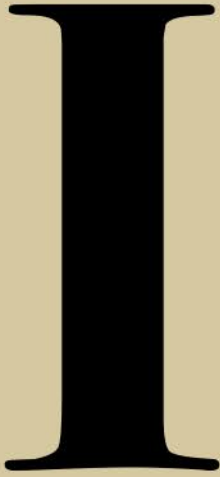


U O I C E

2021
AUK



Editor's Note



Initially, when outlining and coming up with ideas for content for this edition of VOICE, we wanted to steer away from the calamity that has emerged as a reality over the last year or so. To me, and many others, it has become a monotonous cyclical process of repetition; an exclamation of ho-hum, in other words, boring.

The tried-and-true methodology that we used to navigate through the predictability of university life prior to the pandemic was taught in our Univ classes, marked by the song-and-dance of waiting in line at Starbucks and chatting with class-mates in-between classes. That sincerity has all been but evacuated from our lives and replaced with an invisible wall covered in tally-marks, counting down the days to whatever comes after this.

I really do hope this is the last edition of VOICE that gets published during this pandemic, regardless- there are people more patient than myself. Marked by a palpable sense of uncertainty, and a normalization thereof a necessary contrivance- that is, social-distancing, remote learning, and any other variation of online busy-work. There's a curious juxtaposition based on this stationary maneuverability we have found ourselves in- within a static, digitalized circumstance.

By the time that most of you are reading this, you are either gearing up for finals, or the semester break; whether you are an honors student, or on final probation, there is one commonality that seems to be universal in the world of academics, which is burnout. It can vary, that is, burnout- from total depersonalization to day-to-day demoralization; and in my experience, it has worsened with the shift to online-classes, at least certain confessions on certain Instagram accounts can attest to that. Regardless, breaks can help mitigate those feelings of burnout; and since we are not traveling recreationally, indefinitely, we can, and should, use the upcoming breaks to unwind, try something new, and invariably, try to distract ourselves from the tragedy that is conscious reality. Have fun!

Introducing the VOICE Team

Editor In-Chief
Abdulwahab Al – Othman



The holidays, to me, is a way in which one could reinstate their vitality; a notion that has never been truer, than in today's conditions. So, I would like to imagine that I would spend my holidays mountaineering in Tibet, sailing through the Mediterranean, or something in-line with the spirit of exploration- but in reality, the only thing afforded to me and many others this year was the cool wind and the sounds of fireworks going off somewhere in the distance, hoping for a brighter year. Here's to hoping.

Co-Editor
Lavena Jacob

When reminiscing of the holidays, my most cherished memory is going carol singing to houses spreading the season's joy and happiness. A ritual that occurred every year became almost obsolete in 2020; however, we were resilient and adapted to the circumstances. We spread the exuberant wishes to not just those who are in Kuwait, but worldwide using Zoom. These small moments made me realize that we can turn unfortunate events into something sanguine.



Graphic Designer Iman Chebli



Holidays for me are gatherings, hanging out with friends, and practicing my favorite hobbies. No one should miss out any of these moments. As for me it changed a little bit in 2020, but the spirit was still there. I became closer to my family, and I realized that I became a better artist. So, even with pandemics or certain circumstances, you can take it positively and enjoy it your way.

Reporter Abdolwahab B Alqarooni

The weather is essential for enjoying winter break because we live in a very hot and humid area, so just walking out and feeling that cold breeze makes the holiday ten times better. Tis the season of hot cocoa, the kashta season, the season of picnics in parks and celebrating a new page but the most important thing in the holiday season is the gathering of friends and family May Allah bless your loved ones with good health and a long happy life.



Reporter Sara F Zayed



The holiday passed by so quickly for me. I happened to be busy during the holiday (no holiday spirit for me) but I did get the chance to catch up on some work and studies and occasionally go out. The break was a great opportunity to enjoy long walks as I'm an Al Shaheed park fanatic, so take advantage of the nice weather while it lasts.

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A Conversation with Dr. Juliet Dinkha

-Abdulwahab Al – Othman



With this unprecedented period of our lives, there is an endless slew of consequences and variables one can discuss from a multitude of different perspectives. Moreover, the one commonality that can be found in-between these circumstances of uncertainty is the necessity for introspection, the need to bolster our own psychological immune systems. This is where Dr. Juliet Dinkha comes in, a US Licensed Clinical Psychologist with years of experience, both in the United States and in Kuwait, and an Associate Professor of Psychology at AUK since 2005, with numerous publications pertaining to a multitude of subjects in the field of psychology. We could not think of a more well-suited person to interview with insight on this topic, that is, the pandemic and its consequences. I hope Dr. Juliet's perspectives can serve as a conclusive psychological guide for the remainder of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Me and our Co-editor Lavena held a meeting on Zoom with Dr. Juliet, asked about a dozen questions or so, and they go as follows:

What is your opinion on the year 2020?

"You know I might be different from other people. I feel like 2020- although it did bring up a lot of distress and it has been a misfortune for a lot of people, especially for those who had lost love ones, their jobs, and had to leave the country. Though for the people who quarantined and stayed at home, it gave them the opportunity to be alone and reexamine their priorities."

"Although we live in a collectivist society, so we like to be social, to be with people, it was nice to minimize our socialization and pay attention to ourselves" - Moreover "I feel like it was a blessing in a way, because I work a lot and having to teach and work at a clinic was often exhausting. Covid-19 gave me a different perspective about life, and the running, running, running lifestyle was now not that important."

Work and personal commitments had a different meaning during quarantine, Dr. Juliet realized that we use work as a personal escape from reality, and being forced to face the global crisis, made us all focus on what should be important, getting to know who we are, and reflect on our purpose.

"The pandemic taught us to be resilient, it taught us to learn new things, to tap into our strength, and it taught us how to survive. We learned that we can't be planning for the future all the time, and that we need to really be able to focus on the here and now. Being mindful of the moment was more productive than putting effort into the unknown."

"As a Psychologist, I work with a lot of individuals who have a lot of anxiety in the unpredictability of the future. They are constantly worried about what will happen. And I feel like it really has given people a chance to venture out and to try to do something different."

-Do you enjoy the transition into the e-learning platform, or do you prefer our regular classes?

"Actually, I think we should do both. I don't think it should be all online and I don't think it should be all on campus. I think it has been convenient for a lot of moms, right?"

"I love online. I think it's convenient, I'm able to be home, and I could get a lot of things done. Also, online has really taught students how to be independent. I can see my students being more independent in their studies, utilizing different methods of learning that they may not have been able to in the past. I feel like it is forcing some students to manage their time differently, they have learned how to use the online platform to present, ask questions and even try to exercise different forms of participation. This method of teaching doesn't allow for the handholding and dependency that you see in some students. Online forces you to find ways to focus, participate and engage, even if it makes you uncomfortable."

"However, this is not for everyone. There are learners that need face to face instructions and want to come into your office and see you. So, I do not think that it's for everybody; and I think that we really need to have a combination. Personally, I would not mind if I taught a combination of classes online and on campus. Students can have a choice of online and the ones that really need you face to face, they can have in class instruction. For our students who are working, who have family responsibilities, and who have compromised medical conditions, they can take online classes and still pursue their education."



There is a growing sentiment in Kuwait and around the world that many people do not want to take a Covid-19 vaccination; what reasons, psychologically, could possibly explain this phenomenon?

