

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dia al-Azzawi

- 1939 Born in Baghdad, Iraq
 - 1962 BSc Archaeology, Baghdad University
 - 1964 BFA Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad
 - 1976 Moved to London, where he is still based
 - 2021 Dia al-Azzawi Prize for Public Art, created by Tamayyouz Excellence Award
 - 2023 The Nile Prize for Creativity (Arts), Cairo
 - 2024 Honorary Doctorate of Arts, Coventry University, UK
 - 2025 Great Arab Minds Award for Art and Culture, Dubai
 - 2026 Necip Fazıl Ödülleri, Istanbul
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Dia al-Azzawi is a prolific multi-disciplinary artist, publisher and designer. He uses artistic and cultural references from Arab heritage to create contemporary works that are both local and create dialogue with other cultures.

His manifesto *Towards a New Vision* (1968) became the foundation for numerous Arab cultural activities throughout the 1970s, a relationship he maintained after leaving Iraq (1976) through international exhibitions and works inspired by Arabic literature, the destruction of Iraqi civil society and injustice against Palestinians.

Azzawi supports other artists through publishing, collecting, commissioning, donating to institutions, and curating international projects featuring artists from across the global South.

(100 Words)

Dia al-Azzawi (b. 1939, Baghdad) is a prolific multi-disciplinary artist: painter, sculptor, draftsman, printmaker, publisher and designer. He uses artistic and cultural references from Arab heritage, natural history and folklore, to create contemporary works that are both local and can create a dialogue with other cultures.

One of the first Iraqi artists to have multiple solo exhibitions outside Iraq, Azzawi wrote a manifesto called *Towards a New Vision* (1968) in reaction to the collapse of political pan-Arabism, which became the foundation for joint Arab cultural activities including al-Wasiti Festival (1972), the Union of Arab Artists (1973), and the Arab Art Biennales (1974 onwards). Since leaving Iraq (1976), Azzawi maintained his relationship with the region through exhibitions across West Asia and North Africa, as well as Europe and America.

From the 1980s onwards, Azzawi created over 100 unique artist's books and limited-edition print collections based on Arabic literature across the ages. As a result of conflict and sanctions in Iraq, he produced a series of monochrome works called *Land of Darkness* (1991–present) and documented the systematic murder of Iraqi intellectuals. Similarly, he documented the injustice suffered by the Palestinian

people, including one of his most important and best-known works: *Sabra and Shatila Massacre* (1982–83), now in the Tate Modern.

Beyond his own work, Azzawi supports other artists through publishing, collecting, commissioning, and donating from his private collection to public institutions. His ceramics studio in Amman hosts artists from across the region, while his online Arabic-language magazine *Makou* focuses on modern art from Iraq. In addition to joint initiatives to explore the Arab experience, he has also curated international projects, such as an exhibition of prints and graphic design from the Third World (1979–80) and an international poster competition on the themes of freedom of opinion and Palestine (1980).

(300 words)

Selected Public Collections

Azzawi's work has been exhibited and collected by public institutions worldwide, including the Arab Monetary Fund, Abu Dhabi; The Barjeel Collection, Sharjah; Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; The British Museum, London; Calouste Gulbenkian Collection, Lisbon; Colas Foundation, Boulogne; Fondation ONA, Casablanca; Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; Kinda Foundation, Riyadh; King Abdulaziz International Airport, Jeddah; Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, Kuwait; Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum (LACMA), Los Angeles; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad; Museum of Modern Art, Damascus; Museum of Modern Art, Tunis; Nabu Museum, Chekka (Lebanon); Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Tate Modern, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1965

Al-Wasiti Gallery, Baghdad

1966; 1969

Gallery One, Beirut

1967

Iraqi Artists' Society, Baghdad

1968; 1970; 1971; 1975

National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad

1969; 1971; 1977

Sultan Gallery, Kuwait

1973

Arslan Raad Gallery, Tripoli (Lebanon)

