sadu* monumental art (Mohammed S, Sadu Monumental art, personal communication, May 20, 2010).

Figure 6.1 (Al Washe) Wool Dyeing in the Sadu process, by: Simon Cowling
Al-Sabah, A. S., Al-Ghanim, L. K., & Al-Sultan, N. H. (1982). *Portfolio of Al Sadu*, p.12

Figure 6.2 Details of tent divider featuring the cetral design pattern of the Hanbaliyah design.
Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.65

Figure 6.3 Detail of the middle section, which was made of lines of intricate Uwairjan and Midkhar wrap-faced patterns in black, white and red wool with lines of camel's hair.

Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.77

Figure 6.4 Original Sadu Colour Palette (Created By the researcher)

Chapter Seven: *Sadu* as an Art Production

Most artists of the 20th century had a philosophy about the colour aspect of their work and a strategy for their art products. For example, Joan Miro's works have a special stamp and colours that are almost distinguishable by the viewer even without knowing that Miro had presented them. The same thing is true for Chagall. There are also many other artists distinguished by the colour strategy of their works. The researcher has particularly focused on the change of colours used in traditional *Sadu*, and the preservation of *Sadu* identity at the same time. This refers to its general shape and the decorations used, as the objective of producing and establishing an idea that transforms those decorations from tradition, conforms in its subject with an art that expresses modernity in its context. Because that element is directed towards Kuwaiti society, which is attracted to the western culture, and aims to build a new theory of visual culture in Kuwait through globalisation, the researcher has had to produce modern art works in both colour and composition and related to the subject matter in general. The use of light and stark colours will affect the viewer as it creates an element of attraction to this kind of art.

The reader may ask why the name Andy Warhol is mentioned a lot in this research and the truth is that when Warhol and his works are mentioned, the change achieved by Warhol in the art history of art is demonstrated; this is despite the fact that when G.R. Swenson asked him in Art News magazine in 1963"Is Pop Art a Fad", he answered yes it's a fad (Madoff, 1997, p.104). The works presented in this current study do not pretend to have the same approach as Warhol since it aspires to begin a new Era of *Sadu* through art namely *Sadu* modern art, the method of presenting Warhol works is also different but the researcher presents Warhol and his attempts to change the art form as to the colour and subject matter since *Sadu* was introduced previously through Sami Mohammed in a different approach and different colours. This study benefits from what was presented by Sami Mohammed to *Sadu* and the change carried out by Warhol to the art world since the majority of the factors used

in his works of the popular culture which helped more in the spread of Pop Art. In addition, the current study was based on research into the society's culture and traditions as represented in *Sadu* but in a different more modern way than that offered by Kuwait's first generation artists.

Twelve works have been produced for this research that involves a colour revolution related to the renewal of *Sadu* colours. This study has its reasons to change *Sadu* colours to a what is considered more modern colours and which are not represented in the original colours of *Sadu*, because in representing *Sadu* as a monumental modern art form, the study is targeting the younger generation and their modern perspectives about art and fashion, beside the Andy Warhol methods of using colours in his iconic figures which made him one of the most influential artists in shaping our modern world.

As exemplified in figure (7.1) light colours have been focussed on, which have 'a bright stamp', as many of them were absent from the palette of traditional *Sadu* colours, which were mostly dominated by darkness and a medium level of brightness that clearly reflected their natural sources. Blue represents the stability of his work and makes the work more serious. Pink and its tones break the colour rhythm between old *Sadu* and the *Sadu* paintings produced in this research. Violet is the colour that represents a medium among other colours used in this painting project and the pink lends harmony too. Yellow usually represents an encouraging element and highlights the background in order to give dark colour elements the freedom to control the atmosphere inside the painting. Figure (7.2) displays the modern colours of an advertisement in Warsaw, Poland. It is a depiction of *Marilyn Monroe* by Andy Warhol. Its colours were so attractive despite being in a place that does not contain the general shape of civil streets. Finally, there is the green, which entered *Sadu* weaving, with its dark tone, in the late Eighties as in figure (7.3), but all its tones were used in this study, particularly the light ones.

In order to preserve the *Sadu* identity in these paintings, a balance between a traditional palette and a modern palette has been maintained, This consists of a group of colours that protect *Sadu* identity and provide a balance between the two colour groups as in figure (7.4), which highlights the black by inserting it as a medium among other colours in addition to red. However, to make it more vivid, vermilion red has been chosen in order to move from the red used in the original weave. In order to balance the pink in the paintings, there is a slight use of brown in some works in its light tone to balance other light tones. Ultramarine blue provides an important balance with its dark tone in most works. Finally, the colour which is considered fixed, and whose tones have not changed either in the old weave, or in these art works, is the orange. This important feature indicates the extent to which orange represents the traditional side of ancient *Sadu* weave, and modernity in the art works produced in this research.

7.0 The Concept of Art Productions

As indicated in chapter three, the methodology of research based on Jacques Derrida's "Deconstruction", in the first four works which the researcher has presented in this study are by wood engraving. At the beginning, the method of trial and error in producing his works was adopted, in order to maintain the balance which the study seeks. That balance is related to the *Sadu* identity in the paintings, the balance of the elements used, and the control of the appropriate colour groups in producing works that refer to *Sadu*, and finally the symbols taken from *Sadu* weave are transformed to become part of the composition of the painting. The first work produced for this study was completed in 2006, at the beginning of the research. This work, as shown in figure (7.5), forms the initiation of discovery in this research, as the study wishes to produce something different from Sami Mohammed's previous works. The study chooses found its first work to be a little tiring, so it was engraved on wood. Then there is the colour aspect to consider. The researcher sees that the

texture adds more value to the work. The idea is based on the fact that *Sadu* as a weave has a special texture because it is made of wool, and not from regular fabric. Therefore, the emphasis was directed towards the elements of the subject matter to differentiate them from the basic elements of *Sadu* decorations, since the purpose of this work is discovery and not the addition of any element studied in previous art works. Thus, the triangle was chosen because it forms the basic decoration of a *Sadu* weave, and this has been changed in all parts of the painting. However, the main reason for establishing groups of triangles is to have a composition that is based on a pyramid shape in the assembly of those elements, and no kind of original *Sadu* symbols were used.

As a result, many mistakes were discovered in the production of the art work that refers to *Sadu*, since the work has lost much of its *Sadu* identity from colour, entity and even in the amendment of *Sadu* triangles. For example, the blue did not serve its purpose. Therefore, it was decided to continue producing similar works in the same size through the method of wood engraving, yet from another angle. The researcher started to focus on *Sadu* identity. In this work, figure (7.6), the emphasis has been placed on an experience of taking a complete *Sadu* motif, putting it in the centre of the painting, and adding the margins used in the *Sadu* weave to connect the centre of the painting with the angles. The focus on *Sadu* identity in its colour was significantly successful where the red was used, which presented in the original *Sadu* weave. By that, it gave the work more value. This colour was integrated with light blue that was not seen in the weave at all, but gave the painting a kind of balance. However, it has departed from the original identity, which is the aim of the works in this study. That means the tones of those colours need some experimentation, both in their levels and harmony.

There is a significant improvement in trying to discover mistakes. Therefore, the result was two other works in the same measurements, and in the same raw materials used in the wood engraving. However, this time the attempt succeeded and no mistakes were committed. In

figure (7.7), a theory has been implemented to perform the painting as a complete decorative unit in the middle of the painting in addition to the use of a simple line of *Sadu* decorations in the back and foreground of the painting, which are based on the repetition of triangles in the back and diamond shapes in the foreground. One ancient symbol, called a "comb" symbol used by Bedouin woman, was also inserted in the *Sadu* weave. It is a regular handmade wooden comb. This symbol was repeated twice on the right and the left of the decorative unit located in the middle of the painting. That repetition in the form of an angle produced a symbolic balance inside the painting. The balance concerns the basic decoration in the middle of the painting and the repetition of angels inside it, it is thought that the geometric shapes like the triangle and diamond are the most successful and simple shapes represented in *Sadu* textile, like *Shajarah* motifs and most *Sadu* patterns, and the simplicity that these geometric shapes lend to the composition in the paintings is important. Also by adding balance to the subject matter and the artist can control these shapes easily by rotating, recreating, and resizing them in the painting.

Figure (7.8) is the last in a series of experimental works that involves four works altogether. This action has been repeated but with greater concentration, since it was believed that the used symbols and colours have started to follow a specific direction in order to form a clear course in producing works that enable the aims of this study to be achieved: the use of *Sadu* decorations in a modern art form. Modernity shall come from the colour, from the fact that none of the previous Kuwaiti artists has dealt with that subject through a research theory; which aims to create a modern art work away from tradition and reality in the use of *Sadu* decorations, and in a simpler method than the surreal one used by Sami Mohammed.

The first works were started based on the first stage of the practical side, which depends on trial and error. A significant benefit was achieved when the impressive factors of *Sadu* decoration were focussed on, and through the use of *Sadu* symbols to reshape what the Bedouin woman has produced in *Sadu* art. The researcher insisted on having a previously

prepared sketch for any work he wanted to produce. In figure (7.9), he started to limit the decorative units and tried to change them in a way that fits modern art, and that requires that they no longer contain unbalanced repetition. The emphasis was also on the use of a scissors symbol, and the addition of two lines that represent its angles. Also, figure (7.10) represents a method to construct triangles in a way different than the one used in original *Sadu* decorations. The preparatory sketches have depended on the method of trial and error by using the result of the sketches of the main paintings as a product from the research.

The first works after those sketches are as in figure (7.11) the sketch and in figure (7.12) the main work. The theory regarding the use of *Sadu* decoration in the middle of the painting has been implemented, the insertion of similar decorations inside, the element of repetition in the form of triangles in the foreground and diamond shapes in the back, the use of dark colours in some parts of the background to give a contrast to those geometric shapes, and the presentation of basic decoration in the middle of the painting. It has found that the use of violet and orange made the painting more vivid and modern, as the violet is considered strange to *Sadu*, while orange is one of the basic colours of original *Sadu* weave. As mentioned in the analysis of these colours, it has been found that the orange is the only colour that combines the two palettes of the modern and traditional *Sadu* colours.

The second work is presented in a similar size to the first one and in similar raw materials; made of acrylic and inks on canvas. The blue was challenged as intended by assigning a special place for it among *Sadu* colours, as in figure (7.13) the sketch and figure (7.14) the main work. It was chosen to link the angles with a decorative unit in the middle in an unstructured way. However, the basic unit consists of a decoration in the middle, with other decorations repeated vertically on both sides of the basic unit in order to occupy the space; in addition to red and green lines in the back to separate it from the basic element, that being the decorative unit in the middle. Actually, the insertion of yellow with the blue has given the work a significant balance, with a break for the traditional shape of the decorative

angles from acute to mild ones, that make the receiver feels the softness of the lines to produce a new shape of *Sadu* decorations yet protect the identity of *Sadu*.

The researcher has risen to the major challenge, which is a movement from the natural space of the painting that does not exceed 30 inch x 40 inch, to a bigger size in the third work, which is 3 meters wide x 2.4 length. It is considered large in regard to the subject matter that depends on decorative units and not the colour spaces. Figure (7.15) exemplifies how the study has focussed on the symbols and lines of Kuwaiti *Sadu* weave. Moreover, the insertion of the Arabic letter element among these symbols has enriched the imagination by using that huge space for work that should contain traditional elements in a new form. Figure (7.16) is a sketch reflecting the imagination of the artist about how to construct that work, and the analysis of those symbols and their use in that work, where the making of the decorative unit the base in the middle next to its supplements is focussed on. Figure (7.17) represents the middle of the painting with a basic decorative unit, whose sides are connected with other units in the form of triangle, and inside there is a compound decoration made of diamond and triangular shapes. The background contains horizontal lines that provide harmony between the pink and red colours. The lower side of the painting figure (7.18) has a significant role in connecting the repeated decorations with the basic unit in the middle. Certainly, the colour has the most significant role in presenting the modernity of this work while preserving its identity.

After completing a work in a large size, the researcher chose the original space, as in figure (7.19) the sketch and figure (7.20) the main work, where the researcher has used blue in a different way than in previous works, since the blue was only used in the background and not in the decorative elements. Thus, it made the painting seem more stabilised as the basic decorative unit was full of decorations and symbols in the form of lines only, and not as an incarnation. Therefore, the decorative unit appeared in a transparent way, highlighting its symbols, and that actually was made with the help of blue in the background of the basic

composition of the painting. It is noted that all works included two basic shapes, which are the triangle and the diamond. These shapes connect the works together as a series of works serving the objective of this research.

The work in figure (7.21) the sketch and figure (7.22) the main work has also resulted in a successful colour experience, through the insertion of blue with other colours used in previous works, which are orange, pink with its different tones, besides the green. Furthermore, the brown was inserted to preserve the *Sadu* identity in the background. The process of structuring was repeated to give its symbols and decorations a kind of transparency in work, to separate the background from the basic unit in the middle and to focus on the texture technique of the painting in order to connect it with the woollen *Sadu* weave.

There was deep thought about the disassembly of those decorations and symbols to make them spread in the painting in a way different than the one used by Sami Mohammed, as he disconnected the decorations and spread them throughout the painting in a surreal way that made those decorations 'swim' in his works. First an element was built into the middle that contains decorations contrary to the previous works where the contents were symbols. Instead, Arabic letters and some motifs of triangle and diamond shapes connect it with the previous works and preserve the identity. As in figure (7.23) the sketch and figure (7.24) the main work, we see various *Sadu* symbols such as scissors, comb and angle symbols shown in the left side at the top. The scissors symbol was selected because it is unique in *Sadu* in the researcher of this study's point of view, beside that it was rarely presented in the *Sadu* textile as a motif. There is also the separation of the background from other elements by red lines, and the use of orange in the whole space, which gives an impression of the heat of that painting due to the presence of luminous colours that reflect the environment of the Bedouin desert in the past.

Returning to the analysis of *Sadu* symbols, figure (7.25) the sketch indicates that a small amount of *Sadu* contains the symbol of the camel. Thus, the question of how to insert these symbols into a work that represents modernity in colour and presentation and at the same time preserves the identity of *Sadu* with its symbols and decorative units was focussed on as in figure (7.26) the sketch and figure (7.27) the main work. The idea of this work is to divide the main unit in the middle into four parts- each one contains a group of geometric shapes of triangles and diamonds in addition to other symbols, particularly scissors that seem to be the basic element of each painting although they are in various shapes, because the researcher is trying to use one element that can link the subject matter of most of the paintings to increase the quality in the art works as a series, beside the title of each painting. This work was distinguished by containing many lines that occupy most spaces of those decorative units, in addition to the use of colours different from the group of *Sadu* colours, which are pink, violet and blue. When we focus on previous works, we do not see that this work has come too far from them. However, it is only distinguished by the colours and division of the decorative unit.

Another work with a large size similar to the previous work (3 meters wide x 240 centimetres height) was considered. Thus, he started with figure (7.28) a sketch to form the ground of this work. The aim was for the triangles to be distinguished in any way. The explanation of that in full detail will come later. Figure (7.29) the sketch is a complementary form to that painting through symbols, Arabic letters, and decorations within the decorative units whose shapes are triangles occupied by lines across the painting. It is seen that the result of the painting is successful and fruitful on all sides as in figure (7.30) a complete figure for the painting. Figure (7.31) contains details of the new symbol, the camel, in a series of works produced for this research, the researcher tried to represent a "camel" symbol differently than the one used in the original *Sadu* textile, it was reconstructed or recreated to make it a more geometric shape, because the one represented

in *Sadu* textile is a real shape of camel and the whole creation of the art work is dealing with the geometrical abstraction representation in the *Sadu* unit that was created in these works. It also contains triangular shapes, some of which have the effect of repetition represented in light and dark green among pink crisscross lines inside triangles. The triangles in the bottom of this painting are not distinguished by the insertion of symbols inside. Yet as in figure (7.32), the blue frame around these triangles is another layer of canvas stitched to the main canvas, in order to add the sense of a weave to the painting. That could contribute to the success of that painting in both the senses and the colour sides, in addition to plenty of decorations inside the work.

This research has focused on the study and assembly of *Sadu* symbols where it is found that Sami Mohammed has not used all of these symbols, but only adopted their comprehensive idea and changed their shapes. However, the art, which this study uses to present its art works significantly takes advantage of those symbols. It has also been found that the Bedouin woman has rarely used those symbols in *Sadu* weaves, and they were developed during the Eighties, which is not considered a period of cultural prosperity in Kuwait. However, they were the result of the personal hard work of the weavers. Among these symbols, figure (7.33) represents a figure of a human with face details but without a mouth, while figure (7.34) represents a figure of a human without any face details. Actually, the researcher was attracted to the difference between the two figures: why one of them contains face details and the other does not. The reason presumably is that the effects of Islamic rules and limitations on one weaver are more powerful than on the other one. However, both shapes were in the same *Sadu* piece, which means they were performed by the same weaver. After inquiring about that, the result shows that it is just a random piece of work, and the weaver did not mean to differentiate between the two figures. It is also possible that the weaver had wanted to represent a man in one figure and a woman in the

other. Yet the answers were not clear even from the weavers themselves, and they attributed that solely to the one who had produced that *Sadu* weave.

This fact was difficult to overlook. If the researcher of this study were present during that period, he would have focused on all things related to *Sadu* symbols produced in the early Eighties. Figure (7.35) represents an aeroplane symbol. Figure (7.36) is an earrings symbol that this study has mentioned before, two earrings hanging in central geometric form. Figure (7.37) is a symbol of a camel that is connected with Bedouin society until today. It was used in the previous painting, figure (7.31). In Figure (7.38) it is the scissor symbol that was used only rarely in *Sadu* patterns.

In figure (7.39) the sketch and figure (7.40) the main work, there is a return to the normal size of painting. This work consists of one *Sadu* decorative unit repeated as four different shapes. A method of dividing the painting into four parts has been adopted; each one has a decorative unit divided into a group of triangles. The researcher wanted to use the method of Pop art in his work; particularly some of Andy Warhol's works that depended on the repetition of the element but differed in colour. However, in addition to this they also differed in size. Some of these decorative units take a longitudinal shape and others a cross shape with a special feature in the back of each decorative unit. The colour element has again imposed a challenge by inserting basic colours in the *Sadu* palette, and colours different from that palette, like the blue and the luminous yellow.

The last stage of the works connected with the production of this research was a spontaneous piece of work. By that, reference was made to the oblivion of the society to the craft, by inserting the symbol of a hand as a symbol to the weavers who inherited the craft from their ancestors and wished to extend it to the current and future generations. However, that was difficult in the presence of the visual revolution and the effect of globalisation on the younger generation, as it has attracted them to western culture, and other cultures that made society distant from its original identity. Figure (7.41) presents the movement of a

hand asking for help or appealing to preserve the *Sadu* craft. At the bottom, an abstraction in the form of a couple of hands was inserted; one is disassembled and the other consists of *Sadu* triangles that form the general shape of a human hand.

7.1 Summary

This chapter is the most important in this research. Not because it is the penultimate one, but due to the fact that it contains the results of this research, which state that it is possible to transfer *Sadu* decorations to modern art in a simple symbolic concept rather than in a surreal perspective. This chapter presents the colour theory used in Kuwaiti *Sadu* weave and the colours that spread throughout the art of the 20th century. Moreover, a palette has been found that combines the colour theory of modern art with the theory of original and natural *Sadu* colours. Pop art as presented by the visual revolution has been referred to as well as the remarks of Robert Walker concerning the movement of the cultural level of the colour society, from the tradition of colours on billboards, to other factors that have changed the shape of society and affected the view of people towards art and colours in general. The works produced for this study represent modernity through the colour groups used. Moreover, the method of dealing with *Sadu* as a subject matter may change the view of the current and the next generations towards art, with a new view of the heritage of their ancestors.

