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# Painting our conflicts: A Thematic Analysis Study on The role of artists in peacemaking and conflict resolution

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Painting our conflicts: A Thematic Analysis Study on  
The role of artists in peacemaking and conflict resolution

by

Kumail Almusaly

A Dissertation Presented to the  
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University  
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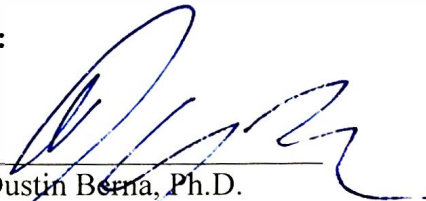
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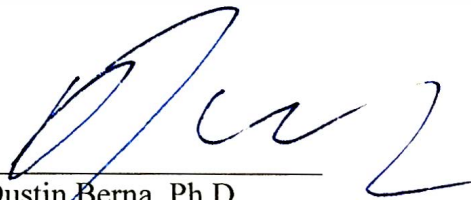
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## Abstract

Artists have involved with their different styles and approaches to help resolving conflicts all over the world. They help in raising awareness of different conflicts through their activities that engage people with art. The creative elements of the art also help in exploring various means of conflict resolution and problem solving (Lumsden, 1997). This study examines the role of artist in society in the framework of conflict resolution and peacemaking. A qualitative research method is used in this research, which in result provides a better understanding of the work of Middle Eastern artists. The research includes in-depth interviews with two artists from the Gulf countries: Abbas Almosawi; a Bahraini artist, and Abdalnasser Gharem; a Saudi artist. The focus of this research is to identify the roles that artists play in society with respect to conflict resolution and peacemaking. Through utilizing a thematic analysis method to analyze the data, the finding identified six roles the artist plays in the society: 1) Observation. 2) Identifying problems. 3) reflection. 4) Partnering with NGO's. 5) Leadership. 6) Influence. The research is also an attempt to shed the light on aspects that can help conflict resolution practitioners to apply the arts for their benefits and increase the effectiveness of their work. The research includes examples of art activities as well as artworks from various artists from the Middle East that show the level of involvement of art in conflict resolution and peacemaking.

## Chapter 1: The Introduction

### **Introduction**

The course of writing this dissertation is a huge step in the academic life. Carving such an astonishing journey in the writing has impacted and influenced my academic progress enormously. When this work began, I thought it would be the end of my academic life as a student. Nevertheless, reality proves that time and place are not necessarily accurate tools to measure the learning process. The eager for development and empowerment drives us through various channels to absorb the proper knowledge needed for those ambitions. This work has enabled me to critically examine existing facts about the field of conflict resolution and to analytically reason its relationship with other fields. I have always been interested in human interaction and have been attracted to the matters that can enhance it. With regards to this paper, the intent of this proposal is to examine the relationship between the field of conflict resolution and the field of art. Art is a very powerful tool that has the ability to impact how individuals interact within a community. As Hawes (2007) stated, “Art can influence the way people interpret, perceive, and ultimately act in their communities” . There is a need to examine the dynamics between art and social science to understand this influence from the art on individual and how artists are using the arts to create social changes.

The intent of this research developed out of conviction and concern for peacemaking as well as to invite other fields and engage them with conflict resolution approaches. Testing the outcomes that are generated by this converge produces an opportunity to appreciate how advancing the work can be. Curiosity in this matter drives

my ambition to comprehend how artists work in the presence of a conflict and whether their work helps resolve the conflict. I am also curious to know how a conflict can be provocative to an artist and how it brings to his attention the obligation to act against its presence. To reach that level of comprehension, however, there is a need to test that inevitable existence of the relationship and the truth behind it. Examining the existence of conflict provides a series of lenses from which we can understand the nature of the relationship and how the factors interact with each other. We can then benefit the field of conflict resolution by providing other possible means to affect conflicts rapidly. This can happen through engaging community members who are not necessarily experts in resolving conflicts but can rather make a huge difference.

Throughout history, art has had so many uses, namely spiritual, political, social, economic, and historical. However, the function and effects of art are not subjected and limited to the individual as an artist. It exceeds that to form an access for achievement, accomplishment, and possibly creating change. There are several arguments that have discussed art's functionality trying to reach a true understanding of what art is and what it can do, which is discussed later on in this paper. In addition, there is an interference of understanding whether art is good or bad/or what is good art. Generally speaking, art can serve both ways depending on how the artist is implementing it and what his intentions are.

For instance, it can be used in political confrontations to create a propaganda that serve one party over another and indeed will be favored by one and hated by the other. As Belfiore and Bennett (2008) mentioned "Art as propaganda has a long history" . Artists

can use the power of image that can communicate to many people from different ethnic backgrounds, race, and religious; they can also, with the use of image, transcend the limitation of language and literacy. With one image they can convey a lot of messages and tackle people's emotions or create fear within them.

Art is subjected, constantly, to the recipient taste which varies from a person to the other. However, the message contained within the artwork goes beyond the matter of taste and still gets the message across. Fauvism, for instance, can be very disturbing to many people; nonetheless, it serves the artist who wants to emphasize individual expression. Provided that, art can be so beneficial to conflict resolution and to the society in general despite the way people implement it or perceive it.

There are many shared features between conflict resolution and the arts. They both contain a dynamic structure within them that is based on interaction. Moreover, both of these fields can influence human interaction and can lead to social change. The group dynamics and the social structure might be shaped differently during the process of resolving the conflict (Mannix, 2003). Art can be seen as an evidence that leads to the existence of humanity and can visually convey a lot about the individual understanding of human interaction. It also constructs a reflection of humanity and human existence. Understanding the communication dynamics of visual expression may tell something about a person's general concept of human dialog. Art forms the habitat for the freedom of expression which can give an access for individuals in the community to enhance the understanding of one another (O'Thearling & Bickley-Green, 1996).

I have always had a belief that artist can play a huge role in terms of resolving conflicts. Artists have a great ability to put the light on specific matters and attract various attentions to them. Through general events and exhibitions, they manage to bring different people together and have them share their insights about a specific phenomenon. Kaplan (1990) stated that “The arts provide a means by which the person removes himself or herself from the group, at least to weaken a reliance upon it. Through performances of music from other eras, or comparable theater, literature, painting, and dance, one may even leave his or her century.” (p. 30). There is a unique role artists play within the society that in some situations they notice the changes and listen to people’s desires and reflect what they want in his artworks. Art can be used as a tool to explore the society’s beliefs and values (Desta, 2015).

Many people become associated with the work of some artists because in some way they feel that they are speaking to them or at least speaking for them. When an artist engages with conflict resolution practitioners, there will be a better possibility to resolve the conflict. Lumsden (1997) pointed out that “there is a need for space for the creative exploration of alternatives, using multiple modalities of non-verbal, verbal and symbolic interaction”. Through the use of art, conflict resolution can concentrate on other forms of communication especially in situations where communication is difficult or feelings are difficult to be shared. Art acts as the bridge for conflict resolutions practitioners to explore creatively conflict settings that might not be possible through other means.

Styles and schools of art have been constantly changing and developing due to political, social, and economical reasons. The artist has this ability of reflecting assorted



qualities of conclusions with respect to a specific issue through his work. Kaplan (1990) mentioned that “The painter, depending on his or her style of and use of materials, speaks to the social issue of the variety of perceptions of the world” (p. 106). The finished artwork of an artist is a reflection of his thoughts and feeling regarding a specific phenomenon that the artist is experiencing. That artist inherently entertains an interesting topic that he or she either strongly accepts or rejects and wants to have his opinion undergo the consideration of a certain population. Keep in mind that the artist is an individual who has specific values and beliefs and might be adapting an ideology that also help shape his experience. The painting of an artist is an influential tool containing a message most of the time and the artist want others to examine and possibly accumulate his agenda. An artist with a peaceful message enjoys a good level of acceptance across various social climates.

Artists have shared their experiences of special events through their paintings and artworks. There are several examples of paintings that reflected the tragedy of war and its horrific events. Many artists have put their feelings and emotions on a canvas to express their rejection of such a painful act. They were very deliberate on identifying the actors on that war separating the victims from the perpetrators on occasions. On other occasions they have worked side by side with the governments, organizations, or political officials to help recognize a misfortune and raise awareness towards it. Across the globe, there are enormous efforts in implementing various forms of art to serve humanity and resolve different conflicts. Countries such as Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and other,

incorporated different types of art to create healing or teach coexistence (Shank & Schirch, 2008).

Indeed, the help of artists is needed because they always have their eyes on the society. Artists are always in an observation mode especially on their own society. Due to this observation ability, they develop a good sense on identifying causes or predict a certain outcome out of the social behavior. To give an illustration, take a look at Salvador Dali. He painted his *artwork Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* in 1936 three years prior to the Spanish civil war. In this painting, there is a good insight about self-destruction and how outrageous civil wars can be and how artists shift focus and become more socially engaged. Such experiences make the artists rethink their artistic process and become more socially involved and engage with social practiced. In his paper *Picasso's Guernica in the historical context*, (Hofmann, 1983) discussed briefly engaged art and defined it as “‘Art engage’” means that the artist leaves no doubt about his position, his sympathies and his aversions: he is a partial observer”. Engaged art ties the artist with his society based on the criteria of observation. It basically allows the artist to step outside of the socially constructed values and beliefs, examine the events partially, and create a work that has the potential to make an influence.

It is important to note that some artists do not play the role of the observer to the society. Artists have different interests, different styles and approaches. Some artists might not be interested on people lives and their political or socio-economical changes that happen within the society. They might be interested in studying the nature around

them or just have a desire to develop their artistic skills. The question that need to be addressed is that how artists get involved with conflicts and what roles they play.

When looking at the global community, it is obvious how intense conflicts are and how they are spreading region after region. The amount of destruction and extermination that we witness is awfully outrageous. This level of intensity and brutality of war and terrorism; however, should not be treated only by similar means of militarizing and arming. Using power in conflicts have a tendency to force parties to consider more of escalation choices, not to mention its effort in widening the gap between parties and up surging losses. The focus needs to be on creating a long lasting reconciliation that brings conflicted parties closer together and provides them with tools to understand and embrace their differences.

What makes the art a suitable supplementary tool to conflict resolution is its capability of transforming messages between different cultures, communities, and even individuals. A number of authors have described art as a potent tool of communication due to its ability to merge through boundaries of all kinds. Taking in consideration the creativity process of an artist, it always includes influences on different levels whether they are ideological, political, or social influences. This connects with the artists and recognizes them as a social being reflecting various social conditions (Finkelpearl & Acconci, 2001; Hawes, 2007).

In view of the increasing mass of this blotch of terrorism and destruction; as well as the intensity of confrontation, the severity of the war machine just chimes correspondingly. Threats against culture and humanity have become load and clear.

There is a need for a similar level of effort to silence this machine and substitute it with what is more productive and peaceful. Confrontation can help a party win a conflict; however, it will generate everlasting wounds and painful memories. Countries that lived a civil war in the past; Lebanon for instance, still suffer from that war. Even generations that did not live the tragedy and brutality of the war have absorbed the pain and have difficulties to eliminate it. The harshness of militarized conflict does not make the pain, hate, and anger stop with the ceasefire orders. Means to solutions become more complex and complicated.

Peace keepers and artist are attacking conflicts severally; especially in situations where conflicts are severe and complex such as those on the international level. Such situations are not commonly shared between artists and peacebuilders. Their work might be divided or geographically separated. Artists, most of the time, reflect on conflict situations in their paintings and exhibit them in their local galleries. The work affects only those who get the chance to see the artwork. Given that, their effort needs to be concentrated in merging artists and conflict resolution practitioners, especially in difficult cases, in order to have sufficient outcomes. There is a good advantage that can be drawn when they work together on some incidents. This body of research might be interesting to artists and humanitarians who are working in crisis field, conflict resolution developers, explorers in alternative peace-building approaches, human rights activists and organizations, experts who are interested in maintaining peace and interested in restoring historical reserves and cultural values as well as art-based researchers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Art is of interest because of its various forms that have been recognized in facilitating peace building processes. Performance art; for instance, plays a significant role in peace building approaches. It provides different lenses to the confronted parties and allows them to examine their problem differently. On the practical level, performance artist as well as peace makers have the ability to set a stage for the conflict to be viewed from different perspectives (Hawes, 2007; Schirch, 2005). Although these forms of art have been indorsed as producing results and decreasing conflicts with respect to the efforts of artists and members of the community worldwide, studies show insignificant amount of researches acknowledge these efforts (Appe, 2006; Roam, 2015; Shank & Schirch, 2008).

Previous studies; that have been conducted on art works that reflect conflict scenes, used aesthetic approaches and critiques to analyze the art work. Other studies went to discuss the relationship between the artist and international nongovernmental organizations in different times of the conflict. A seminal study in this topic is a work by Appe (2006). The intersected area between art and conflict resolution has been understudied and suffered from the lack of establishment. This is a reflection of a complex assortment of issues that makes it a lasting condition. Several of these issue can involve historical context, identification, views in politics and pertinence, emotional communality within the community (Desta, 2015).

There is a scarcity of information regarding the number of artists and organization that work side by side with conflict resolution activists and organizations. This scarcity is

not only limited to the measure of numbers, but it extends to the modality in which these artists and organizations work together. Although there is an increasing volume of investigation of the relationship between art and conflict resolution, there is not enough studies that test this relationship and examine the role of artists in this regard. (Appe, 2006; Bergh, 2010; Desta, 2015; Hawes, 2007; Hunter & Page, 2014; Zelizer, 2003).

From this standpoint arises the necessity to conduct a series of studies to test the effectiveness of the relationship and how it can be used to benefit the alternative peace-making approaches. This work is intended to contribute to the developing efforts in closing the gap between peacebuilders and artists by examining the role of artists in dealing with conflict situations. I am trying to do so through studying the individual himself as the artist and examining what he goes through in times of crisis and conflict in order to identify the encouragement factors that makes him more socially engaged. Moreover, I am attempting to clarify the individual's responsibilities and values that drive him to take a certain peace-making approach.



*Figure 1. The Gulf War by Mohammed Almusaly.*

### **Purpose Statement**

In this qualitative research, I examine the role of the artist in conflict and peacebuilding. The objective of this paper is to understand how the artist becomes motivated and what drives him to seek a conflict resolution approach and assist in creating social transformation. To reach that understanding, I conducted an interview with two artists from the Middle East: a Bahraini artist, Abbas Almosawi, and a Saudi Arabian artist, Abdulnasser Gharem.

One of the ethical issues that faced in this research is avoiding bias. Being an artist might have an impact in favoring this field and trying to find threads that connect it with conflict resolution. However, this is not the case, being an artist gave me a further understanding and an advantage of knowing the arts and what they can do to help conflict resolution. My first experience with art began when I was a child, and my father as an artist played a role in shaping my understanding. We lived in a small house that looked like an art studio due to the number of artworks around that house in different media discussing different subjects. One of his painting is called the pain, which is a composition of three potatoes being stabbed by a pencil and bleeding. The potatoes were stabbed by my older brother Islam m who was just playing with them and have fun. My brother indeed enjoying playing with the potatoes but my father as an artist recorded what that potatoes might feel.



*Figure 2. Smoking by Mohamed Almusaly.*



*Figure 3. The pain by Mohammed Almusaly.*

From this moment, I started to realize how the artist can see things differently and present them even with his own vision and state of emotion. Then when I became five years old I remember the announcement of the Gulf War and I still remember the fear that went into me when I was watching the news and holding that warm cup of milk. That period was full of fear and excitement for us as kids. Being threatened to be attacked with chemical weapons did not give chance to protect ourselves except to cover the doors



and windows with plastic and seal them with duct tape which is until this day is labeled Saddam's tape.



*Figure 4. Leave my land by Mohammed Almusaly.*

After the war ended I saw my father making a painting using water colors showing the destruction of the war on Kuwait. He has a collection of paintings that discuss crisis over land and properties, Leave My Land for instance. Since then I attained especial understanding of the art and how it really expresses the person's fear and pains and also reflects the artist understanding for a certain reality. So when I started studying conflict analysis and resolution I wanted to show this link between the art and peacemaking and the effective role that it play.



*Figure 5. The cry of the land by Mohammed Almusaly.*

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

In this section is a review of the literature to have a further comprehension of the relationship between art and conflict resolution and what role can artists play to maintain peace. For this research, it is important to draw a distinction between various notions; especially those that can be broad and general. The discussion covers concepts such as the arts and the artists from social science perspective as well as conflict and peacebuilding. There is also an exploration of the literature that discusses the dynamics between art and conflict, the importance of creativity, and effects and influences of the art on society. Furthermore, to enhance the picture of this paper some of social theories that can ties arts and conflict and also serves the methodology of this research is mentioned.

The relationship between art and peacebuilding has become interested for many scholars especially in terms of using the art as a means for conflict transformation (Appe, 2006; Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Branagan, 2005; Desta, 2015; Hunter & Page, 2014; Huss, Kaufman, Avgar, & Shuker, 2015; Liebmann, 1996; Zelizer, 2003). Hunter and Page (2014) acknowledged that “To date, documentation of the role of the arts in peacebuilding has included studies of traditional, contemporary, formal and informal creative practices” (p. 118). Artists have involved with their different styles and approaches to help resolving conflicts all over the world. Some studies addressed the artists’ abilities within the society in allowing community members to examine their issues in different ways; especially through their criticism of some social phenomenon.

They also noticed their challenges against normal norms and their efforts in developing and transforming the society (Curtis, Reeve, & Reid, 2007).

One of the first distinguished studies that came to examine the role of art in resolving conflict was done by Marian Liebmann. In her book *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, Liebmann (1996) provided series of essays discussing different experiments in using the arts in peace-making. One interesting factor about her studies is that she invited adults to use the art as a method of exploring different aspects of conflicts. So she raised the level of awareness and educating people about different styles of conflicts by engaging in art workshops and involving with others in variety of situations. The main objective she focused on was not making a direct effort to help resolve the conflict, but rather providing a means that participants can examine the conflict with.

She stumbled upon this approach when she was running workshops for specific audience when unidentified problems among members came to the surface and created interpersonal conflicts. She put these individuals through a process in which they examined the conflict safely using the arts and attempted to create the necessary change to help their relationships and improve their feelings. She emphasized on the ability of art “to help people become more aware of non-verbal aspects of conflict behavior, and sometimes work towards creating solutions” (p. 176). What she focused on more is the “hidden conflicts” which the art can help in settling them holistically so the role of art here is more exploratory. This study, however, focused only on interpersonal conflicts. It is important to notice that she was one of the pioneers in doing such experiments no

theoretical framework existed within which she could discuss the role of artists in conflict resolution.