"The media has a large role to play in it because we're so used to vaccinations taking two to three years for it to be developed. So, I think because of the speediness of Pfizer, Moderna and others getting FDA approval so fast, it makes people suspicious. Don't forget that when vaccinations became more political, people start to believe in the conspiracy theories and then they doubt the science. Historically vaccinations often take a long time, and then you've got fake news claiming fake theories; people became anxious, they worry about the future, they worry about what potential health risks are involved. It's very political, anything that's politically driven- It kind of makes us worry, especially in the U.S where there's a lot of politically driven rhetoric which divided the country into pro, and anti-vaccination camps."

"People get on the internet; they get on Instagram; someone writes an article or shares a video, and because of our human nature, we become curious, and start fishing for answers and then we start to believe in falsities. This is the same thing that happened when COVID-19 started, people were scared, reading a lot of bad media and either panicked or became careless because they didn't believe it was true. I used to respond to my clients when COVID-19 was just starting, 'Oh, doc, did you hear this?' Did you hear that? I would tell them to stop reading misinformation, and to get their sources from valid and approved websites like MOH, or WHO. Honestly, I hate when people forward me rumored information, or circulate certain videos because I don't want to feed into those conspiracies."



What advice do you have for AUK students in the long run?

"I think they should have fun. I think that they should spend some time figuring out what they like, and doing it. I think they need to prioritize what is important and reflect on how 2020 made them stronger."

"Students should reflect on what is 'normal' and when we go back to normal, we are going to miss that notion, we're going to lose all this. I just don't want them to lose that priority. There were some good things that they have learned about themselves during COVID- the Corona phase. Our students have a lot of strength and during this past year we have tapped into more creativity, more patience, empathy, and support than we would have ever done in the past. I think understanding that there is nothing that is going to happen that they can't survive is the best lesson I can pass to my students. We have a psychological immune system, which helps us balance our physical and emotional state."

"When somebody says, 'Oh, I am stressed, I'm worried about this and that...' And then I ask the person, what's the worst that can happen? Nothing. Worse things have already happened and you can deal with it. You have to have confidence. What's the worst thing that can happen? You'll fail a class. You'll take it again. What's the worst thing. Seriously. You've got to think about it. You know, our priorities have to be more than just academic. Look, nobody knows that I got a C in statistics. I'm still a doctor. So, you know, does it really matter? Being successful has no barriers on your grades, it has to do with believing in yourself and in your mission. You need to decide what will be your legacy and enjoy yourself while you are discovering your purpose. Just have fun."



Dear corona

-Yasmeen AlHasan

Thank you for coming along...

I never thought I'd say this, but despite the quarantine, the lockdowns, the social distancing, the masks, the gloves, the hand sanitizers, the online classes, the zoom meetings, the appointments for places, and everything that has happened; I'm so glad you came along.

People are going to disagree with me. But if it weren't for corona, we wouldn't have known people for who they are. It's ironic though, how you see someone maybe daily, but you never got to really know them until you had to be distant?

If it weren't for corona, we wouldn't get the chance to meet ourselves, the real us. We were always too busy to find the essence within us, to see the reflection on the mirror so clearly, with no filters and no lies.

If it weren't for corona, we wouldn't have clear skies and so much greenery. The environment needed this to nourish itself and get rid of the toxins we poured into it.

If it weren't for corona, we wouldn't move on. Corona gave us time. So much time. Time to get over things we weren't over. Time to forgive the people who hurt us or did us wrong. Time to flip the page and go to the next chapter. Time to be at peace.

These are just a few things I realized from a personal perspective. Sit with yourself and think about it, what did corona change about your life?

The idea of growth in unprecedented times allows me to self-reflect more and explore different areas of art.



So strange when flowers wither, beautiful and vibrant once they were. But as soon as they lose their vibrancy they are cast away, thrown, and pushed aside. We pay close attention to its structure and color, but what about its foundation? The stem that holds it, do you see? The stem never loses its color even when the petals fall it stands tall. Stripped away at the core...the core.

- Malak A Hussain

The year of the year

-Moustafa K Hassan

What if we jumped from 2019 to 2021 skipping 2020. Imagine, on December 31, 2020, when we count down to zero, the year 2020 would be automatically erased from our memories. The year that made us live a horror movie, deaths here and there, bad relations between countries that were about to turn into WWIII. This year was the worst for the economy, politics, health, and art. On the other hand, it was a good chance for people to stay at home and get to know their families more.

I heard people saying staying at home helped them know their family members more. Whereas for me, I was grateful for the outings. Going out from the house, seeing the sun, and seeing new faces were my lockdown dreams. I told my family that after this pandemic, I would do a lockdown on the streets rather than at home until I satisfy myself. However, this year held many unusual events. Online concerts, the Emmys were online, the Olympic Games were postponed to the next year, the Oscars were also postponed, and the football season was a mess this year.

All these events will not let us forget this year at all. Nevertheless, we have great news; Donald Trump is out of the White House. This is the main reason why I like 2021; Trump and his administration was about to take the entire world into a war of all against all with China. 2020 was a year to be remembered but not only for the events that happened in the world like the US election, the Lebanese explosion, the Iranian nuclear crisis, or COVID. This year would be remembered as the loss of Kuwait's leader, the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Sabah, he was the one who made the entire world notice Kuwait. 2020 would be marked among the worst years in Kuwait's history, but also Kuwait has a new leader, his highness Sheikh Nawwaf Al-Sabah who would lead Kuwait in the same footsteps.

Dreams were changed this year. If you ask anyone now what their dreams are, they would say to erase 2020 from their memory; this was what my 12-year-old brother told me two days ago. Now I think Kuwaitis or the world population are eager to be back to their normal lives again and travel around the world freely again. This is not the end. Hold your breath and count to ten, feel 2020 leaving and 2021 coming.



Noor N Rafidi

Art throughout the year or 12 months of art

-Sara F Zayed

Though we think of art as timeless pieces, they are a means to tell stories. As 2020 is coming to an end, we tend to look back at each month and categorize them by their emotional tenure. Seasonal fluctuations change circumstances from the heavy clothes we wear while camping to the despair that comes consequently from extreme heat waves- postponing daylight errands in the hopes of cooler nights. Somewhere along those lines, artists find inspiration to bring out the months in their art. Here we prepared contemporary artworks for you to enjoy as the year is winding up.

We would not dare to mention January without all the new year's resolutions that we will forget by February. We say every year that we will stop smoking and start working out, to be positive, etc. One thing we cannot contest is how cold January is. This beautiful oil on Wood by Hendrick Avercamp shows two things we lack right now, snow and crowded places. Avercamp illustrates children ice-skating while women wash clothes and men chop wood for heat. This is a typical scene of a 17th-century Dutch winter, which is nowhere near as aesthetic as a typical Kuwaiti winter, but it is fun to imagine how such scenes look like on a January Saturday by the Gout market.

- Winter scenes with Ice Skaters
- Object type painting
- Object number SK-A- 1718
- Inscriptions / marks
- Creation
- Artist
- Painter: Hendrick Avercamp
- Dating c. 1608
- Material and Technique
- Physical feature soil on panel
- Material panel oil paint (paint)
- Measurement's support: h 77.3

cm × w 131.9 cm



JAN

Jumping onto February, with warmer weather but still cool enough for us to enjoy. This month holds a special place in Kuwaiti's hearts, as it commemorates the National and Liberation day of Kuwait. The photograph shows a young Kuwaiti girl holding her goat with oil wells burning in the background. Such a heartbreaking picture is a reminder of the hardships people faced during the invasion, juxtaposed with the stability we live in. Think of that when you are camping or grilling with your loved ones on the National holidays.