The results of this chapter are largely based on practice based research. As presented in chapter three, "Deconstruction" was used as a process in the practical side in this research in disuniting the *Sadu* motifs, changing their sizes and reforming them in order to distribute them inside the painting and to have a more important role in the painting's subject matter. In addition, the study focused on identifying the *Sadu* identity as to the colour and factors. Concerning the factors, it was mentioned that all parts of the motifs were maintained to be distributed and set with the other factors in the painting. As for the colours, these were

divided into three palettes; the first contains the 'original *Sadu* Colours ', the second contains new colours for *Sadu* and is a 'Modern Colour Palette' and the third was named by the researcher 'Balancing Colour Palette' since it is a balanced group that does not differ a lot from the *Sadu* original colours in order to prove *Sadu* identity in all the paintings. Moreover, the researcher focused more on making remarkable the "Monumental Sadu Art" in the two large paintings of a width of three meters and a length of two hundred and forty centimetres where the *Sadu* motifs spread and redistribution was clearer because of the space available inside the painting. In one of the large paintings, another layer of canvas was used in a zig-zag form in the width of the painting and this layer is stitched onto the main canvas of the painting in order to add the textile touch in the painting. The remaining paintings were characterised by the use of ordinary sizes, and finally the last painting is characterised by the dramatic and philosophical side where the mourning of the Bedouin women, for the *Sadu* textile by the hand factor mixed with some *Sadu* patterns. Through achieving both theoretical and practical results it is believed that the aim of this study has been met.
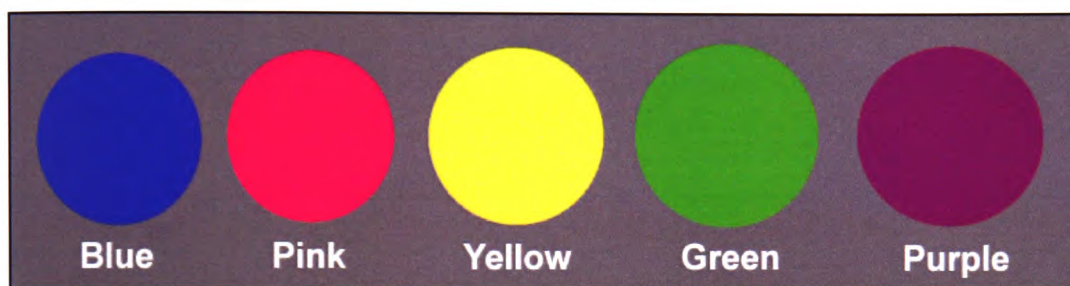
Figure 7.1 Modern Colour Palette (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.2 Marliyn in Warsaw
Walker, R. 2002. *Colour is Power*, p.25

Figure 7.3 Janah Hanballiyyah with green colour (Sadu patterns), by: Simon Cowling
Al-Sabah, A. S., Al-Ghanim, L. K., & Al-Sultan, N. H. (1982). *Portfolio of Al Sadu*, p.30
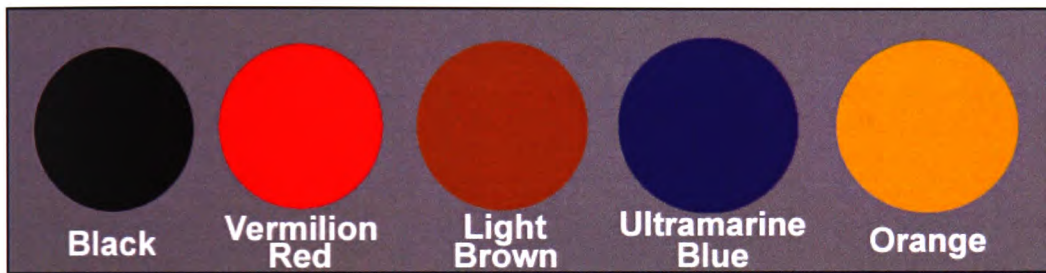
Figure 7.4 Balancing Colour Palette (Created By the researcher)
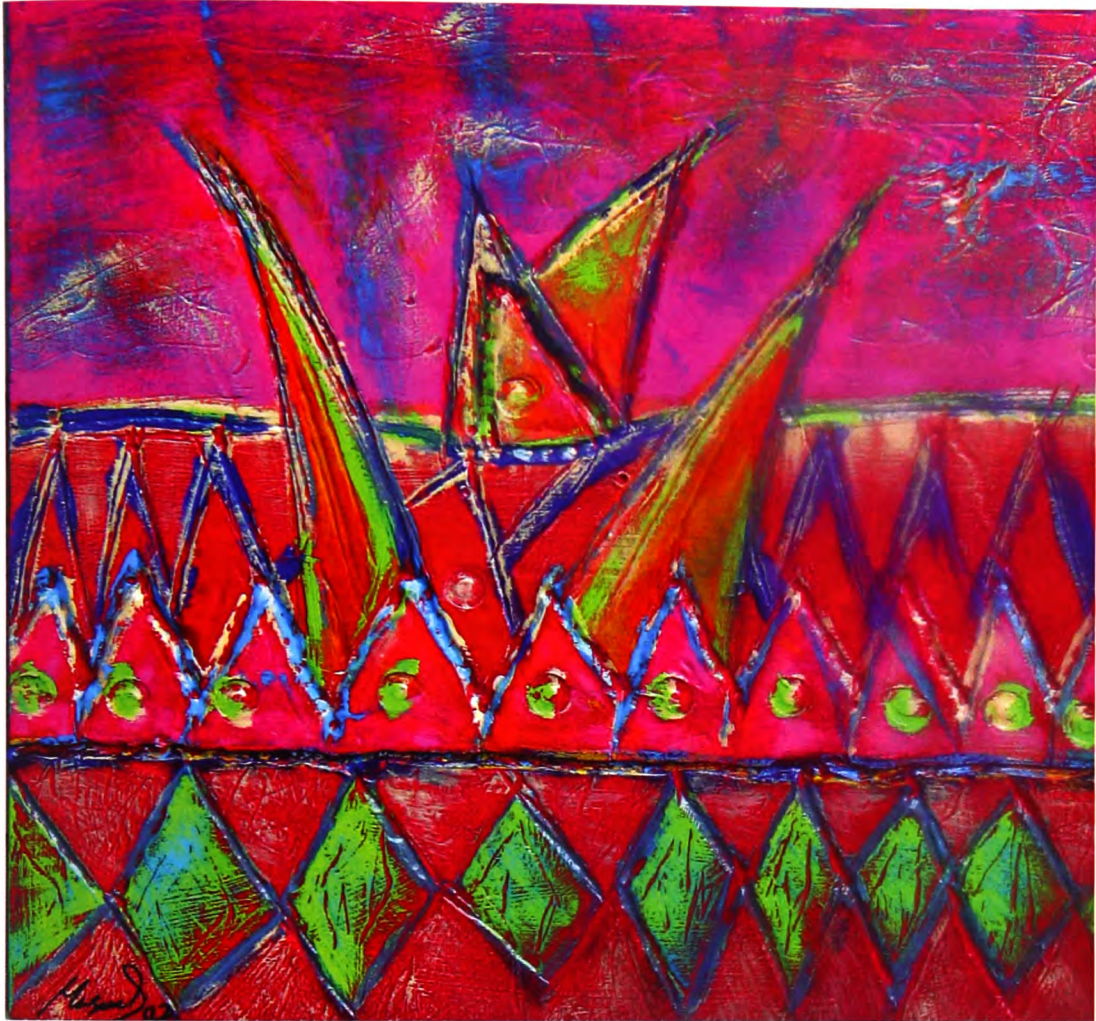
Figure 7.5 Musaed Albehairi, *Exp. Sadustic No.1* **2007, 30X30 cm, Acrylic on carved wood**

Figure 7.6 Musaed Albehairi, *Exp. Sadustic No. 2* 2007, 30X30 cm, Acrylic on carved wood

Figure 7.7 Musaed Albehairi, *Exp. Sadustic No.3* 2007, 30X30 cm, Acrylic on carved wood

Figure 7.8 Musaed Albehairi, *Exp. Sadustic No. 4* 2007, 30X30 cm, Acrylic on carved wood
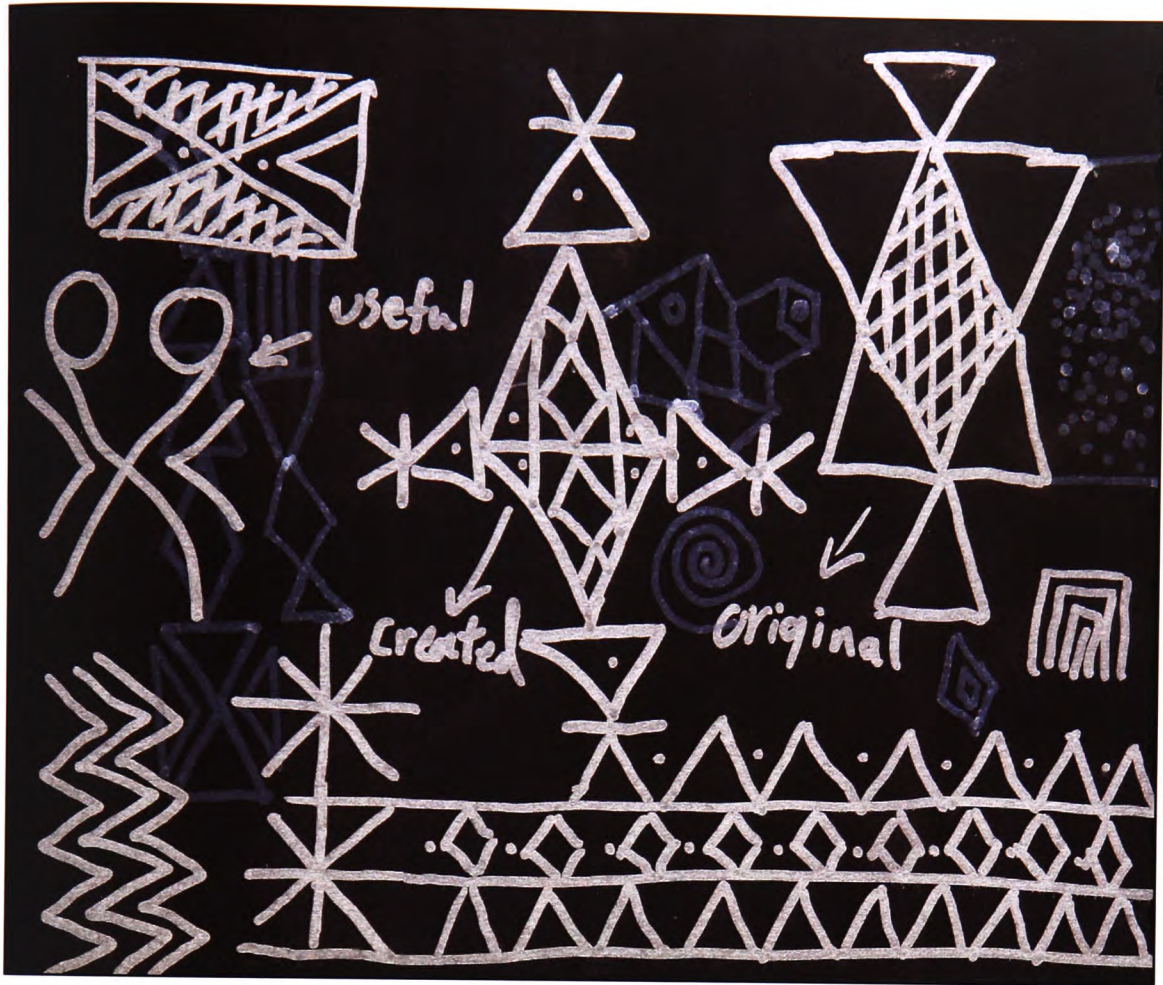
Figure 7.9 A sketch of Sadu symbols 1 (Created By the researcher)
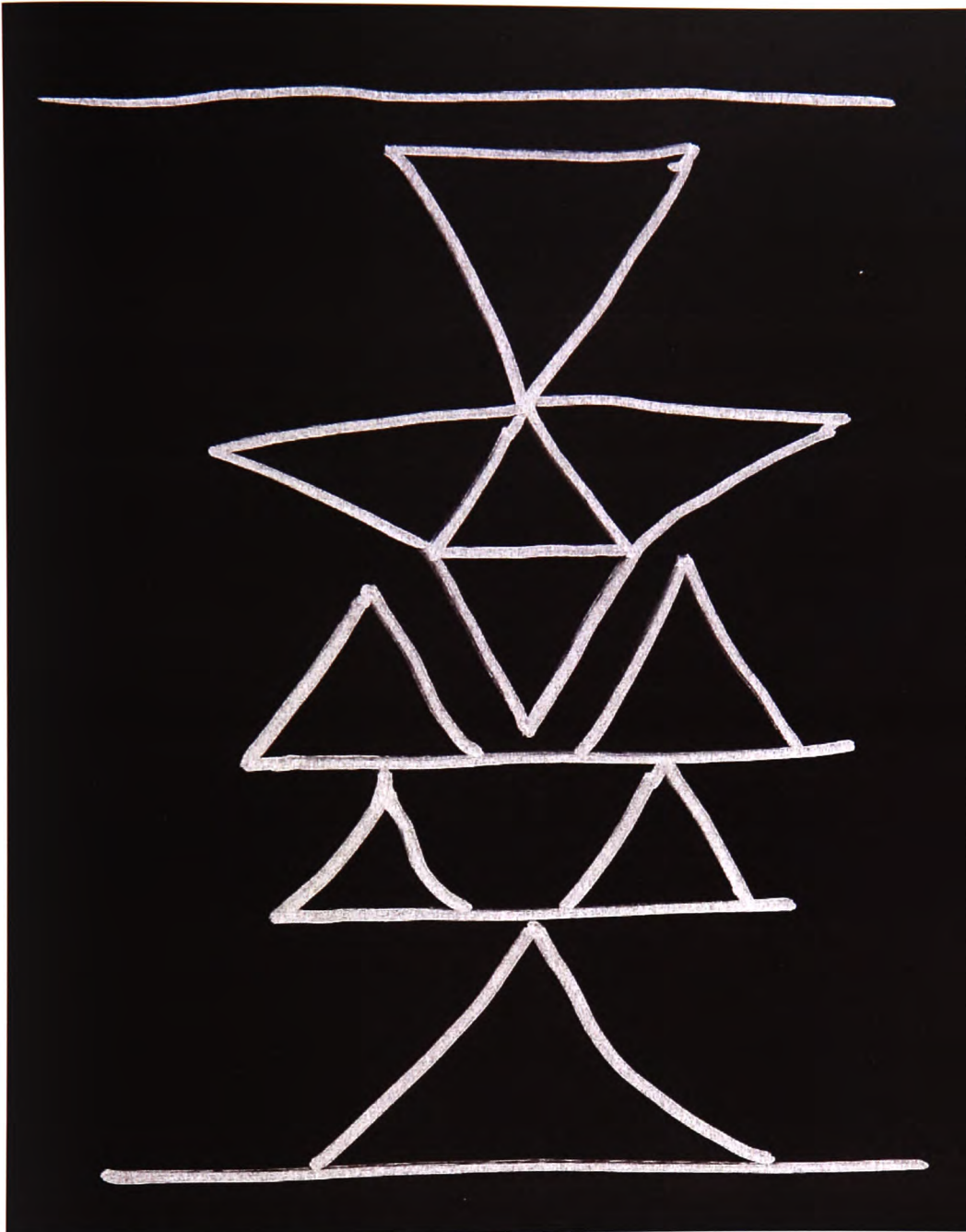
Figure 7.10 A sketch of Sadu symbols 2 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.11 A sketch of Sadustic unit 1 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.12 Musaed Albehairi, Sadustic unit 1 2008, 41X51 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.13 A sketch of Sadustic unit 2 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.14 Musaed Albehairi, Sadustic unit 2 2008, 41X51 cm, Acrylic on canvas
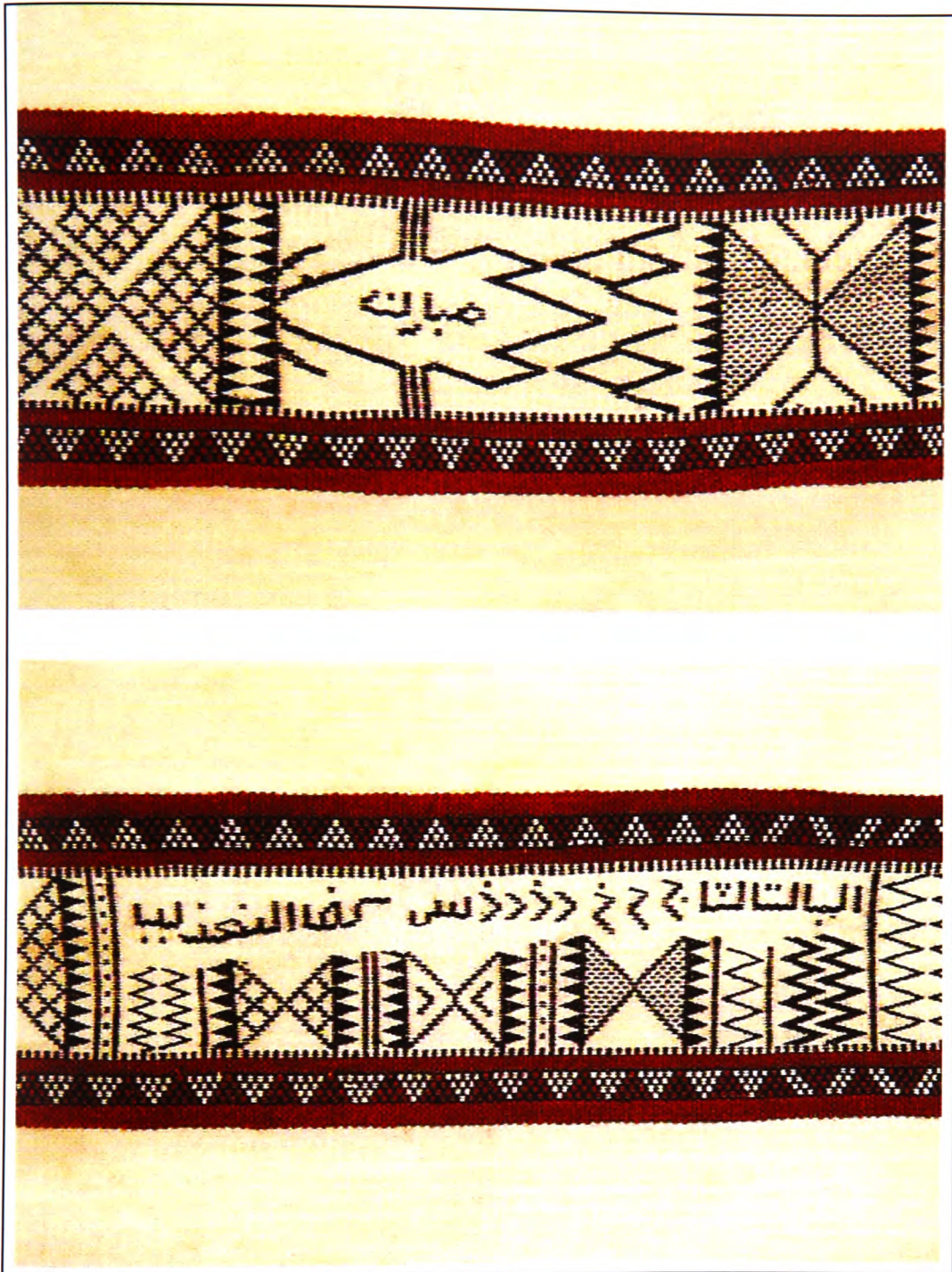
Figure 7.15
In the top figure is *Closer details of the word Mubarak, meaning "Blessed" in Arabic. The figure at the bottom is Arabic alphabetical letters and the Arabic word kaf al nathib, "the hand of al nathib" – a mysterious name probably of a desert animal or plan – appearing as a design motif within the central Shajarah design to probably give the piece a magical and protective power.*