Brandon (1997) found that creativity is a crucial element within peacemaking process that needs to be promoted. The creativity aspect of peacemaking is a powerful tool and connecting it with art can establish a starting point to help workers within the field of conflict resolution. As mentioned above, through the use of art and creativity, conflict resolution practitioners can tackle sensitive and hidden issues in order to help resolve them safely. It also helps in terms of its ability to provide a new and suitable approach that the practitioner feel is necessary to deal with a specific incident. Conflicts have various forms and styles and sometimes they might develop suddenly, therefore treating them might be quite difficult.

Lumsden (1997) recognized creativity in resolving conflict and mentioned that it can embrace “exploring new relationships and means of problem solving and conflict resolutions, personal and communal”. The aspects of creativity can exceed normal approaches in dealing with conflicts, especially with regards to complex issues and crises, where matters such as religion, race, or identity are difficult to control. Appe (2006) mentioned that “Creative solutions to humanitarian needs and assistance have become increasingly important in world affairs since the end of the Cold War”. In this period, conflicts became more complex and received a lot of media attention especially with the development of technology and communication. Creativity has become a need in dealing with conflict. Creativity is intended to assist practitioners and activists to simplify their

work in bringing new possibilities and provide a better opportunity to deal with the conflict when it is difficult to approach with a traditional method.

The Cold War formed a paradigm shift, and with these changes, the field of conflict resolution evolved correspondingly and creativity formed a necessity to overcome difficulties. Peacemakers as well as civil activists were eager to solve conflicts around the world that seemed rather challenging. For instance, during the nineties of the last century, the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina in five years executed more than 200,000 people, arts played a huge role during and after the war to promote peace. Artists and activists arranged art performance, art therapy, and art peacemaking processes (Zelizer, 2003).

Lederach (1995) argued that the social transformation has an aesthetic aspect and suggested that creativity is a crucial aspect in having processes that is responding and adopting the social change; which he calls a 'creative act'. He believes that this creative act has the ability to generate new and advanced processes that were not available before and they have to be continuously be innovative. Zelizer (2003) also pointed out that "because of the arts extensive use of non-linear and creative methods of expression, I believe they can often provide an avenue for facilitating increased understanding and positive interaction between groups in conflict in appropriate settings". Art depends more and facilitates more on the ability for the individual to express. Feelings sometimes cannot be described verbally but rather they can be stated as an impression through an artwork whether it is a painting, sculpture or even in a form of movement such as in

dancing. Creativity in expression through the arts allows the communication between parties to be less confrontational.

### **Dynamics between Art and Conflict Resolution**

Throughout history there have always been real evidences to prove the artist involvement in time of crisis and especially in war. It was in the nineteen century when the art was first recognized and appreciated for its role as a rising tool against social and political situations in France (Roos, 2010). However, with the increase of complexity in war during the 1990s when war took another form and became more toward intra-state, conflict transformations experts started to give more attention to the use of alternative peacemaking approaches such as the arts and music. The main reason behind that is the complexity of the conflict and the new emergent styles of crisis required an additional efforts to treat these issue by combining more disciplines together (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010).

In the last century, especially after the World WAR II is when modern conflict transformation became engaged in academia and researchers showed interest in this field. In exploring art-based approaches to conflict resolution, Desta (2015) also found that in the beginning of the 1990s, peace-builders started to invite other specialists to help in transforming conflicts and it was initiation when art and music became interesting as alternative tools. In the contrast, he also found artists were using art approaches to promote violence and support rather brutal actions. This means that art can be a double edges sword based on how it is implemented. Belfiore and Bennett (2008) stated that “it would be a mistake to assume that because the arts can provide moral symbols, those who

are in the arts are necessarily moral persons “. Art, as any other field, is subjected to the way people are implementing it. Despite this fact, art might be the only product of the society that can be accepted by the majority to promote peace.

When studying the relationship between the arts and conflict resolution, it is important to be aware of any medium that can be used to facilitate these two fields that makes them work together. For instance, Pruitt (2011), examined the effect of art on peacebuilding especially music as an alternative approach. She investigated the music to find whether it can be implemented as an expressive way that assists dialogue. The focus here is on the dialogue that can improve the process of peacebuilding with respect to conflict resolution. It is beneficial to mention that this study concentrates on examining alternative peace approaches that open the gate for young people to use easy and attractive ways to experience peacebuilding such as the music.

Similarly, Sack (2005) worked in social sculpture projects to facilitate stages of communication within the society. She identified the work produced as “instruments that involve ‘trans-actions’ between people, issues and places”. Such projects are intended to enhance social communication and develop social engagement approaches. Sack added “They are *arenas* for negotiation, creating shared currency and new forms of dialogue. They all create spaces where the functional and symbolic coincide”. These projects are indirectly helping conflict resolution approaches since they have the ability to convey messages and can attract community members to engages in social processes. People have the tendency to improve and empower their community through these activities and in this case the focus on dialogue but covered with fun and attractive sculpture projects.



To date, several initial works have appeared linking conflict resolution and art. The most significant work to address the connection is the book, *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, edited by Marian Liebmann (1996), which is consisted of essays by art therapists using arts techniques with a variety of populations. Zelizer (2003) described the book in frame of merging the art with conflict as” The most significant work to address the connection”. He also noticed the emphasize of this book on interpersonal level conflicts. Another collection of essays on the arts and conflict are in the book *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World*, in particular writings by Kees Epskamp (1999) who has conducted extensive research on the role of arts in development.

In examining the usage of art in creating conflict transformation, there is a general assumption that the art gives the ability to investigate the values and perceptions during the transformation. It also can help facilitate parties’ communication through mutual art production where parties work together in art making. Moreover, when the level of conflict is so tense and high, art works can deliver the message cross without having direct communication between parties and it allows others to recognize their opponents easily (Desta, 2015). Branagan (2005) argues that “Through the art, activists can be creative and productive as well as critical, balancing negativity with a positive element”. In crisis, it is important to understand the sensitivity of the problem. The approach towards that crisis might be perceived as an escalation that implicates a powerful and rather severe reaction. Creativity, as suggested by Branagan, helps conflict resolution practitioners as well as activists to approach sensitive matters out of harm’s way.

Desta (2015) recognizes the importance of creativity in assisting peacemaking but also identifies its limitation. It is not always the case that art and creativity can resolve conflicts and the reason behind that is similar to approaches within conflict resolution where parties focus on winning. This concentration does not allow the party to reengage in a process or even accept the other or his efforts even though it is through the usage of art. The eager to win forms the obstacle for an art-based approach to conflict resolution. Even though art can support communication and provide means in which parties can recognize each other, it is still limited in situations where attitudes and perceptions are so different and complex such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Despite this limitation, Desta (2015) believes that art still have the ability to promote and help resolving conflict globally.

With regards to the benefit of art to peacemaking Kollontai (2010) argues that “the arts can be a beneficial tool in peace-building as individuals participate in work to re-create and rebuild the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions of their own life and the lives of others” (p. 263). The creation of art work opens the door for the individual to step out of his reality and examine it from a different perspective. Despite the fact that some people consider the skill of painting or drawing as a requirement to build an art work, it is a process that any person can involve in to set rapprochements between him and the different aspects of life around him.

According to Huss et al. (2015), after revising studies about the effect of war and catastrophes, community members of different ages have utilized the art in its various styles in order to reveal their feelings and thoughts about the vicious experiences and difficulties they went through. The intent was to increase their flexibility when it comes

to living in harsh conditions and they did that by participating into plays and other artistic approaches. These techniques help in reexamining their experiences and reconstruct them since they are saved in their memories in forms of pictures. To help change the trauma they went through, the arts allow them to change these memories by making a new understanding and jointing them with new feelings.

There are several examples of art peace projects around the world which Kollotani (2010) listed some of them in his paper *Healing the heart in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. He mentioned the project Song and Stories that received support from the European Union. This projects aimed to discuss issues such as cultural differences, identity and traditions. Another example is the Sawa peace project in Egypt. The title of the project is an Arabic word that means together. This project was meant to bring Egyptians with refugees in Egypt to share their feelings in a creative atmosphere. Having these examples in mind, Kollotani (2010) pointed out that “

Evidence that art can and does create change in this way is not easily available as the numerous projects throughout the world where various aspects of the arts – painting, music, theatre – are used as a component of conflict resolution and peacebuilding remain generally unevaluated in a systematic sense.

The examples mentioned above were established spontaneously in a social manner; however, the outcomes of these projects would be more sufficient if they were tested. He also found that “The changes that arts create are often psycho-social and qualitative in nature, and articulating indicators of such changes is difficult” (Kollontai, 2010,). Perhaps the difficulty is consisted of the size of the project and how much effect it can

generate. Indeed, social change requires a great effort and needs discursive rhythm to tune it with the time factor. Peace projects that happen instantaneously or come as a reflection of an incident or a certain phenomenon will generate a small reaction or will only record that incident and then vanish.

Art's borders have a very flexible and kind of fluid quality that can merge with many different fields. In the criminal justice field, Quinney (2006), studied people's lives inside and outside of the prison to find a better way in serving the community. The nature of the prison affects the whole society with regards to the negativity that it holds. He claimed that the arts are the only means that can improve the work of the criminologists. He stated, "The quality of our work as criminologists—our work in the context of the continuing public debate on crime and justice—can only be enhanced through our connection to the arts" (Quinney, 2006, p. 272). Indeed, criminology as a field deals with creating social transformation; especially on the individual level, needs to have more of artistic involvement in order to develop more engaging atmosphere.

In the peacebuilding field, however, art is disregarded due to the perception of that it is "soft" nature against the harsh results of conflicts that make it "hard." Another reason behind this might be that pacemakers generally have a political or social science backgrounds and do not necessarily come from the humanity field such as the arts. Thus, many of peacemaking activities lack art-based approaches. Throughout history, there are many evidences that prove the art has been utilized to cultivate both peace and brutality (Shank & Schirch, 2008).

What makes art helpful for the field of conflict resolution can be identified in the art's role within the society. The arts are part of the society and are a result that is produced from the complexity of its components. They also form expressions of the human experiences and in most parts can be seen in general public as a sign of a particular culture. In fact, the likelihood that art is recognized generally as a symbol of beauty and aesthetic form. However, the evidence indicates that art is an influential social aspect and a symbol of interaction of a variety of levels whether historical, social, economic, and even an ideological level.

Appel (2006) elaborated on the role of artists in motivating social change and mentioned that the artists have taken a role in many communities as facilitators and mobilizers to educate and affect social change. These initiatives taken by artists in the pursuit of social change, peace and justice could be improved with communication and greater support across fields.

Although artists are showing a great effort in creating social change, their work will be more effective if combined with other fields and practitioners. The same thing can be applied to other fields dealing with peacebuilding such as conflict resolution.

Shank and Schirch (2008) mentioned that "Arts can change the dynamics in intractable interpersonal, intercommunal, national, and global conflicts". The different fields and styles have the ability to influence people's emotions and play on the socio-psychological aspect of people's life. Recording human experiences and communicating them in a way that is attractive and provocative. When applied from the artist with the purpose of reaching people and creating a social transformation, it will have an influential

effect on the society. Peacemakers and activists can take advantage of art since it has various means and forms and reflects the complexity of the human being dealing with different experiences. The duty then becomes on peace maker to identify the suitable mean that they can utilize in their projects to help create a reconciliation to the group they work with (Shank & Schirch, 2008).

Shank and Schirch (2008) suggested four strategies for the art to be incorporated with peacebuilding in different situations. Art can target a conflict before it reaches a violent level by bringing the attention on the conflict before it escalates. Another means they suggested for the art to tackle situations with violence involved is by breaking it using suitable art forms such as paintings, dance, or performance art. Moreover, it can be used in “transforming relationships” and restoring individual’s experiences and try to create new connections to overcome pain and suffering. The last strategy is to use the art in “building capacity” that focus on the individual empowerment and social skills establishments (Shank & Schirch, 2008)

### **Art and Society**

Art is a product of society’s members and so also reflects the culture and traditions of that society. When attempting to identify the relationship between art and the society, we have to understand how they both influence each other. Community members help shaping and evolving their culture through their efforts in the production of art or designing their houses and cloths. Also the need to be distinguished and recognize the importance of the identity that represents the values and traditions of that particular society help makes it unique and different from others. At the point when a society

establishes its own particular character, the next generation is born, absorbs this identity, helps spread it, and educates the world about it.

Artists in this regard assist the society to enforce the identity through their creative product such as paintings, songs, and dance and help in improving upon it. By this effort they could also gradually transform the culture and create a new identity that is derived from their values, beliefs, and identity but represent their new desires and perceptions. Belfiore and Bennett (2008) stated that “there is a mutual relationship between the art and society”. This relationship is created out of this circle where art influenced the society and by returned get affected by the different processes within the society whether it is a formal decision, crisis, or a settlement.

Art within the society is susceptible to the considerations of an expansive number of social establishments. Social establishments are frequently affected by this symbolic purpose since art is always known to be connected with them. Art has served cultural historians as well as social scientists in examining indications for specific sociocultural phenomenon. Researchers, additionally, have utilized the arts as means of symbolic documentation and reflection of the society. They have also examined the development of the society based on the improvement of their art. Art as a precursor of social change forms a great representation that originates from great visual and imaginative expression. For instance, the eagerness to examine space and reach other stars was affected by the painting *Fantasies of Artists* (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008). This change also was generated out of this cycle of influence. In his book *The Rots of Evil*, Staub (1989) indicated that “Culture provides shared explanations and images of the world, shared values and goals,

a shared symbolic environment. Through such institutions as the military, schools and child rearing. It shapes individual personality” (p. 51). When an influential component within the society, such as these institutions, deals with the art and helps raise individuals who are well informed about the importance of their culture, they help sustain the cycle and eventually improve upon it.

The arts ability with the society, especially in creating change, lies within the individual capacity in transforming himself and making an extension of that transformation. This process reaches to the circle he lives in by affecting the culture and the society and creating new perception about the world that fit their goals and values. In discussing the importance of art within the society, Belfiore and Bennett (2008) said that “this is frequently expressed in terms of the capacity of the arts to transform the lives not just for the individuals but of whole communities” (p. 2). The increasing effort from the artist in focusing on his society, and identifying the shortage and weakness and trying to constantly find creative solution, will eventually help to take this affect from the individual level to the community level.

Art as an expression of the human experience forms a symbolic entity that extracts supply from society's examples, establishments, weaknesses, legends, and customs. The painter, as one of the members of the art, uses the entity to discuss his social problems and examine it from different and global points of views (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008). Artist drives his views from the reality his lives in, and by creating his work he or she steps out of the reality generating a different experience in the hope of creating new reality. The creation of the art generates a parallel reality that remains



tangible while the real reality becomes history. Here is another function of the art that makes it really crucial for the society and its future. Hauser (1982) elaborated on this angle and said “For no matter how different the degree of reality to individual triangles... it represents an objective sociohistorical structure and not mere abstraction” (p. 57). This have given social scientists and historians a great means that they can go back in history and investigate the life of certain population through their artworks and cultural representations.

What makes art historically distinguished is these factors that help to create history and improve upon it. These factors contain the foundation, materiality, entity, and purpose of its existence in a particular sociohistorical context. These factors are much deeper in developing culture making the art exceeds the limits of being just a communication tool. In the implementation of these sociohistorical and cultural items, artists demonstrate a greater level of utilizing influence in the society (Hauser, 1982, p. 89).

In her article *Cultural Counterpoints in Society and Art* Jahn (1994) attempted to identify the problem people face in modern age by examining the links between some art works and social theories. She was concerned about the immediate reflections of the paintings and work of arts with social discourses. Her thoughts were based on the theorists who witnessed and examined social development in modern time, and then looked on art works that carry similar social perceptions within them. She reviewed works of art between the period 1950s and the 1990s and compared them to sociological remarks. Her findings identified some important similarities in terms of art development

and social transformation. What she found was that with every decade passed, a new trend of art came to existence and became parallel with social experiences then reflected the attempts from the society to discover how to deal with dilemmas and complexities within our world. The author believed that artists represent the critical voice of the society based on what they perceive in their own views. By understanding his needs and fears and linking them with social incidents the viewer can reach a better understanding of modern art. Based on this study, artists and artworks can be an indication of problematic social phenomena. Art can serve social science by being the means in which social theories can be transformed tangibly to the public and have a visual reflection (Jahn, 1994). Art is this work that reflects the artists meaning of their surroundings (Enright, 2001).

Discussing the art sociologically, the concentration on it fits into its ability to influence the society rather than a product coming from it and reaching expressively its way to the society. The influence is a part of that social process where it comes from and create a social change. Moreover, the art itself engages in social transformation and spontaneously gets affected by this transformation. The relationship between art and society is controlled by the matter of influence, especially the elements of society that influence the art and cause the artwork to be the way it is. In the end, the artwork forms a reflection of the society happening with a framework of communal interaction which makes the society the prevailing factor of the relationship (Hauser, 1982, p. 89).

Shank and Schirch (2008) elaborated that “Art is a tool that can communicate and transform the way people think and act”. Art allows the individual to retrieve previous

experiences and create new complex form of ideas and emotions. All this happens with a mental effort, especially if the person is tackling an experience from his memory with intent to develop a new cognitive connection towards that experience. The transformation happens during this mental process where aspect of creativity is engaging with the experience. In terms of dealing with negative experience, there will be better way of tolerating that experience since there is a new understanding that became connected with it.

The relationship between the art and society is creating a permanent cycle where the factors generate interaction between them to enforce modifications and structural reformation. Consequently, every part of this relationship causing a change one will inherently cause a change to itself (Hauser, 1982). The existing nature of this relationship is causing a constant systematic change that might not be noticeable at the moment but rather can be identified when looking at it in a specific timeline.

Accomplishing social duties helps creating the identity of an individual, similarly with the art. For the artist to be what he or she is, they must be engaging in “interpersonal relationships” (Author, Year). The desire for expression through the arts naturally happens; regardless of the existence of shortages within the society (Hauser, 1982). As a form of interaction, art also forms a space that the communicative process takes place in. It is either between artist or community members, but what it is important is the information and thoughts being exchanged across the society.

Palmer (2012) explored the role of news media and how it affects how art is perceived within the community. He stated that “The arts serve a valuable social role and

are an asset to communities” (Palmer, 2012, p. 4). The social role that art contributes can be very beneficial to the society. However, he believes that art is in need to the news media to reach out to the community. When there is a little effort made in this regard, the benefits will not be as hoped for. In his work, he insisted that the news media should work side by side with the art to have that social values of the art to be exposed and make the role of the art more effective.

Art not only discusses the current political and social situations. It transcends that and passes the timeframe to discuss all aspects that are questionable, from social changes to conflict transformations, and draws the influence from the old traditions. Creating the art is something that is unique and powerful and elicits rather strong answers, and depends on the circle of those who are engaging with and using it (Brandon, 1997).