FEB



- Woodblock print (nishiki-e); ink and color on paper.
- Medium/ Technique
- Dimensions 35 x 70.5 cm (13 3/4 x 27 3/4 in.)
- Credit line
- Gift of L. Aaron Lebowich

We cannot mention March without thinking of the beginning of spring, perfect weather, and of course, blossoms. When I think of spring, the first country I think of is Japan. Here we have a Japanese ink illustration from the Meiji era in 1894 (Meiji 27), giving us a feel of what we wish spring were to be in the rest of the world.

MAR

March may be blooms and butterflies, but April's moody weather fluctuates from extreme summer heat to rainy showers, as if it were winter's way of saying goodbye. April showers depict just that, minus the English countryside Peter Brook painted in 1976 that we do not have here. Aside from weather talks. I happen to remember nothing about April, maybe pre-finals panic? But let us leave that for May.

- Peter Brook 1927–2009
- Medium Lithograph on paper
- Dimensions Image: 505 × 715 mm



APR

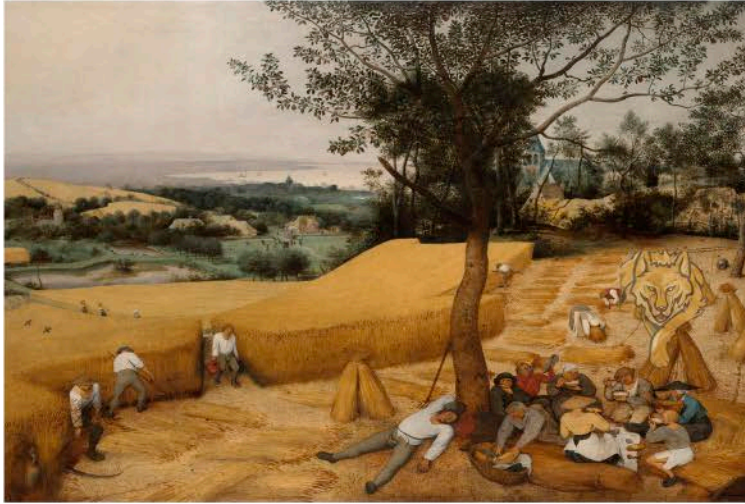
Such a transitional month in terms of weather, but we know it as more of a finals month, isn't that a kick in the head? I happen to spend my May at AUK's library (last year was an exception, thank you, Coronavirus). Library behavior in the final's week is so interesting to observe, and it has not changed a bit since Thomas Rowlandson illustrated the Cambridge Public Library in 1809. An inside view of the Public Library in Cambridge, we see a combination of book hunts, frustration, and loads of side conversations. It sounds familiar, does it not?

- Title: Inside View of the Public Library, Cambridge
- Series/Portfolio: "Oxford and Cambridge"
- Artist: Thomas Rowlandson (British, London 1757–1827 London)
- Publisher: Rudolph Ackermann, London (active 1794–1829)
- Published in: London
- Date: November 9, 1809
- Medium: Hand-colored etching and aquatint
- Dimensions: Plate: 9 3/16 × 12 11/16 in. (23.3 × 32.2 cm)
- Sheet: 10 1/16 × 13 7/16 in. (25.6 × 34.1 cm)
- Classification: Prints
- Credit Line: The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959
- Accession Number: 59.533.1635



MAY

June, early summer, flight booking season, and for farmers, a harvest season. Pieter Bruegel the Elder is showing a Netherlandish harvesting on a hot summer day. The women in the harvesters are enjoying their meal while the men are dropping on the floor with exhaustion. Though a June summer does not look like a 2021 summer regardless, harvesters and farmers will be dropping in feats of exhaustion after shipping of your favorite fruits and vegetables.



- Title: The Harvesters
- Artist: Pieter Bruegel the Elder (Netherlandish, Breda (?) ca. 1525–1569 Brussels)
- Date: 1565
- Medium: Oil on wood
- Dimensions: Overall, including added strips at top, bottom, and right, 46 7/8 x 63 3/4 in. (119 x 162 cm); original painted surface 45 7/8 x 62 7/8 in. (116.5 x 159.5 cm)
- Classification: Paintings

JUN



4th of July (Fourth of July in Centre Square)

JUL

Moving onto July, we can see one of the earliest fourth of July scenes illustrated by John Lewis Krimmel. He shows us a busy day near the Philadelphia Water Works, which is the first public fountain in America with Quakers clothing. This painting shows us the fourth of July before fireworks and grilling came into style. What else reminds you of July?

AUG

The peak of heatwaves and tanning oil sales happen during this month. As nothing says 'the beach' more than August, unlike this oil on canvas by Édouard Manet, we will not be catching any formally dressed gentlemen with 1800s attire while tanning outside of this painting. Manet is showing us how he perceives a typical day at the beach with his family in *Sur la plage*. How does summer look like where you live?



- Edouard Manet (1832-1883)
- On the Beach
- 1873
- Oil on canvas
- H. 95.9; W. 73 cm



- The Garden of Saint Paul's Hospital ('Leaf-Fall')
- Oil on canvas, 73.8 cm x 60.8 cm
- Vincent van Gogh October 1889 - 1889
- From the collection of Van Gogh Museum

September marks the beginning of fall, and we cannot really write an article about art without mentioning Van Gogh; now can we? This piece shows the road of a hospital wherein Van Gogh was admitted. With a predominant theme of brown tones and haziness, the walk of solitude makes *The Garden of Saint Paul's Hospital* the perfect fall depiction.

SEP

Halloween

Spooky season, right? For October, I decided to use a romantic era (not what the name depicts) as it conveys the real Halloween spirit that we all love. These two men eating soup by Francisco Goya shows us black hollows as eyes and almost dead-like bodies enjoying their soup. Save it for next year's Halloween inspiration!

- 1820 - 1823. Mixed method on mural transferred to canvas.



NOV

Thanksgiving (saying grace)



- Oil on canvas
- 1951

Aside from being midterms month, November is also the month of impulsive black Friday shopping and thanksgiving. Celebrating thanksgiving became controversial as people became aware of the native American genocide that had happened, with people unknowingly subscribing to that historical notion in the celebrations that have occurred for decades. Leaving our political take on thanksgiving aside, Rockwell painted the cover of The Saturday evening post as he illustrated a woman and child saying grace in a restaurant. This unorthodox location for a thanksgiving feast shows what Rockwell prioritized in his thanksgiving dinner.

DEC

Last but not least, December is preparing for Christmas (Plucking Turkeys) by Francis William Edmonds shows the Christmas preparation on a farm in 1851. It shows us two white men who are skimming the turkey while a black woman is watching. This seasonal painting is not your regular festive happy-holidays painting; this painting covers a larger discourse. The nineteenth-century American painting is applying what many of his peers are doing, which is integrating black subjects into their art, yet these applications vary from offensive implication to empathy. When looking at this painting, we need to acknowledge that expanding slavery to western territories might not be a current social problem, but this reminds us of where we are coming from inequality and how far we have to go in the light of the BLM movement.

- Artist: Francis William Edmonds
(American, Hudson, New York
1806–1863 Bronxville, New York)
- Date: 1851
- Culture: American
- Medium: Oil on canvas
- Dimensions: 23 × 33 in. (58.4 × 83.8 cm)



This visually entertaining art trip ends here but do not worry we are still covering what is on display in Kuwait's galleries in the next few pages, stay tuned.