Al-Sabah, A. S. 2006. *Ibjad Ornate Tent Dividers and Weavings of the Kuwait Desert*, p.59
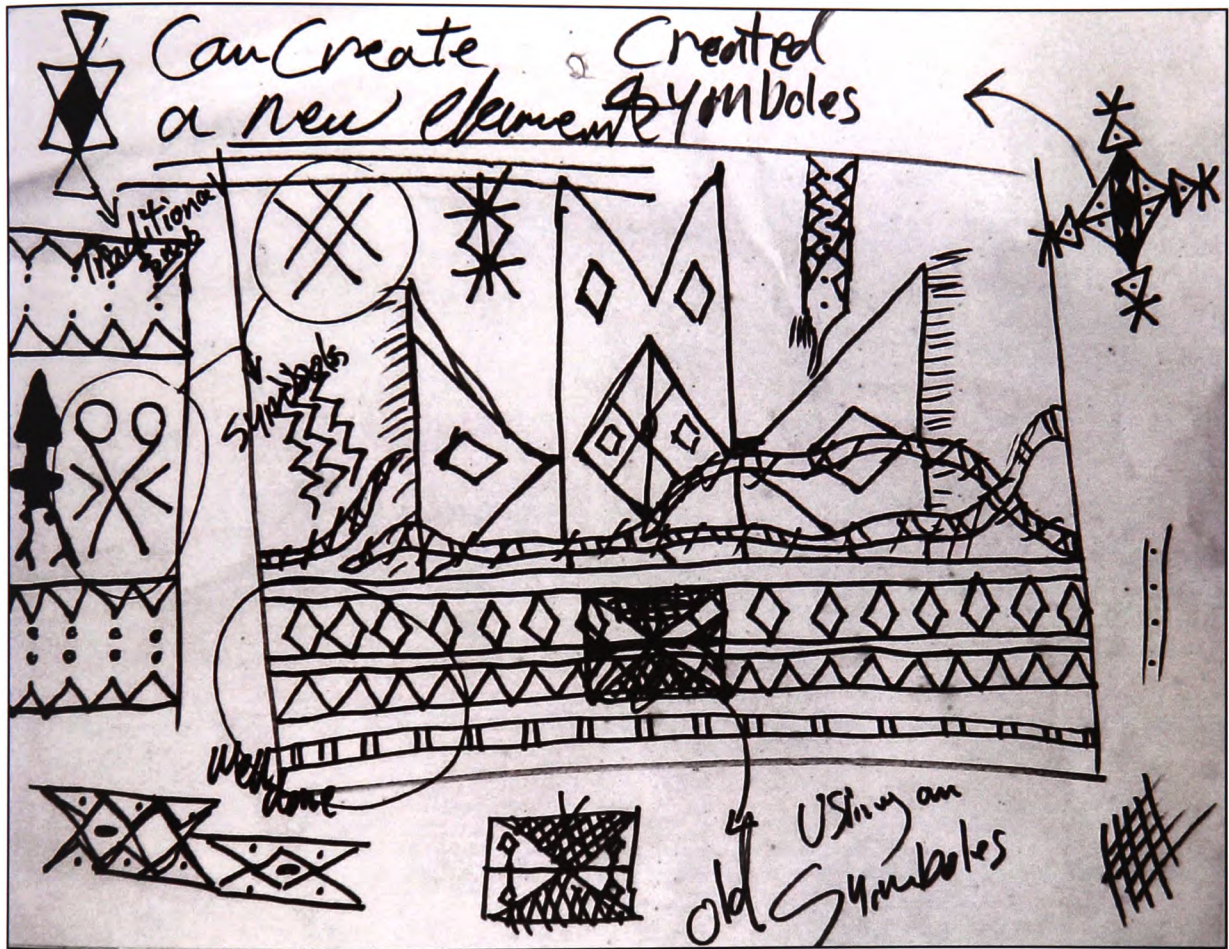
Figure 7.16 A sketch of Sadustic unit 3 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.17 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 3* 2008, 300X240 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.18 Details of *Sadustic unit 3* 2008, 300X240 cm, Acrylic on canvas
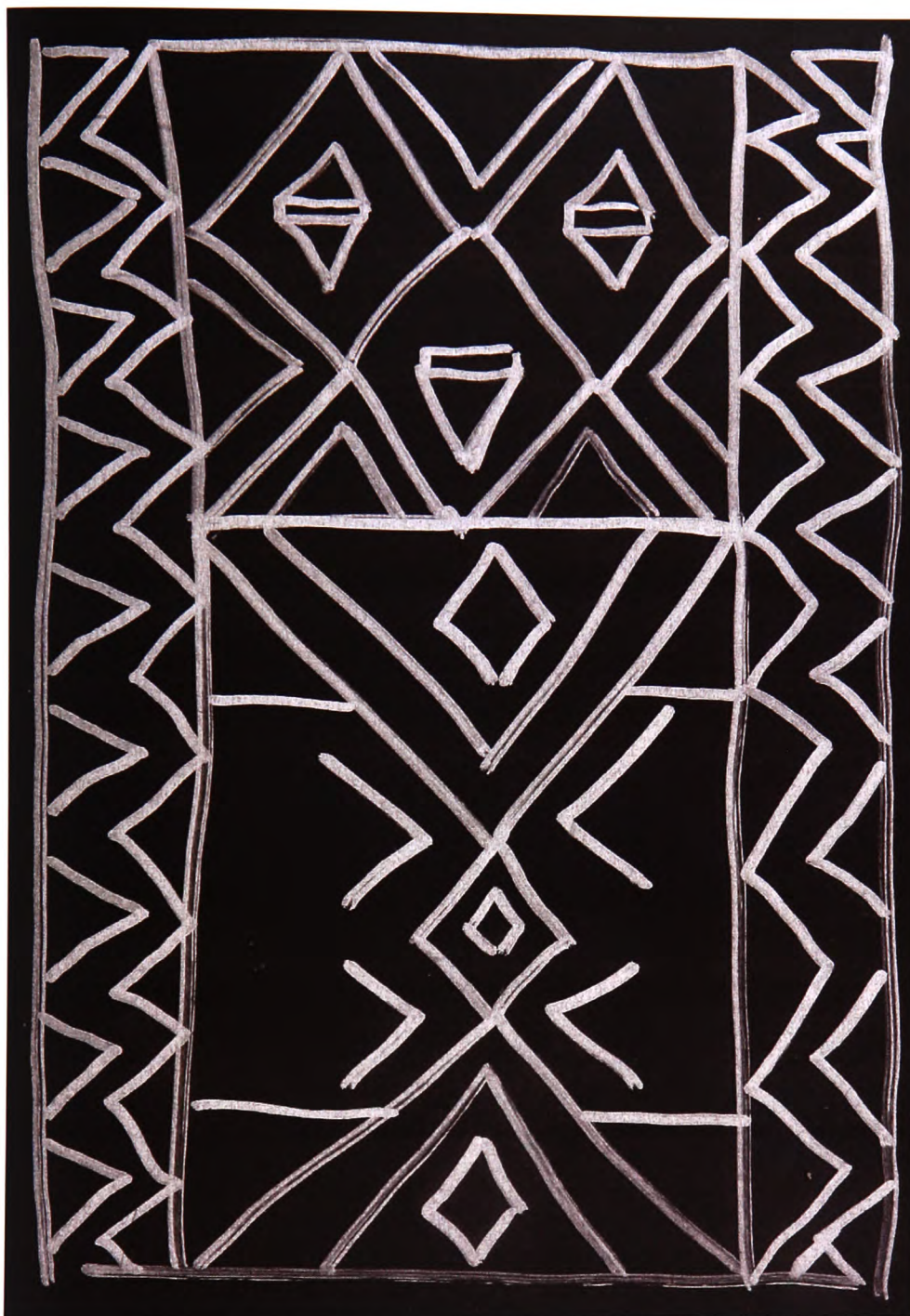
Figure 7.19 A sketch of Sadustic unit 4 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.20 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 4* 2008, 76X92 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.21 A sketch of Sadustic unit 5 (Created By the researcher)
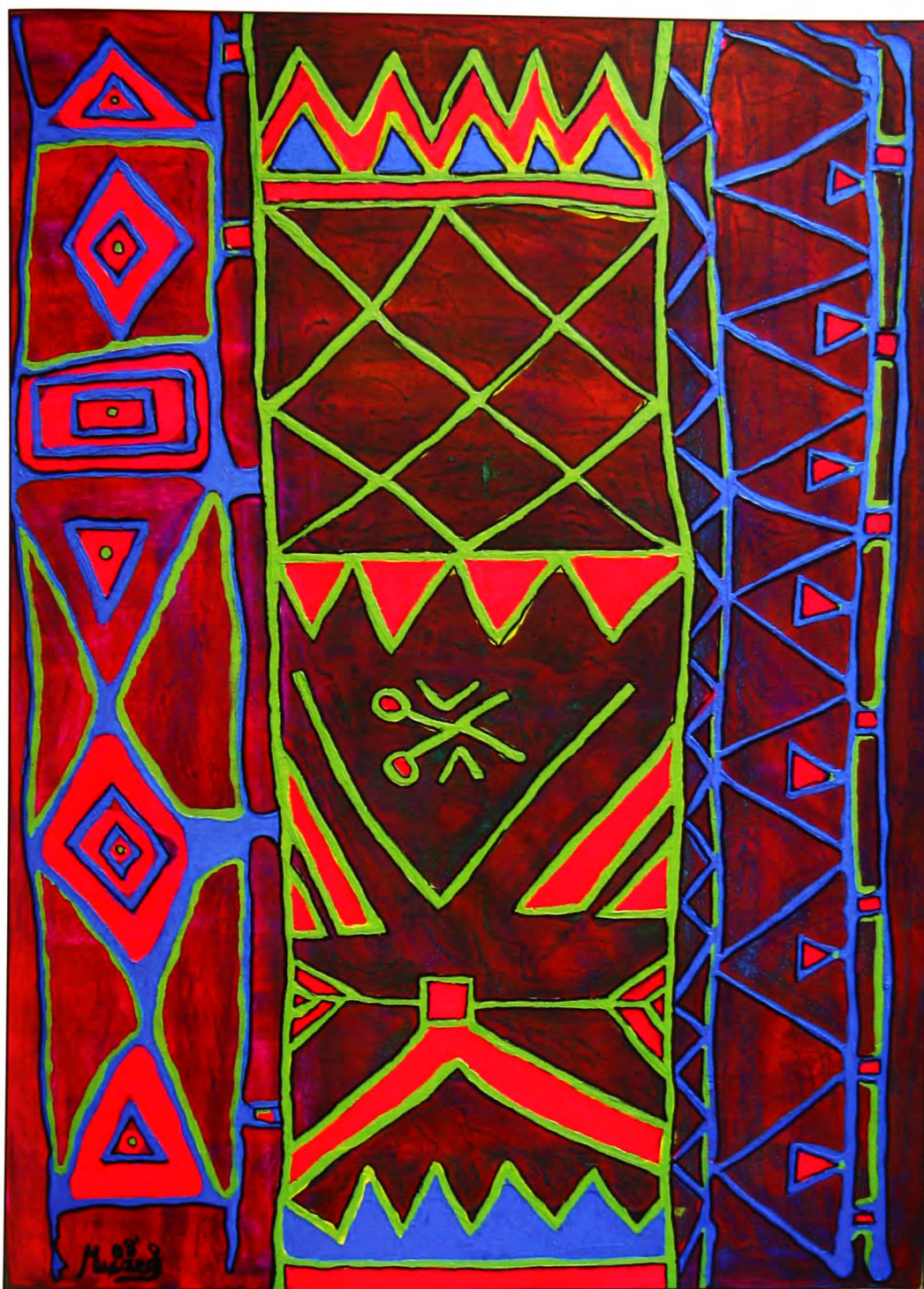
Figure 7.22 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 5* 2008, 76X92 cm, Acrylic on canvas
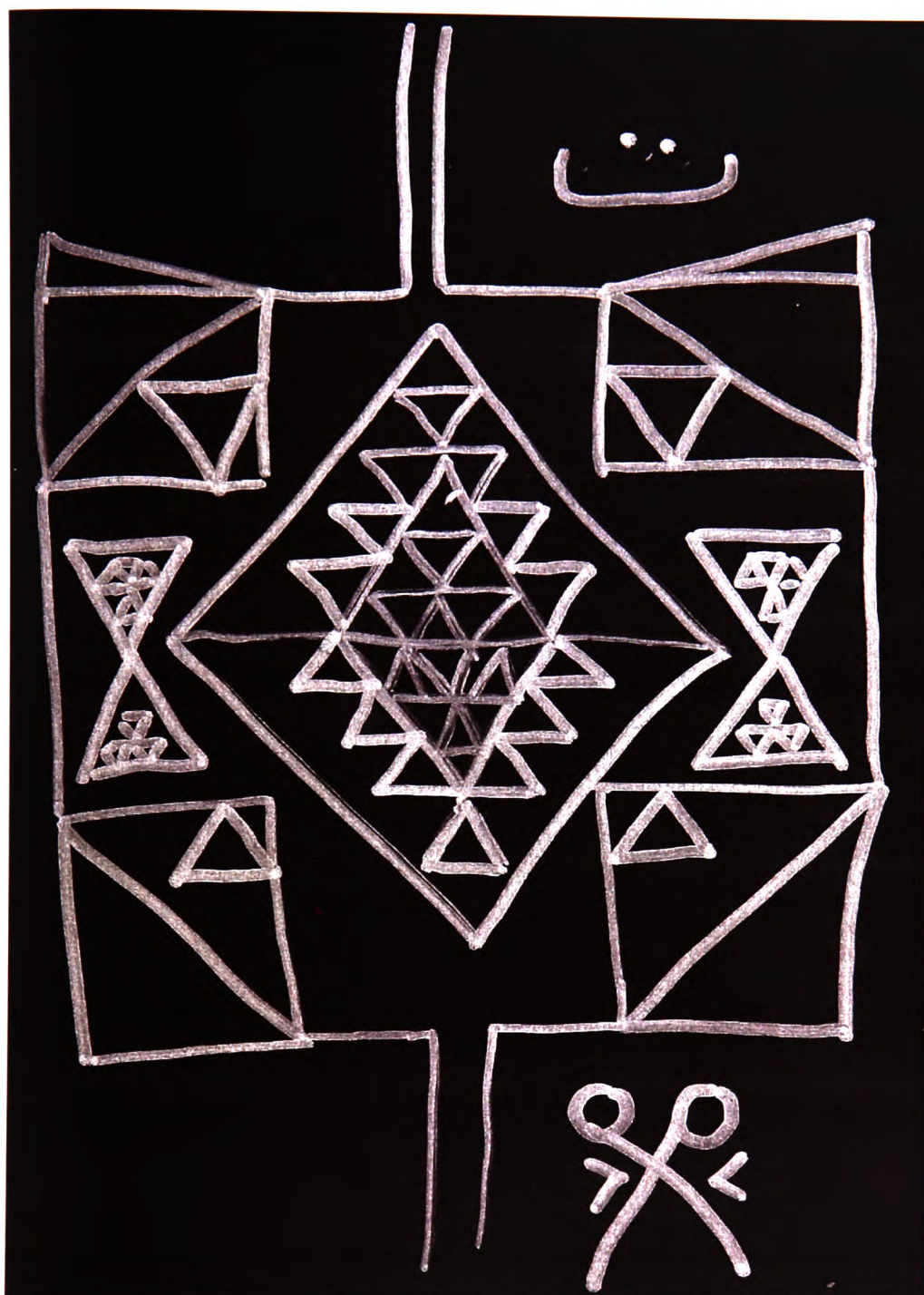
Figure 7.23 A sketch of Sadustic unit 6 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.24 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 6* 2008, 76X92 cm, Acrylic on canvas
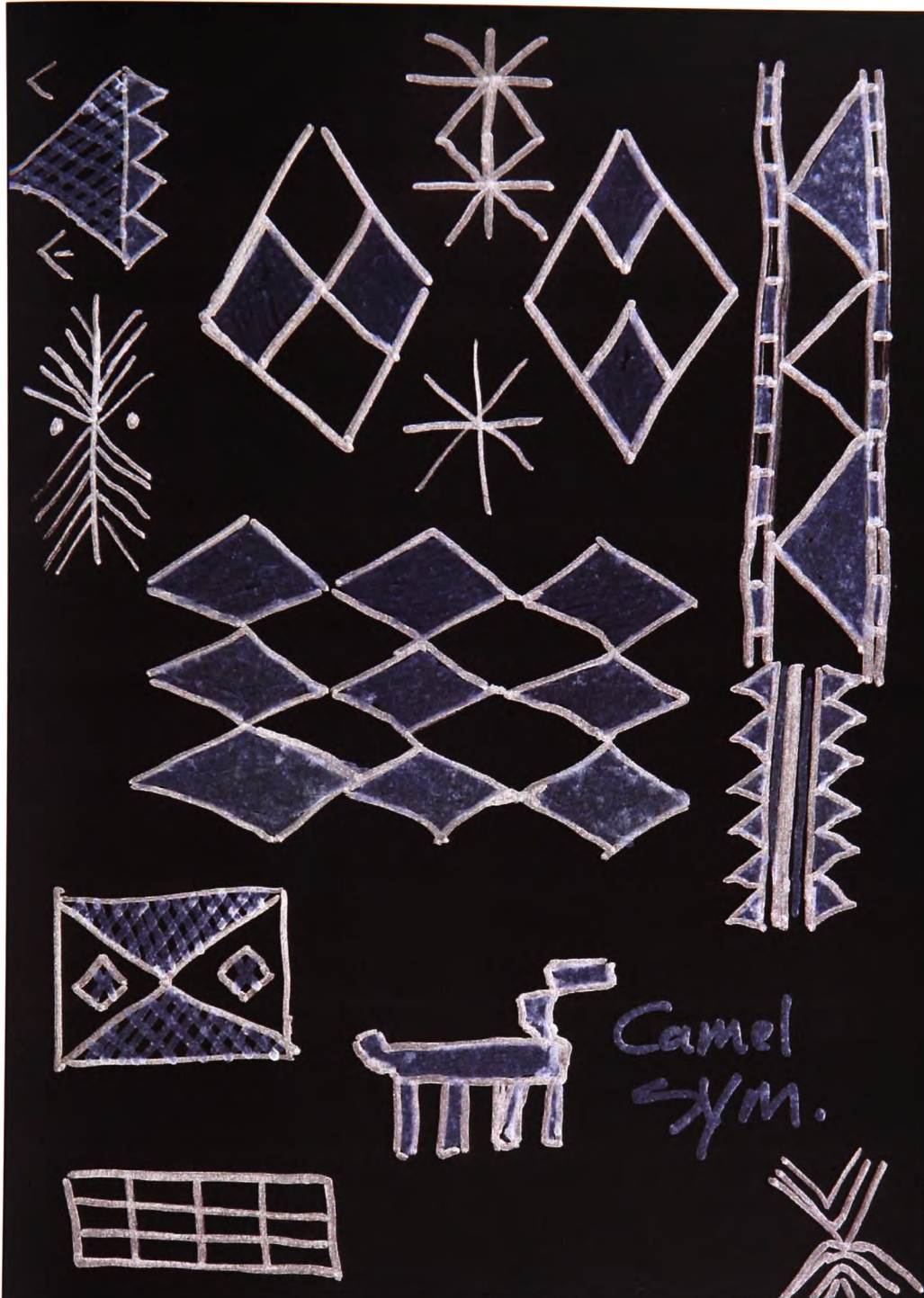
Figure 7.25 A sketch of Sadu symbols 3 (Created By the researcher)
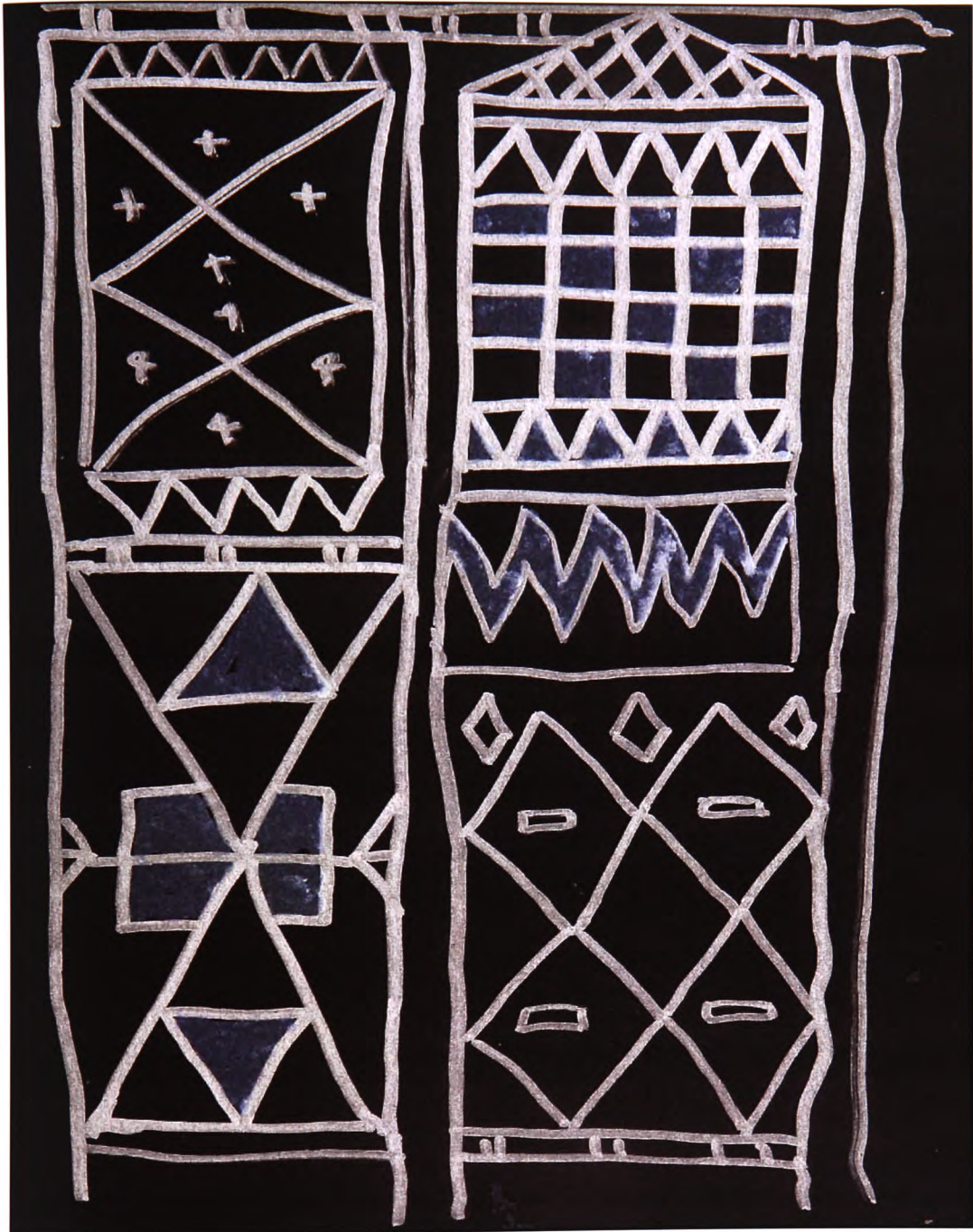
Figure 7.26 A sketch of Sadustic unit 8 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.27 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 8* **2008, 76X102 cm, Acrylic on canvas**
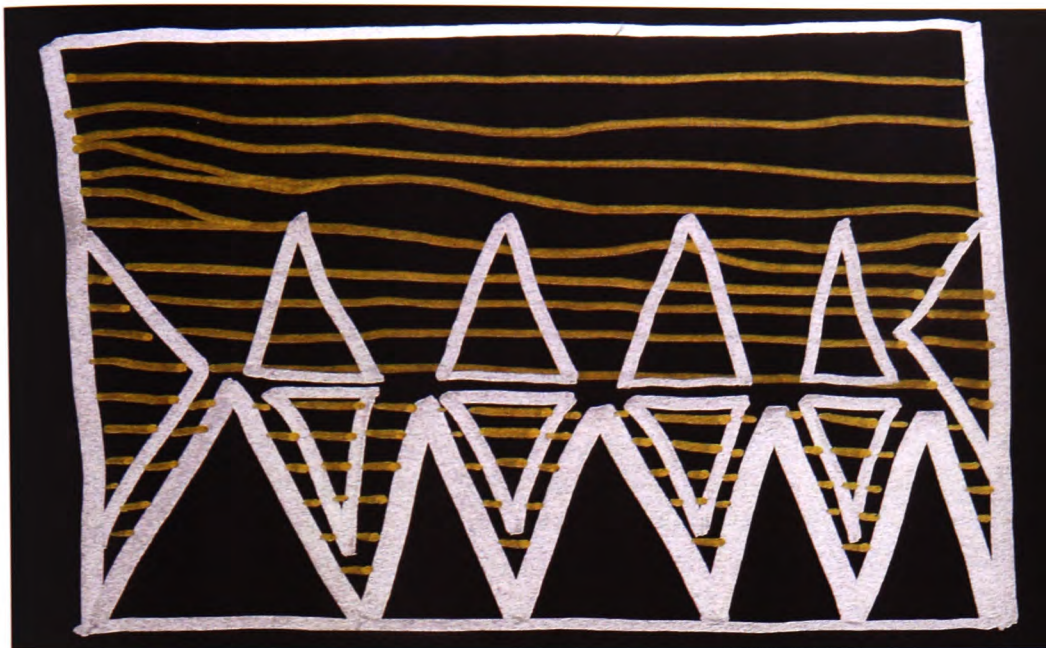
Figure 7.28 A sketch of Sadustic unit 7 (Created By the researcher)
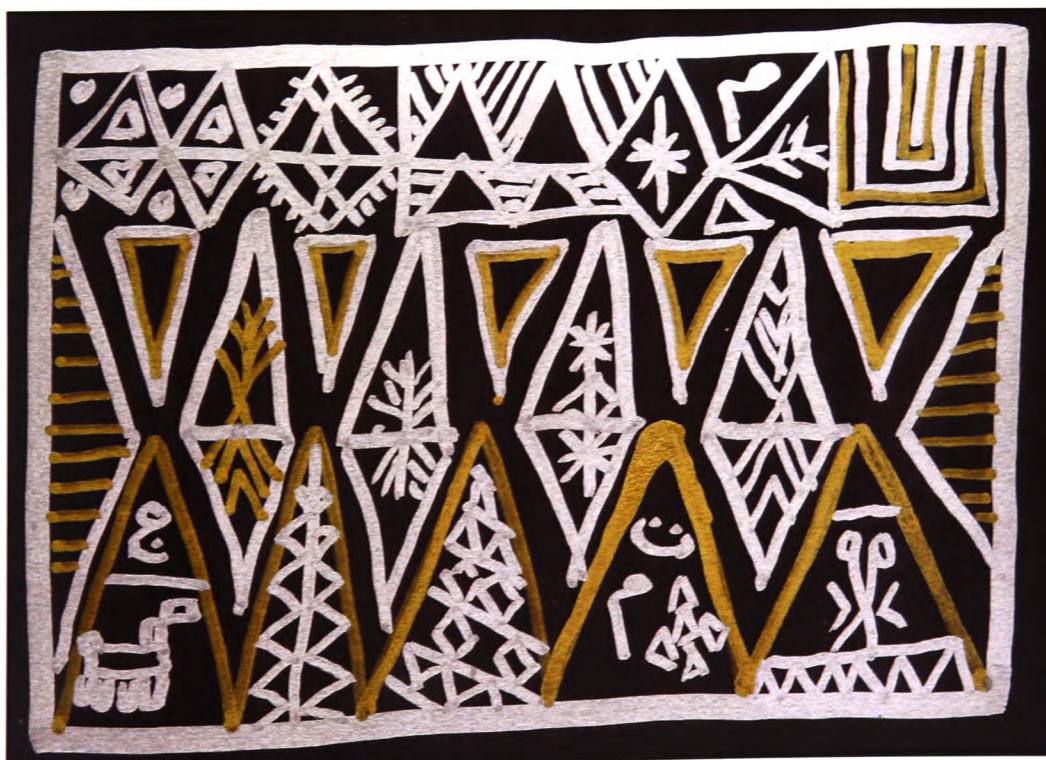
Figure 7.29 Details in sketch of Sadustic unit 7 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.30 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 7* 2008, 300X240 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.31 Details of *Sadustic unit 7* 2008, 300X240 cm, Acrylic on canvas
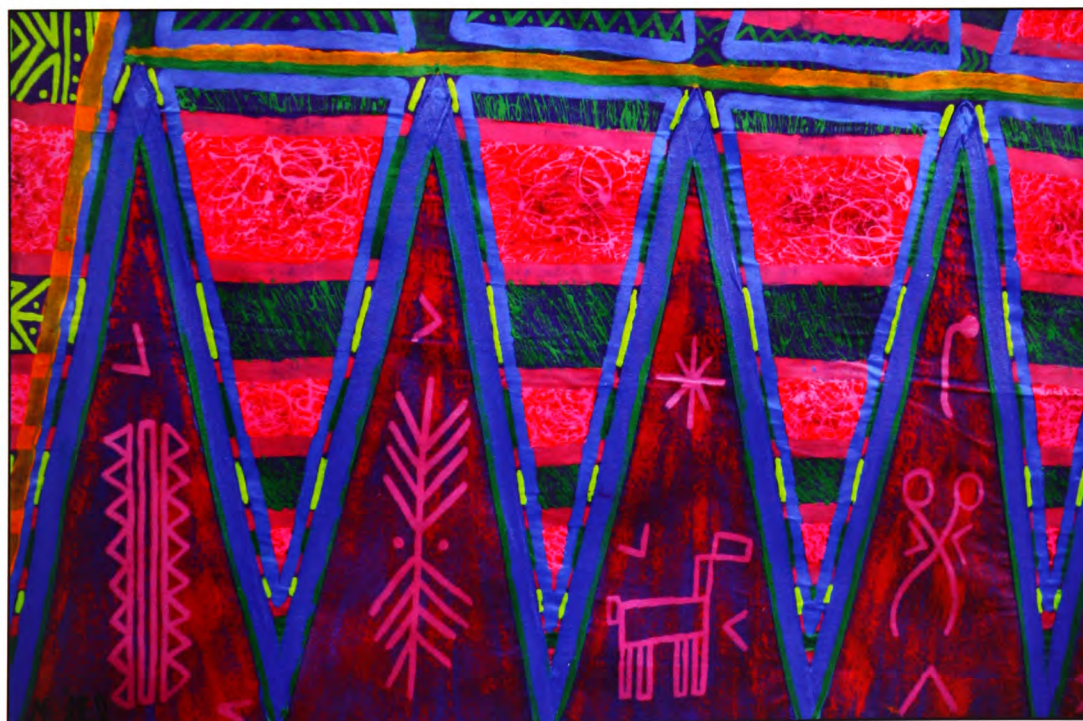
Figure 7.32 Details of *Sadustic unit 7* 2008, 300X240 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.39 A sketch of Sadustic unit 9 (Created By the researcher)