Artists’ involvement in the society has been recognized by researchers, especially in their roles of reflecting people’s worries on one side and their hopefulness on the other side. They have also worked for political agendas as in favor of works of propaganda (Lumsden, 1997). In this case, it can separate the actors instead of unifying them (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010). In fact, the art has been integrating with society in diverse variation. Branagan (2005) explained that “Art-forms...are an integral part of nonviolent action today, imparting messages widely and thereby influencing public opinion, building cohesive, sustainable, mass movements, and helping to prevent violence”. Peaceful process; including the including the arts, have recognized the danger of the war machine and violence and started to convey messages that help community members understand each other.

The role of artist in the society can vary depending on many reasons. At the point when the artist is depending monetarily on a specific party, or obliged to achieve the work for an institution, the artist's space of expression will be tied accordingly. The role he plays in the society and the influence he is trying to convey will match the level of his attachment and dependence (Hauser, 1982). It is important for the artist to identify the role he wants to play and what kind of transformation he wants to influence in the society. Perhaps the influence that the artist wants to invite is based on his views of the society and what it needs.

This part of his action is contingent on the level of integration he has with the society. The artist has to be aware of the condition of the society and what settings he is engaging in. Branagan (2005) claimed, "artists favor openness rather than secrecy, seeking audiences for their work since there is no point creating political artworks without having the audience in mind for them". The topics that the artist wants to tackle have to come from a background connected with his audience, otherwise the influence and change needed will not be understood. The work of art might be appreciated for the look and not necessarily for the signification of the content.

In his article "Artists and Citizens in Time of War", Zinn (2002) attempted to identify the role of the artist within the society. His approach in understanding the relationship between the artist and his community is focusing on the form of the relationship and how it must be believed that the existence of the relationship is inevitable. He referred to the artist role as transcendent, and what he meant by that is the artist transcends the immediate. The artist transcends the madness of the world. The artist

transcends terrorism and war. The artist transcends conventional wisdom, the word of the establishment, and the orthodoxy to go beyond and escape what is handed down by the government and said in the media.

This description allows a very profound and important task the artists take; especially in terms of practicing his absolute freedom. The role artists play, with respect to Zinn's description, exceeds beyond social, economic, and political demarcations as well as sub-demarcations. In this sense, the role played give an opportunity for investigation and to examine the reality that the society lives which provides possibilities and a better understanding to that reality.

Hunter and Page (2014) focused on art-based peacebuilding approaches by emphasizing on the creativity aspects that intended to change the course of violence and conflicts. Their study is conducted to identify how the arts are valued and evaluated and whether they are appropriate and benefiting the society. Their findings pointed out that "there is a gap between policy and practice when it comes to understanding and valuing the complexity and potential of the arts in international development and peacebuilding". This study emphasized the underestimation of the arts and their influence in peacemaking and ability in growing globally. Art has been known for their functionality in terms of being a medium of social exchange and interaction. Moreover, it has numerous possibilities that can be implemented "as a practice and measure of peacebuilding" (Hunter & Page, 2014).

## **Art, War, and Terrorism**

When discussing art in a conflict resolution frame in a larger sense, the connection goes immediately toward war and with the modern understanding of terrorism. Art, throughout history, has been used as a record, such as where images of armies are seen in caves and graves. According to Bingham (2006), he mentioned that “One of the earliest surviving images of war is found on the standard of Ur. It was made around 2500 B.C.E. in the land that is now Iraq”. The use of art in this period is emphasized as a form of documentation to record the power of the army, to save the incidents happened in that war, and to send messages to the enemies.

After the 9/11 attacks, when members of Al-Qaida attacked the twin towers in New York City, Americans had to face a challenge beside the horrifying events of that day. They were in confrontation with rapid growing of radical Islamism and the negativity it had to reflect on Islam and the Middle East, especially the involvement of negative stereotyping that it reflects. They had to bring together a separation of view of the Islamic culture as brutal and uncivilized against the western culture as the civilized which created this us versus them division. Art; in this case, seemed to have the solution by providing what the Middle Eastern art and culture has to offer and organizing special events that sends the message of art as a tool for cross-cultural understanding. Art also can be provided as an evident for humanity that is unifying and has a tendency to bring people together (Winegar, 2008).

In discussing what art means and how the relationship is formed between war and the artists in an art form, Roos (2010) mentioned that this discussion is a continuous

historical argument. Moreover, people have become aware of the complexity of this relationship in terms of violence and how it is represented through the art that it occupies a part of their culture. It can be said that Western art contains powerful art work done by artists such as Leonardo da Vinci who also was a pioneer in engineering and developing bombs and war machinery. To add to the list, and between distinguished artists who contributed their work to times of war, Goya with his sketches Bayeux as well as Picasso in his famous art work Guernica (Roos, 2010).

Throughout the path of history, states have used the support of artists through paid commissioned art to represent paintings of wars and various events and also to convey the state's viewpoint. Museums also hold many pieces of evidence memorializing war and the people who participated in these wars. For example, in Britain during the 1939 Kenneth Clarke, who was the National Gallery's director, started a program for six years to buy artworks and pay artists to paint their experiences of the war and how it threatened them. Their artworks were distributed throughout the Imperial War Museum and some other galleries and museums all over the UK. It is important to mention that the Air Ministry and War of Office were commissioning these artists. This effort shows the power of image and how by applying it can unite and bring people together (Roos, 2010).

In an attempt to identify the relationship between the artist and war, Roos (2010) stated that "More often though, it is the artist as outsider, or in rebellion against the prevailing situation and the official position on a specific war or war in general, who defines the relationship between art and war" (p. 39). The artist examines the situations



normally from an observer stand of point to fully comprehend the situation and be able to reflect on them. The author here attempted to identify the relationship from a perspective where the artist's action is against the idea of war.

Nongovernmental organizations started to implement the arts in mediation process in situations where the intensity of the conflict can form an obstacle for conflicted parties (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010). Even though art is recently involved with nongovernmental organization, it is still connected with the level of power that the organizations have. The effectiveness of the results depends on the organization's local support that it receives.

### **Definition of Art**

In recent years there has been a long argument about what a work of art can be or do. A work of art is contingent of the production of an artwork; however, the essence that makes the artwork is the focus of the debate and whether the art is an origin in itself or it is a product. (Cazeaux, 2000).

Rand (1971) described that "Art is a selective *re-creation* of reality according to an artist's metaphysical value-judgment". Art in this sense represents the artist approach to knowledge in terms of his perception to the world around him and the matter of his existence. The product, formed in the art, becomes a reflection of this nature of acknowledgement between understanding the reality and assessing it.

Wyszomirski (2002) discussed culture and art with regards to the American society. He described them as "a large heterogeneous set of individuals and organizations engaged in the creation, production, presentation, distribution, and preservation of and

education about aesthetic, heritage, and entertainment activities, products and artifacts” (p. 187). Although this definition was discussed with an American context, it can fit an international setting as well (Appel, 2006).

In attempting to reach a set of platforms for defining the arts, Dickie (1969) encountered a description approach to distinguish between different productions of art works. He also focused more on the general concept of art without falling into the subcategorization that comes after it. He recognized artifactuality as the tank that distinguished them from other productions. The second criteria that he relies on to define art is social property of art and stated that “a work of art is an object of which someone has said, ‘I christen this object a work of art’” (p. 256). His criteria give the individual the permission to sort his or her production as a work of art; however, it is not open to include any item that is hand made. He concluded his argument by saying “so one can make a work of art out of sow’s ear, but of course that does not mean it is a silk purse.” (p. 256). In contrast, Baker (1997) claimed that a work of art such statues cannot be identified as a work of art based on relational property. She asserted that from an essentialist perspective, constituting a material object does not give it an identity.

Carrier (2005) described that the art work is not build based on an argument, but rather based on the culture it belongs to. He argued that some museums do not follow practices that support forgiveness by presenting different cultures in a balanced equivalent setting. The art also can be defined or titled based on the purpose it has been made for. For instance, the term Holocaust Art, as mentioned in Pickford (2013) book *the Sense of Semblance*, refers to “the class of any artwork that is about the Holocaust, that

is, the intentionality or content of which includes reference, direct or indirect, to the Nazi project of humiliation, deprivation, degradation, and extermination against Jews and other marked groups” (pp. 130-131). This definition recognizes the general understanding of the art and categorizes the work intended with what the author is referring to as the Holocaust Art to clarify for the reader the intent behind the concept.

Shank and Schirch (2008) used the term art-based peacebuilding in their paper, *Strategic Art-Based Peace building*, to refer to “an expressive vehicle for communication” that includes “both ephemeral and more classical approaches, and embrace the wide variety of forms including visual arts, literary arts, performance arts, and movement arts”. And by peacebuilding they referred to “a wide range of effort to prevent, reduce, transform, and help people recover from violence in all forms, at all levels of society, and all stages of conflict” (Shank & Schirch, ). The term *art-based peacebuilding* is a generalization for any form of art that is engaged and intended to affect conflicts positively. Mostly to bring awareness or to enforce a reconciliation or help those who were affected by conflict in any level to find peace and overcome trauma.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Social theories help us in forming our understanding of the society and its mutual relationship with individuals. They deconstruct complex components of the society and study the effects of different factors, such as morality, religion, ethics, material, and so on, on individuals to explain why they behave in a certain manner. Social theorists enjoy this uniqueness because they work with abstract concepts, yet they are able to explain how tangible objects relate with each other. In this paper, the theories will form the

foundation to build a strong base of understanding of how the art is associated with the society; hence build bridges between the two fields.

Best (2003) explained that “Social theorists are people who step back and attempt to identify, outline and explain what ‘the social’ is and how it works. They invent theories about the nature of ‘the social’ and attempt to discover how people endeavor to recreate the social in their everyday lives” (p. 8). Society is subject to change depending on the way people engage and react to each other which explains the need for social theory and why they vary. Theorists come from different backgrounds and have different views to the world. Their attempts to understand the society and fill the gap of this understand is what helped establishing these theories. In this paper, there will be provided several social theories to help enhancing the understanding of the art role in the society and to examine the art-based programs in peacemaking. The intent of this paper is to understand the role of the artist in the society, how the artist perceives conflicts and crises, and what the threshold is that leads the artist to act and create a socially transformative work of art.

### **Objectivism**

This school of thought might be one of the closest theories that came to explain the art. The objectivist theory of knowledge recognizes the essential elements of perceiving the information which are differentiation and integration. These processes are contingent on receiving the information from a sensory factor in order to recognize the existence of that element or concept. After the information received, it is then governed perceptually which is a very important foundation of knowledge base on the objectivist

perspective. The last stage is the conceptual, in which the information is recognized and perceived based on the individual's reflection of knowledge and experiences (Rand & Binswanger, 1990).

With respect to the arts, objectivism forms the essential aspects of objectivism in the perception of knowledge. According to Rand (1971),

The position of art in the scale of human knowledge is, perhaps, the most eloquent symptom of the gulf between man's progress in the physical sciences and his stagnation (or today, his retrogression) in the humanities.

In this sense, objectivism perceives the art as an indication of the level of the person's understanding as well as his contribution to the society. The development of the art; spontaneously, affects the society and closes the gap between the efforts made in the physical science with the intention of serving humanity.

The contribution to knowledge is consisted of the art effect on the person's perceptual factor in which he or she can examine his reality; especially the abstracted elements of it. Rand (1971) mentioned that "Art brings man's concepts to the perceptual level of his consciousness and allows him to grasp them directly, as if they were percepts". The art facilitates the person's understanding of his surroundings; especially in terms of the metaphysical aspects. Even concepts like freedom, liberty, and coexistence that are very reciprocal and relevant to people, nonetheless, are very difficult to grasp because of their abstraction. Artistic products such as statues, paintings, and even poems, help in creating a perceptual reflection to abstracted concepts and contribute to acknowledging them.

## **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange suggests that social behavior is generated from a process of exchange in which people have the intention of managing the benefits and costs. There are many factors that can be gained or lost such as time and money. This theory was developed by James Coleman. Coleman is a well-known theorist who also developed the rational choice theory which exchange theory was based on. People make rational decisions in exchanging processes. Coleman earned his PhD from University of Colombia in 1995 and taught at the University of Chicago. Later on, he founded the Department of Social Relations at Johns Hopkins (Adam & Sydie, 2002, p. 188). Other thinkers that also facilitate this theory are George Casper Homans, John Thibaut, Harold Kelly, and Peter Blau. Homans explanation to exchange theory is based on social behavior which he interprets as an activity between two individuals or more (Adam & Sydie, 2002, p. 197).

Homans (year) provided four propositions that link behaviors with his theory. His first proposition states that when a person acts in a certain manner and the he or she gets rewarded, this action has a great possibility to be repeated. The second proposition is based on the rewarded behavior of a specific stimulus. When this stimulus gets a similar rewarding results, then it will happen again. The third proposition states that the individual will repeat his actions when it is personally rewarding to himself. The final proposition consists of punishment towards the behavior, which will result in anger. Anger here is the rewards (Adam & Sydie, 2002).

The arts recently have been linked with competition and social voting to rate artists in the galleries and exhibits. The influence of these competition and voting will indeed have an effect on the artists' style of painting. The rewarded artists will try to produce more of that style of painting that he received the reward on, even if it was just a compliment from the audience or highly appreciated by a collector. Other artists, who notice the style that was rewarded, tend to replicate it or enhance their style to be close to it in order to receive a social recognition or receive that similar reward. From this point, the styles of artists can be exchanged based on the rewards they receive and perceived in the art world.

Another form of this theory is the audience noticing the artist succeed and receive rewards based on the social and artistic action he is taking. Members of the audience might want to engage on that success and be part of that artist's journey, either by collecting his art, writing about it, or sharing it in their surroundings. Most of the time, people who notice the success of the artist, especially young members of the audience, will want to replicate that success by becoming an artist. The artists journey that was perceived by audience member become the stimulus to be an artist. Being the artist in this case is the reward, and being involved in the art community will repeat the experience of reward. This theory explains the circulation of art generation after generation.

### **Functionalism**

Functionalism is a social theory that was invented by Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Durkheim provided several thoughts that have great weight in the social theory. His unique approach comes from treating social facts as physical objects. The thing that

made him interested in sociology was to understand the possibility of society. Durkheim concentrated on studying the relationship between the individual's personality and his society.

Another thinker who was known to assist functionalism is Talcott Parsons. He was interested in understanding the social system, so he categorized the functional requirements of the social system as well as the classification of the social system. He thoughts of individuals within the society as actors who engage which each other based on social and cultural constructed values. Social system is constructed by these individuals who need an institution that function for them and for the society (Best, 2003, p. 31).

The art fits with this theory in terms of its main element that there are systems and institutions that bring stability to the society. Based on the literature suggestion, the art forms a necessary gear within this system which helps in assisting and assessing the function of the society. It brings a social, economic, and political stability to the society. Functionalism is interested in studying the elements that adds to the society strength and support. In the case of art, it is not only a factor that forms a huge part in the culture and tradition of the society, it is also a contribution factor for education, science and overall development of the society. Based on the examples provided in the literature, art and the artists, devoted a lot of time and energy to help resolving conflicts and assist community members to overcome their problems and recover from past experiences.



### Chapter 3: Research Method

#### **Introduction**

In the literature section, there was an overview of several studies that reflected the impact of art in the society and served in favor of peacebuilding. The finding of the literature also suggested that there is a lack of information regarding to the role of art in conflict resolution which includes a lack of theoretical frame works as well as studies of investigations. In addition, the majority of studies were focusing on music as a type of art and its role in the peacebuilding process. Music and performance art shared a good interest by scholars and researchers, which was reflected in the literature review. However, there is not enough information about the role of visual art and visual artists in peacebuilding processes and social transformation. From this standpoint comes the necessity to conduct a study to examine the relationship between visual art and conflict resolution.

This study applied qualitative research methods using a semi-structured interview to investigate the role of the artist in society. Interviews with two artists who use art for maintaining peace and creating social change served as the cases under examination in this dissertation: . Abbas Almosawi, a Bahraini artist, and the Abdalnasser Gharem, a Saudi artist.

The qualitative research method allowed the researcher to investigate in depth people's experiences through various means. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) compared between qualitative and quantitative method and asserted, "qualitative research emphasizes understanding by closely examining people's words, actions, and records, as

opposed to a quantitative research approach that investigates such words, actions, and records at a mathematical significant level”. The intent of this study is to have a better understanding of the life of artist experiencing or noticing the presence of conflict.

Creswell (2009) identified that “Qualitative is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem”.

### **Interpretivism**

This research adopted an interpretivist approach since it focuses on uncovering human understanding of their own actions. It also sought to understand the essence of representation and how members within the society encounter this concept (Willis, Jost, & Nilakanta, 2007). This research aimed to understand how artists, as members of the society, seek to engage with a peacebuilding and social transformation settings and what the efforts taking towards that. Willis et al. (2007), in discussing interpretivism with respect to the environment and how it affects human behavior, claimed, “Humans are also influenced by their subjective perception of their environment—their subjective realities”. Interpretivists focus on understanding how an individual perceives the world around him or her.

### **Data Collection**

The chosen design for the research was a multiple case study. The importance of using a case study approach is its intention of exploring the experience of a person. When the research examines several individuals, it is a multiple case study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Data was collected through interviewing to get a better sight of the artist opinions, feelings, and approaches regarding conflicts and peacebuilding.

This study used a purposive homogenous sampling procedure. The researcher is aware of the participants' history in the art field and their attempts in focusing on conflicts, social change, and peacemaking. Creswell (2009) asserted, "The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants on sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research questions" (p. 178). The researcher used purposive sampling and a means of qualitative research method to facilitate him in understanding the essence of the relationship between the artist and society in terms of the level of social involvement of the artist.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument in this research was a semi-structured and open-ended questions conducted with the two artists. This method enabled the participant to fully engage in the research and discuss his experience in the topic. It also facilitated the researcher to navigate the interview in order to generate the necessary information needed for the study. During the interview, there were also follow-up questions. Rubin & Rubin (1995) said that "The basic purpose of follow-up question are to get richer, more in-depth answers" (p. 212). This type of question is necessary in semi-structured interview because the interviewee might share unexpected information that can help the research and the researcher might feel that there is a need for a further investigation in a specific aspect. The follow-up question enabled the researcher to generate more information and have a better understating of participant.

This method allowed the researcher to engage with the participants. It also allowed the researcher to seek for further explanation regarding a specific issue, which

enhances his understanding. The researcher had clarity about his topic and about the meaning of the participant conversation, which enriched the researcher's ability in interpreting the data. Furthermore, participant engagement was intended to expose the meaning of the participant's experience and to go beyond the words provided. As the interview occurred, new meanings were introduced to the conversation. Semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to investigate these meaning to increase the accuracy of analyzing the data (Galletta, 2012).