Getting out of 2020 Thoughts

-Farida Mohamed

I've always been a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. All the way from losing your car keys in the morning to being stuck in traffic or to dropping your coffee, all these things happen because they are meant to happen. Just like 2020, yes, it was disastrous, but it had to happen. It had to happen to wake us all up, to show us that being busy only meant being blessed, to have a roof over your head, food on our tables, and clean water - are necessities that so many barely have, which makes us the lucky ones. Incredibly lucky. At this point, we have survived, we are alive, we are grateful, we are humbled.



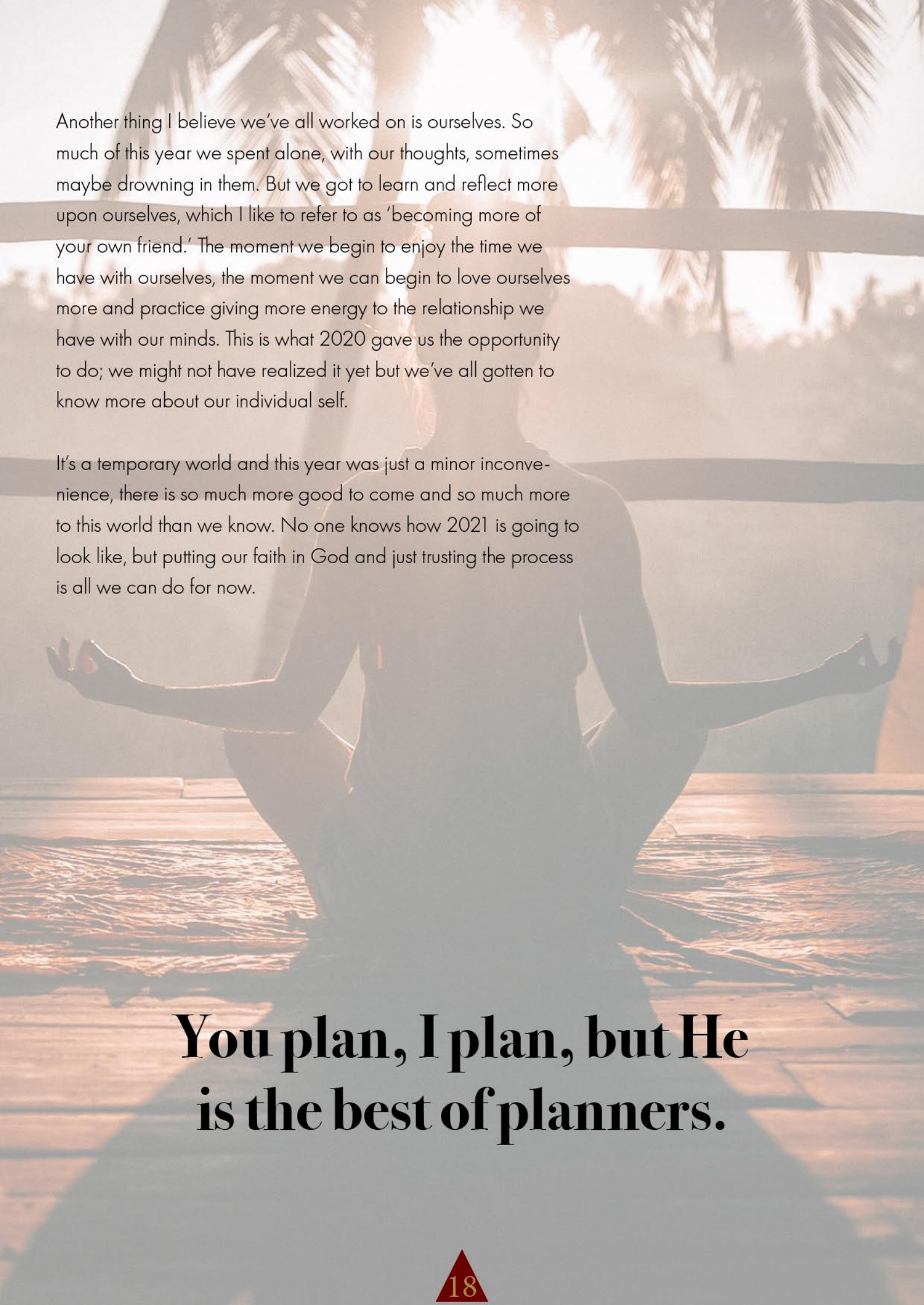
Noor N Rafidi

The real blessing though, health.

Oh, how our busy days were more than just a blessing, cramming a last-minute assignment, looking for an empty parking space, rushing from class to class, squeezing in a quick coffee with some friends. All these facets are not called being busy; it is called being blessed. All we have done this year even unconsciously, was practice gratitude. The real blessing, though, health.

Just being able to sit and not feel any pain or irritation in your body, oh how rich you are. The word rich is also a word that's meaning has changed this year. I believe the biggest misconception we all have is that we associate the word rich with money. But if this year has taught me one thing, it is to be rich, is to be rich by the mind and not money. How much money you have or how well you dress or where you live means absolutely nothing at the end of the day. Real richness comes with how you look at the world, how you deal with any minor inconvenience that comes your way, how you find joy in the little things and how you treat a worker at a grocery store.



A person is shown in silhouette, sitting in a meditative pose on a wooden deck or boardwalk. The background is a warm, golden sunset over the ocean, with palm trees visible in the distance. The person's hands are resting on their knees in a mudra. The overall mood is peaceful and reflective.

Another thing I believe we've all worked on is ourselves. So much of this year we spent alone, with our thoughts, sometimes maybe drowning in them. But we got to learn and reflect more upon ourselves, which I like to refer to as 'becoming more of your own friend.' The moment we begin to enjoy the time we have with ourselves, the moment we can begin to love ourselves more and practice giving more energy to the relationship we have with our minds. This is what 2020 gave us the opportunity to do; we might not have realized it yet but we've all gotten to know more about our individual self.

It's a temporary world and this year was just a minor inconvenience, there is so much more good to come and so much more to this world than we know. No one knows how 2021 is going to look like, but putting our faith in God and just trusting the process is all we can do for now.

**You plan, I plan, but He
is the best of planners.**

Last thought of

-Sara F Zayed

2020

If you ask anyone you know, they would probably describe 2020 as the most eventful year they have experienced so far. Let us have a quick recap. Starting in January people were raveling about a war starting between the US and North Korea. February and onwards the never-ending pandemic began. Lots of home evictions, the BLM movement, Australian wildfires... I can go on for longer, but something that we must acknowledge is that this year, was the year of self-reflection. Though saying that, this year "has been blessing in disguise" is rooted in classism, and living so comfortably that one would come out this year well. I happen to divide 2020 into five categories ranked from least to most important for excitement purposes.

One thing we will not do in 2021 is talking about 2020 but let us recall some news for old times' sake. Starting with the good news, Trump lost the US elections. Well, it depends on who you ask if this is considered a piece of good or bad news. Also, let us not jump the gun. On another note, carbon dioxide emissions have declined while everyone was locked in their homes. Nature had its break from people, but people did not have a break from technology. 2020 made us glued to our screens for pandemic updates. Did anyone else religiously check the daily coronavirus cases? One thing I noticed is a mix of fake and official news, a lot of ranting videos recorded in cars, and media outlets pushing agendas.