Figure 7.40 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 9* 2008, 92X122 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Figure 7.41 Musaed Albehairi, *Sadustic unit 10* 2008, 92X122 cm, Acrylic on canvas

Chapter Eight: *Sadu's* Development towards Modernity

The research began with the idea of making a part of Kuwaiti traditions, *Sadu* weaving, into a subject and object in a modern art form by modernising its motifs. This research examined different periods so as to find an approach that helps in this transformation. But there was a lack of Kuwaiti references about *Sadu* weaving generally, and a lack of analysis of the relationship of the *Sadu* form to modern art, except for one recent book by Zahra A.H.Ali. This book discussed the experience of artist Sami Mohammed in transporting *Sadu* decoration into artworks: the co-called Sadu Project. According to Zahra A.H.Ali, Sami Mohammed had focused on expressing his by modifying these decorations and using them in his paintings. But Sami Mohammed did not focus on these decorations in themselves, but on expressing the issue of human hardship as a dominant subject in his works and sculptures (A.H.Ali, 2004, p34). In particular, this study showed in chapter four how Sami Mohammed was captivated by sculpture when young, and how he developed it. Until today Sami Mohammed prefers the subject of human hardship over *Sadu*. In the article in *Alwatan* the Kuwaiti newspaper, Sami Mohammed talked in a cultural session at the library of Jawed Boshehri gallery. In the headline, Sami Mohammed said, "I will sacrifice myself for the Human Hardship' cause".

This article was published on January 3rd, 2009, which means that Sami Mohammed's view of this issue did not change – he had also assured this himself when interviewed for this study in 2007. It is believed that this issue took Sami Mohammed to universality unlike Sadu Project which was a local concern. Therefore, this study came to focus on Sadu and move it to modern art by focusing on its original decoration, and old and recent codes. The research deals with Sadu from a different perspective, i.e. in a different way than the path Sami Mohammed took in Sadu Project; in fact it continues what Sami Mohammed did (K.U.N.A, 2009, p.26).

8.0 *"Sadu* Afterimage" in process

London was selected for the exhibition since it represents a large population of people of different nationalities, roots, and cultures of whom the Kuwaitis are one. And this is an opportunity for the reactions of visitors in London where the artistic activity is of a very high level to be assessed, because it is a European capital known in its museums, artistic activities, theatres, and more, the "Candid Arts Galleries" in Angel was chosen, located in the eastern part of central London which can be reached easily and has the gallery "G1" on the first floor that is suitable for the number of works exhibited and corresponds to the size of the two large works. The exhibition was entitled "Sadu Afterimage"[45] which highlights the word *Sadu* in order to give it a higher profile since it constitutes the base of the works in this research and links it with the term "Afterimage" to use the afterimage process of "optical illusion" when the person looks at something and sees the same thing upon closing his eyes but in a different way and this is a process related to eye vision and means that the *Sadu* has been presented in a new form. In general, the term "Afterimage" is the best to make that remarkable. Moreover, the researcher designed invitation cards to many universities in London, in addition to University of Wales, Newport and the universities in Cardiff. The Embassy of Kuwait in London helped the exhibition by distributing the invitations to embassies in London, and this is considered a major support for the exhibition.

The exhibition was equipped so that the visitors become familiar with what is being exhibited since Kuwaiti culture is not a particularly well known one among the public but there is a basic knowledge of the state's location and other matters related to the Gulf War history and others. In all thirteen art works were exhibited representing the majority of the

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[45] All about the "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition materials in Appendix E.

work produced for this research. In addition, an "explanation board" was set up at the entrance of the gallery, a poster or board that summarises the work during the research in five stages from one until five as shown in figure (8.1) starting with stage one where the question "What is *Sadu*?", the definition and pictures thereof. Stage two shows the works of the first generation of Kuwaiti artists; stage three shows the works of Sami Mohammed as to Sadu Project, stage four shows the change carried out under this current study in modernising the *Sadu* form through the process of "Deconstruction" and stage five shows the title of the exhibition symbolising what the visitors sees in the exhibition. At the beginning, works the *Sadu* textiles, such as bags and rugs, were presented. This introduces the value of *Sadu* textiles to the visitor.

8.1 The impact of "Sadu Afterimage"

The exhibition opening was on Monday November 2nd 2009 at 6:00 pm and this day was a private showing for officials, ambassadors, and examiners. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Secretary of the Ambassador of the State of Kuwait, Talal Alshati, standing in for the ambassador who had a prior important meeting. The ambassador did visit the following day. The public visited the exhibition between the 3rd and 8th of November 2009. The visitors were of many nationalities including art specialists and art lovers, in addition to Kuwaiti students in London and even the persons that were in London for health and therapy reasons and were happy for to see an art exhibition that shows Kuwait culture in the most famous European capitals London and some visited the exhibition two consecutive days.

The words of the ambassador of the State of Kuwait, Mr. Khalid Al-Duwaisan, are an important reflection on this study: "I express gratitude to those who made the wonderful exhibition which aims at disseminating and promoting the culture and history of Kuwait abroad, I wish you success in your studies in the UK and your career in the future"

(Guestbook, 2009). Exhibiting the most important and beautiful textile crafts in Kuwait, which is *Sadu*, gave the exhibiting an 'official' character.

One of the major ambassadors received on the first day of the exhibition was the ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Fakhraddin Gurbanov, who expressed his admiration of the exhibits and the exhibition idea and said that the *Sadu* textiles reminded him of textiles in Azerbaijan since there is a significant similarity in the designs. He also added that he likes and encourages art and that what the study had done in transferring the heritage to paintings is a great idea and expressed his big admiration of the large paintings saying that they make remarkable the motifs and wrote in the guestbook "I am impressed by this exhibition which explains Kuwaiti traditional motifs" (Guestbook, 2009) and wished the artist all success in his future life.

Moreover, there were Kuwaiti students who wrote to what extent they liked the paintings that present *Sadu* in a different way, such as the student Mohammed Alfaris and Hamad Alsuwaidan. In fact, the opinion of these students is very significant since they represent a category of the current generation and some of them are 18 years old, meaning that they represent the young generation. On the first day the researcher met Khalid Al-Daihani, a correspondent from the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), residing in London who interviewed the researcher and covered the exhibition taking photos to circulate it to all Kuwait newspapers. He commented that all the works in the exhibition today show the wonderful effort deployed by the researcher and expressed his admiration of the idea of presenting *Sadu* in colours different than the *Sadu* original colours since they express modernity and cope with the changes witnessed by the world.

From the artistic side, a Japanese artist, Juuichi Higashi, a graduated of the Osaka College of Art in Japan, visited the exhibition. Higashi is characterised by modernity in his works and expressed his admiration of the exhibition sequence and of giving the opportunity to the visitor to see everything related to the *Sadu* in summary. Moreover, he liked the colour

philosophy that characterises the research works, the motifs forms and their locations in the paintings. Furthermore, he also wrote in Japanese in the exhibition Guestbook that he wishes to participate with the researcher in future exhibitions, which made the researcher even more optimistic since a visitor from Japan is also a gain to the exhibition based on the difference between the Japanese culture and the Western culture and even Arabic.