### **Interviewees**

Artists in general have different intentions in using the arts. Based on their tendencies and personal goals, their journeys differ from one to another. This paper is interested in understanding those artists; who are devoting some of their time and work to serve humanity in different aspects. In addition, this paper also intended to facilitate in closing the gap in literature; with regards to studying the role of artist in peacebuilding and social transformation. As shown in the literature, the role of the artist within the society is tangible; however, it is not academically investigated and explored. To better understand the role of artist, the researcher is going to conduct an interview with artists who are contributing to the field of peacebuilding with their own methods. Based on the researcher's knowledge of artists' communities within Gulf Countries, the researcher is going to contact artists who is working in the framework of peacemaking and social transformation. Interviewees will be contacted via e-mail to participate in the research.

**Artist: Abbas Almusawi**

Abbas Almusawi is a Bahraini artist who is involved in the art since 1970s. He was born and raised in Bahrain made him surrounded eventually with issues regarding wars and environmental problems (O'Dwyer, 2010). People; who have witnessed the Gulf War, remember the tragic incident that it contained. Although Kingdom of Bahrain was not directly involved in the war; especially in terms of missile attacks and ground battles, it lived dark days as a result of burning oil wells in Kuwait. The dark clouds and black rain are still remembered until this day as a horrifying incident to human and nature. For artist Almusawi, it brought to his attention that environmental issues were not isolated based on locality. He started to recognize it as a global issue and started to use the art as an informative means to tackle the issue. Since then, he has put focus on engaging the arts with humanitarian work and arranged work with organizations to implement the arts toward spreading peace. He has designed projects such as the Peace Project 2000, which enforce peace messages by artworks done by children (O'Dwyer, 2010).

**Artist: Abdalnasser Gharem**

Abdalnasser Gharem is a Saudi artist with a military background. He was born in 1973 in a city called Khamis Mushait, Saudi Arabia. Gharem is one of the recognized contemporary Arab artists with the highest paid work and also a co-founder of Edge of Arabia (Venkataraman, 2011). Gharem's approaches in the art are different than other artists in the region; as he is one of the pioneers in contemporary art in the Gulf countries. Gee (2013), mentioned that "He uses his art to encourage independent thought and highlight the way religion is used – not least because he went to school with two of

hijackers involved in the 9/11 attacks”. Talking religion concept in the art is not an easy task especially in a conservative society. His work now is to concentrate on young Saudis by opening a platform for them to discover themselves through the arts. As Milner (2015), described his mission and said that “Now artist Abdalnasser Gharem is on a mission to divert bored young Saudis from jihad.”

### **Why They Were Chosen for the Interview**

Both artists have a recognized work in humanity and serving their community. They also have lived into an era of war and crisis such as the Gulf war and the iconic incident of 9/11 in the turn of the century. They also reach beyond their local community and use the art to serve humanity on a global level. Young artists recognize them as role models in the art world for the work and effort they produced. They are both socially active in printed media and there are several written documentations about them, which make studying their background and history possible.

### **Interview Questions**

1. How long have you been working as an artist?
2. When did you start giving attention to society through your work?
3. There was a remarkable change in your style, what are the key factors that have affected your style?
4. Do you think this has affected you alone? or other artists would have similar effects on their work?
5. Based on your experience in the art world, how would a conflict affect your style?

6. What messages do you want to deliver by your art especially to a general audience?
7. What is your social message toward young artists?
8. What mediums do you prefer to deliver your message with, why?
9. Describe your experience in working with non-profit organizations?
10. Do you think an art piece can resolve a conflict? How?
11. How would art that is perceived as a soft concept, stands against the harshness of war and conflicts?
12. The Middle East is a region that suffers from terrorism and terrorist attacks constantly, terrorist organizations are targeting young people to apply their ideologies and serve their agendas, how do you think the art can be implemented to prevent that from happening?

The intent of this research is to participate in the growing body of literature that has examined the role of artist in society with respect to peacebuilding. The literature review shows that there is a lack of investigation regarding the relationship between conflict resolution and the arts. Moreover, art-based peacebuilding has a great potential in facilitating conflict resolution practitioners in affectively implying alternative peace approaches to various types of conflicts. The methodology section of the research chose a qualitative research method by using interview as an instrument for collecting data.

The interview questions helped the researcher to gather data from artists that live in the Gulf countries who went through an era of wars and crisis and used their arts to enforce peace and raise awareness of aspects that affect humanity and the environment.

These questions helped in identifying information that can be sorted to themes in the research and facilitate the analysis process of the finding. In addition, the questions helped in understanding the role of artist in society; especially during crisis and how artists perceive war and what are their tactics with respect to using the art in maintaining peace. The hope is that the generated information helped in drawing a roadmap for artists and conflict resolution practitioners in working together affectively in peace missions.

The concern of this research is to identify some aspects that of the artist experience in the art during and after the time of crisis. This also lead to the question that look for reasons that make the artist more socially engage. Moreover, there was a concern weather the expression of the artist through his paintings and artwork makes him considered a seeker for humanitarian work or no.



## Chapter 4: Results

In-depth interviews were conducted with the artists Abbas Almosawi and Abdalnasser Gharem. The time of the interview was chosen based on the convention of the participants. Prior to the interview process inform consents forms were signed. The interview process was more like a learning process for me as a researcher. The interviewee has a lot of experience in their work environment as well as being in an interview process. The in-depth interview allowed me to visit a lot of the artist experiences especially regarding the aspects that make them be socially oriented artists. Of course, the artists are not always considering their work to take social messages, however, in some period of time this case might happen.

This interview helped me in understanding the artist in those period of time where he tackles social issues and search in them. This interview indeed is an attempt to draw a connection between the artist and the society as an affective community member and to identify the different roles that artists play. The participants engaged in the interview with a general understanding of the meaning of conflict and social problems especially violent ones that threatens the existence of humans and the environment. The results of the interview were broken to several theme that merged during the interview.

The following section will include these themes that were generated after reviewing the transcription of the data. There are six themes I noticed that developed during interviewing the data and some of them appeared during the interview process. I noticed some common patterns while reviewing the transcripts and after identifying these themes I provided quotes from the interviews that related to those themes from both

interviews. The artists provided generous information about their experiences in diverse situations with regards to the field of art as a necessity to the society. In the next section some of these quotes will be available to help in supporting the themes that were developed after the interview.

The themes are outlined in a sequence that connected the data with the intention of this research and to help understand better the role of artist in society. The structure of the answers will be alternating between the artists to create more clarity for the reader as it provides a smooth transition in the interviews.

### **Major Themes**

- Observation
- Identifying problems
- Reflection
- Partnering with NGOs
- Leadership
- Influence

*Results that are linked with the thematic fields*

### **Observation**

In providing the question I wanted to be able to identify the role of artist in the society and I wanted to hear the artists discussing their experiences as individuals of the society. It was important to be aware of the things that of an interest to them and affect them as well. To do so, I needed to go back in time and deep into their experience with the art to have a glance of what makes them the artists they are today. In many places

during the interview, I noticed that the participants embrace observation as an asset for the artist.

Some of the questions that were asked to the participants are:

- How long have you been working as an artist and why did you choose the arts?
- When did you start giving attention to society through your work?

### **The artists' response**

In discussing his childhood, artist Almosawi provided some aspect of his life where he seemed connected with his surroundings making them his visual library of reference.

My grandfather has a store in the market and I would always go to him. Our house was also close to the sea and the farms was very close to nature as well.

The house has a big role, the house contains you and protects you. Our house was close to everything, close to the cinema, the market, the school and everything. So I would go to all these places. I did not follow anybody, I would go to all there place even if my friends and relatives were gathering in some place, I was roving in my world. And I will look around and learn from people's life and nature as well.

There was a clear connection between Almosawi and his father and it was obvious in his words how he was affected by his father "my father and the house has a big impact on me my father was very peaceful in the house and he'd label the rooms like peace, bliss, breeze and so on."

Abdulnasser Gharem discussed his view of contemporary art. His intakes about this style of art convey that the artist has to have high level of awareness on current moments he lives.

Contemporary art depends on daily life. Daily life beside the events that are related to your daily routines, your social position, your job positions, where do you belong. All these factors affect in creating conclusions that in a certain stage become thoughts and these thoughts come out as artworks. Since you are a contemporary artist, and you are connected with the daily life, it affects you somehow.

Artist Almosawi also mentioned with a high level of emotion the need for artist to have certain qualities that make him a proactive artist especially in a young age when he just finished collage. He said “I had a lot of curiosity, braveness and confrontation”. The key word in this statement is curiosity which gives him an advantage to constantly look for new concepts and information. He engages being fearless with curiosity as it drives him to experience new adventures.

Contemporary artists who choose conceptualism to be their style rely on several essential pillars. One of the fundamental ones is the ability to thoughts elicitation. Artist Abdulnasser Gharem provided his way of connecting his ideas to the everyday life.

I am always deriving my thoughts from my daily emitted mind. So these things get converted to thoughts that you transform into artworks depending on your reactions, people's reactions. You collect these reactions from your daily interaction with them, then your role as an artist to translate these thoughts these

daily reactions and transform them to concepts that is linked with the knowledge aspect that you have. You link it with personal conclusion. Following the time line to this specific event or that subject that you want to talk about. Visit it historically, what was it, in your current time what did it become. Predict what is going to happen in the future. That why you notice that the society becomes the source of thoughts.

Almosawi talked about the importance of the period of the Gulf War in his life and how it shaped his perception. From his words it is obvious he follows everyday events and how it affects him

After the Iraqi Iranian war, things started to change especially with the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait. With the threat of the war I retreated for twenty-four hours praying to the war does not happen and I made an art work during that time. Each hour I painted a square. When the war started, it was the first time that I we saw live footage for a war in the CNN and other TV channels. So I decided to say no to war and made that painting and I made a solo exhibit. This painting made an effect it reached the media and was spread all over the war.

With respect to the affect of war on artists, Gharem describes how previous World Wars have generated new art schools and styles. In this specific example, tragic incidents, as artist experiences it, move him to a higher level of awareness that moves his role from just an observer to active player.

war have an effects on artists since a very long time. From the First World War to the Second World War it affected a lot art movements and artists. For instant,

fauvism, Dadaism, these schools came as reaction to the World War. There were a lot of artists and painter in the trenches. And you can see how Hitler and Nazism treated different art styles by creating degenerate art exhibition in Munich.

### **Analysis: Observation**

At the beginning of the interview I wanted to extract from the artists their individual experiences and perception about their role in the society. I was looking for incidents and certain crucial moments where they decided to be actors in their communities. This has made me able to step into the artist position since there would be some differences between the artists. In this case there might not be a universal response and will create an opportunity to the research benefit to identify a unique perspective of the factors that makes the artist socially engaged.

From the data, I noticed that the artists were discussing their views and experiences from outward and inward perspectives. A possible way to describe this is by saying that they become in a level of awareness of their surroundings as well as their thinking process. In doing so, they create a gap between any stimulus they interact with and how they respond to it. In this gap the artist becomes the observer which is also a learning and a researching stage that the artist enjoys different than other professions.

There is a clear difference between the two artists in terms of style and approach but they share common characteristics in dealing with society. the gain from this data here is that when artist wants to interact with his surroundings he must be different than others. Art production as well adds to the role of artist as an observer in this particular aspect in studying the society. when the artist wants to be unique and constantly

developing then he has an opportunity provided by making his society and environment his source of learning.

This also enrich the artist ability of being an observer that can identify patterns and recognize problems. He can look closely to the social, economic, political issues. Look closely to the divers reactions towards them, to his own way of thinking to create a different conclusion than others. His role as an observer also allows him to examine the issues and problems from different angles and view them with different intellectual approaches. Even if the artist interest is landscape painting, what is said understood in this matter is very minimized to some people but for the artist is a very long and complicated mental, emotional process of a deep examination to that part of nature. The artist creates a relationship between him and hi object which creates a significant to that particular geographical land or that view of the ocean and what it means to him.

With regards to the complex social issues and things that are far more complicate than painting a landscape, the artist also takes in consideration a deep examination to that issue through constant observation and research. In studying these issues, the artist seeks after tangled threads to draw a comprehension of the real causes to find a possible way to resolve them or to be able later to create an art work that the artist see suitable for the situation.

From the data it is noticeable the observing role the artists play in first stages in life, the house, reactions and how the experience is generated. In addition to his intakes about serious issues or the process of following his thought that dictate and enlightened him about what happens around him in the form of concepts to capture what is important

to him and create his artworks out of them. This process of thinking or series of thoughts is a feedback to the artist who is observing his environment that ends up to be tangible artwork reflecting what is happening in the artist's mind.

It has been said a lot that artists are always looking for inspirations to extract ideas that feed his creativity to enrich his artworks. This inspiration stage either comes from nature and the environment, or driven from within oneself. Simply, one cannot reach this stage of inspiration without seeking an effort to get to it. In other word, if the person is not driving himself to be fully aware and conscious about the things happening around him or not aware about his thinking process will not be inspired. From this stage, the artist creates from himself an intellectual base from which he becomes a thinker, an expert, an intellectual. The more that this base is enriched, the more social and educational contribution appear from the artist.

### **Identifying problems**

Identifying problems is one of the themes that I became obvious early in the interviews and its features clearly appeared when I reviewed the transcribed. The theme focuses on one of the important role that the artist plays in the society. Here are some of the questions that helped developing this theme:

- There was a remarkable change in your style, what are the key factors that have affected your style?
- Do you think this has affected you alone? or other artists would have similar effects on their work?



- Based on your experience in the art world, how would a conflict affect your style?
- The Middle East is a region that suffers from terrorism and terrorist attacks constantly, terrorist organizations are targeting young people to apply their ideologies and serve their agendas, how do you think the art can be implemented to prevent that from happening?

### **The artists' response**

In discussing tragic events that happened during the nighties in the Gulf countries and discussing various effects of terrorism, artist Almosawi talked about artists in general and how they interact with such incidents. He mentioned fear as a problematic issue for the artist to discuss risky topics that they know exist but do not want to take that path.

Here, the artist is afraid, sometimes sees the subject way bigger than his subjects.

Sometimes he might reflect it in sketches, cartoon, caricature, but at the end most of the artist get afraid of discussing such topics and they remain on the sidelines.

Ghareem also discussed the issue from a different angle which is that the artist should not be affected by fear in order to facilitate creativity also provided possible solutions for this problem.

It is impossible in the creative state to have fear. Never, there is nothing that can affect the artist. However, maybe after completing the artwork, the artist might get his thought through to the audience in a certain way that is not necessarily direct. But he still can get his thought across though using means that has a

relationship with the society. The society might be familiar with it but he makes them look at things from another perspective

Artist Almosawi discussed the effects of different aspects on the individual that create an unbalanced result as an external stimulation which is control. Then he gave an example about the artist and athletes in the context of conflicts and control on the individual.

Artists are born with the love of beauty, even of sports. You born then you love to jump here and there, then they give you a ball, you start kicking it right and left, then you are seen as a talented playing with a ball then you go to represent a team. Because you became talented at this specific sport you become obligated to bring victories. Then he gets stripped of the initial purpose which is loving that sport. Then they put him an area where he feels pressured leaving that world of freedom and happiness. He the he left that freedom he got and went into a pressured world. All people are born with love of things that are simple then other people twist them, push them, use them.

Ghareem also discussed this topic and what it does to a broad generation. He tackled the issue of control as a problem generated by the sociopolitical system and he has done a series of artworks emphasize it.

I have a work called Restored Behavior that I used rubber letters for stamps. In my works I discuss bureaucracy and how it kills dreams. It was generated by the systems to make it crutches for human ingenuity. They want human ingenuity to walk with crutches. They want you to be late, killing dreams, delaying events.

This has created a big gap between the older generation and the younger generation. From this bureaucracy, which is the dilemma in the systems, they design your future to you. You find that you have a predesigned future for you read. People do not want anybody to design their life. People now in a time where human mentality has developed. They want to practice their dreams and ambitions. But then they discover that they have a future design for them and have to walk by it. salary structure, to retirement. People's thoughts have changed now. That is why have complete plans that I call restored behaviors that I use stamps which are the symbol for bureaucracy.

Almosawi when asked to indicted the affect of conflicts on his style he provided an overview of current incidents the artists face in our time. He mentioned several aspects of external interference on international level and how it creates instability to some countries for the benefit of others.

Conflicts pass on people and they create it through religions, through trade and economy, environmental problems, water problems, census problems. Some countries resolve in the way that is suitable for them, I want me economy from there, then creates some sort of pressure on specific regions to create problems and wars involving them in conflicts so he can invest materials and industry he has. Weapons or anything. Or he goes to a dry land and say that I have agriculture and I can plant for you and I have the materials.

He also mentioned that economic ambitions intervene with human health issues as it benefits from it. He stated that "There is destruction in everything. We are exposed

while we go and spread these gases till we expand the ozone hole so the toxic substance from radiation come through and the human gets sick and go look for medicine and other create the medicine and the gap gets bigger. The world is like this”. In addition to this global complexity of international and economical conflict, he identifies the role of religious ideology of creating uncertainty in the world as he calls it ‘the war of differences’ that lead to recruiting individual from various places in the world to fight each other based on religious preferences.

Ghareem believes that communication and new technology have brought the world closer together and facilitate the artist to reach other communities easily which in return gets the artist affected by everyday incidents easily as well. He stated,

There is no one that does not get affect by the incidents. We live in the age of technology and communications and the age of information. Anything can make an influence in any moment. You cannot say that I am separated from the world.

Technology transfers news faster and a lot of information are in the reach on hand and it might be overwhelming to some individuals and artists. Ghareem discussed the benefit of independence that the artist enjoys to be able to identify problematic issues around him with being drawn into it. He mentioned that “the artist does not belong to a specific institution or a specific ideology.” Which might give the artist quite a good margin to freely express himself.

Almosawi progressed in the discussion to give a comparison between the universe and human nature in terms of violence and destruction by examining it with the Big Bang theory to draw a conclusion for understanding terrorism.

Let's go back to terrorism, just like what we said, this is the people of our age today, you notice that the universe, God created the universe in Big Bang. What happened? The universe was like a grip, then it exploded, it still until it reaches its maximum range. The planets diverged from each other. It still diverging and it still spreading and later on will go back to become like a grip again. Then it will explode again. This continuity in the universe like this explained by this theory. This terrorism is part of the human destruction on the universe here are problems and there are wars. If you look at discovery channel and see the problems that happen, you will be surprised and there are problems that are worse than terrorism. Terrorism, is a result of utilizing specific situations and cases to market a specific thing like marketing weapons, marketing materials, meaning marketing problems.

With respect terrorism and youth recruitments Almosawi feels the exaggeration and the size of this war and he compare it with the individual artist's capabilities in confronting it.