The year of reading too much news



The year of “you are on mute”

It is no joke; I must have heard the phrase “you are on mute” as many times as the word “coronavirus” in 2020. This may not be the year for college students or the not so very traditional, not-so-tech-savvy employees and students, but it is definitely the year of Eric Yuan, the CEO of Zoom. He himself did not expect a pandemic and the subsequent shift to work and study from home, as Zoom saw a 458% growth in users. Though private users do not have to subscribe, big corporations use the premium feature, so if you did not make Yuan one of the 400 richest people in the US, your institution did. 2020 included much more, but let us leave the past where it belongs and talk about what 2021 will be like. We are still testing the water, but who knows right?

The year of Tiktok

Almost everyone found Tiktok childish and unappealing until they were locked at home. This video-based application was developed back in 2016, but its popularity skyrocketed when people started posting tips, sketches, comedy, and most importantly Tiktok dances. Tiktok also became a song promotion application with catchy songs. Tiktok has its own celebrities now who would not have been popular on any other social media platform. These Tiktok celebrities are now full-time content producers; if you are creative and not camera-shy, Tiktok is the fast route to fame.

The year of learning new skills

Since we were locked in our homes for a good month and a half, we all had the time to unleash our hidden talents. I think at some point everyone tried the Dalgona coffee and baked daily. This might have been a coping mechanism for us as a global entity. Hobbyists all around the world went from photography, knitting, baking, drawing, etc. 2020 might have been a good chance to re-discover the old passions that you missed due to work and school.

Not the year for celebrities or any 500k person on the internet

Wealth redistribution has been one of the themes of 2020, especially when middle-class workers who got laid off from their jobs saw Hollywood celebrities collaborating in a “feel good” song from their mansions and spending their quarantines comfortably. This was back in March. Such unfair treatment is not new as it happens to individuals every year. Unlike any other year, 2020 collectively left a lot of employees with home evictions and no money in their savings account. Simultaneously, celebrity idolization grew less, and the public wanted to hear less from them unless they are helping the people survive the pandemic. There is no guarantee that this collective stance is changing as it might redefine celebrity culture which is...good?

Bouncing Back

- Abdolwahab B Alqarooni

What changed in 2020? Social distancing has affected us in many ways and changed a lot of things in our personalities. 2020 can be considered as a step in the opposite direction for some and an opportunity to improve for others. But we can all say that after 2020, many things are going to be different now. Now 2020 has prevented us from many things that we wanted to experience, any places we wanted to visit, and any ideas associated with the traveling experience. But since we are almost at the end of the bad news era, the question that arises is it still the same outside? Will we be able to experience our traveling plans, and will it live up to its hype?

In 2020, the plan was to travel the world, and if that wasn't your plan, what is? Now after this is all over, will traveling be as safe and fun as it was, or will we have to live with the new laws of Covid during 2020? Traveling in 2020 was as hard as it was dangerous because of the pandemic and all the precautions we had to take while we travel. It was also demanded from any traveler to stay in quarantine for 7 to 14 days, and that rule is still present for the safety of the country and our people. Now in the Pfizer era, traveling gets easier as once you are vaccinated, your passport gets stamped, and you receive a certificate that eliminates the need for you to quarantine while traveling. The biggest advantage of getting vaccinated is that you can use a different lane compared to those who are not vaccinated. How strict is Kuwait's government with the traveling precautions? Kuwait is still making sure that all people coming from outside of Kuwait are quarantined in other countries first if they arrived from one of the 31 countries that are dubbed as "Plagued countries," and they are India, Iran, China, Brazil, Colombia, Armenia, Bangladesh, Philippines, Syria, Spain, Singapore, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mexico, Iraq, Indonesia, Chile, Pakistan, Egypt, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Panama, Peru, Serbia, Montenegro, Dominican Republic, and Kosovo.

If you were staying in one of these countries, you need to be quarantined in another country for 14 days and get a PCR test 72 hours prior to your flight before arriving in Kuwait. Now that is a lot of work to get done for a vacation, so 2020 is not the year for traveling. In 2021, with the vaccine arriving, we still have to keep social distancing and be very careful; only we can end this pandemic. Soon enough, when everyone gets vaccinated, and the virus disappears, this will all be just a memory locked in the back of our minds, but we are the only ones that can put an end to this pandemic. You can start by considering the vaccine that is offered by the Kuwaiti Government. Reserving a spot cannot be easier, and it's one of the precautions that, in my opinion, is necessary for a better tomorrow.

You can get your vaccine by registering through this link:

www.moh.gov.kw/en/Pages/Default.aspx or scan the QR code below.

**COVID-19 Vaccine
Pre-Registration**

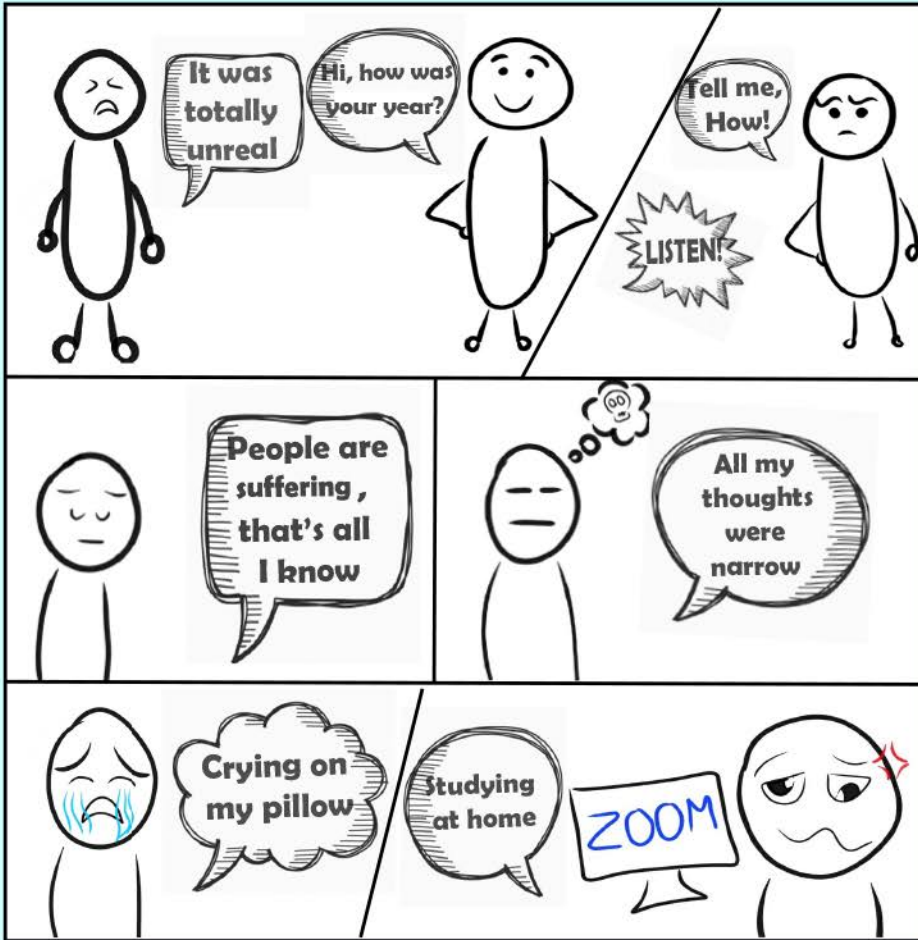


Scan Here



COMICSTRIP

BY: ZINAB K HASSAN



The background is an abstract, textured composition of various shades of blue and white. It features thick, horizontal brushstrokes and some darker, more intricate patterns that resemble a close-up of a rock face or a microscopic view of a material. The overall effect is one of depth and movement.