There were visitors from Russia and other countries who do not speak English but their reactions were clear from their smiles and some of them wrote in the Guestbook in their own language. The same building of "Candid Arts Trust" has training courses in drawing and the teacher gave the students the opportunity to enter the exhibition and they had very positive reaction and expressed their admiration to the researcher for using old motifs in modern paintings with attractive colours. One of the visitors, Nathan T, an artist from London, expressed his admiration of the exhibition but recommended to include some sculptures to give a three dimensional expression of *Sadu* and wrote: "Congratulations on your touching modern and relevant pieces. I applaud the modernization of the Kuwait textile in these pieces, Keep up the great work" (Guestbook, 2009).

At the end, Anthony Earle, an artist and show organiser in London also expressed his admiration of the exhibition and said "Thank you for the show, wonderful introduction to the art and culture, also thank you for the "Connection"! adding past and present of Kuwait" this is what we humans really need to live on" (Guestbook, 2009). He means by that the subject he discussed with the researcher concerning the global spread of cultures and the participation with other countries in opinions and others.

Many newspapers published articles about the exhibition including photos and the opinions of some writers. On November 5th 2009, *Al Watan* newspaper published news about the inauguration of the exhibition in Kuwait through (KUNA), stating "the Kuwaiti artist Musaed Albehairi inaugurated his exhibition in London on November 2nd 2009. This is the third personal exhibition of the said artist after the two exhibitions at the United States in

Washington D.C on 2004, the second exhibition in Illinois on 2005. The artist showed *Sadu* as a Kuwaiti cultural heritage in his paintings" Also added "he presented the *Sadu* in modern approach based on what was reached by the artist Sami Mohammed and Albehairi artist used a part of what presented by Sami Mohammed as a starting material in his research and developed it in his paintings". The article also mentioned that "Albehairi conducted his research in London during the last 4 years and he will get a Ph.D. in the next few months" and at the end, "the artist Albehairi mentioned the reason for which he chose *Sadu* as a title for his research and paintings wishing to increase the level of cultural awareness in modern art by using local heritage" (KUNA, 2009, p.7).

Many newspapers published the same news some on the same dates and other on different dates, *Awan* newspaper, *Annahar* newspaper, *Assabah* newspaper on November 5th 2009 and *Al-Ruya* newspaper on November 6th 2009, *Alqabas* newspaper on November 8th 2009, *Al-Seyassah* newspaper on November 9th 2009 and *Alanba* newspaper published on November 15th 2009 around half a page in a more detailed way about the exhibition by Zainab Abu Sedo, the writer in the newspaper under the title "Albehairi used the symbols from the old *Sadu* textile". After interviewing the researcher, she expressed her admiration for the modern way in which the researcher showed the motifs and symbols of *Sadu*, and added that the "study of the artist Albehairi of the modern art history in America and refining these ideas that he started to compose are reflected in his paintings since he changed the *Sadu* colours known in the past and maintained the *Sadu* spirit through the motifs and designs shown in phosphoric colours and the size of the paintings is impressive for me since the motifs are very clear and beautiful and this positive change is what characterises the modern art" (Abu Sedo, 2009, p.30).

Finally, what the researcher presented in this exhibition has helped him a lot since he received a range of opinions of people. It was disappointing, however, that the daily newspapers in London did not publish anything about this exhibition despite calling them

and sending invitations. The purpose of the exhibition was to take opinions and to understand whether the study adds anything to the artistic culture in general and Kuwait culture in particular. Based on the results and the conclusion reached in this study, the results were positive and the aim of spreading *Sadu* culture in a modern way that attracted different opinions and cultures was achieved. Finally, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait acquired two of the paintings in the exhibition which demonstrated significant support and will help spread the ideas in this study. Having the works placed in the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in London is a demonstration that this study has used *Sadu* to create "Monumental Sadu Art".

8.2 Conclusion

This study focused on the only available resource which talks about Sami Mohammed and his Sadu Project. The focus was on the one hand to reveal what was written about that experience, and on the other hand to discuss some objects that were among Sami Mohammed's subjects in paintings. The study also showed that Zahra A.H.Ali's book serves a wide range of the community, including experts in Kuwaiti arts and culture. Despite this, the author should have simplified the way she expressed some things through using the philosophical and psychological side of the Sadu Project. The study concludes that as authors and researchers we require the entire community to look at its culture and art, and not complicate the information displayed. This is essential because a wide range of the community is not interested in the philosophical and psychological aspects. We aim to attract community members to its culture in a simple, accessible way without complication. The problem which the young community is facing is that they do not know about their own culture, especially the artistic side of it. It is not necessary for that to come from the finest universities or public libraries, but simply every house and every educated and cultured

individual, because the aim is to increase the awareness and spread culture in a simple and direct manner.

When Kuwaiti society started to build its culture through the existing marine and desert environments, resulting from multiple forms of Kuwaiti culture, this was through their ancestors who had a vision that the social culture would remain as it was. It is noticeable that Bedouin society focused on maintaining its customs and traditions through the existing heritage and crafts, by *Sadu* craft, Bedouin poetry and even Bedouin dances. The urban society, living on the marine side, maintains the craft of making *Bisht* which is an old costume for men, as well as the craft of making ships, along with popular games, songs, various kinds of music, popular dances and so on (Al-Refai, 1999, pp 6-10).

The composition of the society is what will lead it to build a strong, and difficult to extinguish, identity. This study only focuses on one aspect of heritage i.e. *Sadu*. This heritage has many aspects, which if transferred, whether to art or any other aspect, will aim at reaching modernity. The study started by modernising traditional motifs, and in this way reached the phase of change. Such change does not mean a changing of the identity of these motifs, but their reconstruction and employment by presenting symbolic modernity in the artwork is to emphasise the value and traditional identity of *Sadu*, on one hand and represent it in a modern form that will be an icon for the new generation, through colour philosophy and the researcher's style in building monumental subject matter, on the other hand.

The purpose of starting to build the researcher's concept in developing *Sadu* is the focus on proving the *Sadu* identity through paintings without disregarding the original form of motifs existing in the *Sadu* textile. Upon asking Sami Mohammed about this part, he answered: "I certainly felt the *Sadu* upon seeing these works since most motifs did not change but the sizes and compositions thereof changed in the painting. I mean by that that when 1 see these works I can notice that you did not cancel the motif composition, but you used it in different

places with same identity since they did not include any motifs of different textile other than the Kuwaiti *Sadu*. As for the colours, we can see a change in the colours but this helps in showing your concept for the beginning of a modern *Sadu*" (Mohammed, S, personal communication, May 20, 2010).

After taking these steps in the course of modernity to reach what the society sees as its culture and heritage, what is presented is not strange to society because *Sadu* is a part of the heritage, thus, it is already an icon. However, the reconstruction of this icon to be more attractive to all generations is what was sought through this research. According to Zahra A.H.Ali, as mentioned earlier, some Kuwaiti artists used and presented *Sadu* in their work as it is in reality, and none of them presented it as subject and object, simultaneously, except Sami Mohammed who was the only artist who started changing the form of *Sadu*- by using *Sadu* motifs in his abstract works through the Sadu Project and the start of national abstraction in Kuwait (A.H.Ali, 2004, p14).

The difference in what the research has presented in the *Sadu* form, from others like Sami Mohammed, lies primarily in the style. The theory adopted by Sami Mohammed is "Morphology" being shown as surrealistic by using *Sadu* motifs and making a special environment for it in his paintings. Whereas this study used "Deconstruction" as a process in the paintings by deconstructing and reconstructing *Sadu* symbols and motifs as ornamental and symbolic units; in order to include *Sadu* as a monumental art form to change society's perception of this heritage. Furthermore, the study intended to prove that these paintings are a strong sign of a desire to construct and maintain a Kuwaiti identity that draws in elements of the past in a forward-looking manner.

The development is a positive move for society because the study of the *Sadu* condition through art has a very important goal; that is increasing the visual perception level, whether for current or future generations. This can be achieved by taking advantage of the attraction and influence resulting from Kuwaiti society being influenced by western cultures, as well

as the search for modernity and change. Research fundamentals are based on the stability of the Kuwaiti society's identity, while developing this identity and ensuring it is in harmony with surrounding influences, whether globalisation or the mergence with other countries' cultures. This study emphasised this fact by adopting Deconstruction, whereby he considered that deconstructing *Sadu* does not mean forgetting the identity of heritage, but rather taking advantage thereof in modern art, so that the resulting work presents *Sadu* as subject and object through a concrete concept that uses modern art as a basis. However, this concept will take into consideration *Sadu*'s position and value to the Bedouin society, Bedouin women in particular, passing through the phase of heritage forgetfulness and craft distinguishing, by the society as a whole, to heritage revival and representation in a new form- side by side with the modern Kuwaiti media, where they use *Sadu* as graphic design and so on, and by merging paintings produced in this research in future Sadu House events. All of the development that Kuwait has witnessed will be in favour of the Kuwaiti society's identity, and not against it, if the individuals control their visions and thoughts through the development and technological revolution that they observe everyday in the world, along with globalisation and its influence on the Kuwaiti identity. If some people in Kuwait consider that globalisation threatens and helps in forgetting the traditions, this study also confirms this. Yahya Swailem mentioned that since the late eighties, people in Kuwait have been focusing on how to live in a multicultural society, and each generation wants to be up to date with western culture, not how to develop their own culture. However, once globalisation is controlled, we can use it well, and transform any influence thereof from negative to positive, by adopting and developing the globalisation concept to spread Kuwait's traditions throughout the world, in a new and developed way that will make other countries become very aware of Kuwaiti identity. This step was begun through this research, by modernising traditional *Sadu* motifs. This will also contribute to the perception in society of other Kuwaiti traditions, and how to represent them in different styles. *Alwatan*

TV's contribution in 2008-2009, in terms of including the heritage aspect in the clips between their programs, and using *Sadu* in graphic design and so on, is one of the things that revealed a momentum to improve the revival of Kuwaiti identity in a way that attracts the attention of the current generations (Swailem, Y, personal communication, September 5th, 2009).

8.3 The Results Briefly

The study began by, through the research question, asking which factors, if developed, would help in the process of transformation of *Sadu* textile into a monumental modern art form, the research analyses the factors which are:

- The background of the art in Kuwait.

- First generation artists and their representation of *Sadu* in their art.

- Sami Mohammed and his Sadu Project, and what is missing in that project.

- The status of *Sadu* as a tradition in Kuwait culture.

- The issues of globalisation, and highlighting "visual culture" in Kuwait.

- The Colour revolution used to recreate a balanced modern colour palette.

Then followed the process of deconstructing *Sadu* motifs in the original to reform it to a *Sadu* units and symbols that can make the change, after transforming them to the concept of *Sadu* monumental modern art form.

8.4 Summarising the Research Results

The research started with one idea, which was: "How to modernise traditional *Sadu* motifs?" The ideas are formed and then transformed into an analytically detailed study, resulting in a monumental art form in a modern style. Through this style the study used Deconstruction as a method to deal with *Sadu* from many angles, by deconstructing *Sadu*

motifs, in one aspect, as well as deconstructing the style which the first generation artists adopted. Thus, the *Sadu* form has changed as an item in reality due to their works, and was used in the paintings in this study as subject and object, with its form cancelled in reality as a functional item. From another aspect, the *Sadu* form was deconstructed and reconstructed in Sami Mohammed's paintings in the form of ornamental units, by merging it with symbols existing in *Sadu*, and which were not previously used by any other Kuwaiti artist. The reconstruction process is not intended to be as it is shown in Sami Mohammed paintings, where *Sadu* motifs are composed of separate individual elements in the paintings, but instead by reconstructing it as an ornamental unit itself that isn't only individual but also connected to other units and symbols.

All this refers to the practical aspect. Although in the theoretical aspect, the study included a historical survey on Kuwaiti art, and how it started to reveal how the first generation artists used to deal with the art concept- where they learnt it and, of course, which of them used *Sadu* in their work, as previously stated. Most of these artists' works presented *Sadu* as it is in reality, until Sami Mohammed came.

The analytical aspect of the research is about Sami Mohammed, with what he started and how he came up with the Sadu Project idea; by building a new art line that contributed to "National Abstraction" and the result of *Sadu* motif forms in his work. The research begins from where Sami Mohammed left off. This does not mean that Sami Mohammed stopped producing *Sadu* works, but he acknowledges the end of his *Sadu* Project and the start his focus on human hardship issues.

Another aspect is the influences that affected *Sadu* diffusion, such as the current generation's awareness of *Sadu* as Kuwaiti heritage. The researcher's study of these influences revealed that globalisation has had an impact on this heritage, making it easy for the younger generation to be attracted to other cultures and disregard the culture of their own country. In addition, technology, easy access to information, and a change in visual

perception, also helped towards shaping society's perception of their surrounding, whether a billboard or any other form of urban modernity. All of these things attracted society's attention, making the current generation's awareness about Kuwait's heritage and culture weak, and even forgotten by some. The lack of productivity of the Sadu House in raising awareness in the society about the craft of *Sadu* is caused by the absence of a clear strategy that identifies Sadu House's activities, as stated in the previous chapters. All of these matters had an impact on the non-diffusion or non-development of society's awareness about *Sadu* as a craft and art.

This was personally experienced during the research during the visit to Sadu House in 2006 and 2007 where the simplest thing that should apply to these exhibits is "labelling" that is not subject to museum's protocol where most of the exhibits hold a label and a title for the exhibited piece written on an ordinary paper and some are hand written. These would be expected to be the simplest things that the people in charge of the Sadu House should take into consideration. There are many specialists in these matters that should take care of the said since the visitor of Sadu House needs organisation and needs to feel that this place is a Kuwaiti feature and the old pieces in it should marked with "Please Do Not Touch" since this is standard practice in museums around the world when dealing with rare and important exhibits

The research placed emphasis on the areas considered important, particularly the philosophy of colour before and after *Sadu*; through the presentations of Yves Klein and Andy Warhol, appertaining to the change of colour philosophy in modern art, which is the key the work in this thesis, due to its focus on how to reach modernity in *Sadu* to positively influence the visual perception of Kuwaiti society. The result attained is the construction of units in the painting of ornamental and symbolic characteristics, as well as the symbolism in paintings, whether by using old *Sadu* symbols or modern colour symbols on old *Sadu* motifs, with a positive influence on the volume of works. Consequently, the result is monumental *Sadu* art

forms, which give value to *Sadu*, from its early start as a craft and old art form, to its value in modern art through these paintings.

As to the cultural result of these works, according to Yahya Swailem's point of view regarding the Bedouin woman, this study holds that the modern Bedouin woman will be optimistic to see what her ancestors started as a craft. Since the Bedouin woman is currently more open to the city and attracted to the modern world, she will consider art as an escape, especially where she sees the heritage presented in a new form of modern colours.

The researcher of this study had a conversation with Mohammed Albehairi, a teacher in the art education department at the College of Basic Education in Kuwait about the increase in the number of female Bedouin students in the art education specialisation and said that there is no study that may clarify the same but through my teaching sessions in the art education section since the Eighties, I can see a remarkable demand and their numbers are increasing. Upon asking Sami Mohammed about the same, he said "I think that Mohammed Albehairi is right since in my opinion, I can see that during my experiences with the participants at some art exhibitions and art competitions. The participation rate in art exhibitions of Bedouin females has started to increase which reflects the increase in awareness and artistic participation. The Bedouin woman nowadays differs from her predecessors. She is considered as any other woman in society since she started to learn, to work and participate as we saw in the last parliamentary elections when a Bedouin woman stood as a candidate to the National Assembly in Kuwait and this is reflects the change in society on the artistic and cultural side. The change may be slow but it exists" (Mohammed, S, personal communication, May 20, 2010).

This mergence resulted from the evolution of the visual culture concepts in parallel with the visual perception of the Kuwaiti society. If some people believe that the result of these works is to be considered as 'High Art', the mere start of a high art concept in Kuwaiti society will mean that there are new steps being taken, an art revolution even, in Kuwait;

through which art starts to take shape and subdivide into many aspects, whether by considering art as a hobby, or expressive, academic or even commercial function. All these matters have existed since ancient times in the West, and resulted in an artistic history through which geniuses, artists, philosophers and art schools emerged. If the cultural view of Kuwaiti society reaches this level, by considering that the works of the present research are placed within "high art", this study will have reached the end of the point with which he started the research.

8.5 Recommendations

The researcher wishes to repeat the context of this research with regard to other aspects of Kuwaiti tradition, not only in weaving, as there are many traditional aspects that need to be preserved, whether traditional songs, traditional stories, folklore dances, or other aspects from our heritage. This future research is considered to be not only artistic, but also generally educational and cultural. Repeating the steps in this study in other research, not only in Kuwait, and using it as a guide in research related to gathering and transforming traditions into any aspect of modernity in any community of the world is also recommended other aspects of this research are also dealt with. The most important aspect is for the study to be part of a wider one concerned with producing a study based on arts in Kuwait, and for it to be a reference for all studies about Kuwaiti arts; in addition to supporting new researchers in finding reliable references.

The researcher of this study intends to focus on developing this research to become the basis of a book that would debate issues related to traditions and modernity in art. It would also contribute to reading resources for the Kuwaiti community that do not focus on the philosophical aspect only, but on spreading awareness and information about inherited traditions passed down from their ancestors; thereby this *Sadu* theme and type of research could also be used for other very different fields, even architecture. Ultimately, a new

fashion in the Kuwaiti outlook on art should result, and *Sadu* would again be available for the Kuwaiti community in their everyday lives, and not be forgotten.

Figure 8.1 Explanation board of "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition (Created by the researcher)
Albehairi, M. 2 – 8 November 2009. *Sadu Afterimage*. London: G1/ Candid Arts Galleries.