Notice that this is a world game, bigger than me and anybody else. There are some people who are controlling this thing. This person who trains these kids, playing with their perceptions, it is unfortunate to brainwash these kids. This is a small game underneath the big game. Art in this case get oppressed, and if the artists goes in, just like the straw that want to save a sinking ship, it cannot do anything.

Ghareem specifies the role of artist in helping the society to overcome difficulties especially with regards to the ambiguities that hide the problems.

The role of the artist is to show the alternatives and different opinions that no one from the general people can say because of a religious, economic, social, political reasons. The artist has a role that authorize him to mentions the opinions that people have but cannot say.

### **Analysis: Identifying**

In the previous stage, it was notable how the artists examine his surroundings and generate an enormous memory to things he come cross every day acquiring a sufficient load of information. This second them discusses a different role the artist plays in his society. It gives him the ability to identify the source of problems that his society faces through the concentration of aggravating incident that cause conflicts. In many time the weak elements of the society get covered especially those that happen in official departments or decision-making unites. Ordinarily, it becomes difficult for the average individual to recognize it did not get exposed.

In this stage the artist starts identifying problems, causes, and reasons based on given information and conclusion he makes as an observer. Through several questions in the interview process with artist Abbas Almosawi and artist Abdalnasser Ghareem, I was able to recognize this theme which is a very important one. With regards to assisting the society in overcoming difficulties, the artist has a great capability because of the acquired knowledge he generates through examination and experience. The identifying problem

phase gives the artist a leading role in the society because of his ability to deal with various issues that threatens stability and peace that the community seeks.

The importance of this roles lies in the context in which the artist lives during the problems that he faces and shares with other individuals. Most of the incidents that causes instability in the society like racism, classism, sexism, autocracy and many other issues are apparent issues. However, as mentioned previously, what the artist does by observing and studying various concerning issues is that he distant the investigation to recognize the sources that ignites these problems. For instance, many people believe that terrorism is associated with a specific belief or a commitment to a religion and defending religious principles. Terrorism is a very obvious problematic phenomenon due to the destruction and violent it contains. Through examining act of terror, you can specify the identity of the actor and his religious affiliation. However, this does not give an explanation of the intentions behind the act and the main reasons that led this individual to take such action.

What has been said in this section gives the impression that the artist went into a deep thinking about this phenomenon. Went beyond the outer shell to the society that represent only the identity or religion to the reasons that encourage that individual to take such violent actions. In other words, the interest was to identify certain issues that create a tendency for people to adopt terrorist approaches despite their belongingness. For instance, reapplying in different society the idea of bureaucracy, controlling the individual freedom, and confiscating his right to determine his future. In addition to the

economic and political pressure will lead to social instability and create similar horrifying outcomes in different religious characterization.

Ultimately, this discussion shows us that artists dedicate part of their work and time—even if it to their personal interest for the purpose of inspiration for instance—to study the problematic issues that faces the society. The artist takes these step to reach deep staged in understanding social phenomenon that leads to changing social patterns that skimps peace and instability. This quality authorizes the artist to play and essential role that is reliable to examine social, economic, political aspects that artist discuss in their work to identify core problems and their sources to solve it from the roots.

### **Reflection**

This theme focuses on one of the stages that is mostly enjoyed by the artist. In this stage the artist applies his thoughts and inspirations in reveal it to the world through artworks in different forms and styles. In the interest of this research, what matters is that this theme is considered a development from the previous discussion. After the artist enriched his information and made an enough examination to reality that he lives, then he waits in this stage to translate that reality based on his perception, beliefs, thoughts, and feelings. Different artists have different styles and prefer to work special mediums that suits the subject being treated. Here is the primer question in the interview that led to this discussion.

**The Artists' Response.** What mediums do you prefer to deliver your message with, why?



**Abbas Almosawi' s Response.** How do you read the events around you and what impacts does it have on your work.?

**The Artist Response.** Artist Abbas Almosawi believes that there are certain criteria that lead the artist to choose a particular medium. He said, “In the art it depends on the individual and how he implements his skills.” He also believes that constant training is a key for the artist to be able to reflect what he feels and what he has in mind about a situation. He mentioned that “You have to spend hours to be creative. In order to excel at any aspect in life, you have to go through thousands of hours of practice in that particular profession to excel in it.” in explaining his view of acquiring a high level of skills and knowledge about art and how it can facilitate that artist, he stated that “Because the first ten paintings are different from the hundreds different than the five hundreds different than the thousand. The important thing is the production. You cannot go backward when your steps are going forward, you are going to get there. As long as your practice, you are going to get there.”

Based on the question that asks about the important events that happen around the artist, he discussed his experience in the art during and after the Gulf War in the nineties:

I made the soul exhibit and invited Kuwaitis and invited Alarabi magazine and they wrote about the project. Alarabi magazine the famous One. What, people during the days of Wars And artists most of them get affected by but do not Translate their feelings to artwork. They do not take steps in doing such works, it scares them, hurt them. It just like the old man if I ask him to marry again, he

would say that he does not have the ability, 'I barely can stand up, and you ask me to get married'

Almosawi also talked about the tendencies of artist and what they think of war and violence. he noted that "You ask the artist paint wars, but he will say no, I just want to paint what I love. Why I would get involve with these problems" and to justify this statement by saying

The art can be employed to deliver messages but the artist is not obligated to do so. Unless the artist does it voluntarily because he is living it and sees it and gets affected by it and does it by himself. Nobody forces him to do it. if it comes from within, it becomes sophisticated, the work is honest. If it is commissioned, it becomes like put-together, and if you ask the artist he'd say 'they just asked me and I did it.'

**Abdulnasser Gharem' s Response.** In discussing how the artist engage with the events that he encounters, artist Gharem described the artist actions" The artist initially becomes a mirror reflecting his own society. that is why at the beginning most people did not like this kind of art because it reflects them. The artist becomes a mirror to the society and people do not like to their true selves. This role gets played by the artist very well and very neutral". This is an important statement that describes the essence of the social activity for the artist through his own work.

Artist Gharem also described the differences between the available artworks that are produced in commercial and decorative context, he mentioned that "These works are there for the general audience who is looking for a beautiful china or a painting that suits

his couch. But there are works that make different and stays”. Indeed, the discussion here is provided to distinguish the value in artworks based on their influence and remarks that they leave.

In explaining the different views from that audience and individual in reading the artwork and embracing the concept of importing the art into society he asserted that

This has to do with education, has to deal with visual culture. We have a verbal culture. We depend on the verbal culture a lot. We fought against pictures and sculptures but lately things started to change. Mutations happened just like genetic mutation in certain phases. But we still specifically with this type in contemporary art”. in this discussion, the reflection is coming from the history of art and various visual means that made their way to conservative societies such as in the Gulf counties.

In the importance of conceptual art and whether the philosophy of aesthetic has to be implemented in reflecting about violence and war, artist Gharem said that “In the conceptual art is related to research and epistemology. There is no beauty in war. The most important thing is the cognitive devices within the mind get activated, the artist is not offering a visual massage”. In crucial moments, such as in conflict and war, the artist goes beyond traditional understanding of the art as thing that is related only to beauty and entertainment. Artist Gharem here emphasize on the artist ability and intention to change people’s perception and not to provide what identify as beatify piece or not.

He also discussed an important work that he made that reflects the danger of manipulating the ecosystem on the expense of the environment. He noted that

In my work, Flora and Fauna I was discussing the ecosystem. How do you bring extraneous trees from Australia and plant them in a place like Abha in Saudi Arabia that have native trees? I was talking about the lack of liability in system. I noticed that they do this in many different places. For instance, bringing tamarisk trees from America to stabilize soil. It did stabilize the soil but it killed other trees. So, I was against this ecosystem as an environmental system.

This work recognizes the importance of the artist's works in reflecting back on various issues that they come across and feel the need to show others what they see and feel. This kind of activity resonates beyond the art society, meaning that not only art critics and enthusiasts are interested in this kind of art but all whom are affected by the incident that the artist is reflecting on.

### **Analysis: Identifying Problems**

Appears from the reviewing what generated from the interviews the possible differences between the artist from the execution mode to choosing the material that they prefer to deliver their thoughts and feelings. The outward messages in the artwork might not be obvious and explicit as much as the suggested experience and intellectual journey it represents. These messages perhaps docile to the artist tendencies' and his desires and they rather control the outcome of the product. Here we must take in consideration the various styles available within the art as well as the susceptibility of people these days in palpating advanced and challenging styles.

Indeed, that within this frame of tendencies and the choices the artist make in identifying mediums to communicate his message, lies the control of the outcome of the

final product. I want to mention here a point that artist Gharem has mentioned when discussing the importance of contemporary art in delivering messages. with respect to the role that that artist plays in communicating the audiences' sensations and driving to places that the person has not decided to intentionally visit. The choice for picking the medium depends on whether it serves the artist in not only getting his message out to the audience, but whether it forces a change in their perception.

The artist has resembled the development in technology and communication through the openness to employ them to serve his productions and conveying with this development to regenerate himself. In many time the artist paces for opportunities to bring new ideas and appear newtric, variant, and in many times surprising. This in itself is a revolution to the norm and the existing monotony in the society which results from some complexities in the sociopolitical system.

With regards to the social and human issues, we find from the discussion the presence of the artist in these issues and his insistence to express his thoughts about them. It is not necessary the role the artist play is completely humanitarian. However, the artist sloshes in these topics for the belief he carries of the ability to educate and provide edifications towards issues that concerns the person's future, environment. It is also unnecessary for the artwork to be constantly a complete reaction to violence and war as they are not the only topic that threatens the artist. For instance, Flura and Fluan, and preformed artwork by Abdalnasser Gharem, discusses environmental problems that concerns some places and cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This artwork, or act per se, is a conduct that urges to create a change in a present situation in dealing with the ecosystem and seek for a stop to this problem. It is in contrast also create from the audience an extension to identify similar problems and educate others about it. This stage of this artist role, gives him the ability to experiment and discover new means to reach for the problem and considering the challenges he identifies. It is another learning process where the artist engages deeply in his world about a topic that is external. artists rely a lot on collecting visual information to employ them in the production phase of the art. By either receiving the information from the media, television, everyday interaction; or seeking for the information through searching, reading, communicating with other artists. The artist expands his knowledge, his skills, and his connection circle and all that benefit the context in which the artists is moving in.

### **Partnering with NGO's**

Nongovernmental or nonprofit organizations form a phase for independent artists and it is considered a bridge to link the art with other fields that for instance are concerned with social issues, peacemaking, and conflict resolution. these organization are available throughout the world and they deal with various social, economic, environmental issues. Their role contributes in elevating the individual and facilitating those who are in need. The work of artist with these organizations come with the framework of exchanging experiences and benefiting from what the artist can offer of educational and cultural services.

The discussion with artist Abbas Almosawi and artist Abdalnasser Gharem was very beneficial in terms of working with NGOs and the importance of this partnership.

The generated conversation provided a good insight about what this interaction can bring to field of art and conflict resolution. After reviewing the data, I have identified this role of the artist in society by partnering with nongovernmental organization and considered this an important them for the research. Here is one of the question that helped in generating this them:

- How do you see the benefit of working with non-governmental organizations?
- Describe your experience in working with non-governmental or non-profit organizations?

**Abbas Almosawi' s Response.** Artist Almosawi talked about some of the difficulties that faces the artist during his work which is financial stability. He mentioned Van Gough story with the support he received from his brother

If you are an artist and you cannot sell, one day the wheel is going to stop on you. And you will be looking for different source of income in life. There are some artists who had support like Van Gough for instant, it would not matter for him to sell his art. It mattered to him to produce art and keep painting and his brother supported him

Almosawi recognizing financial stability as a limiting aspect for the artist to produce and reflect his expressions. Then he combined this discussion with the role of NGO's in benefiting the artist as well as the society especially with regard with issues that concern raising an awareness. He said that

Sometimes there are some associations, foundations, organizations that deals with these issues, and they make some sort of gatherings, creating group works, or preparing conferencing calling for artists, writers, poets, photographers, filmmakers. And they create some kind of gathering that bring people together, orient them, making film festival, art festival sheading the lights on a specific subject. For instance, on terrorism, on the role of religion, the role of society, the role of woman, the deprived woman, the role of the child, child rights and so one. But not all artists are interested, very few.

He also discussed his work with the United Nations in different occasions. He pointed out the intention of the United Nations to include art into their activity.

That's why the united nations, and I have worked with them, they focus on the role of art of changing approaches and values and so on. So when you say non-governmental organizations, it lives here, because the United Nations selected to people and nations day for everything. A day for the woman, a day for the child, a day for the environment, a day for the earth, a day for peace, a day for the language. It selected these so it can bring people of all places and created new situations. Who deals with them, people like us. I dealt with them in cases like these, I brought schools and children and went to the offices of the United Nations. In the book fairs that happens or other events or in theater or music festivals, all these are educational events. The person has to put these thing in mind if he is looking for things that have higher values, have principles.



**Abdulnasser Gharem' s Response.** Artist Gharem talked first about the emergence of NGOs and their role. He noted that:

The non-profit organizations in the contemporary societies, need this kind of organizations for many reasons. The first reason is because of family disintegration in the society. Young Boys and girls need a society or a place that have intersection of interest with. They need to find a place where they practice their hobbies, an embracing place that offer equipment, mentors, a place to be a think tank. Place that attract specialists from different fields and have the latest information

In the benefit of these organizations, he said that “These places are good for young man and women that have interest in a specific field, not necessary in the arts. This is the reason for the development of such organization”.

In terms of dealing with non-governmental organization he said that” I have done a lot of work such giving lectures in museums and different institutions”. Then he pointed out the benefits of these organizations to the artists and the person who is interested in the arts “These organization become like habitats, containing advanced tools for professionals. It provides a good environment for the artist, from the knowledge aspect, providing connections with curators, libraries, other artists, studios visits, workshops. But still not profit” this statement ties with what Artist Almosawi the limitation of artist if there is not support provided to him.

To distinguish these organizations from commercial platforms, artist Gharem said” That is why these organizations have a great role different than the gallery. The

gallery is looking for financial profits, commercial goals”. And to the extended benefit of the artist in working with NGOs he mentioned that “The artist who work with a foundation does not have pressure, he has the place and the equipment, does not need anything”.

### **Analysis: Partnering with NGO's**

After reviewing the importance of the artist role in the society in the last phases that were previously discussed, it gave a description of the individualistic role on dealing with social issues. this characteristic balances the artist knowledge about things that he lives. I have compared it with process of research an examination until the artist reaches the stage of forming the thought into artworks and that what the artist during the interview explain their inspirations.

In this theme, another role of the artist in society rises with respect to interaction outside of his studio where he produces his artworks. This stage is basically a role of contribution from what the artist has earned from skills, experiences and knowledge. The activities that the artist make vary based on the approach of organization that he works with. The artist enforces his role in the society be associating with these organizations which facilitate him in dealing with a lot of obstacles that face him.

In the previous themes, artist Almosawi mentioned that some situations where difficulties might be formed against the artist and prevent him sometimes from working. for further clarification, these situations might come financial obstacles, fear for war and conflicts, fear of terrorist organization that might target the artist. This theme provides solutions to these situations and where organizations facilitate the work of the artist or

working groups and provide a safe and stable environment to let creativity unfold. In this part of the research, the artists discussed the role of organizations that hold events and create interaction settings for artists from different field, different places of the world and come to work together. Artists participate in work about peace, youth empowerment, education, etc. In addition to that, they create workshops, conferences, festivals where artist share these experiences and skills and participate in raising awareness that concern human right, women, children, and the environment.

Independent artist might face difficulties to deliver their messages to a larger and general audience especially if their subjects are not completely artistic. in this case, these organization form a gate where the artist can reach the audience and share his message. Dealing with these organization is indeed beneficial for both side since it unifies the effort and facilitate the work. The discussion of this theme comes in the frame of questioning the social aspect of the artist and which approach the artist takes to serve the society especially in terms of conflict resolution and peacemaking. It was obvious in the previous themes that not all artists are concerned or interested in constantly discussing war and conflict in their work. However, the artist leave the place of his work to treat these issues to provide alternatives to confront them. Recognizing this theme assist in identifying the means that become available to the independent artist in dealing with various social issues.

The interviews helped in reaching a conclusion about the artist activity out of his studio and away from his zone. artists dedicate part of their effort in dealing with different organization as part of their contribution to the society. There was a lot

beneficiary aspect provided in this joint work and its importance. there is also a huge benefit in the presence of the artist in the agenda of nongovernmental organizations.

## **Leadership**

Task accomplishment on a large level need to have a person that have a leadership quality. This personality enjoys specific skills that allow it to communicate to various layers of the society and have the capability and the vision to create change and development. In the world of art, there are a lot of activities that require group work and cooperation especially those activities that carry with them intention for education and awareness. In this settings, the role leadership offers the artist great opportunity to apply his vision and create a functional environment that apply his thoughts. During the interview with Artists Abdunnasser Gharem and Abbas Almosawi, some situations appeared where the artist performed with sense of leadership. In reviewing the data, I noticed that there are common and shared characteristics between the artists that reflect a social role that the artist play. Here are some of the question that generate this discussion.

- What messages do you want to deliver by your art especially to a general audience?
- What is your social message toward young artists?

**Abbas Almosawi' s Response.** Almosawi' s response came to described his effort in working with groups and making encouragements to attract a lot of artists to work together. He mentioned that “I have established the peace and love carnival where we went to several countries to promote peace through the art, from Bahrain to Oman to Germany, Italy, Geneva, even China and Cairo working with the Arab league”. in

addition to making these efforts, he talked about the experience he has in collage and how it helped him in maintaining these events based on the knowledge of design “My interior design major helped me a lot in working on due dates and working with a big group of people. Many of these festivals people would not believe that it can happen but I showed them it can. I design the layout for the place and what not and make it happen.”.

Another example of leading groups of people in art projects, Artist Almosawi discussed this in working with the United Nations. He mentioned that “In 1997 I worked with the UN in Palace of the UN for the 50th anniversary where we worked with 1000 artist and children. Also... the New Millennium peace project where we did the peace message by the Tree of Life in Bahrain with 2000 students”.

**Abdulnasser Gharem’ s Response.** Gharem’ s response emphasizes on the importance of transferring knowledge and helping youth artist to involved in the society. He said that

Creating a role to your continuity to produce a generation of artist not be a continuity to you as an artist but to continue carry this approach of thinking. To pass the knowledge to them, to pass the thinking mechanism and how the knowledge factor is very necessary in the art world. And they are not supposed to be just artists, they have to be social actors, active in their societies and have a role. This is an approach, a policy, they get it and develop it. So, you will be as a mentor to them.

### **Analysis: Leadership**

Sense of leadership is an added quality to the characteristic of an individual how is visionary and ambitious. Drawing and painting beside reflecting on some social issues through the art are not necessarily effective means by themselves. This role of leadership that the artist plays is very crucial because it takes him out of his studio and put him in a place with high responsibility. Having the thought and communicating it to the audience is part of the artist job, however, there must be an interaction to activate the intention of these thoughts.