Twiddle your thumbs

Arts, Design and Culture: Kuwait's Guide

-Sara F Zayed



With February approaching, we decided to provide you with a guide of entertainment in Kuwait with precautionary health measures in mind. We constantly hear the complaint that "there is nothing to do in Kuwait aside from restaurants," but we are here to change your mind. This guide is only art and literature related spots as we already know paintball or racing rink exists, so we are giving local art and design the coverage it deserves. Starting off with contemporary art platforms, which is an art hub that combines digital and conventional art with a strong online presence as well. This fairly new initiative of art display, social art, and literature discussions are growing in Kuwait since the gallery opened in 2011. Located at Shuwaikh industrial, the gallery hosts local and regional international works of art that which is accessible to the public. Such cultural transition in art appreciation gives local artists the space to share their work and exchange knowledge. Alongside the gallery, you will find Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) bookshop offering architecture, design, and art books. We will cover some of the gallery pieces on display and some recently hosted events for (CAP). Visit (CAP) at working hours from 10 am-7 am Saturday to Thursday. For more information, check their Instagram @capkuwait and @capculturekw or visit their website at www.capkuwait.com.

O N D I S P L A Y

As a part of the Spotlights exhibition, "The Great March of Return" by Steve Sabella, artist and writer based in Berlin, Germany, shares a fresco-like collage of the 2018 Gaza protest, which was photographed by five Palestinian photojournalists. This print mounted on glossy diasec shows outer space as a battlefield for the Palestinian protests as a symbol for the national resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Straying away from glossy diasec to nontraditional art medium. Abulrahman Katanani used wires to build "Tornado" in 2017 to cover another aspect of the Israeli occupation. Wires translate to the apartheid that is set in the West Bank. Katanani symbolizes the Nakba 1948 as a tornado to reflect the aftermath of the generational struggles with refugee camps and inhumane violence. Such complex integration of wires also speaks for the oblivion and uncertainty of the region as well.

DISCUSSIONS

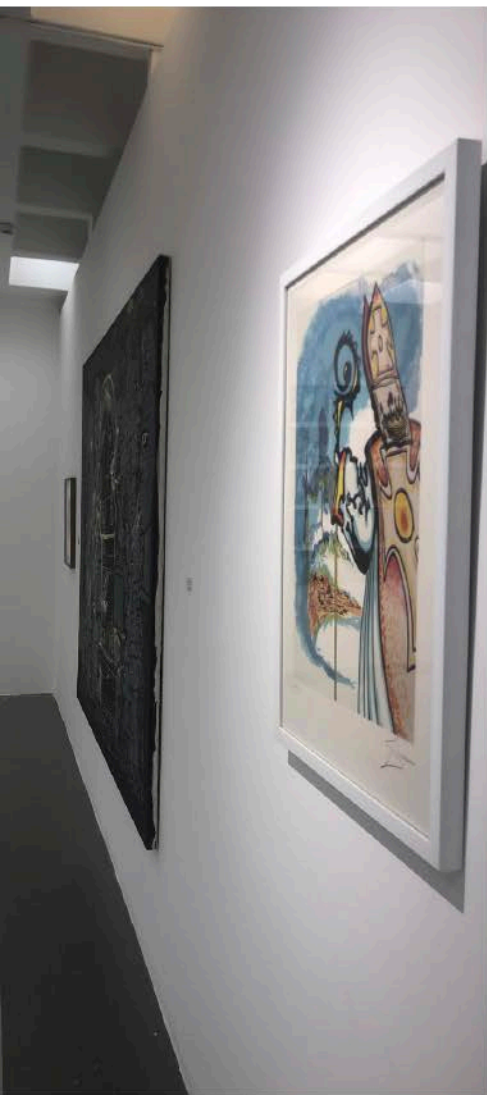
Since the pandemic started, most (CAP) events became virtual either via Zoom or Instagram live. Though there are still some book discussions happening in the gallery with limited seats to keep social distancing, (CAP) is using this virtual platform to invite regional and international directors, writers, and artists and saving them the hassle of traveling. Events are mostly in Arabic unless stated otherwise. One of the interesting events is "Cinema between Pen and Camera," with director and art critic Walid AlZahry talks about directors who write their own scripts. AlZahry discusses how this 1948 French concept redefined the role of directors from only managing the visual aspects of films to the written word. He also discusses that the hierarchy of the film set depends if the director takes on the role of a writer or not. The discourse and many others are available on their Instagram page as an IGTV to get acquainted with the regional film trends and the critics' take on them.

An initiative of Al-Diwan Al-Amiri to develop a well-rounded cultural center which is considered as one of the largest projects of its kind globally, Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre (ASCC) hosts 22 display rooms with 3000 pieces on displayed that are divided on natural history, Islamic art, space, theatre, and visual art sub-museums. Moreover, it hosts open discussions and children programs to cater to all age groups and interests. Since ASCC also hosts virtual events, we will also be briefly covering two events to give you a feel of what to expect from the cultural center. For more information about upcoming events and ticket prices, check their Instagram @ascckw or visit their website at www.ascckw.kw.



DISCUSSIONS

ASCC hosted a series called "Artist talks" from June to September via Zoom that covers the talk of artists, photographers, painters, and writers that are associated with ASCC. The virtual series was ongoing during the phase of Kuwait's lockdown and it is still available as an IGTV on their official Instagram. One other initiative worth mentioning is the virtual school trips that ASCC is doing. The cultural center divided the virtual field trips into sub-programs depending on the class. Due to the pandemic, ASCC is not fully operating and the museums are currently closed, but the outside area and cafes are open. As a result, there are no artworks currently on display.



Kashta Season

- Abdolwahab B Alqarooni

The winter season in Kuwait is extra special because of the significantly hot weather we get from March/April till October every year. The winter season is the season of dressing up, enjoying the city view while drinking coffee in a café that has a balcony but what makes winter in Kuwait really special is camping or in 2020s case, Kashta.

A Kashta is mostly like camping, but it would last a maximum of 2 or 3 days, then you go back home. Going to the desert with a group of friends and switching to off-road, having that one particular friend that makes you feel like he understands the desert as if he has a special connection to it. Two people from the group, usually the eaters of the group who have a very unique taste in food, are the designated shoppers for the group. They buy all the food necessities of the trip according to how many days they are camping and how much everyone is pitching in. The camping utility team are three of the handiest out of the group. They go to the co-op and get the things that will make the stay in the desert easier, such as the grill for the food, a grill for keeping warm and for tea, the tent, kettles, pans, etc. Last but not least, you have the drives aside from the desert guru that I just talked about. It can be one extra driver or two extras, depending on provisions that they are taking and how many people are camping. The drivers can also be useful for closing spaces while camping to make the campsite be more private. All that planning can take a week or a day, and the more it is random, the more you are going to feel that it is special. The Kashta started off as just tents and a hole to make fire and with the years, people are getting more creative from wireless projectors to sources of power for electricity. The trademark "Kashta" in Kuwait is the source for also many ideas in the Kuwaiti business industry. You can rent a car full of Kashta necessities and desert necessities for the time you are staying there. You can rent a spot by the beach in any hotel that has the accessibility to it for a certain amount of money. The most luxurious way of a Kashta is having a caravan ready, and the accessibility to a caravan gives a lot of flexibility to the time that you are spending there; it can extend from 3 days to a week or so.