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List of Terms

Abstract art: Abstract unlike 'figurative' art, 'abstract' art does not represent things from the visible, three-dimensional world around us (or for that matter, from our imagination). (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Abstract expression: The stylistic label given to painters working mainly in New York in the 1940s and 1950s. Abstract Expressionism may be broadly divided into two sub-groups: the 'Action painters' typified by Jackson Pollock's use of large, paint spattered canvases and the 'Colourfield painters' typified by Mark Rothko's large, colour blocks on canvas. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Academies of Art/Academic Art: Academies of art were first formed in Europe in the sixteenth century to institutionalize training for students in the fine arts (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Aesthetic: Imported from philosophy, the aesthetic is concerned with principles of taste and beauty in art. Like Humanism, it is a term which makes claims to universalism. For instance, the aesthetic (as a criteria for judging art) implies that 'beauty' (in itself a loaded concept) resides in the art object and that 'taste' is the viewers capacity for appreciating the beautiful. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Colonialism: Colonialism is a form of Imperialism which describes the political control and subordination of one country by another such as British rule in India or French rule in North Africa. Marxists see colonialism as the export of Capitalism to lesser developed markets and social, political and economic exploitation of its people and resources (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Construction/Constructivism: The term stems from Vladimir Tatlin's corner constructions of 1914, which were 'sculptures' assembled from various pieces of metal, wood and string, as opposed to being cast, carved or modelled. The term has since come to describe the work of painters, designers and architects in revolutionary Russia usually working in an abstract idiom to an impersonal and common revolutionary agenda. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Cubism: Cubists tended to think of their work as a wholly new means of representation, rather than a style or Aesthetic. As modern painters, their aim was to represent the physical three-dimensional world in a two-dimensional space without resorting to conventional, Illusionistic techniques – summed up by Braque as 'not to try and reconstitute an anecdotal fact but to constitute a pictorial fact'. Together Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque evolved Cubism between 1906 and 1912 (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Dada: one of the earliest anti-art movements started in neutral Zurich during the First World War. Drawing some of its ideas from Italian Futurism, Dada (the French word for 'hobby-horse') fostered performance and interactive arts, as well as giving art status to utilitarian objects such as a urinal and a shovel. Dada has been one of the most influential movements of twentieth-century art, stimulating aspects of Pop Art and its twenty-first-century offshoots, and even the Op Art of the 1960s. (Gage, 2006)

Deconstruction: An intellectual movement that may be traced back to Jacques Derrida's texts. Darrida uses the world as a means of discussing his project as a writer. Derrida 'deconstructs' literary and philosophical texts, as well as writings on art, by revealing the biases within the foundations of a text's structure. (Richards, 2008)

Decorative arts: Sometimes used to distinguish the 'applied' or decorative arts – textiles, ceramics, woodwork or metalwork – from the fine arts – painting, sculpture and printmaking. This division came about once Academies took control of fine art training, leaving the decorative arts to be taught by the Art Guilds. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Fauvism: An early twentieth-century French movement related stylistically to Expressionism, particularly in its bright colour and broad brushwork. An exhibition of a group of artists' work, notably that of Matisse, in 1905 led critics to brand them as 'Fauves' (the French for 'wild beasts'). (Gage, 2006)

Feminism: after thirty years of scholarship, Feminism now has a relatively established position within discourses of art history. Its impact in simple terms has been twofold; first bringing to light the art produced by woman which had been hitherto neglected in dominant

discourses of art. Secondly, feminism has overhauled the way in which art historians consider representations of woman in art. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Geometric Design: An art form in which a design is created by dividing the pattern forms into different sizes of the basic geometric unit. (Critchlow, 1986)

Globalisation: (*globalisation*) in its literal sense is the process of transformation of local or regional phenomena into global ones. It can be described as a process by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and function together (Croucher, 2004)

Hue: That aspect of colour which depends on wavelength, and distinguishes blue from green, yellow from orange, and so on. (Gage, 2006)

Human Subjectivity: It is a condition of Modernism, since the subjectivity mode is involved, coloured by personal feelings, and therefore places the onus on the self in the production and consumption of visual art (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Icon: An icon is traditionally an image or likeness which describes medieval religious portraits. It has come to mean anything regarded as sacred or that embodies great symbolic value. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Kitsch: Kitsch taken from the German verb meaning 'to make cheap', kitsch has come to mean vulgar, mass-produced imitations of 'objects of high' art and design. Today, the concept of kitsch is problematic since, as the old adage goes, 'one man's kitsch is another man's culture'. Moreover, there has been a tendency in Post-Modern art and design to use kitsch 'knowingly' in order to parody concepts of good taste (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Minimalism: more commonly associated with sculpture and music than with painting, Minimalism is an art movement dating from the sixties which, characteristically, employed sheet metal, Perspex and house bricks to make regular, geometric constructions on a fairly grand scale for art galleries and sculpture parks. Ironically perhaps, even though

Minimalism was a deliberate reaction to the individualistic qualities of Abstract Expressionism, it is often seen as indulgent. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Modern: The dictionary definition of modern is 'of present or very recent past'. Thus modern is synonymous with 'contemporary'. However, modern can be confusing term since its present tense connotations are confounded by definitions of Modernism. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Modernism: Modernism has a long and varied provenance which describes a period designation, a style and a theoretical stance. Broadly speaking, Modernism can be dated to the 1860s and describes the efforts of artists (as well as architects, designers and poets) to break the codes and conventions of visual production – especially those preserved by Academies. Typically modernist art is concerned with the 'new' – using unconventional materials, novel means of construction and experimentation with new ways of depicting the subject. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Morphology: Derived from the Greek 'morphae,' morpho-logical: the study of shapes, forms or structures of an organism or mechanism.

National Abstraction: is a term created by Zahra A.H.Ali in her book "Sami Mohammed and the Semiotics of Abstraction: Kuwaiti Folk Art as Muse" to define the start of abstract art in Kuwait founded in the early sixties by Ahmed Zakariya Al-Ansari and then officially by Sami Mohammed and Khalifa Al Qattan.

Naturalism: often used synonymously with Realism, naturalism, in terms of art, avoids precise and measured usage. Since what constitutes naturalism has changed over the centuries, then it is most useful to think of it as a way of painting rather than having a particular content. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Popular Culture: associated with the Modern period and facilitated by the growth of 'disposable income' among people living in a Capitalist society. Forms of popular culture include television and radio, magazines and newspapers, records and videos. Popular

culture is an everyday mass culture. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Post-colonialism: Which has emerged particularly since the demise of colonial regimes, giving rise to art and literature which directly responds to the experience of Colonialism from the point of view of indigenous peoples (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Post-modernism: Post-Modernism tends to be defined either as the period after Modernism or as a 'condition' whereby established values are rapidly eroded by new technological advances and a general apprehension of what the future will bring. Either way, it is profitable to qualify the term with regard to the visual arts by noting that while Post-modernism endorses Pluralism in styles of paintings and eclecticism in architecture and fractured narratives in film and literature, it is by no means resolved at the present time (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Primary Colours: The smallest number of colours considered necessary to mix the whole range of perceivable colours, or, in the case of coloured lights, to mix white light. In the Subtractive Mixture of paints, the primary colours are considered to be red, yellow, and blue; but in mixing lights, it was found in the mid-nineteenth century that any two colours sufficiently far apart in the spectrum could mix to white. Nevertheless the ideal additive primaries are found to be red, green, and blue. (Gage, 2006)

Realism: In art is beleaguered with problems since art is not 'real'. It is a term commonly confused with Naturalism – in which artists depict subjects which are 'true to life' or use technical means which closely approximate the way things 'really' appear. (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Semiotics: A general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages and comprises syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. (Merriam-Webster, 2009)

Structuralism: A tradition of thought that emerged in continental Europe during the mid-1950s. Thinkers approaching a subject from a structuralist perspective try to understand the

ordering oppositions of the subject they are analysing. Derrida critiques the reliance on binary oppositions by structuralist thinkers, perceiving a repetition of the hierarchical structures ordering the Western tradition that structuralists often thought they were critiquing. (Richards, 2008)

Supermatism: Suprematism patented by the Russian artist Kasimir Malevich in 1915, Suprematism was a short-lived Abstract art movement. Characterized by paintings of geometrical, coloured shapes, it is invariably linked to border Russian Constructivism, since both were Abstract art movements (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Surrealism: French Surrealism formally dates from 1924 when the first Surrealist Manifesto was published. Growing, in part, out of Dada, Surrealism developed into a more self-conscious 'art movement' – with a leader, Andre Breton, and a shared set of aims and principles, Surrealism in also wider movement in western art which is still practised today (Dawtrey, Jackson, Masterton, Meecham, & Wood, 1996)

Symbolism: Symbolizing is a universal human phenomenon (although the connotations of particular symbols vary from culture to culture and even from individual to individual), but it became a particular aesthetic creed in the late nineteenth century, particularly in France. Symbols always convey more than they show; and it is usually only those spectators who are in the know who are able to penetrate far below the surface. (Gage, 2006)

Trial and error: Experimentation or investigation in which various methods or means are tried and faulty ones eliminated in order to find the correct solution or to achieve the desired result or effect. (Dictionary.com, 2009)

Trait: Trait – French word for 'trace' or 'trait'. As with writing, Derrida expands the term trait to include an array of figures, both graphic and visual. The term arises frequently in Derrida's considerations of art. On different occasions, trait becomes a term marking the absence of the artist, while also being that which gives an artist her or his identity. Identity is attached to a material trace, creating an illusion of presence that Derrida's texts deconstruct. (Richards, 2008)

Utopia: Imaginary and ideal country in Utopia (1516) by Sir Thomas More, from Greek ou not, no + topos place Date: 1597. (Merriam-Webster, 2009)

Visual culture: Visual culture is a field of study that generally includes some combination of cultural studies, art history, critical theory, philosophy, and anthropology, by focusing on aspects of culture that rely on visual images. (Wikipedia, 2009)

Glossary: Bedouin and Sadu Terms

Alhuodej (Hodaj): (n.) Camel litter used by women when travelling. Also "Qabeet". (Crichton, 1998, p.82)

Bait Al-Shaar: or 'House of hairs' the traditional black-haired tent, was the home and shelter of the Bedouin. It was made primarily from a mixture of goat's hair and sheep's wool. (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.19)

Bedouins in Kuwait: Bedouins in Kuwait have their own habits and traditions. They play a major role in the life of the Kuwaiti society with regard to commercial trade and earning a living, and other activities they practice inside the "Walls of Kuwait" which separate the civilized areas and the capital from the agricultural areas like "Al-Jahra" in Kuwait. (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.4)

Dhrus elkhail: (n. pl.) teeth, dhirs (n. sing.); elkhail is horse in Arabic. A tooth of the horse is a design in Sadu. (Crichton, 1998, p.82)

Gata (Ibjad): patterned tent divider used for privacy or to cover the beddings and camel litters, tent dividers were regarded as an important part of the women's possessions and accompanied her to her marriage. It's usually made of four strips of woven cloth "to a height of a man," as the women would say. (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.20)

Handicraft: 1 a: manual skill **b:** an occupation requiring skill with the hands
2: the articles fashioned by those engaged in handicraft. (Merriam-Webster, 2010)

Midhkhar: (n.) A Sadu design made up of two pyramidal shaped clusters of dots with their heads touching, thus creating an impression of two bunches of flowers. This interpretation would be valid if we derive midhkhar from zakhar <v.) to blossom. It could also be derived from Al Idhkhar (n.) a sweet smelling plant. (Crichton, 1998, p.80)

Natural colours: the colours that represented from the Kuwaiti desert environment, like beige and brown from the sand, black and white from the animals in the desert etc. (Crichton, 1998, p.11)

Sadu: The word Al Sadu in Ibn Mandhurs' Lissan Al Arab one of the earliest known encyclopaedic dictionaries of the 13 c. denotes the extension of the hand towards an object, as when camels move forward with their fore legs. The word Sadu equally implies the movement of the head as in the way camels and horses move with their heads thrust forward. Earlier, Al Jawhari (died 398 H) in his book Al Sahah adds that the word Al Sadu also means the long and gentle stride of the camels. Al Sadi is the term used for warping and means what is extended. (Crichton, 1998, p.11)

Sadu: in the wildest linguistic application Al Sadu means: to extend or to stretch and spread, and, as used by the Bedouin of Kuwait it means the process of wool weaving, the actual woven objects as well as the loom itself. (Crichton, 1998, p.11)

Sadu: "AlSadu" is the term traditionally used by the Bedouins of Kuwait to denote the process of wool weaving, the woven objects and the loom. It literally means 'to extend and stretch out'. (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.18)

Shajarah: (n. sing.) *Shajara* (v.) to differ. A design in Sadu, erroneously I think, translated as the tree pattern. This is the only pattern in Sadu weaving where different designs (pictures) appear in sequence, as opposed to the other patterns where one single unit is repeated over and over again. The design of a tree as such, does not appear in any of the pictures. I would therefore rather translate it as the "vari-form" pattern. (Crichton, 1998, p.83)

Shajarah: The Shajarah pattern in an old traditional weaving structure popular among the Bedouin of Kuwait. However, because of its complexity and the fact that it is time consuming, few weavers are skilled in it and it appears mostly on cherished woven pieces such the 'ibjad' (Gata), tent dividers, and some 'Udul', (Hodaj) the camel bags. (Al-Sabah, 2001, p.44)

Uwairjan: (n.) diminutive of 'Urjun, a bunch, cluster of grapes or dates. The 'Uwairjan design in Sadu depicts a row of pyramidal shaped dots that could represent a triangular motif in the Arabian desert. 'Araja (v.) to bend, 'Uwairjan could therefore also mean a curving line. (Crichton, 1998, p.83)

Weave: The order of interlacing wrap and weft yarns to make a cloth. (Crichton, 1998, p.80)

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Chapter eight

Appendix E

Appendix A

Field study report: first Interview with Sami Mohammed
September 20, 2007

Field Study Report: first Interview with Sami Mohammed

A 5 hour and a half interview conducted on September 20, 2007. At 8:00 p.m. at the residence of Sami Mohammed in Sharjah, UAE.

This is a summary report of a one and a half month field study in Kuwait, including a visit to Sami Mohammed's workshop in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. I spent 2 days in Dubai. I visited Sharjah to meet Sami Mohammed in a residence undergoing renovation and modification. Part of the residence will be converted into a studio, and another larger part into a gallery to display his works of art from the Seventies to date. I visited him on my insistence, because he does not allow any visits before the completion of the building and his works.

The interview lasted for around 5 and half hours as an open conversation. Indeed, I believe that the interviewee should feel comfortable during the discussion, especially if you wish to obtain new or rare information, because the question/answer method holds him back. The first question was about art in Kuwait and Sami's disappointing, strained relationship with authorities concerned with fine arts in the country, the first being Kuwait Arts Association and the second, (NCCAL) National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, a governmental authority. Sami Mohammed indicated that, contrary to logic, the conflict between the two authorities was not about arts in Kuwait but about undeserving individuals taking up certain posts.

The interest of art is not served:

The said conflict caused harm to Sami Mohammed as an artist. In fact, a section of Kuwait Arts Association did not attend his exhibition in November 2006 because he hired a gallery from National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature. Sami stressed that such actions and conflicts did not serve the interests of art, and did not encourage novice painters to produce innovative work.

A step toward becoming world famous:

With regard to sculptures, Sami Mohammed indicated that a company by the name of "Christie's", based in the United Kingdom in London and having agents in Dubai, contacted him to purchase some of his works and put them up for auction in London. This is very good, for I believe that no other Kuwaiti artist was given the chance to have his artworks auctioned outside Kuwait. My own conclusion is that Sami Mohammed does not need

Kuwait Arts Association because he is a founder of the arts movement in Kuwait and is pursuing his work to date. Any support given to him will be in recognition of his 50-year art journey.

Sadu and human hardship:

We talked about his distinguished Sadu works in the early Seventies, and the reasons why he abandoned them and turned to factual abstract expression that reflected human issues. When I said that I wished to discuss the Sadu works because of their excellence and to keep these traditions alive, he replied that he did not abandon such works of art but that they were an outlet of his imagination and love for the Sadu traditions. He added that it was always stressful for him to start works with human hardship content. The ugliness of object in which Sami wants to show human hardship is stressful, contrary to Sadu, subject matter, where free expression in line, aesthetic value of colours and element association inside the painting is like coordinating plants and caring for a beautiful garden.

Sami prefers to reflect human experience rather than culture and traditions. In his opinion, the issue of human hardship carries a message to all nations because the world is full of stories of hardship, whether known or unknown. Sami stated that his Sadu works were just experiments and did not reflect what he still hopes to achieve with Sadu crafts. For me, a researcher in the same field of specialisation of Sami Mohammed, these crafts are a gap. Expression through Sadu may be taken to several levels and completed in different ways in terms of technique or raw materials and the number thereof.

Sami Mohammed produced around 250 works of Sadu named as numbered. The last part was called *Saduwiyat*. Since many Sadu crafts were produced, the title *Saduwiyat* was followed by numbers.

When asked about the similarity between his works and those of Joan Miro, he mentioned being influenced by Miro in the beginning. There was no awareness of global art in the Sixties in Kuwait, and he perused books he would either bring from abroad himself or ask someone to send to him. He was also influenced by Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee and others. He said that similarity does not mean a drop in the value of the work. Every art work will have its own characteristics. Influence is important for building the personality of the artist. He should be acquainted with the works of other artists before him. When the works of artists living in different countries are gathered, some affinity or the same spirit and method may be detected. You are confident that they have never met. This is what is called

in our culture "accidental identity of thoughts", meaning that two persons have never met but have something in common, which could be expression in works, elements or colour.

Moral encouragement:

He gave me some encouraging words when he said that I was the only person using Sadu at the time. I had told him that if I did not, another person would have used it. Indeed, any Kuwaiti artist would rarely adopt Sadu as a subject of his works. Throughout my art journey, I have found that there were only experiments submitted from time to time but no artists who considered Sadu as both research and art at the same time, except you. I sincerely hope that you will concern yourself with this field even after completing your academic research. I hope to see these studies and experiments compiled in a book that will benefit the public and would be a main source of art, visual culture and traditions.

Sami stressed the importance of the deep-rooted Sadu tradition in the Kuwaiti culture. Sadu is a craft exercised by Bedouin women who have nothing to do during the day but serve their families. The Sadu craft was their hobby. They would do something they loved and inherited from their forefathers. This is why I link the importance of the research with the originality of its title because it contains Sadu. Everyone knows that there were no machines and no technology at the time.

Sami's action for merging Sadu with art:

During the Eighties, Sami tried to take up the Sadu art. He performed Sadu designs to be ready for weaving. However, the difficulty lay in execution, for it was hard for Bedouins to produce exactly the same design, for they were used to weave by instinct and not according to a harmonious design, which confirms the originality of Sadu and its nature as an inherited work dating back 400 years and more. Bedouin women would recommend their daughters to take up and not abandon the craft.

Sami added that Sadu and its designs were executed much more easily than those performed by instinct. The exhibition was inaugurated at the Sadu House in Kuwait. Forty weaving pieces were produced according to designs performed and executed by Sami. Most weaves were suspended carpets. On the inauguration day, most pieces were sold. Almost all visitors were VIPs including ambassadors of foreign countries, the Sultan of Oman and the senior sheikhs of Kuwait.

According to Sami, many weaves are found around the world and some are alike. However, Sadu in Kuwait is distinguished by its triangular shape which is weaved in several forms

and sizes. Kuwaiti Bedouin women used their comb motifs at the time to repetition patterns. The viewer did not know that that was only a symbol from a comb. Repetition of the elements inside the weaving piece gave it more value and simplicity. Bedouin women also adopted the shape of scorpions which abounded in the desert. However, the shape of scorpions was abandoned because the women found it difficult to execute the details of the form on the woven fabric, which distinguishes the form used in the weave as a scorpion.

Appendix B

Interviews with Yahya Swailem

September 5, 2009

Interviews with Yahya Swailem, September 5, 2009

Interviews with Yahya Swailem at Boshehri Gallery in Kuwait held on September 5, 2009 at 9:10 p.m. Swailem works as an art education teacher for the Ministry of Education in Kuwait since the Nineteen sixty two and he is currently the director of Boshehri Gallery and an art critic. He also wrote many articles regarding art in general and a book about Spring Exhibitions in Kuwait that was issued two months ago.

The interview will be carried out as a dialogue and not as questions and answers in order to cover all axes of the research in general.

Researcher: You discussed in the introduction of your book the emergence of art in the Kuwaiti environment and the nature of the population in this area as well as the division of the region between Bedouins who travel the desert and civilised who live by the sea. I wonder what makes the Kuwaiti artist from both environment, whether Bedouin or civilised, express is inner soul by mean of a painting. Is it a feeling that turns into an art consciousness translating the feelings of this artist or is it the participation of the artist in painting the environment in which he was raised and exposing his traditions to people at that time?