Throughout the discussion in the interviews, the artists provided examples and situations where they had to involve a lot in group work and in other places they dealt a lot with youth. The sense of leadership is an important one in many professions even in education. The teacher must have some leadership skills to be able to control his classroom and give students sense of tranquility. Artist who deal with conflict resolution and peacemaking, or reflect on these topics in their work acts with leadership sense to give those people interacting with him the confidence and belief of what he represents. Gives them confidence of the approach that he is taking and that it is beneficial to the receiver. We must take into consideration that a lot of artists, especially professional ones who uses that art as a source of income, enjoy a base of audience members which contains a lot of youth that look at him with aspiration.

In the previous themes, we came across some discussions about the artist interaction with young people as Artist Abdulnasser Gharem mentioned in working with nongovernmental organizations. He emphasized on the importance of the mentoring

young people as they form a continuity to the artist and his approach. In addition to what has been discussed here about the role of leadership, this role draws a distinction between different artists. There are some artists who participate in art shows and have a presence in the artworld. However, they are different from those artists who acquire the role of leadership and create the events and activities. It is obvious that the artist plays this role of leadership and it is an important quality for creating social change, conflict resolution, and peacemaking; but the artist should come forward to it.

### **Influence**

This role that was identified during reviewing the interviews data, in fact expresses an important factor of what makes that work of art continuous and the respond to it more effective. In the third theme that was discussed earlier, when the artist reflects his insights to the audience and transfer his experience to them, there has to be some sort of influence for that work to be effective. this theme, the role of influence, is the last theme of the research and by reviewing the interviews' data, it became obvious how it is connected to the research and it is one of the important roles that the artist play in the society. here are some of the questions that helped in generating the data.

- Do you think an art piece can resolve a conflict? How?
- How would art that is perceived as a soft concept, stands against the harshness of war and conflicts?

**Abbas Almosawi's Response.** To take the conversation toward answering these questions, Almosawi gave several examples about artworks that influenced that outcomes of violent conflicts. He mentioned that

Sometimes an artwork can change a lot of perceptions to the world. The picture of Vietnam war and the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is nothing more horrific, but the picture and the photographer, the journalist that took the picture of the naked girl while she was going out of that hell. This still has an affect on the world and it stopped the war and changed a lot of perceptions. So, the artwork ... like Picasso's Guernica. There are examples in the art, in the movies that changed our understandings and our perspective of the universe the creation by the affective dimension of the external world. All these movies warn and changes our awareness and educate and increase your perceptions so you can be creative in your paintings and cinema sometimes. Sometimes even poems, songs, if it has resonance, voice, music, it can make change.

Then he continued to described the evolvments of art throughout history and how art and artist broke their path to become what they are today "human being previously if someone is talented He would be under the umbrella of the church or the government. we found that the era in which the art car parade today and the revolution of the arts broke these rules and the redundancy of subjects". He proceeded to discuss different periods of time and the school of arts that relate to them "The classic periods, the first, second, third and the modern one, until the development of the baroque movement, Dadaism, surrealism, cubism, and impressionism".

Almosawi also explained how the artist used the art to connect with himself and have a better understanding of his existence. He added "The artists then started to dive into new places, they started to search to find themselves not for others to find themselves



in the artist ... draw me, draw my family, draw our church, draw how the creator made the universe. Things like that”.

Another example provided here by artist Almosawi and the shift that artists make in their subjects “Goya, he lived with kings and painted them and the royal families. He was a court painter, then he went into situations and started painting artworks of a human eating his children, fire at night. And he created great artworks”.

Almosawi then pointed out how this evolution engages art with other aspects that are not necessary pure visual and how it led to reaching to affecting the perception of others saying

This revolution changed all the concepts. So, when the artist came to deal with these new concept, he took from an aesthetic perspective, changing the behavior of the sight process and the search in within the artist and his feelings and dreams. So, it became not only that he is a talented artist and can draw and paint and transferring reality, he got within his private secrets, his dreams, his fears, his stress, so the artist took part in this to drive other to his position

In this statement, Almosawi mention the turn point where artists started to seek for things further than the visual aspect of art, to connecting the feeling between the artist and the viewer and influencing the perception.

Here is a comment from Almosawi about artists involvement in their society and what should be done from their side

There are some artists that have an approach to just serve humanitarian causes.

But most of them do not have a big role. I would say that the successful artist in

fact is the one who interact with his society and its issues. He must have a word, a position, a touch, a move, an involvement. You are not supposed to stay away and do not know anything

Almosawi here encouraged artist to have a position in issues that affect their society from his belief of the importance of this aspect. Then he provided an example artist Pablo Picasso's work "Artist like Picasso, when the war was in Spain, seeing death and blood in front of him. He considered this in his artwork Guernica, it was a revolution, he wanted people to see what he saw. Picasso an artist of beauty, portraits, mosaic. He broke all the role and got into this topic, he put his sign and touch on it".

To ease the fear of most artist that perceive the difficulty of conflicts and challenged as more powerful than their ability, Almosawi describes how small steps of the artist's actions can influence a big change "You are not responsible for the whole universe but if you started to put a planting here and put a plant there, and here a seed, and here a drop of water, then you are creating a fertile soil that serve humanity".

**Abdulnasser Gharem's Response.** As a contemporary artist, Abdulnasser Gharem seeks to communicate with the audience's perception and knowledge to provoke them into critically examining the world. He mentioned that "The type of art that I provide is an attempt from me to activate the conceptual devices with the viewer. That is why I highly touch the cognition areas, I touch presuppositions, referents. And also that is how the arts can reach dark places in people's minds". Then he added in describing the benefit of art as a tool that seeks behind the visual and artistic aspect "he arts is the only

medium that can reach these dark places in the people's mind or their thoughts. There is not any other means that can play the same role".

In explaining his use of medium to communicate his message and the effectiveness of them he associated it with the suitability of medium itself in serving the thought and concept. He said that "This is depending on the idea. You must choose the right medium to can suitably deliver your message. The medium is not the basis; the idea is the basis. There are two stages in the art which are, the searching and innovation stage, and the formation stage. There are at the beginning a focus on developing the idea from the artist experience and examining it until it reaches the execution stage and becomes tangible in an artwork. in this process, the artist decided which medium to use to deliver the message". Then adds

It mostly depends on the idea. However, currently might be the photograph and filmmaking. These are the mediums of this age. First, because of the easiness it offers in moving through the communication age that we are in. Second, it does not need a translator, so it is from the mediums that leave an affect now. They do not get affected by time and it communicates several senses, visual and authorial and so on. And you can use it in live shows even online.

Artist Gharem shares his passion as an artist and how he facilitate his audience alongside with his attention of implementing the art " I am not showing you a beautiful painting to give a massage to your eyes. I am moving your perceptions, constants, referents. I am liberating you from the mental tyranny that was constructed in us. And

that is how I am creating changing by shedding the light in the dark places in people's mind"

The matter of youth and the sporadic paths that they face, Gharem explained the difficulties that confronts them as they not able to achieve their role and what lead them toward undesired destinies. He mentioned that "Young people in the current period of time feel like they are not playing their role. They do not find facilitations to make them employ their hobbies, projects, thoughts. We have a big complexity in the system which is bureaucracy controlling young people. That is why they go to secretive and dark systems. Any secret system would be attractive because it gives them a chance to play a role in their lives. He will have a key role to do what he wants. He would go to these systems and organizations because he has power and energy and he has to feel his role and his existence".

### **Analysis: Influence**

In every phase of these themes that the research went through, it becomes obvious that importance of association between these themes to complete the structure in which we understand the full social role of the artist. The explanation that was provided in the previous stages that the artist deals with the society, I have reach substrates to identify the work that the artist makes and understand what he does out of the artistic framework. In this theme, I must focus on the power of communication with others that the artist enjoys as a result of understanding his role and the leadership ability. This allows him to involve in group associations to mobilize intellectual crowds and create an audience-base composed of school of thoughts that interest artist, social activities. This also influence

academic packs competing in research about artists work and who it connects with different philosophies.

In moving to identifying this role, the features of the research vision started to clarify giving the reader a map to understand the artist's effort and his position in the society. This role, the artist as influential, is what translate the artist endeavor, creations, efforts; and what in fact explains all the previous stages. It is normal that these efforts produce at least a slight change between the initiation of reflecting on a situation, or the problem that the artist is dealing with, until the completion of this circle in containing the problem, investigating it, discussing it, exposing it to the society; to the end in creating statements about that problem that concord with the artist's.

In discussing the artist's role as an influential figure, not a luxurious, because in many times the role of artist is absorbed as a character associated with a shallow concept interested in playing with colors and materials. There is a necessary need for understanding the deeper meaning of the artist role. During the interviews, I asked the artist to describe the means used of communicating their message to the youth, their answer did not center only on providing advices. Their focus is to create an extension to the artist approach, his thoughts and philosophies, his means of dealing with various events around him. In addition to that, they are interested in see young artist capable of maintaining the necessary skills and confidence that allow them deal with difficult issues and creating a countermovement to these problems and minimize them and minimize their effects as well.

This role is what activates the communication between the artist, his thought, his work, with his audience. Whereas the interaction between the artist and audience that is standing on compliments, praises, and aesthetically evaluating the artwork is extremely fragile since it does not communicate the artist convictions, feelings, beliefs, philosophies, and so on. Creating a change, that the role of the influence is responsible for and the artist's end-result intended of his work or his social activities, comes in this part. It is making a difference by urging group of people to take different positions toward and issue, adopt the artist ideas and applying and this is what gives that artist an effective role.

### **Research Findings**

I noticed that the artists are taking into consideration the bigger problems that has an effect on the society overall. What their artworks reflect is symbolize aspects that affects either the development of the society or threatens the life of the individual or his environment. It could be the case that is a result of what state that the artist is experiencing that might increase the desire for him to create a true change. This change transforms the reality and the social patterns that he lives on one hand or for the sake of safety in the other hand. For instance, issues like war, natural disasters, human damage to nature, poverty; these are aspects a person might experience and haunts his sleep and occupy a lot of his thinking. The artist might have a direct experience with such incidents where he might live in a place of violent conflict between two or more parties. Here the artist plays a role by leaving an impact in this conflict by being neutral to the situation but reflects on it.

Conversely, the artist also becomes interested about a particular situation or certain challenges that face the society and receive a lot of information about it. The media here, in all its forms, plays a good role in delivering the information to the artist and facilitates him in following the incidents. As a result, the artist experiences provoking feelings that prevent him from living in peace. The intention for humanitarian and social work against these situations arises and the artist starts working through the same gate he received the information from. Seeking to make a reaction where he practices his passion through dealing with this incident through his artwork in the way that he finds suitable and can provide an effect.

The question to ask here is that whether the artist is obligated to do humanitarian work or mark his opinion or position toward a specific war or a particular conflict. Of course not; however, what urges the artist to move (artistically) toward a specific event stems from a personal desire within the artist for many reasons: to exhibit his feelings towards it, to express his belief that he can make an impact on the official level in the government or certain parties in the conflicts, and to exert influence on the public opinion with this issue and engaging with the media to transport the picture in different way that is coming from the artist experience in dealing with his audience. This is eventually going to affect the audience position either by influencing them or giving them this missing information to entertain it.

When the artist takes a certain action, there is an absolute conviction behind this action and a total belief that he has the right and the ability to express and what he has of messages will be heard and effective. The concept or the creation of an idea is a very

important thing. This is what makes the individual a thinker, author, maker, or an artist.

Implementing the idea and giving it an artistic nature or a functional nature; cultural, social, or political, changes based on the person role and his position. To clarify this the meaning here look at different profession from the engineer to the mechanic, from the lawyer to the bank teller and so on.

Everyone gets occupied with certain thoughts throughout the day based on his profession. Based on this idea, most artists see themselves as a mirror to their society and environment and that is how they make a living. However, there are very few people who pass the stage of using their profession as a source of income and achieve self-actualization through their art.

Practicing the profession by itself is not enough as much as the artist see a payoff in playing an effective role in the society by contributing his time and effort. Surely, the approaches vary between artists based on the influences that moved the artist toward these issues in the first place. Furthermore, the artist's style differs based on the historical and the sociocultural context that the artist emerged in as well his interests and tendencies.

Some concepts I understood from Gharem include his suggestion that the artist does not work only in the studio, paints and brushes are not the only tools he has, and production of artwork is not the only goal. With rapid change in our time with the current development happening in all different fields, the art has become a powerful tool that allow the artist to utilizing different aspects at the same time to activate a concept and implementing it in life.



When Abbas Almosawi decided to do something about the Gulf War in the 1990s. He made great effort by trying to do something while the area was still boiling. Those who lived there remember the fear and the level of anger that people start having toward each other. It took years for people to forget and forgive the tragedy of that war. Separation is intimate between the Arabs themselves.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Our need for peace is an essential one since it deals with the sense of security we as humans demand. The instability of this need, leads us to generate conflicts with each other for the sake of stabilizing it. It is obviously embedded in our genetic structure to have this need stabilized in order to function properly in accomplish what is necessary for our survival. This basic discussion is very clear that it does not need any collaboration to emphasize how necessary having peace in our life. However, the complexity of our system makes it impossible to have this factor of our life be achieved throughout the time. There are many factors that provide this instability and we can discuss it on many different levels whether it is psychological, economical, or social level.

The moment when an artist witnesses a difficulty in his society, he or she starts to search for answers to solve this difficulty. It comes from the nature that the artist is an observer and have high ability to examine social patterns. Artists who are merging their souls to understand themselves would often consider their life to be the big picture they paint. The obligation comes from the understanding that the individual is a part of a whole and that the whole is the community he belongs to. Indeed, any artist that has worked on his knowledge and feels that he or she is a one reflection of that community and the community as well reflects individuals just like him, this artist will have his work continuous in many levels. The artist works are extensions of his being. The creativity is only an aspect in which the artist can use to enlarge his existence. Being creative is an ability that allow the individual to see his or her thoughts manifested in the physical world.

When I talk about the artist role in the society, I talk about it from the learner perspective. Overall, the discussion about the role of artist in peacebuilding is still developing. The academic aspect of the topic is lacking knowledge and evidence of artists' efforts in the society. I believe that researchers and conflict resolution practitioners should take this topic into consideration and start building in it. The importance of this topic has been growing and I believe as we speak a lot of attention is being drawn to this topic, and this is very good for our field. Art is not only a decorative means that we use to in our houses and hospital, it is a part of our culture and it could be the only aspect of our life where all human can agree on. All humans are attracted to beautiful things, it is something that we strive for and look for it in every aspect in our lives. We are attracted to beautiful designs, clothes, nature, smell, buildings and so on.

In terms of conflict resolution, there are many arenas that the arts can be involved in. At every stage or level of conflict we can find a suitable place for the art to take place. We can use the art to prevent disasters and raise awareness before something happens. Moreover, we can implement it during the conflict to make a bigger impact on an intervention process. we can heal and reconcile people that have been effect of a certain aspect of the conflict. The good things that artists are making efforts an all aspect of conflict resolution and they are not waiting for case study to prove that their work is going to make a difference or not. Pablo Picasso used his skills to express his fears of the destructive power of war even before conflict resolution became a field in the academia

In an area like the Middle East where it has a complexity of social belongings, differences between people sharing nations and religions started to appear especially with

emergence of the Arab Spring. The tone of argument or expression takes the form of separation to with and against. This makes the work difficult for artist who wants to act in unifying fashion specifically with regards to incidents that have an act of violence or terrorism.

There is something very important for the artist more than being in the art studio. Being out in social or cultural occasions by being either a guest or a host is very important because this is a source for the artist to recycle his information through interacting with other individuals

### **Social Change**

The concept of changes has been mentioned a lot in this research since it is associated a lot with a range of qualities that creates some sort of a leap to a nonessential situated position. Change is a normal and inherent character connected with social development and evolvement. There are a lot of issues that align with this concept and get influenced by it. In a lot of societies, change becomes a requirement because of the acknowledged feeling that there are better alternatives for lifestyle, form of governance, economic trades, and so on. Once this is recognized, change must take the current situation to a better status from where it has been. However, in the situation of war, conflict, violence, and in many similar situations, change becomes a necessity. In the development of social phenomenon, even if it is limited to a smaller group of people, but these phenomena can cause a great deal of social anxiety, unrest, and instability; then social change reach to a level that is a must to take place. Otherwise, the current problems are just going to keep expanding creating further conflicts. For instance, terrorism as

problematic social phenomena, put in mind that there is not necessary a direct link with needs of social change; however, it represents a flaw in the society than needs the change. Many things can lead to these flaws such as an imbalance in the raising up the individual and his education, the lack of means that create condition to examine possibilities to the future.

In this frame of discussion comes the question about who is authorized to create this change, to lead it, examining its causes and possible means. Indeed, there is a responsibility from the government and official authorities to promote different types of social changes. Moreover, there is also a responsibility on all other facilities that makes the society from charities, organizations, religious institutions to help stabilizing the society.

Here also comes the artist's role as a participating member with a lot of these organizations. Many times, the artist becomes one of the founders for such organizations, is associated with them, and is connected with their visions and missions. The artist enjoys this specialty for his awareness of social issues, needs, and desires which are not necessary linked to his job as an artist but because of his ability to apply his skills in serving them. In the contrast, it facilitates the artists in reaching what interests him the most in many times which is speaking directly to the audience and delivering his thoughts to the individual.

In this context, we cannot say that art is only a place to demonstrate the artist's strengths and skills to the audience. There are a lot of venues where the artist can practice and challenge his colleagues in art contests that arrive to choosing a winner. These

contests creates competitions between artists and inspire them to bring new artistic experiments, experiences, and executions. It is important to point here that in many times these contests get associated with subjects that deal with social issues and give the contest special direction. Almosawi mentioned previously in the interview that he paints based on the event that he would be participate in. Accordingly, the artist participation in art events is categorized with a level of awareness of the subjects that these events represents.

Based on this discussion, the relationship between artist and society has a long history and is very continuous. There is a large common ground where art and society deal with each other based on shared interest and characteristics. Initially, the artist is a constituent element who corresponds with the society in joy or sadness. Most of the time, society is a source of inspiration to the artist.

### **The Artists' Works**

The philosophy behind the artwork determined through series of components that the artist collects through his experience. Choosing the subject to discuss in the painting is similar to the engagement in a conversation where the artist has some ideas to express and get them to the audience. Artist Almosawi is interested more in work and activities that seeks to educate and increase awareness by bringing people to the event and have them participate.

In this picture, Almosawi is supporting a social-environmental cause by participating with Bahrain Environmental Society in an activity that attract youth to paint nature and be close to it. Almosawi spoke passionately during the interviews about the

importance of the environment to him that he even pointed out that he is the nature artist.