K A S H T A

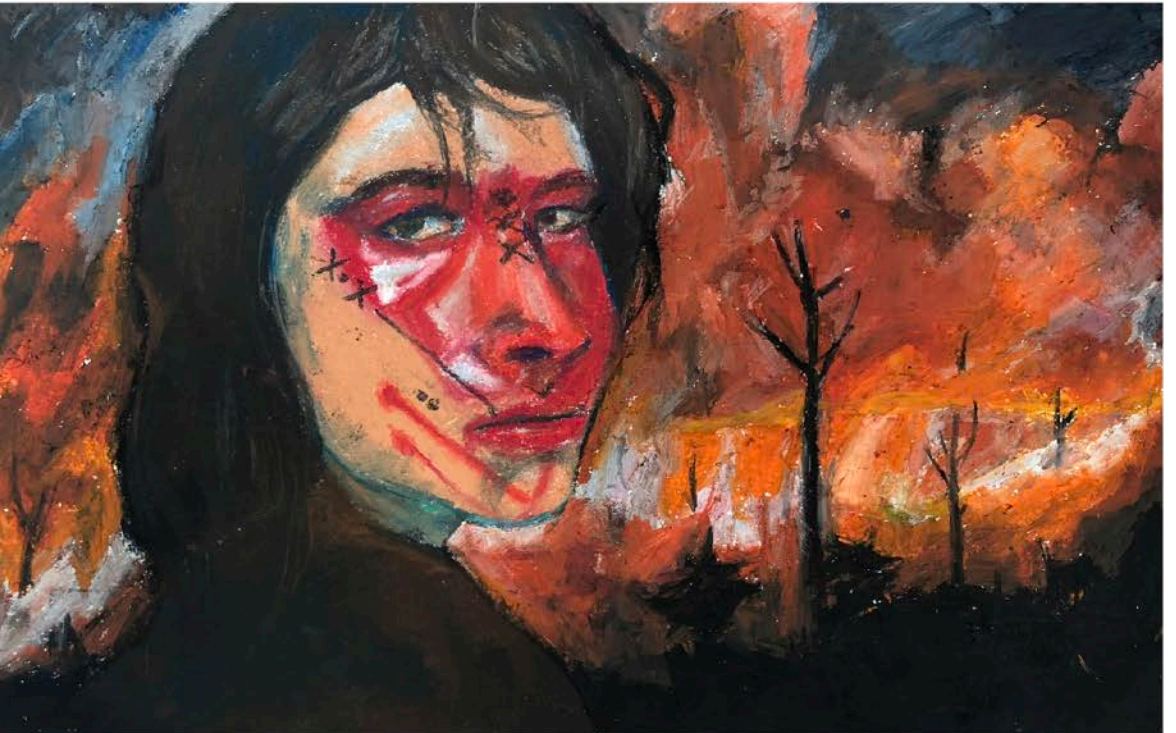
S E A S O N

Akin to every facet of recreation we partake in, throughout our lives, we carefully align it with our personal notions of care and due-diligence; likewise- we need to take care of our Kashta spot and keep the environment around us as clean as possible so that others can enjoy it as well. It does not do any harm if trash bags were counted as a particularly important necessity on our Kashta list; and like the adage goes, 'leave it better than you found it.' There are a lot of different approaches to a Kashta and it can be enjoyed in all ways, whether you are with your friends sitting on a rug and drinking tea by Bnaider Beach, or your barbequing with your family enjoying the of view of Kuwait City from the hills of Jal Alzoor. All of us can agree on one thing, what's winter without a Kashta?

مكافئ

”حان وقت التطبيق“ قال لنفسه بعد دراسات عميقة لمنهج كونستانتين ستانيسلافسكي، يبحث عن أداء يلامس به القلوب و تدمع من أجله العيون ليلعب دور شخصية بأئسة من شخصيات تشيكوف في أحد المهرجانات المسرحية. ”سأذهب لأنام في بيت صديقي يا أمي“ قال وهو يضع نسخة من النص المسرحي و سترة ذات غطاء للرأس في حقيبة ظهره. ”أي صديق؟ علي؟“

”نعم...سأنام في منزله ليوم أو ربما اثنين.“علي صديقه منذ المدرسة الابتدائية الذي لم يره منذ ثلاث سنوات. ”حسنًا توخي الحذر“قالت بثقة وهي خارجة من غرفته.فتح محفظته و أودع كل نقوده في الدرج و لم يبق سوى دينار واحد،نزل من غرفته إلى المطبخ لإكمال آخر تجهيزات مغامرته،وضع خبزة واحدة في حقيبته و أخذ من التلاجة قنينة ماء بلاستيكية.خرج يقود سيارته في صباح يوم ربيع كان هواءه يطير شعره عبر النافذة، أكمل طريقه حتى اختارت السيارة أن تقف في ساحة رملية في منطقة لم يرها من قبل. نزل من عربته الرياضية دون هاتفه حاملا معه حقيبته و مشى لربع ساعة إلى أن وجد مكان نزله، تحت شجرة كبيرة مميزة عن الأشجار المحيطة في مشى عام يفصلها عن بلاط المشى بعض الشجيرات المرتفعة، استلقى في ظلها الواسع ليرتاح ثم أخرج مفكرته و دون شعوره بالتعب ليتذكره لاحقا. جلس يفكر في وقت عادة كان يمضيه بلعب الألعاب الإلكترونية،يتعرف من خلالها على أصحاب وهميين، بدأت أفكار الانسحاب بالتغلغل إلى رأسه بينما يراقب أزرار مفتاح سيارته الأسود وتفاصيل نقش العلامة التجارية للسيارة الأمريكية. ”كن رجلا و قم بما وعدت نفسك به!“قال لنفسه بعد أن دفن المفتاح في قاع حقيبته. أخرج النص وبدأ في التحليل..يتساءل عن هدف شخصيته ناظرا إلى موقع الشمس كل خمس دقائق.تسلل إليه الجوع وقسم خبزته لنصفين، نصف ليأكله الان ونصف للمساء