Swailem: The people of Kuwait, as you said, are divided into two groups, those who belong to the sea side and those who belong to the Bedouin society of the desert where they travel a lot. Those who belong to Bedouin society have their own traditions and arts and are for example affected by the Sadu, a female hobby and handicraft where the needs of women and Bedouin societies are met by means of Sadu that is also a hobby. Affected by the same environment, Sadu is made of camels and goats' hair and we can see how the environment not only had its impact on the needs of Bedouins but also on the hobby of Bedouin women through which they can express their art. But we can notice that men only contribute in cutting and washing camels and goats' hair and then, women works on Sadu until the final stages. But we can also observe that Bedouin men and women are interested in exposing that environment through the fabrication and selling of Sadu to society in the past and then developed until the Sadu Society became responsible for such activity.

Researcher: My research revealed that the Bedouin woman chose the colours in an indirect and unintentional manner during the weaving process of Sadu, is that true?

Swailem: Yes, that is true, the choices were unintentional but their senses provided balance to the weave itself. This process is related to feelings and not the attentiveness to colours as such. And it is well known that Sadu handicraft is inherited among Bedouin women.

Researcher: Is it possible that Sadu is based on communication until it reached the Bedouin women? In other words, can we discover the origin of this handicraft?

Swailem: Of course not, because it is inherited, but if we would like to go back to its basis, we see that it reached this area due to the communication of human in this region with those before them who at their turn were surrounded by the Babel civilisations in the north, such as Iraq for example, and a different civilisation in Iran and the Islamic civilisation in the south and its expansion until reaching China and its old civilisation where we can notice a minor resemblance in fabrics all over the world.

Researcher: What's the reason behind the disappearance of Sadu handicraft in Kuwait? Are development and construction behind it? Is it the fault of government officials and those who are in charge of cultural institutions? Or is it the fault of the society members themselves?

Swailem: There is a link between all these reasons. At first, the encouragement of officials decreased. For example, at the beginning of the seventies, the Kuwait National Museum held exhibitions directed by civilians and not the government, in addition to a material and moral encouragement from their part. We also see that all craftsmen, not only Sadu craftsmen, left such handicrafts since the discovery of petroleum and headed towards civilised employment and petroleum companies as the Bedouin girls headed towards education and public employment and thus ceasing the handicraft inheritance from mothers to daughters that do not have enough time to learn handicrafts as they go to schools and universities.

Researcher: Even Sadu House did not constantly contribute in this regard and its members only sought outshining in the society through the institution?

Swailem: That is true, because the members were of the best founders but did not pursue their work until Sadu House became intellectually and culturally distant from society. Even the sessions organised by them were attended by foreigners and not Kuwaitis and as for the Bedouin weavers who used to weave at Sadu House, only two were left and the others barely attend.

Researcher: Did the technology and the development of life drive Bedouins away from this handicraft?

Swailem: Of course, this is the main reason. The impact of television and modern markets as well as make up and other form of luxuries for women themselves made this handicraft less appealing to them specially since Bedouin women started driving cars in the eighties and found other means to entertain themselves other than Sadu handicraft, house chores and weaving.

Researcher: Do you think that if Sadu handicraft was enlisted among the girls' curricula, it would have positively affected the persistence of this handicraft?

Swailem: Yes, that will result in a whole different situation. It will help us constantly preserve this patrimony throughout future generations. But it is hard to guarantee that girls would like this handicraft and excel in it. But eventually awareness shall be maintained, thus affecting the personality of girls in their young age.

Researcher: We will now talk about the art in Kuwait. After reading your book and through the information I collected during my research, I discovered that art in Kuwait was initially related to that person, Mu'ejib Al-Dossari, and that is what you mentioned in your book. My attention was especially caught by a valuable information which the poem written by the poet Mullah Rashid Al-Seif for the opening of the 1st Spring Exhibition in which his paid tribute to Mu'ejib Al-Dossari while he is known for not mentioning the artist name in his poems in the Gulf region?

Swailem: The fact that Mullah Rashid Al-Seif wrote this poem and praised Mu'ejib Al-Dossari was a strange and beautiful gesture, even though this poet was religious and not

acquainted with art, but the efforts made by Mu'ejib Al-Dossari through teaching art and his artistic contribution as works in the exhibition raised his opinion. Many articles written by Mu'ejib Al-Dossari were published in *Al-Bi'sa* magazine published in Cairo where he exposed his ideas and his admiration for art. He also published an article in the Sixties in which he mentioned a very beautiful sentence about colours, their importance and value for human beings where he said: "Let us imagine that God "Allah" created this life only in black and white, how it would look like?" He always used to wear a pair of trousers and a shirt instead of the national or the folkloric costume. What I intend to say is that he was open-minded and not living in his closed environment because all Kuwaiti men at that time used to wear the national costume. He used to bring book about western art and show them to his students at his place in order to discuss art with his students. Among his students who became artists, Tareq Sayed Rajab, Issa Bushehri and Abdullah Taki.

Researcher: It is hard to look up a history that was not written in details. During my research, I found that along with the art contributions of Mu'ejib Al-Dossari in Kuwaiti, as a Kuwaiti, I found many other ideas not related to Mu'ejib Al-Dossari such as the Spring Exhibition and art exhibitions in general?

Swailem: Yes, there was an Egyptian art teacher and critic in Kuwait at that time, in the Fifties, called Mohmud Humeda, who got the idea of establishing most exhibitions related to art in Kuwait and he demanded the increase of art awareness in Kuwait due to the presence of many talents. He also suggested the establishment of the Free Atelier that is considered as one of the most appealing places for talented people as a workshop/studios where they can constantly practice their art and among them were Sami Mohammed, Khalifa Al-Qattan and many other artists from the first generation in addition to the contribution of Mohmud Humeda in art articles published in *Al-Arabi* magazine.

Researcher: The artist Tareq Sayed Rajab has a painting entitled *Fatat* (a girl) that represents a Kuwaiti girl wearing the folkloric costume *Thoub* (Garment) and in the background Sadu ornaments. Did the artist want to highlight the beauty of the girl or the patrimonial aspect whether by her costume or the Sadu ornament?

Swailem: The first artist who highlighted patrimony or used patrimony in art was Mu'ejib Al-Dossari and Tareq Sayed Rajab is one of his students. Mu'ejib Al-Dossari taught the

beginners to benefit from traditions. He also focused a lot on them because he wanted to illustrate the patrimony and the environment through art. This approach affected the subjects of artists' works. As for your question, I'd say that Tareq Sayed Rajab wanted to highlight the patrimony through the garment of the Kuwaiti girls during a social event as well as the ornament in the background to show that Sadu is present in the life of a Kuwaiti and is displayed as such.

Researcher: What do culture and arts mean to Kuwaiti media in your opinion? Because I realised that daily newspapers don't have a section for arts even books that about art as a culture in Kuwait are very rare?

Swailem: You are revealing a very important aspect which is the social awareness for art and culture. I was writing articles for the *Al-Qabas* newspaper from almost ten years and I started to introduce some Kuwaiti artists from an artistic critical manner, and I started with an entire page about the artist Ayoub Hussein as an artist specialised in patrimonial subjects in his paintings. Many readers liked this page, but unfortunately, the editor cancelled this page and not the editor in chief because the editor is generally responsible for the newspaper and sometimes he is its owner. This page was cancelled because he didn't want anything related to art culture or art in general as he thought that it does not interest readers nor grant the newspaper any precedence or distinction. This is the temperament of daily newspapers' editors. I say that because I've been writing articles for thirty years now and I tried hard to publish any in a daily newspaper.

Researcher: When did art officially started in Kuwait, I mean in its official form when artists from foreign countries began participating in Kuwaiti exhibitions?

Swailem: In1958, the Conference of Arab States authors was held and at that time, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah instructed the Minister of Knowledge Council which is equivalent to the Ministry of Education to benefit from the presence of Arabs in Kuwait and Abdul Aziz Hussein, the head of Knowledge Council, suggested focusing on art so Kuwaiti artists can get into contact with Arab artists. Therefore, they held an exhibition along with the conference for any artist who wishes to participate. The first conference was held in Cairo, the second in Beirut, the third in Damascus and the fourth in Kuwait. At that time, Egypt, Lebanon and Damascus were the cradle of literature and culture but Kuwait was

chosen as a result of its cultural awakening. Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah wanted to hold the conference under the title of "Arab Championship" to give initiate competitiveness among artists and incite them to bring the best they have. That's how changes began, it was the first time that Kuwait hold an art exhibition for the sake of art itself because previously all exhibitions were organised by schools or in relation with education. This exhibition was held as a competition where winning works were chosen and granted encouraging rewards. Most artists were from Palestine and Egypt.

Researcher: What really drew my attention during the exhibition is that most paintings were about war and victory and what is called "Arab Nationalism" while subject such as patrimony and environment were absent, even the Kuwaiti artist Ayoub Hussein drew a portrait of the Egyptian President Jamal Abdul Nasser?

Swailem: Yes because at that time, Arabs were witnessing civil wars and Sinai war in Egypt as well as the liberation of Algeria and other from Colonialism. The most important factor was the independence of these countries from colonisation and Ayoub Hussein was influenced by that as Kuwait provided national support for Arab countries as it is the Gulf country that most backed the issues of Arab countries and has strong relations with Lebanon and Egypt. The Kuwaiti community was also interested in literature and introduced magazines and books from Egypt and Lebanon who used to translate many important western books and this is what distinguishes Kuwait from other Gulf countries with merits to the literary side.

Researcher: What types of foreign magazines were introduced to Kuwait?

Swailem: There were Egyptian magazines such as *Al-Moqtataf* and *Al-Hilal* in the Twenties and Thirties. Many Arab authors visited Kuwait and gave lectures in Al-Mubarakia School and whoever attended the lectures would go and recount them to his friends and parents which increased the intellectual and literary awareness in the Kuwaiti society in addition to western travelers who visited Kuwait where they were welcomed and narrated what they saw and heard thus leading to the increase of the level of culture in Kuwait.

Researcher: When did Kuwaiti artist became aware of modern art?

Swailem: It started late and it's hard for me to determine which year exactly. But even Arab artists when they became acquainted with modern art, they did not study it, they just imitated western artists. So did Kuwaiti artists as they became aware of modern art, they started imitating it without focusing on the critical aspects of the art itself. That was the result of the French campaign in Egypt that brought along a number of French artists and scientists as some of them left the French campaign and settled in Egypt where they opened workshops for teaching painting to the children of rich people and kings in Egypt. This had a positive impact on the art on Egypt leading to the establishment of the First College of Fine Arts in Egypt in the year eighteen five. Some western teachers and artists began teaching in Egypt which increase awareness in the Arab region in General and Kuwait in particular. But it is hard for me to determine the year when modern art began in Kuwait. You evoked a very important subject and I've never thought before about the beginning of modern art in Kuwait.

Researcher: The American Women Exhibition has certainly an impact on Kuwaiti art, but the question is: what's the form of such impact?

Swailem: the 'American Women Exhibition' has definitely had an impact due to Kuwaiti artists' association with American female artists dealing with art as a talent and not an occupation. The helpfulness appeared in some information about the western art provided by these artists due to their existence in the United States and familiarity with western art schools and artists. This helped the Kuwaiti artists to observe what these artists display through their work and use of colour differently from the method and kind of colour used by the Kuwaiti artist, and contributed to opening the Kuwaiti artist's intellectual capacities. On the other hand, there's a very important point which is the association of both women and men in one place within the exhibition. Previously, this didn't exist when exhibitions were held for men exclusively and only one day used to be dedicated to families. During four or five years, the exhibition continued to be held many times with different artists, but unfortunately there's a lack of good documentation of such exhibition, thus, I don't have sufficient information that allows me to provide further details.

Researcher: The Institute of Teachers then became the College of Basic Education; did they contribute to raising awareness about Kuwaiti art?

Swailem: I think that the Institute of Teachers was a place dedicated to shaping the skills of art teachers and not artists. The process focuses on transforming the student joining the Institute to an art teacher and not an artist, including your father "Mohammed Albehairi". So I say "yes" it helped in raising awareness but on an individual level and not in the whole society. The big step made in late Eighties which transformed the Institute to the College of Basic Education had lots of contributions to art education in terms of curricula and the increase of scientific courses within the art education department, helping the student to be creative and show their talents. However, at the end, the student will graduate from the college as an art teacher due to the curriculums that focus on education more than arts. This is the policy adopted by the Government because it needs teachers and not artists.

Researcher: Do you think that, through this research focusing on the innovation of Sadu motifs related to Bedouin society, there will be a positive impact on the culture of the current Kuwaiti society through their perception of modern art which now presents the legacy inherited from the ancestors, and renews its form to facilitate its access to the society?

Swailem: From my point of view as an art critic and art teacher in Kuwait since the Sixties, through the pictures of works produced by you that I have seen in the course of this research, no one focused on Sadu in such a manner as a study and analysis. The mere talk of modern art in Kuwait is positivity in itself, the impact of which on society will certainly be significant especially in terms of its perception of art, through the existing Sadu motifs in a modern and innovative form being complementary to Sami Mohammed's previous achievement. However, what makes your research distinctive is its big interest in the critical and artistic aspects and not the heritage specifically, the fact that gives it great importance. From my point of view, this research is an actual result of what Sami Mohammed was searching for after Sadu Project, and what Zahra A.H.Ali indicated in her book about Sami Mohammed and Sadu Project. Even Bedouin society will be attracted to what will present its heritage, whether the visual media or visual art.

Appendix C

Jacques Derrida's
"Letter to a Japanese Friend"

"Letter to a Japanese Friend"

10 July 1983
Dear Professor Izutsu,

At our last meeting I promised you some schematic and preliminary reflections on the word "deconstruction". What we discussed were prolegomena to a possible translation of this word into Japanese, one which would at least try to avoid, if possible, a negative determination of its significations or connotations. The question would be therefore what deconstruction is not, or rather ought not to be. I underline these words "possible" and "ought". For if the difficulties of translation can be anticipated (and the question of deconstruction is also through and through the question of translation, and of the language of concepts, of the conceptual corpus of so-called "western" metaphysics), one should not begin by naively believing that the word "deconstruction" corresponds in French to some clear and univocal signification. There is already in "my" language a serious [sombre] problem of translation between what here or there can be envisaged for the word, and the usage itself, the reserves of the word. And it is already clear that even in French, things change from one context to another. More so in the German, English, and especially American contexts, where the same word is already attached to very different connotations, inflections, and emotional or affective values. Their analysis would be interesting and warrants a study of its own.

When I chose the word, or when it imposed itself on me - I think it was in *Of Grammatology* - I little thought it would be credited with such a central role in the discourse that interested me at the time. Among other things I wished to translate and adapt to my own ends the Heidggerian word Destruktion or Abbau. Each signified in this context an operation bearing on the structure or traditional architecture of the fundamental concepts of ontology or of Western metaphysics. But in French "destruction" too obviously implied an annihilation or a negative reduction much closer perhaps to Nietzschean "demolition" than to the Heideggerian interpretation or to the type of reading that I proposed. So I ruled that out. I remember having looked to see if the word "deconstruction" (which came to me it seemed quite spontaneously) was good French. I found it in the Littré. The grammatical, linguistic, or rhetorical senses [portees] were found bound up with a "mechanical" sense

[portee "machinique"]. This association appeared very fortunate, and fortunately adapted to what I wanted at least to suggest. Perhaps I could cite some of the entries from the Littré.

"Deconstruction: action of deconstructing. Grammatical term. Disarranging the construction of words in a sentence. 'Of deconstruction, common way of saying construction', Lemare, De la maniére d'apprendre les langues, ch.17, in *Cours de langue Latine*. Deconstruire: 1. To disassemble the parts of a whole. To deconstruct a machine to transport it elsewhere. 2. Grammatical term... To deconstruct verse, rendering it, by the suppression of meter, similar to prose. Absolutely. ('In the system of prenotional sentences, one also starts with translation and one of its advantages is never needing to deconstruct,' Lemare, ibid.) 3. Se deconstruire [to deconstruct itself] ... to lose its construction. 'Modern scholarship has shown us that in a region of the timeless East, a language reaching its own state of perfection is deconstructed [s'est deconstruite] and altered from within itself according to the single law of change, natural to the human mind,' Villemain, *Preface du Dictionaire de l'Academie*."

Naturally it will be necessary to translate all of this into Japanese but that only postpones the problem. It goes without saying that if all the significations enumerated by the Littré interested me because of their affinity with what I "meant" [voulais-dire], they concerned, metaphorically, so to say, only models or regions of meaning and not the totality of what deconstruction aspires to at its most ambitious. This is not limited to a linguistico-grammatical model, let alone a mechanical model. These models themselves ought to be submitted to a deconstructive questioning. It is true then that these "models" have been behind a number of misunderstandings about the concept and word of "deconstruction" because of the temptation to reduce it to these models.

It must also be said that the word was rarely used and was largely unknown in France. It had to be reconstructed in some way, and its use value had been determined by the discourse that was then being attempted around and on the basis of *Of Grammatology*. It is to this value that I am now going to try to give some precision and not some primitive meaning or etymology sheltered from or outside of any contextual strategy.

A few more words on the subject of "the context". At that time structuralism was dominant. "Deconstruction" seemed to be going in the same direction since the word signified a certain attention to structures (which themselves were neither simply ideas, nor forms, nor syntheses, nor systems). To deconstruct was also a structuralist gesture or in any case a

gesture that assumed a certain need for the structuralist problematic. But it was also an antistructuralist gesture, and its fortune rests in part on this ambiguity. Structures were to be undone, decomposed, desedimented (all types of structures, linguistic, "logocentric", "phonocentric" - structuralism being especially at that time dominated by linguistic models and by a so-called structural linguistics that was also called Saussurian - socio-institutional, political, cultural, and above all and from the start philosophical.)

This is why, especially in the United States, the motif of deconstruction has been associated with "poststructuralism" (a word unknown in France until its "return" from the States). But the undoing, decomposing, and desedimenting of structures, in a certain sense more historical than the structuralist movement it called into question, was not a negative operation. Rather than destroying, it was also necessary to understand how an "ensemble" was constituted and to reconstruct it to this end. However, the negative appearance was and remains much more difficult to efface than is suggested by the grammmaar of the word (de-), even though it can designate a genealogical restoration [remonter] rather than a demolition. That is why the word, at least on its own, has never appeared satisfactory to me (but what word is), and must always be girded by an entire discourse. It is difficult to effect it afterward because, in the work of deconstruction, I have had to, as I have to here, multiply the cautionary indicators and put aside all the traditional philosophical concepts, while reaffirming the necessity of returning to them, at least under erasure. Hence, this has been called, precipitately, a type of negative theology (this was neither true nor false but I shall not enter into the debate here).

All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique and its translation would have to take that into consideration. It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a simple element, toward an indissoluble origin. These values, like that of analysis, are themselves philosophemes subject to deconstruction. No more is it a critique, in a general sense or in Kantian sense. The instance of krinein or of krisis (decision, choice, judgment, discernment) is itself, as is all the apparatus of transcendental critique, one of the essential "themes" or "objects" of deconstruction.

I would say the same about method. Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be tranformed into one. Especially if the technical and procedural significations of the word are stressed. It is true that in certain circles (university or cultural, especially in the United

States) the technical and methodological "metaphor" that seems necessarily attached to the very word deconstruction has been able to seduce or lead astray. Hence the debate that has developed in these circles: Can deconstruction become a methodology for reading and for interpretation? Can it thus be allowed to be reappropriated and domesticated by academic institutions?

It is not enough to say that deconstruction could not be reduced to some methodological instrumentality or to a set of rules and transposable procedures. Nor will it do to claim that each deconstructive "event" remains singular or, in any case, as close as possible to something like an idiom or a signature. It must also be made clear that deconstruction is not even an act or an operation. Not only because there would be something "patient" or "passive" about it (as Blanchot says, more passive than passivity, than the passivity that is opposed to activity). Not only because it does not return to an individual or collective subject who would take the initiative and apply it to an object, a text, a theme, etc.