When he talked about his childhood, he mentioned a lot of memories about his adventures with his friends in the nature and his love to the sea and gardens. His paintings reflect this approach a lot.



*Figure 6.* Almosawi with Bahrain Environmental Society.

This position of the artist, integrates more with contribution when associated directly with the public or in prearranged activities as we see here with Almosawi.



*Figure 7.* A child participating in the art activity to protect the environment.

Another example is this project by Gharem when he engaged in a live performance in the streets of Khamis Mushait city. The project is called Flora and Fauna. In this project, the artist engages directly with audience forcing them to wonder about his actions start to communicate this idea of the connectedness between human and nature.



*Figure 8.* Flora and Fauna, performance art by Abdulnasser Gharem.

The artist incorporates his position with actions that align with the importance of what he wants to discuss. In terms of serving environmental causes, the artist believes that direct contact with the concerned audience and engaging individual who live in those places in the activity, create a greater effect on the education process of this issue. This also help the individual himself to examine the environment and understand it from another perspective. These activities that are interested in such subjects, gain a greater power in producing and communicating messages through activating people's awareness directly. The specialty that these activities have, is that they complement the efforts that has been done through traditional advertising, lectures, and conferences; they exceed professional individual to reach the general public.





*Figure 9.* Painting for peace in the corridors of the Palais des Nations, Geneva 1997.

Peace activities that Artist Almosawi has created, started from the nineties. That period represent the harshness of the Gulf war and Iraq just get out of a long-time war with Iran. Almosawi felt reaching for the young generation at the time and educating them about the importance of peace and engage them in art activities to express himself on that topic.



*Figure 10.* Peace and Love project by Almosawi in Moscow in 1996.

The tragedy of war leaves harsh feelings between conflicted parties. Expression toward the conflict might feed the negative feeling even more that was generated from the conflict. The focus on peace sort of shifts the focus from the negative aspect of the lived experiences of war and generates a new focus toward the concept of peace.

Almosawi associated the concept with the art from his conviction that it has a greater expression and communication capability that exceeds words, speeches, and languages.

Almosawi went through these activities through many stages with a belief of the artist's role in communicating and educating people about that art ability in drawing rapprochements between different people. From those activities, we see



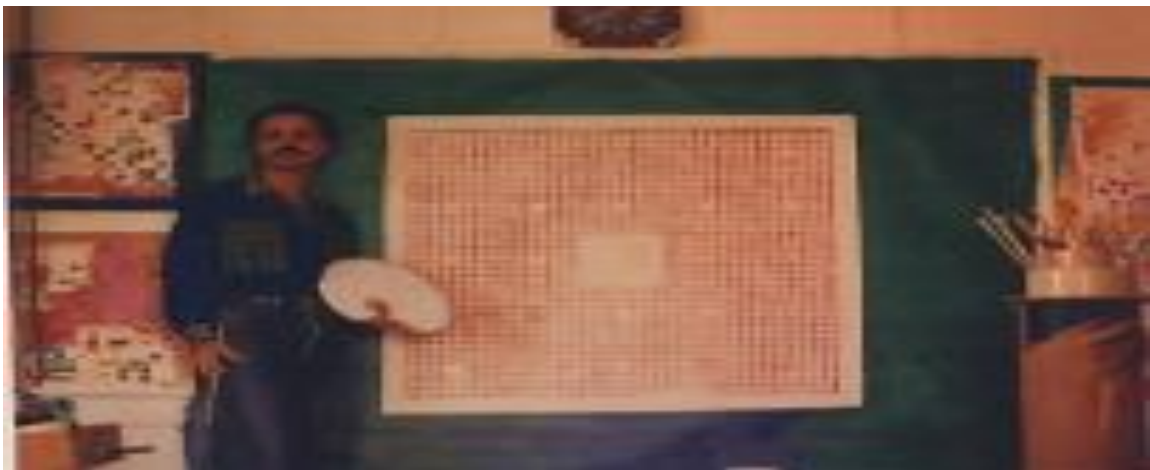
*Figure 11.* Painting for peace in the new millennium at the lone tree in the desert known as the 'Tree of Life', 1994.

Creating such activity never stops from interacting between participants and the continuity of it to assure the existence of the artist's voice against that challenges that conflict brings. Aside with these activities, the artist has his own perception and practices the expression of his feeling toward conflicts. In 1991, Almosawi created this piece as a

reaction to the beginning of the Gulf war, which he followed with an exhibition about the war that he discussed during the interview.



*Figure 12.* Peace project by Almosawi painting with children at Arad Fort in 1994.



*Figure 13.* Artist Almosawi painting reflecting on the Gulf War.





*Figure 14.* Artist Almosawi painting reflecting on the Gulf War.



*Figure 15.* A work by Almosawi representing the last 24 hours before the beginning of the war to liberate Kuwait.

Also in 2001, days after the incident of 9/11, Almosawi created a piece to share his feeling with the American people through the American Ambassador in Bahrain. Almosawi continues throughout the years to create such activities, in 2005 he did in 2006.



*Figure 16.* Abbas Almosawi's work as a reflection on 9/11



*Figure 17.* Painting for peace a project by Almosawi with the United Nations, Geneva 2005.



*Figure 18.* Painting for peace a project by Almosawi with the United Nations, Geneva 2005.



*Figure 19. Almosawi in discussion with Amer Moussa, the Arab League Secretary General.*

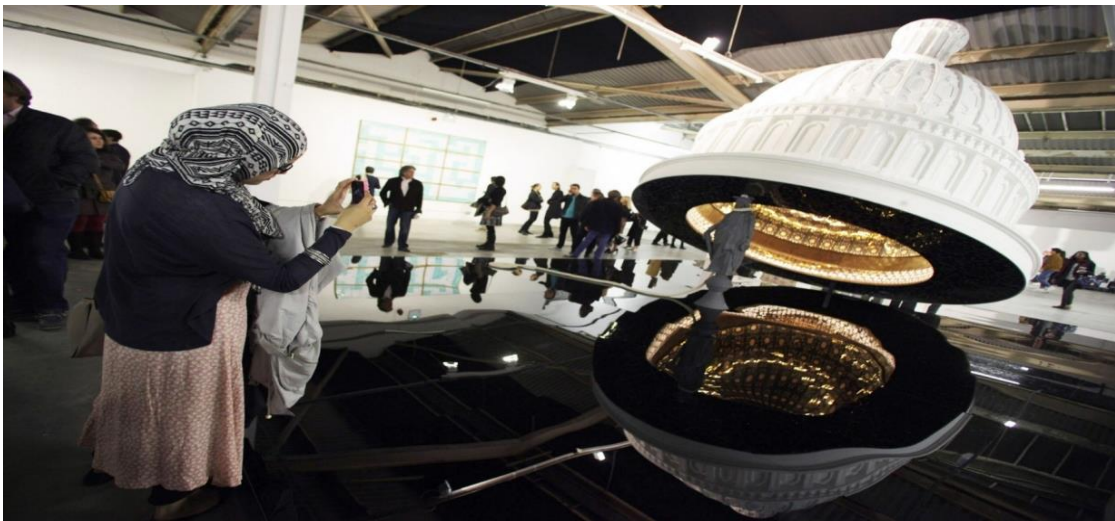
Ghareem is brave in the subjects that he discusses. Some might think that there is direct simple messages in Ghareem's work, however, in focusing on the work, one finds the artistic as well as intellectual values go further and further. In his works, he has investigated the concepts of power and authority and examines the seriousness and the credibility in formal views. Being an artist and a soldier gives an additional dimension to his perception, and consequently, to his work.



*Figure 20. Message/Messenger by Abdulnasser Ghareem.*



The nature of working in the art is associated with the artist set of beliefs, his aspirations, and his ambitions. Creating the artwork is a modest component of the artist creativity process. Still, there is a compound layers of activities and work that the artist becomes interested in that gives him a continuance and active persistence. When the society is a source of inspiration to the artist, and I mean here the pain of the society, worries, and dreams, this creates an abundance of subject matter to the artist. This might give the artist and accessibility for over-production, but it also might become a source of confusion and instability to the artist. This also prevents a lot of artist to discuss social concern in their work because of the overwhelm that they feel of these subjects. However, when the artist is an influential figure and a person with responsibility and a vision to help his society and contribute in its development, then he becomes like the dynamo the revive his society.



*Figure 21. The Capitol Dome by Abdunasser Gharem.*

The artist is indeed an outspoken person that always express his opinion in the issues that interest him positively or negatively. One can also read the journey of the

artist through his artworks and can identify the socio-cultural component that the artist belongs to in addition to the intellectual development that created the work. So, the work of an artist is his voice and his history which is considered part the stages and progress that created the artist experience.

Artist Gharem comes from this military experience that comminuted with art and now he is pursuing his work as a full-time artist. In fact, he is an influential artist toward a generation of young Saudis. His activities come from the concern to provide and facilitate the path for young artist and assist them in recognizing their identity through his studio and Amen foundation which is a non-profit organization that is intended to educate young artist in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East. He always discussed in his artworks that issues that forms obstacles to the state of creativity that young artist faces.

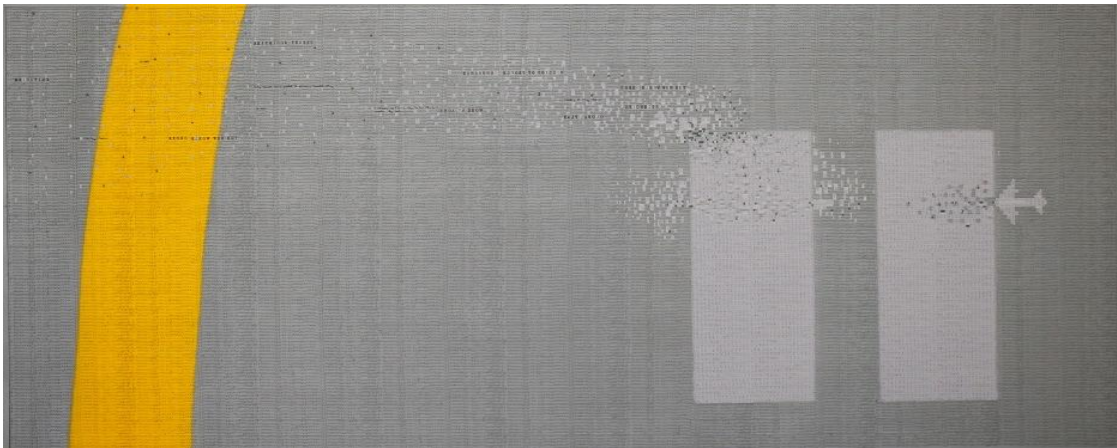


*Figure 22. The Stamp-Moujaz by Abdalnasser Gharem.*

During the interview, Gharem discussed these obstacles in the contest of this work Restored Behavior. In this work, he investigates the insufficiency of bureaucracy and the authoritative process that prevent the creative aspects to unfold in the society. In



these series of work, he uses the rubber letters as the base of constructing the artwork and in the formation he introduces the subjects that concerns him and concern others. In several artworks he discussed the incident of 9/11, the work *Pause* and *In Transit*. There is a mixture of artistic technique that represent the identity of the artist and the value of the subject presented in the work. The work *Pause* represent that moment one all the world gave their attention to that action pausing to understand the shift the happened to the world.



*Figure 23. Pause, Gharem's intake on 9/11.*



*Figure 24. Pedestrian crossings by Abdunnasser Gharem.*



*Figure 25.* Rubber Stamps used in Gharem's work.

The work *In Transit* reflects an airplane taking off, centered in the artwork and embraced with arabesques and Islamic art on a field of stamp letters. This artwork is an incorporation of several arenas the comes from the artist's perception, identity, and belief. The aircraft in general is a tool of mobility and transportation, adding this concept of mobility with Graham's philosophy of 'restore Behavior' when linked with the rubber stamps, the generated reflection s this barrier created by bureaucracy.



*Figure 26.* Fighter by Abdulnasser Gharem.



Another work depicts a tank with its gun barrel is centered in the middle of a ‘mihrab’, a sanctuary normally occupied by the Imam during prayers. Around this barrel is a flower that contradict the destruction that tanks bring to the battlefield. The background of the work is filled with the arabesque style of Islamic art in what appears to be a mixture of representations of the Shia and Sunni sects in the architectural aspects and designs of mosques. Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, the division between these two sects started to appear more, which many times has escalated to violent conflicts. The argument can be built upon the military appearance in the area increases the dividedness in time when unity is needed more than ever. However, there is also a deeper discussion of this visual representation of the tank and the flower. It is important for the speeches that comes out these Mihrabs that cover hidden messages and manipulates people’s perception which therefore feed conflicts and create undesired dividedness.



*Figure 27. Camouflage by Abdunasser Gharem.*

At the end, Gharem seeks to liberate the individual from the mental and psychological barriers and prevent him from expressing himself. These barriers are mostly created by unpractical systems and procedures. Being unable to express and question one's self and examining his beliefs and emotions creates also unstable and fearful individual that, therefore, would be limited in his creativity and contribution. Artist Gharem discusses these issues beside examining the socio-political cloud that covers the Middle East formed in bureaucracy and social system design.

Currently, conflicts and wars have the upper-hand on the Middle East so that they become intersected and evolving. We mostly see alliances changing and tactics escalating followed by negotiation to re-stabilize the process. The conflicts have become like tunes that attract people who find themselves raptured with them, discussing them, leaning toward them, defending them, or justifying them.

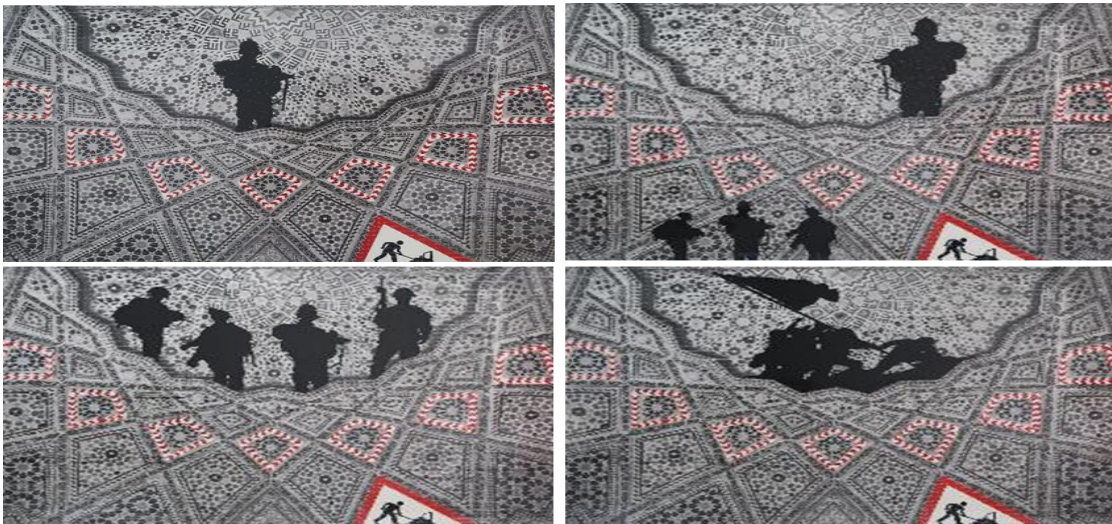


*Figure 28. Abdunasser Gharem's Hemisphere.*

Most people question the size of destruction and the evilness that started to prevail until the individual feared it reaching to his feet. Throughout history, artist have



discussed different conflict and recorded a lot of wars until some criteria have appeared that determine and classify the artist as a war artist, post-war artist, or a military artist. In this research, I am trying to stay away from these classifications and want to find that intellectual and practical context that the artist follow that benefit the field of conflict resolution, peacemaking, and creating social change.



*Figure 29. Men at Work by Abdunasser Gharem.*

### **Works by other Artists**

In another journey that accompany this research, I will provide some example of artworks from several Middle Eastern artists. Following the discussion of this research about Artist Abbas Almosawi and artist Abdunasser Gharem, I would like to expand the readers view of other artworks that emphasize on the role of art in conflict resolution and peacemaking. I found it even fascinating when I was searching for Arab or Muslim artists that reflect on the concept of war, conflict, and violent; it appears to be the case that a lot of artists have spoken in their own away about these issues.



*Figure 30. Grafitti at refugee camp by Mesa.*

With the expansion of this scope of conflicts and violent acts in the Middle East and what the region is facing from different styles of conflicts whether they are ethnic, sectarian, or politician conflicts; the artist became obligated to discuss these painful tragedies in his artworks for the sake of healing and spreading hope messages. In this section, I will present several artworks for artists from different regions in the Middle East and take a glance at their work and activities that reflect the reality of different conflicts that they have lived and affected them.



*Figure 31. Grafitti in refugee camp by Mesa.*

Of course, these conflicts that are constantly being covered in the news have shocked a lot of people, have spread them into a diaspora and have shortened lives. However, the artist remains continuously connecting with his own creativity and communicate his emotions and hopes through it. Despite the horror and fear that conflicts normally brings with them, the artist insists in planting hope and record his denial of these conflicts and the situations that shall develop under them.



*Figure 32. Painting in Sahrawi Camp by Mesa.*

The artworks differ from an artist to the other, each one of them has his own imprints and marks that determine his artistic identity and approach. Through these elements, the artist display his being and belonging reaching for the art to be a communicating and speaking platform that perhaps would allow him to convey his feelings and emotions. What the artist offer through paintings and sculptures is a position that accommodates with it many narratives that disclose memoir from experience. The insistence of the artist in the harsh and brutal situations of conflict to contribute makes us realize the challenge that artists are willing to take to confront this destructive machine



and the insistence of transplanting hope. The artist is constantly searching for unique means to continue in carrying the creativity process and hand it to adjoining generation.



*Figure 33. Grefiiti by Mesa in refugee camp in Algeria.*

In this section, there is a collection of artworks for artist that insist to enrich the art scene with their creativity even though conflicts and wars are thrown on a generous domain in the Middle East map. These artworks, in part, form a scream in the face of war and destructive machine, and largely, form the artist tendency to achieve his highest purpose in being tenacious of his entity and identity. It also from a rejection to the brutal painted picture of his nation and the terrorist approaches that are imposed on vulnerable people. Moreover, these artworks are a statement of confrontation and challenge against the fear that is standing to silence and gag the people in the Middle East. Those artists insist to carry on in expressing their freedom and opinions and leave a fingerprint in history. Art will remain as part of a civilization that build the future and that shape the identity that reaches for improvement and perfection.



Indeed, that these artworks contain within it stories to tell the coming generations about what is happening now, but they are at the same time show the intention of the artist elevate these situations with his work.