1975

Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad

1974

Contact Gallery, Beirut

1976

Gallery Nadar, Casablanca

1978

Patrick Seale Gallery, London
Al-Riwaq Gallery, Baghdad

1980; 1983

Galerie Faris, Paris

1980

Galerie Centrale, Geneva

1982

Intercontinental Hall, Abu Dhabi

1983

National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait

1984; 1990; 1993

Alif Gallery, Washington, DC

1985

Hotel Meridien Abu Dhabi

1986

Royal Cultural Centre, Amman

Les Mille et Une Nuits, Galerie Faris, Paris

1988

Galerie Claudine Planque, Lausanne

1990

Galleri Nakita, Stockholm

Vanazff Gallery, Gothenburg

1991

Galerie 50x70, Beirut

1992

Gallery Hittite, Toronto

Flandria Gallery, Tangier

1994

Al-Manar Gallery, Casablanca

Abaad Gallery, Amman

Galerie 50x70, Beirut

Al-Sayed Gallery, Damascus

1995; 2004; 2006; 2009; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2017; 2018

Galerie Claude Lemand/ Espace Claude Lemand, Paris

1996

Art Centre, Bahrain

1998

Seven Golden Odes, Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, Starco, Beirut

2001

Retrospective Exhibition, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

2003

Cité du Livre, Aix-en-Provence

2006

Kalemmat Gallery, Aleppo

4 Walls Gallery, Amman

Dar Al-Funun Gallery, Kuwait

2009

Retrospective of Paintings, ADMAF, Sixth Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Festival, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi

2009; 2015; 2016; 2018; 2021

Meem Gallery, Dubai

2016

I am the Cry, Who Will Give voice to Me? From 1963 until tomorrow: Dia al-Azzawi, a retrospective, Al Riwaq Gallery and Mathaf Museum, Doha, Qatar

2017

Karim Gallery, Amman

2018

Azzawi, Sabra and Shatila Massacres, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (with Galerie Claude Lemand)

2020

Art Dubai Portrait Exhibitions (online)

2021

The Lebanon Works, Meem Gallery, Dubai

2022

Mission of Destruction, Meem Gallery, Dubai

2022

Dia al-Azzawi: Painting Poetry, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford

2023

Imagination Realised, Karim Gallery, Amman

2025

False Witnesses, Saleh Barakat Gallery, Beirut

2026

Excursion Across Time, Richard Saltoun Gallery, London

SOLO BOOTHS

1981

Galerie Faris at Basel Art Fair, Basel (Switzerland); Galerie Faris at FIAC, Paris

2004

Galerie Claude Lemand at St'Art, Strasbourg (France)

2011

Elegy to My Trapped City, Meem Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art

2013

Bilad al-Sawad and Other Works: 1978–2011, Galerie Claude Lemand at Art Paris

2014

Selected Works: 1964–1973, Meem Gallery at Frieze Art Fair, London

2015

Galerie Claude Lemand at Armory Show, New York City

2016

Mission of Destruction, Meem Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art

2018

Dia al-Azzawi: Furniture Design, Mark Hachem Gallery at Beirut Design Fair

2021

Meem Gallery, Art Dubai

2024

Meem Gallery, Editions Art & Design, Dubai

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1964; 1965; 1966

Annual Exhibition of Iraqi Artists' Society, Baghdad

1965

Iraqi Impressionist Group

1966

Carrera Craven "A" Arab Art, Cairo; Manama; Kuwait; Baghdad; Amman; Damascus; Beirut; London, Paris; Rome

1968

First International Triennial, New Delhi

1971

Al-Marbid Poetry Festival, Basra

Contemporary Iraqi Art, Kuwait

Contemporary Arab Art, National Museum, Nicosia

1972

Al-Wasiti Festival, Baghdad

Fourth International Poster Biennale, Warsaw

1974

First Biennale of Arab Art, Baghdad

1975

Exposition de Gravures, L'Atelier, Rabat

Seventh International Painting Festival, Cagnes-sur-Mer

International Summer Academy, Salzburg

1976

Art Contemporain Irakien, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville, Paris

Artists against Racism, National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad

Iraqi Pavilion, XXXVII Venice Biennale

Second Biennale of Arab Art, Rabat

1979

Iraqi Pavilion, XV Sao Paulo Biennale

1980

Sixth International Exhibition of Graphic Art, Rijeka (Yugoslavia)

Salon de Mai, Centre d'Art, Paris

Salon d'Automne, Galerie des Beaux Arts, Paris

Third World Biennale of Graphic Art, Iraqi Cultural Centre, London

L'Art Contemporain Arabe, Le Belvedere, Tunis

The Influence of Arabic Calligraphy on Modern Arab Artists, Iraqi Cultural Centre, London

1981

Peinture Irakienne Contemporaine, Centre Culturel Irakien, Paris

Salon de Mai, Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris

1982

Contemporary Arab Graphics, Grafitti Gallery, London

1983

Seventh International Grafik Triennial, Frechen (Germany)

1984

British International Print Biennial, Bradford (UK)

Exposition d'Art Contemporain Arabe, Centre d'Art Vivant de la Ville, Tunis

1985

Contemporary Arab Art, Blackman Harvey Gallery, London
Musée Hubert d'Uckerman, Grenoble (France)

1986

Salon Comparaisons, Grand Palais, Paris
Semitic Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
Contemporary Arab Art, The Mall Gallery, London
The Norwegian International Print Biennale, Fredrikstad (Norway)

1987

Third International Biennial Exhibition, Taiwan

1988

Olympiad of Art, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul
Three Artists: Azzawi, Jumaie, Nasiri, Kufa Gallery, London

1989

Contemporary Art from the Islamic World, Barbican Centre, London
Arab Graphic Art, National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Kuwait
Homage to Jawad Salim [sic], Kufa Gallery, London
La Caligrafia en la Pintura Arabe Contemporanea, Havana Biennale

1991

Belkhodja and Azzawi, Galerie des Arts, Tunis
Contemporary Iraqi Artists, Sheppard Contemporary Gallery, University of Nevada, Reno

1993

Asilah Arts Festival, Asilah (Morocco)

1994

Signes et Écritures, Institut du Monde Arabe, Poitiers (France)
Al-Chabbi and Azzawi, Galerie des Arts, Tunis

1997

Five Visual Interpretations, Green Art Gallery, Dubai

1998

Azzawi & Nasiri, Galerie La Teinturerie, Paris

2001

Machreq - Maghreb: Paintings and Books, Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris

2002

Azzawi and Fattah, Green Art Gallery, Dubai
Masters of Tondo, Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris
The Kinda Foundation Collection, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

2003

Fondation Colas, Boulogne-Billancourt, Paris
Broken Letter, Contemporary Art from Arab Countries, Kunsthalle Darmstadt, Darmstadt

2005

Portraits of the Bird: Books and Drawings, Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris
Homage to Shafic Abboud, Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris
Improvisation: Seven Iraqi Artists, Bissan Gallery, Doha, Al-Riwaq Gallery, Manama, and 4 Walls Gallery, Amman

2005–08

Dafatir: Contemporary Iraqi Book Art, University of North Texas Art Gallery, Denton, Texas; Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota; Minnesota Centre for Book Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota; University of Texas, El Paso, Texas; Daura Gallery, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Virginia

Dafatir: Contemporary Iraqi Book Art, The Centre for Book Arts, New York; Minneapolis Athenaeum, Minneapolis, Minnesota; NIU Art Museum, DeKalb, Illinois; The Jaffe Centre for Book Arts, Boca Raton, Florida, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

2006

Portraits of the Bird, Festival of Arts, Bastia, Corsica

Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, British Museum, London

2008

Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East, British Museum, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai

Iraq's Past Speaks to the Present, British Museum, London

Iraqi Artists in Exile, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, Texas

Iraq: Reframe, Montalvo Arts Centre, Saratoga, California

2009

Modernism and Iraq, Columbia University, Wallach Art Gallery, New York

2010

Beyond the War, Leila Tachinia-Milani Heller Gallery, New York

My Homeland, Art Sawa, Dubai

Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

Interventions: A Dialogue Between the Modern and the Contemporary, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