Deconstruction takes place, it is an event that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organization of a subject, or even of modernity. It deconstructs itself. It can be deconstructed. [Ça se deconstruit.] The "it" [ça] is not here an impersonal thing that is opposed to some egological subjectivity. It is in deconstruction (the Littré says, "to deconstruct itself [se deconstruire]... to lose its construction"). And the "se" of "se deconstruire," which is not the reflexivity of an ego or of a consciousness, bears the whole enigma. I recognize, my dear driend, that in trying to make a word clearer so as to assist its translation, I am only thereby increasing the difficulties: "the impossible task of the translator" (Benjamin). This too is meant by "deconstructs".

If deconstruction takes place everywhere it [ça] takes place, where there is something (and is not therefore limited to meaning or to the text in the current and bookish sense of the word), we still have to think through what is happening in our world, in modernity, at the time when deconstruction is becoming a motif, with its word, its privileged themes, its mobile strategy, etc. I have no simple and formalizable response to this question. All my essays are attempts to have it out with this formidable question. They are modest symptoms of it, quite as much as tentative interpretations. I would not even dare to say, following a Heideggerian schema, that we are in an "epoch" of being-in-deconstruction, of a being-in-deconstruction that would manifest or dissimulate itself at one and the same time in other "epochs". This thought of "epochs" and especially that of a gathering of the destiny of being

and of the unity of its destination or its dispersions (Schicken, Geschick) will never be very convincing.

To be very schematic I would say that the difficulty of defining an therefore also of translating the word "deconstruction" stems from the fact that all the predicates, all the defining concepts, all the lexical significations, and even the syntactic articulations, which seem at one moment to lend themselves to this definition or to that translation, are also deconstructed or deconstructible, directly or otherwise, etc. And that goes for the word deconstruction, as for every word. *Of Grammatology* questioned the unity "word" and all the privileges with which is was credited, especially in its nominal form. It is therefore only a discourse or rather a writing that can make up for the incapacity of the word to be equal to a "thought". All sentences of the type "deconstruction is X" or "deconstruction is not X" a priori miss the point, which is to say that they are at least false. As you know, one of the principal things at stake in what is called in my texts "deconstruction" is precisely the delimiting of ontology and above all of the third person present indicative: S is P.

The word "deconstruction", like all other words, acquires its value only from its inscription in a chain of possible substitutions, in what is too blithely called a "context". For me, for what I have tried and still try to write, the word has interest only within a certain context, where it replaces and lets itself be determined by such other words as "ecriture", "trace", "differance", "supplement", "hymen", "pharmakon", "marge", "entame", "parergon", etc. By definition, the list can never be closed, and I have cited only names, which is inadequate and done only for reasons of economy. In fact I should have cited the sentences and the interlinking of sentences which in their turn determine these names in some of my texts.

What deconstruction is not? everything of course! What is deconstruction? nothing of course! I do not think, for all these reasons, that it is a good word [un bon mot]. It is certainly not elegant [beau]. It has definitely been of service in a highly determined situation. In order to know what has been imposed upon it in a chain of possible substitutions, despite its essential imperfection, this "highly determined situation" will need to be analyzed and deconstructed. This is difficult and I am not going to do it here. One final word to conclude this letter, which is alread too long. I do not believe that translation is a secondary and derived event in relation to an original languag or text. And as "deconstruction" is a word, as I have just said, that is essentially replaceable in a chain of substitution, then that can also be done from one language to another. The chance, first of

all the chance of (the) "deconstruction", would be that another word (the same word and an other) can be found in Japanese to say the same thing (the same and an other), to speak of deconstruction, and to lead elsewhere to its being written and transcribed, in a word which will also be more beautiful. When I speak of this writing of the other which will be more beautiful, I clearly understand translation as involving the same risk and chance as the poem. How to translate "poem"? a "poem"?...

With my best wishes,

Jacques Derrida

Wood, D., & Bernasconi, R. 1988. *Derrida and Difference*. USA: Northwestern University Press, pp. 1-6.

Appendix D

Second Interview with Sami Mohammed
May 20, 2010

Interview with the artist Sami Mohammed on May 20th, 2010

Interview with the artist Sami Mohammed on May 20th, 2010 taking his opinion about the research method and the results reached by the researcher on the practical and theoretical side:

After presenting the research idea to Sami Mohammed and to what extent he benefited from the interview with him during the first phases of the research, and the approach applied by the researcher by using "Deconstruction" in research methodology, the researcher started the interview with Sami Mohammed as follows:

Researcher: First of all, thank you for everything you provided me with in this research as a researcher and artist and especially that you know that written sources are very limited in Kuwait. What do you think about the research idea?

Sami: I am the one who should thank you for the efforts you deployed in this research when it is not easy to collect this information in addition to analysing my artistic works and other artists' works and merging the conclusions of these analysis with your study of Sadu from all its aspects in order to reach a written source in addition to an exhibition carried out in London with paintings that may be exhibited again in Kuwait and may other countries.

Researcher: What do you think about disuniting Sadu as a design and motifs and applying them in paintings?

Sami: This is a great idea. When I saw the paintings you performed during this research, I remembered how I used to analyse the Sadu ornaments and change their forms in order to make them different than the textile itself. The idea of disuniting an art emanating from a handicraft is considered an accomplishment itself since during this phase, the artist will discover many things from which we can benefit from and using the same in your paintings differs completely from using these motifs in my paintings. I think that you focused on proving the Sadu form but with a composition that differs from motifs in the same Sadu textile.

Researcher: How do you evaluate the colour philosophy in these motifs after seeing the art works accomplished in this research?

Sami: I was really impressed by the strength of colour in your paintings and especially in *Sadustic unit 7* with very beautiful colours and the space helped the colours in this painting since the balance in your paintings design of the Sadu units added a harmony with the colour and space and the vision became more harmonic. *Sadustic unit 3* has also the same harmony but in a different way in which I find more clam than the other paintings. I mentioned these two paintings since I visited you in your house studio where they impressed me by their large size and by supporting the idea of creating Sadu Modern Art and making Sadu in your paintings represent monumental art in Kuwait. Moreover, this serves Kuwait culture not only Sadu. I myself never created paintings in this size with a width of 3 meters but based on my knowledge and culture in art, modern art always presents large size paintings with colour flatness in order to add a modern touch to the work.

Researcher: When you saw my works during this research, did you notice that Sadu has a different identity compared to the original Sadu in the textile or is it the same?

Sami: I certainly felt Sadu when I saw the paintings since most of the motifs did not change but the sizes and compositions thereof changed. I mean that when I see these works I can see that you did not cancel the motif composition but you changed the disunity in some places to reuse them in different positions but the identity is still the same since it did not include any textile other than the Kuwaiti Sadu. But when we talk about colours, we can see a change in colours but the colour helps in showing your concept for a modern Sadu.

Researcher: In fact, the factors witnessed by Sadu during the previous 50 years, made me focus as a researcher on modernity in presenting these art works and reaching the current and young generation. What do you think about reaching young generation for spreading the Sadu traditional culture in a way that may attract them to their old culture?

Sami: What you are doing is very important especially in the last years in which I personally see young generations forgetting their traditions and being attracted to other cultures. It is certain that the idea you presented to me, before our conversation about the introduction of Kuwait in the globalisation concept and affecting local culture and that

requires a big effort in order to attract young generation to their ancestors' culture, about reaching young generation through modern art is excellent but it requires a big effort of researchers and analysis. Your improvement of Sadu colours in your works is considered a beginning of change as to introducing this generation to Sadu through art and increasing the art appreciation level from another side which I see is very positive.

Researcher: Do you think that the works you performed during your artistic career and my works in this research serve Sadu?

Sami: They do not serve Sadu only, they do serve Kuwait culture in general and in my opinion, when the Bedouin weaver women see these works, they will be happy since what their parents and old generation began was transferred through them is applied now in paintings and art and everywhere and may also be introduced in many matters as in my previous experience in the Eighties when I introduced Sadu to fashion where there was also positive reactions. Therefore, I think that the incompletion of the Sadu Project has a meaning now when I see the effort deployed in this research I feel that I paved the way for you and for other researchers and artists. I call that a big contribution and addition to art in Kuwait and culture in general.

Researcher: What is the change that occurred in your opinion in the visual culture of Kuwait? Do you think that young generation started to be attracted to their local culture more?

Sami: Kuwait culture was more vital and spread in the Middle East in the Seventies and Eighties. But after liberating Kuwait in 1991, the change started as to the society becoming more open and the Government gave more opportunities for studying abroad in all their academic levels, and some educational institutions specifies in the expeditions law that the student should not be sent to Arab countries but only to Western countries. This made a big change in the society culture diversity and the society became in knowledge of many other cultures which took young generations away from the culture and tradition of their country and television became to show an unlimited number of foreign channels and others which also is considered a change in the visual and audio culture in Kuwait.

Researcher: I was talking to my father the artist Mohammed Albehairi, who is a teacher at the College of Basic Education in the Art Education department, about the college from the Eighties until now, and I asked him about the number of female Bedouin students because in the period during which I worked in the faculty, I saw a big number of them studying the Art Education. He said to me that there is no study that determines the number of students in Art Education but through his career from the Eighties until now, he can see that the number of female Bedouin students started to increase from the mid Nineties. What do you personally think about this?

Sami: I think that Mohammed Albehairi is right since I, personally think that during my evaluation of some artistic exhibitions and competitions, I can see that the rate of Bedouin young women participations in art exhibitions started to increase and this shows the increase of awareness and artistic participations. Bedouin women today are not as in the old times. They are considered as any other women in the society since they started to study, work and participate of whom the attorney who stood for election in the last Parliamentary elections to the National Assembly in Kuwait and this is a big sign of change in the society so what about the artistic and cultural side. The change may be slow but exists.

Appendix E

"Sadu Afterimage" Exhibition's Materials
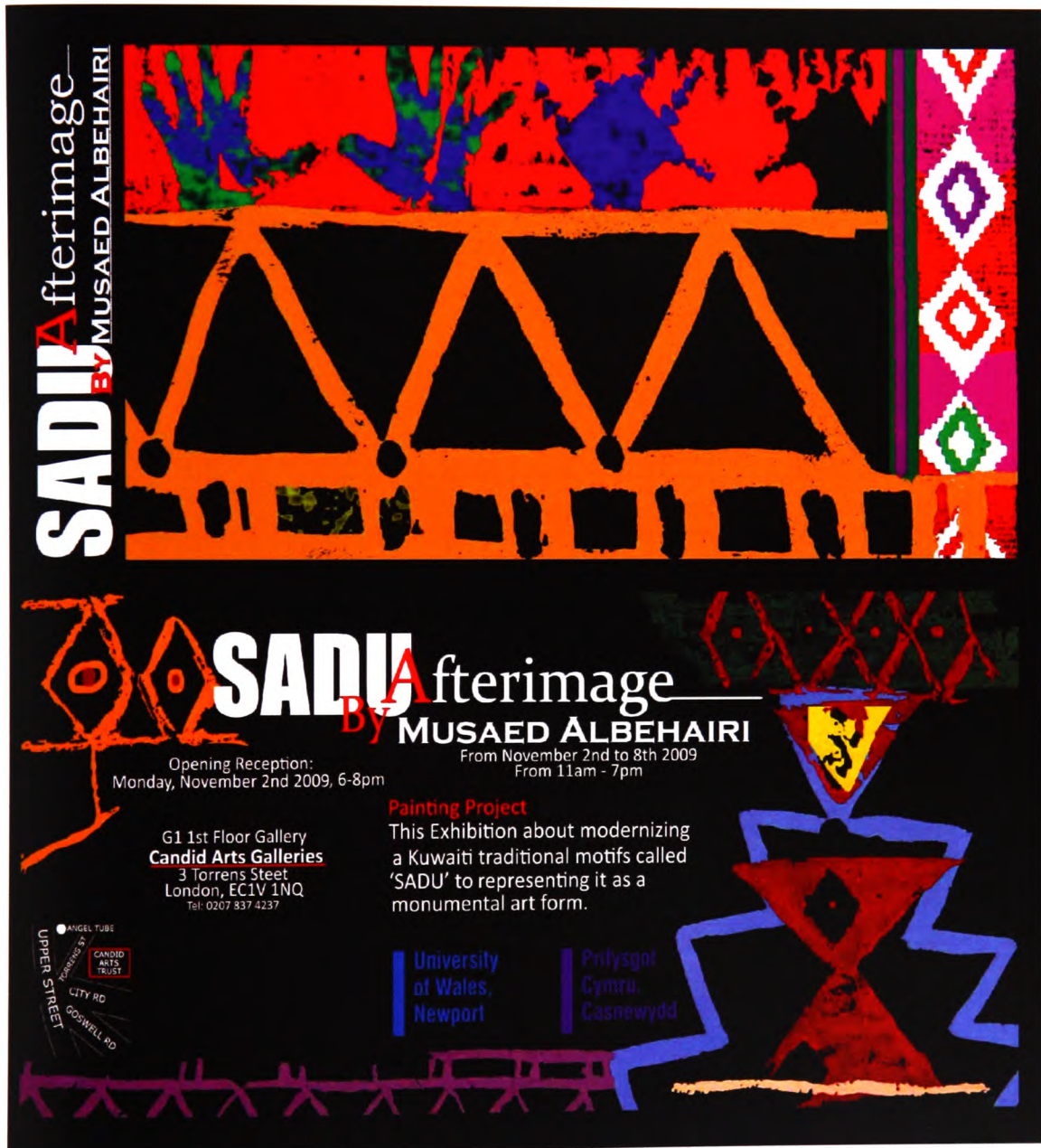
Figure 1 the invitation card of "Sadu Afterimage" Exhibition, front & back
(Created by the researcher [Musaed Albehairi])
Albehairi, M. 2 – 8 November 2009. *Sadu Afterimage*. London: G1/ Candid Arts Galleries.

Figure 2 "Sadu Afterimage" Exhibition's poster
(Created by the researcher [Musaed Albehairi])
Albehairi, M. 2 – 8 November 2009. *Sadu Afterimage*. London: G1/ Candid Arts Galleries.

Figure 3 inside the gallery of "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition 1
Photography by: Nawaf Alqenai
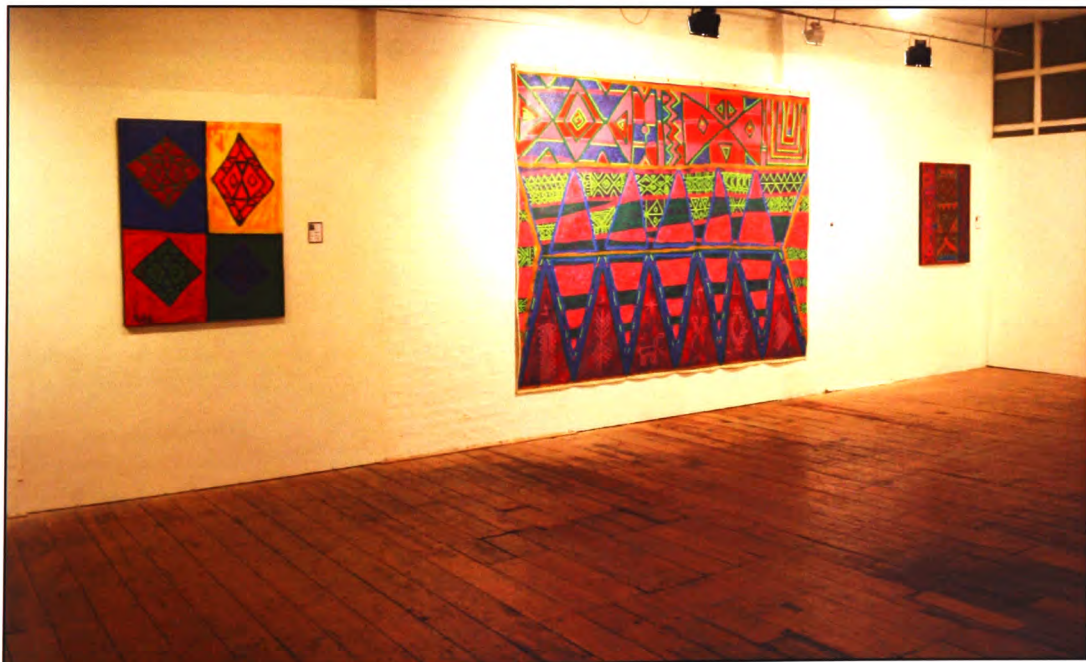
Figure 4 inside the gallery of "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition 2
Photography by: Nawaf Alqenai

Figure 5 Musaed Albehairi explaning for his painting to the audience in "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition
Photography by: Nawaf Alqenai

Figure 6 Musaed Albehairi and the ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Fakhraddin Gurbanov at "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition
Photography by: Nawaf Alqenai

Figure 7 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Awan Newspaper*
Awan Eds. 2009. Albehairi open his first exhibition in London. *Awan Newspaper*. 5 November, p.31.

Figure 8 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Al-Seyassah Newspaper*
K.U.N.A. 2009. A Story of Al Sadu in Musaed Albehairi's works. Al-Seyassah *Newspaper*. 9 November, p.39.

Figure 9 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Annahar Newspaper*

K.U.N.A. 2009. The artist Musaed Albehairi opens his first exhibition in London. Annahar *Newspaper*. 5 November, p.38.

Figure 10 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Al Watan Newspaper*

Al Watan Eds. 2009. The Kuwaiti artist Albehairi opens his exhibition in London. Al Watan *Newspaper*. 25 November, p.36.

علي الصيرفي 6   عبير بوعركي 6   رشا بهبهاني 6

التراث الكويتي.. حالة من الإبهار في العاصمة البريطانية «الفيص

افتتح الفنـان مسـاعد البحيري معرض العاصمة البريطانية لنـدن، ويدور موضوع المعرض والذي يعتبر جزءا من بحث البحيري الذي يبحث بـه الفنان في درجة الدكتـوراه وهو حول رفع مستوى الوعي الفني للأجيال الجديدة عن طريق استخدام نظرية الفن الحديث وتطوير الجانب المنسي من التراث الكويتي والذي يحتاج إلى العديد من الدراسات للتطوير ليصل إلى زمن الجيل الجديد في المجتمع.

مساعد البحيري ولوحة من ابداعاته 6

قامت مجموعة الصناعية ومبرة الدعم لمرضى السرطان بزيار بمستشفى مكي جمعة يومين مثاليين لنقد لهم من منتجات الفيـ يأتي من منطلق تحف مجموعة الفيصل في المجتمع الكويتي الأمـ وكان من اهـداف الـ المريض سعيدا حتى يـ ويعيش للتفاؤل وذلـ الجانب الاجتماعي والنـ المريض في استجـا بصورة سريعة.

مع ممثل سفارة دولة الكويت في بريطانيا 6

Figure 11 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Aldar Newspaper*
Aldar Eds. 2009. Kuwait heritage as a case of dazzling at the Britain's Capital. Aldar *Newspaper*. 16 November, p.20.

Figure 12 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Alanba Newspaper*
Abu Sedo, Z. 2009, Albehairi used the symbols from the old Sadu textile. *Alanba Newspaper,* 15 November, p.30.

Figure 13 About "Sadu Afterimage" exhibition in *Assabah Newspaper*
Assabah Eds. 2009, Musaed Albehairi opens his first exhibition in London. *Assabah Newspaper*, 5 November, p.29.