*Figure 34. Self-portrait of Artist Abdessamed being beheaded by his father.*

Mesa, Moahmed Sayed, a Sahrawi artist who suffered the consequences of conflicts. He was raised in refugees' camps. He represents this environment and tell its story on the walls that he paints throughout the world to inform them about his life. It is absent on many people that there were some conflicts that took place between Arab nations that have affected many people. For instance, this land that this artist represents and this refugee camp in the desert, is a result of the conflict between Morocco and the Western desert that created this refugee camp.



*Figure 35. Bird Sculpture by Abdessamed.*

Adel Abdessamed is an Algerian artist who create controversial and brave artworks. In his show, 'I am innocent', lays this idea to isolate himself from problems and incidents that he might be accused of. It is the norm of many to receive the blame because of others' actions. Adel's work seems to have a shocking quality for the audience that makes them question aspects of life that they take for granted. In his work 'refugee boat', this artist used a boat that was used by refugees to flee their nations and come to the United States to have a safer and better life. This work tells the story of suffering and frankly danger that the refugees take that might jeopardize their life for the promised American dream.



*Figure 36. Headbutt Sculpture by Adel Abdessamed.*



*Figure 37. Refugee boat filled with garbage bag, artwork by Abdessamed.*



*Figure 38. Iraqi Artist Ammar Alsalem with his painting reflecting at ISIS crimes in Iraq.*



*Figure 39. Artist Alsaem in his Studio.*

Ammar Alsalem; an Iraqi artist, Records the horrible crimes that is made by ISIS against Iraqi Yazidis. He uses the realistic style to paint the picture clearly without leaving a loophole open to interpretation. His works illustrate the suffering of the victim and the brutality of the criminal, and make the viewer in the center of this dramatic and tragic picture. His works accommodate a lot of details, clarity and precision in the execution which does not leave any way to turn away from this tragedy.

The composition of elements in his a artwork expresses the intensity of pain, where mass numbers accumulated in the unity of feelings full of fear, pain and helplessness. It also highlights the ugliness of that smiling criminal who considers these massacres against unarmed civilians as achievements and victories in the battlefield which make him win politically and raise the morale of his fighters. Banners of ISIS are used in a lot of artworks; which is what make them historical, where you cannot express or read in another form. These artworks show some graphics for women and children in a panic situation and destruction prevail on buildings and cars in the background of the



painting. All their eyes are on the mysterious, their face are full of fear and sadness. In another corner, one can see women chained in iron cages where ISIS men around them in the women sale markets.



*Figure 40.* Artwork made from war scarps by Ali Alwakwak.

Ali Alwakwak; a Libyan sculptor from the city of Bin Gazi, has also used a new style due to the conditional changes in Libya and the outbreak of war. He took advantage of the remnants of war machines to create materials for his production of artwork. Mashallah newspaper had talked about this artist and described him as the one who turns death machines into a piece of art representing Libya's new life.

In fact, artworks always give reason to look at things from a different perspective; which lead to having different emotions. It is known that emotions which is gained due to wars and conflicts are fear, anxiety and; at most times, depression and hopelessness.

Under these conflicts, artist tends to tease these feelings and thoughts, which are different depends on people's perspectives on his artworks. Artworks are not meant to lead viewers to accept wars or merge into it; however, they are intended to spread hope,

discuss the war in comic and sarcastic way. They also can communicate with children who are filled with fears and anxiety; and able to turn these artworks to someone who took these war machines and play with it as if they are Lego blocks to create beautiful and entertaining models. What a funny soldiers' helmets; that is how hope is given.



*Figure 41. Anime de Materia by Ali Alwak wak.*



*Figure 42. Smiling faces made from soldiers' helmets by Alwakwak*



*Figure 43. war art by Alwakwak.*



*Figure 44. unbreakable by Almohasen.*



*Figure 45. Almohasen reflecting on conflicts through the art.*



*Figure 46.* fighter jet in Almohen painting.

Hussain Almohasen, a Saudi artist from the city of Qatif, is one of believers of the impact of the picture and considers pictures a way of communication. He uses pictures in his artworks via Graffiti which is important in this time and spread globally.

Alarab News magazine talked about artist Almohasen and mentioned that the artist; via his artwork, creates a mixture of fear and laugh in art pieces that are filled with vivid colors which speaks to the eyes. One can notice highlighted elements in his work that has always reflected what appears in the media frequently these days which is; of course, the war machine. He tends to make a communication with these elements and compose then in a nice way of either employ them with \ Linguistic phrases; taking an advantage of the properties of Graffiti. Generally, he uses Arabic fonts as a background of his are pieces which is what emphasize the identity of the artist. Of course, he; as an artist, gives the viewers the privilege to enjoy the status of peace.





*Figure 47. Artist Almohasen during live performance.*



*Figure 48. war mechines in almohasen's work.*



*Figure 49. Graffiti art by Almohasen reflecting on war and conflict.*

Hassan Mousa, a Sudanese artist born in 1951. This artist mixes between different styles from Arabic calligraphy to pop and modern art. His artworks have unique characteristics of irony, cynicism, and controversy. He also combines in some of his paintings Western Classics with modern and contemporary events creating from a perspective that raises questions and wonders. In some of the work that he produces you find it clear that he opposes a lot of political views and actions by using portraits of political leaders like President Obama and President Vladimir Putin. The style of pop art serves his concepts and allows him to add sarcasm to his paintings by mixing calligraphy that speaks the words of his mind in an artistic fashion, sending a direct message to his audience. For instance, the portrait of President Obama carry the phrase 'Yo Mama' as it rhymes with the president's name. Another similar painting has the phrase 'I have a drone' as a twist on the phrase of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' that President Obama used in his election campaign. This painting provokes to the viewer the notion of war tied with the reference to war machine as it reflects Obama's era timed with the Arab Spring.



*Figure 50. Yo Mama by Artist Hassan Mousa.*



*Figure 51. I have a drone by artist Hassan Mousa.*

In another painting, the artist used the back of a dollar bill as a symbolic reference of money. He used the back of the bill since it contains the phrase 'In God We Trust' and used wrote the word Halal in Arabic above the work. The work is covered with arabesques full of figures of naked women. The collection of icons that appears in this work discuss the controversy of war and terrorism. These two concepts hover around the notion of interest and rely on religion to fuel the continuity of the war and recruit people to terrorism.



*Figure 52. Halal Flage by Hassan Mousa.*





*Figure 53.* El Seed Artwork exhibited in Dubai.



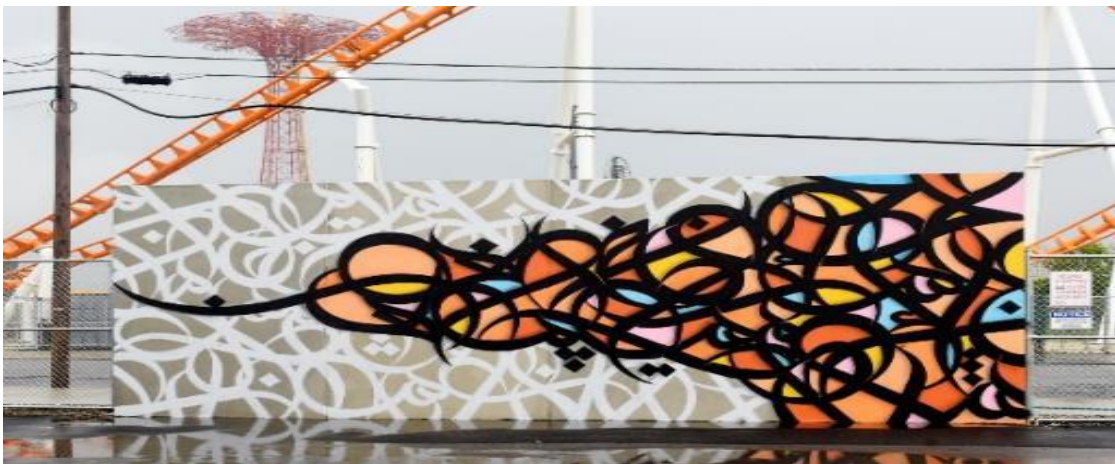
*Figure 54.* El Seed Grafitti photographed by Hichem Merouche.



*Figure 55.* El Seed Grafitti on fifty buildings in Cairo.



*Figure 56. El Seed Mural in Cape Town South Africa.*



*Figure 57. A Mural by El Seed.*

El Seed, a Tunisian/French artist, describes himself as a calligraffiti artist. Basically, he combines Arabic calligraphy with graffiti by applying it on big walls and buildings. He is an artist who seeks to raise awareness peace, love, and tolerance. He spreads these concepts through murals performed on walls and buildings throughout the world. The artist extract values from Arabic poems ranging them in visual aesthetics in forms that looks more like arabesques. El Seed transcends through borders, history, and civilizations. His work unifies these values and cultural characteristics in the West and

East and bring them together historically to eliminate the time factor. Working with graffiti indeed is a challenge, but in El Seed's case, it is an extreme challenge. He transcended the ordinary painting by reaching for historic buildings, and many times took the risk of wind and put his life in danger by climbing high buildings. Of course, this artist has a high level of belief in the art and what it can do. It is beautiful that the artist uses the place he wants to exhibit his work. Leaving the art field from galleries and museums, gives the artist another dimension in making his work more communicative by reaching out for many people.

Mohamed Ghannom is a Syrian artist who is known to be one of the best calligraphy artist in the Arab world. He has many exhibits throughout the world. His paintings, at this time, are centered on the idea of creating a challenge against the status of destruction Syria is going through from war and terror. His works are symbol of continuous action of creativity and displaying the beauty of the Arabic language and calligraphy art despite all the negativity and destruction this war brings. Indeed, this work speaks against the brutal picture that is painted about the Arab and Muslim identity that shows him as a scary terrorist. These paintings offer hope to Syrian people and give the next generation a thread to hang on to in order to discover the truth of their identity. They also give them something to look up to and creatively aspire towards, drawing beauty and spreading it around the world.





*Figure 58.* Ghannom paintins exhibited in Natherlands.



*Figure 59.* Arabic Calligraphy by Ghannom.



*Figure 60.* Sand Rushes in photographed by Sama Alshaibi.



*Figure 61. To Eat Bread by Sama Alshaibi.*



*Figure 62. Payload, from project warhead by Sama Alshiabi.*

Sama Alshaibi is a Palestinian-Iraqi artist who uses multimedia in her work. She aims to discuss this status of continuous conflict over control of land and sources and enforcing power that reflect on people through fear, panic, and isolation. She appears in some of her artworks but mostly uses the back of her body which indicates distance and uncertainty. Using the body is a symbolic reference to this lost and hidden identity.

Tammam Azzam is a Syrian artist based in Dubai. His works are very clear and direct, but what makes them unique is the juxtaposition of classic Western works with



pictures of the current on-going conflict in Syria. He uses pictures of the destructive cities and buildings in Syria because of this brutal war and reflect digital imprints of Western Classics like Goya, Dali, and Da Vinci. These paintings speak clearly about the rejection of the situation in Syria not only on those buildings, but also on the history and memories that they represent.



*Figure 63. Freedom Grafitti by Tammam Azzam.*



*Figure 64. An image of bombed Strian Building flying in Londong by Tammam Azzam.*

The conflict in Syria is long and on-going, the more this conflict lasts, the more the destruction happen. News and media have filled the surface with so many pictures and scenes of this conflict. Azzam utilized these pictures as an attempt to create an alternative perspective to this devastation. It is unfortunate that people get accustomed in seeing such views and it became normal to them, however, Azzam manipulated these pictures graphically to make the viewer pause and think and not allow these scenes to pass by. Azzam forces the viewer to communicate with himself and wonder about the truth. Western Classics that have high protection in museums and people travel to take a glance of them are now linked with destruction as being victim of war and conflict. The viewer then wonders, what about the history and civilization of Syria? What is left for people there? The destruction devours everything; the artist is seeking to save the remaining hope which makes him a creator of civilization that utilizes devastation as a point to start creativity.



Figure 65. Tammam Azzam 'Matisse'.





Figure 66. Tammam Azzam's 'Dali'.



Figure 67. Tammam Azzam's 'Goya'.



Figure 68. Tammam Azzam's 'Andy Warhol'.

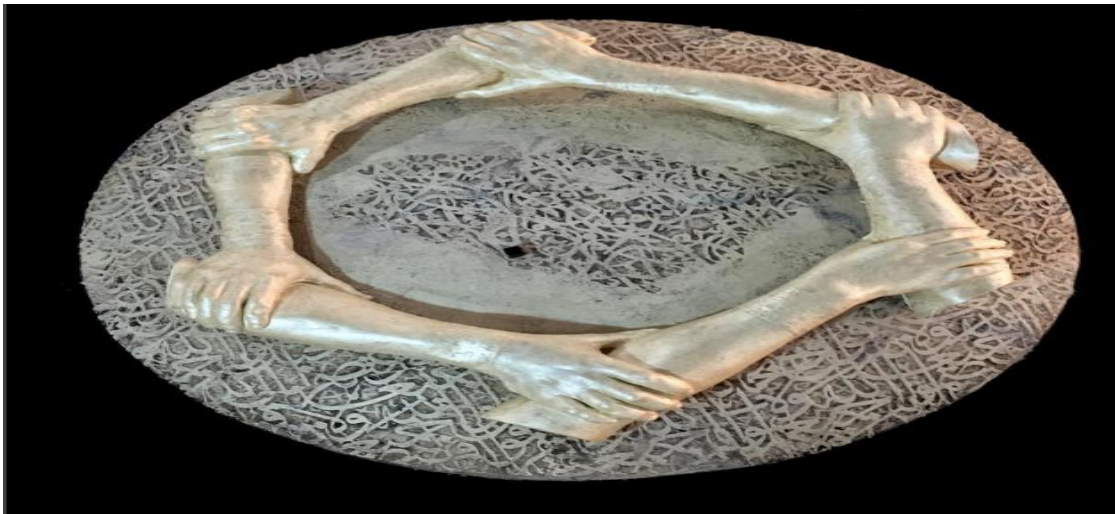


*Figure 69.* Tammam Azzam's 'Gogan'.



*Figure 70.* Buddy Bear project by Zaman Jassim.

Zaman Jassim is a Saudi Artist born in 1971. He has many exhibits local to Saudi Arabia and around the world. Jassim is known for being continuously active and a prolific artist. His paintings reflect and abstraction of his heritage and local culture in Saudi Arabia. He is also a divers artist utilizes different material and styles to create his work with what it suitable for his creative state. He has participated in the United Buddy Bears, which is an activity that brings artists from around the world to paint Buddy Bears, and these works tour the world for the purpose of promoting peace and tolerance. In this activity, Zaman performed on several pieces painting them in a style that reflects his identity using colors and shapes that represent the Saudi Culture in clothing and architecture.



*Figure 71. Peace By Zaman Jassim.*

This piece that has been done lately and titled 'Peace'. Zaman executed this work that represent unity and coherence by using hand sculptures on a plate with the map of Saudi Arabia. The map is formed by the word repeated many times leaving this beautiful

effect. He participated with this piece in the 86th celebration of the National Saudi Day in La Pure Art Gallery.

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## Appendix A: Consent Form for Participation



Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled  
**Painting our conflicts: The role of artists in peacemaking and conflict resolution**  
 Funding Source: None.

IRB protocol #

Principal investigator  
 Kumail Almusaly, M.S.  
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 (954) 793-5559

Co-investigator  
 Dustin Berna, Ph.D.  
 3301 College Avenue  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314  
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For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:  
 Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)  
 Nova Southeastern University  
 (954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790  
 IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information  
 Nova Southeastern University  
 3301 College Avenue  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

**What is this study about?**

You are invited to participate in a research study. This research is intended to help us understand the role of artists in conflict resolution and peacemaking.

**Why are you asking me?**

Your experience in using the art in social involvement led me to believe that you have valuable information and a unique role that can benefit this study.

The information will help the researcher to identify the aspects that can be used to support conflict resolution practitioners and possibly engage with artists to solve conflicts.

**What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?**

You will be asked to join an interview process with the researcher that will last between 45 minutes to an hour. The interview will be conducted through Skype and the time scheduled will be based on your convenient time. you will be asked a series of questions related to your experience in using the arts in conflict resolution and peacemaking. You will be asked these questions and the duration of this process will be dependent on your level of participation. You have the right to refuse or permanently terminate your involvement in this research at any time.

**Is there any audio or video recording?**

This research study will include audio recording of the interview process. This audio recording will be available to be heard and transcribed by the researcher only. The researcher will be using an earphone during transcribing the interview to guard privacy. The recording will be kept securely in an encrypted file on the researcher's personal computer. The recording will be kept for 36 months and destroyed after that time by deleting all related files. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to strict access to the recording as described in this paragraph. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised.

**What are the dangers to me?**

There may be minimal risk involved in participating in this study. Should you feel any stress or discomfort at discussing this topic, inform me, I will try to help you and of course you can stop the interview at any time. If you have questions about the research, your research rights, or if you experience injury because of the research please contact Kumail Almusaly at (954) 793-5559. You may also contact the IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights

**Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?**

There are no direct benefits to agreeing to be in this study.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**

There is no cost for participating in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and no payment will be provided.

**How will you keep my information private?**

Information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. All data will be secured in encrypted files. The researcher's notes will be locked in a safe at the researcher's house for 36 months and will be destroyed after that time by putting them through a shredder. Your name or other identifying information will NOT be used in the reporting of information in publications or conference presentations. The IRB, regulatory agencies, or Dr. Berna may review research records

**What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to participate in this study and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You are free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in this project at any time and for any reason. If you decided to withdraw from the study, the information collected about you will be kept for 36 months and will be excluded upon your request.

**Other Considerations:**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, I will provide you with this information.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled "Painting our conflicts: The role of artists in peacemaking and conflict resolution"

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear Sir,

It is my pleasure to contact you in order to ask for your participation in a one-day meeting for an interview process. The meeting will be conducted via an on-line meeting software such as Skype. It will be held on the time frame that will be agreed on. It will take from your valuable time around 60 minutes to generate information about the arts and the role of artists in society based on your own experiences.

This interview is a part of a doctoral dissertation at Nova Southeastern University. The topic of the dissertation is *Painting our conflict: the role of artists in peacemaking and conflict resolution*. You have a very well recognized journey that has benefited the field of the art as well as the society. My concern; as an artist and as a student of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, is to identify what roles artists play in the time of conflict and how they apply their skills to help decrease conflicts.

Your participation is needed and beneficial for the study since you have a unique work and you are making an effort to make this world safer and better. Please RSVP no later than 12/5/2015, by e-mail to [kmusaly@gmail.com](mailto:kmusaly@gmail.com) , or by calling Kumail Almusaly at (954)793-5559. I look forward to having you as a part of my dissertational journey.

Sincerely,

Kumail Almusaly  
PhD candidate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution  
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For question/concerns about your research rights, you may contact:  
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