2011

Art in Iraq Today: Part IV, Meem Gallery, Dubai

Art in Iraq Today: Conclusion, Beirut Exhibition Centre, Beirut

2012

Facing History: Dia Azzawi and Leon Golub, Tate Modern, London

Elegy To My Trapped City, Meem Gallery, Dubai

Masters of the Tondo; Arab Masterpieces, Espace Claude Lemand, Paris

Meem Projects 2012. Part 1: Letters in Art. Part 2: Modern Arab Art, Meem Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art

2013

Tajreed: A Selection of Arab Abstract Art, Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait

Re: Orient, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah

Paintings, Sculpture and Projects Garden, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

D'Orient et d'Occident, Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris

Meem Projects 2013. Part 1: Modern Arab Art. Part 2: Contemporary Arab Art – How Do You Sleep At

Night?, Meem Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art

2014

Arab Modernities; Landscape and Arab Modernity, Espace Claude Lemand, Paris

Children of Gaza, Meem Gallery, Dubai

2014; 2018–19

Portrait de l'Oiseau Qui N'Existe Pas, Museum of Issoudun; Maison des Arts, Ville d'Antony; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

2015

Modern Arab Masterpieces, Espace Claude Lemand, Paris.

After Picasso: 80 Contemporary Artists, Wexner Center for Arts, The Ohio State University, USA.

Picasso and Contemporary Art, Deichtorhallen Hamburg

2016

The Sea Suspended, Barjeel Art Foundation at TMOCA, Tehran

Arab Modern Artists, Espace Claude Lemand, Paris

From East and West, Galerie Claude Lemand at Art Paris

2017

Tondo from East and West, Espace Claude Lemand, Paris

Tour du Monde en Tondo, Musée de l'Hospice Saint Roch, Issoudun (France)

From East, Afrika and West, Galerie Claude Lemand at Art Paris

2018

Baghdad Mon Amour, Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris

Guernica, Musée national Picasso-Paris, Paris

Sabra et Chatila, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

Millenia of Creativity, Nabu Museum, Batroun (Lebanon)

Keyword: Palestine, Dar El-Nimer, Beirut

I am Ashurbanipal: king of the world, king of Assyria, British Museum, London

2019

Artists' Tribute to Notre-Dame, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

A la plume, au pinceau, au crayon: dessins du monde arabe (Donation Claude & France Lemand), Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

Iraqisms, Dar El-Nimer, Beirut

Objects of Imagination, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art, Amman

2019–20

Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991–2011, MoMA PS1, New York City

2020

Taking Shape: Abstraction from The Arab World, 1950s–1980s, Grey Art Gallery, New York City

Hope and Despair, Nabu Museum, Batroun (Lebanon)

Spotlights, Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait

Arab Art Today and Tomorrow, Meem Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art (virtual)

2021

8. Schweizerische Triennale der Skulptur, Bad Ragaz (Switzerland)

Between the Walls, Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait

Primaverale; Printmaking; Continuity, Karim Gallery, Amman

When Images Speak: Highlights from the Dubai Collection, Etihad Museum, Dubai

Cities Under Quarantine: The Mailbox Project, Villa Romana, Florence

2022

Amakin, 9th Edition of 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Jeddah; Ithra, Dahrn

Beirut and the Golden Sixties, Gropius Bau, Berlin; Lyon Biennale

Baghdad: Eye's Delight, MIA, Doha

Artist's Making Books, British Museum

Is it Morning for You Yet?, 58th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh
Promised Land, 2nd HacerNoche, Oaxaca (Mexico)

2023

Defenders of the Homeland, B7L9 Art Station, Fondation Kamel Lazaar, Tunis
Palestinian Art Stands: Cultural Resistance, Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait
Cities Under Quarantine: The Mailbox Project, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha

2024

Central Pavilion, LX Venice Biennale
Dharti Dhar Dhar Dharke Gi: Art as Witness, COMO Museum of Art, Lahore
Friends Under the Roof of Art, AlHosh Gallery, Doha

2025

All Manner of Experiments: Legacies of the Baghdad Modern Art Group, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (Upstate New York)