اكتشف نقص تنوع النكهات بعد تذوقه الخبزة الجافة فراح يدون ذلك في مفكرته أيضا بعد شربه الرذاذ المتبقي في قنينته. وفي تأقلمه على هدوء المكان رأى عامل النظافة بلباسه الأصفر المتسخ يقترب من شجرته. "لن أعطيه مالي فأنا فقير مثله! سيسلم علي وأرد السلام وهذا الذي سوف يحدث لا أكثر!" قال في ذهنه. ظل ينظر إلى العامل متوقعا منه أن يسلم عليه لكنه لم يشاركه نظرة و ظل يمشي مكلا عمله. توقعاته الخاطئة أخرجته من مخيلته الدرامية وحديثه لنفسه جعله كالسكير صريحا بمشاعره وضعيف الإدراك. "ماذا أفعل هنا؟" "أصحيح ما أفعله؟" "من ياترى يشعر بالذي أشعر به في هذه اللحظة؟!" "كفى!" صيحى من سكره و وقف على قدميه بسرعة شرسة. لاحظ غروب الشمس و راح يبحث عن ماء سبيل ليملا قنينته الفارغة و ليشغل نفسه ببعض الحركة. ظل مركزا على موقع شجرته في خريطته الذهنية، استغرقه وجود الماء عشر دقائق فيها استبدلت أضواء الشوارع نور الشمس، رجع إلى المشى و رأى أن أضواءه لا تعمل، بعث المشى المظلم فيها لرهبة فتاهت وجهته. "الرصيف؟ تحت الشجرة؟ أم السيارة؟" وقف لثوان ليفكر "أيها المثير للشفقة!" لعن نفسه و اتجه إلى شجرته بشجاعة مظهرية و بخطوات سريعة أشبه بتلك لأبطال أفلام الأكشن. وصل إلى شجرته وأخرج سترته من حقيبته والتي أصبحت شبه فارغة، ارتداها و حاول النوم في أول ساعات الليل مستخدما الحقيبة كوسادة لرأسه. تقلب في مكانه ألف مرة و مرة، حرصه الزائد من النوم، كان يسمع كل شيء بوضوح مضاعف، صوت الرياح ترتطم بالأشجار.. صوت إطارات السيارات البعيدة و احتكاكها في حصى الشارع.. صوت عراك القطط.. و بعد مرور الوقت سمع صوت خطوات الجري تأتي باتجاهه.. تقترب.... تقترب.... حتى تجاوزته ورجعت إليه فاستيقظ و جلس منتبها "أتأسف لم أقصد مضايقتك!" قالت امرأة جاءت لتجري لتنهى روتينها الرياضي. "لماذا تنام هنا؟ هل كل شيء على مايرام؟" سألت بفضول. "نعم كل شيء على ما يرام" قال صادقا. "أرجوك انتظرنى! لا تتحرك!" نظر إليها بغرابة وهي تجري بالاتجاه الذي أتت منه. رجعت بعد عدة دقائق ومعها كيس مليء بالمواد الغذائية المعلبة، ناولته إياه وقالت "تفضل" مع إبتسامة كبيرة. "شكرا" قال بهدوء ثم أكلت جريها. مكث في جلوسه متعجبا.. "كيف يشعر المحتاج عند تلقيه المساعدة....؟ بالامتنان؟ بالتقبل؟ بالإهانة؟ ماذا عن عزة النفس؟" تساؤلات عصفت عقله وهو يرى إبتسامة تلك المرأة في ذهنه. تفحص محتوى الكيس ووجد علبة معدنية لقطع الأناناس فتح العلبة ولاحظ فقدان أدوات المائدة فراح يلتقط قطع الأناناس بأصابعه التي يغطيها الغبار، شعر بالانتشاء لفترة قصيرة بعد تمتعه بطعم الفاكهة الحلو اللاذع وشربه للعصير المتبقي في العلبة. "مع هذه المؤن أستطيع البقاء ليومين آخرين" ظن لنفسه. بات الوقت متأخرا و قبل أن يستسلم للنوم سمع صوت بين الأشجار المحيطة. "المال معك؟" "أكيد.. أتمنى أن تكون جيدة هذه المرة." "جرهبا إذن وكف عن الشك!" "حسنًا.... هووووويااا! أريدها! إنها ممتازة!" "لا تدع الآخرين بخداعك دي أفضل...." بدأ قلبه بالهلع، يحاول أن يجهز وضع جسده ببطأ رغم تنفسه السريع، تمسك بحقيبة ظهره و حاول الإبتعاد بخفة. "كما قلت لك دعه يقابلني في نفس هذه الساعة هناك وسوف.... أنت! توقف!" طاردوه وفي تلك اللحظة استرجع كل غرائز البقاء التي فقدت بسبب العالم المتحضر و ركض كاللؤلؤمي هاربا و كأن راخيل بنفسه يطارده، أضاعوه و وصل إلى أمان سيارته. وفي أقل من أربع وعشرين ساعة أدرك أنه بعيد جدا عن الحقيقة.

Revealing the Hidden Fantasy Makeup Artist

- Lavena Jacob

When we think of an artist, our mind naturally depicts a person painting on a canvas. However, the art domain is just not restricted to that; it has a much wider spectrum. Every artist out there does not use paper and paint; one of them is Fouzia Z. Allami. She is a Freshman who is majoring in System Engineering but is currently in IEP. Surprisingly, this 18-year-old Kuwaiti has a hobby that takes a tangent from her current field of choice. Allami delved into the fantasy make-up art realm as her true passion is spreading her art with a different creative touch.



Being a self-taught artist, she explained how YouTube helped her a lot in the initial stages. She also added that practicing is integral and is the key to make you an expert in the field. Consequently, her advice to aspiring artists was the following. "It's not necessary to start with high budget make-up and equipment! Start from zero. Enjoy the experience from the beginning. You will have high and low make-up looks, so don't give up. Just keep going and learn from your mistakes, and get lost in the sea of art till you find your passion!"

Her journey began in 2012, and she humorously narrated how she entered the make-up art world through her experiments at home. "I started with simple low-budget material like markers that are ideally not for human use." She further explored using "Vimto and Hershey as fake blood, created homemade scar wax using Vaseline and corn starch... glue sticks, tissues and cotton." As each year went by, she developed and improved her repertoire of work using advanced professional make-up skills and equipment.





Her fantastic showcase of work indeed echoes her preferred themes of fantasy, drama, and horror. But one can also note the undertone to her emotive looks that deliver a general message. In particular, she passionately explicated that her favourite look, titled 'Australia is on Fire,' was based on the 2020 wildfire tragedy that claimed the lives of nearly 3 million animals. "That broke my heart, so I tried to express my grief over this tragedy with my art," said Allami.

Over the last few years, Allami has attended many cosplay events in Kuwait, which she claimed had been a learning experience, as it gave her the opportunity to meet other cosplayers and artists in the same field. She started expanding her territory in this sphere in 2018 as she received orders for make-up looks from numerous clients and has also began private make-up courses. She hopes to continue to work in this field and explore SFX make-up deeply in the years to come.

As you can all see, VOICE just introduced to you an ambitious artist who is beaming with a thriving attitude to showcase her art. Allami is a fierce special effects make-up artist we are warning everyone about as she is here to reign in the industry.

Allami's Do's and Don'ts!

Try new things! You don't have to stick to a specific style or theme of makeup art.

Skincare routine before the look is a must! A clean, hydrated skin base is the secret to a perfect final result.



Missing your loved ones, send them a few postcards...

VOICE is showcasing a few stupendous postcards done by the students in Professor Antonia Stamos GDES 315 – History of Design course. The “Postcards of Kuwait” assignment is the latest iteration of the linoleum block. The main objective was to create a design that advertised some aspects of Kuwait to tourists; the students could either represent the people and culture or focus on specific tourist attractions and monuments.

VOICE is giving you a chance to choose your favourite 3 postcards from the ones below.



Picnic Sunset by Anwar

1/3

Anwar Al Mausawi – Sunset and Picnic

“I realized Kuwait isn’t about its skyline, so rather than try and squeeze in a building, I tried to evoke the feeling of Kuwait. To me, that is the intimate feeling of sharing a cup of coffee or chai with the people you love. I decided to set the scene on the beach as that is where Kuwait’s history draws back to.”

“I chose the Henna pattern to represent the old Kuwaiti women and the old traditions in Kuwait. It is a unique idea that is really hard and it was challenging to carve it, but it was a wonderful experience.”



1/3

HENNA

Fatima Al-Mariri

Fatima Al Mariri – Henna



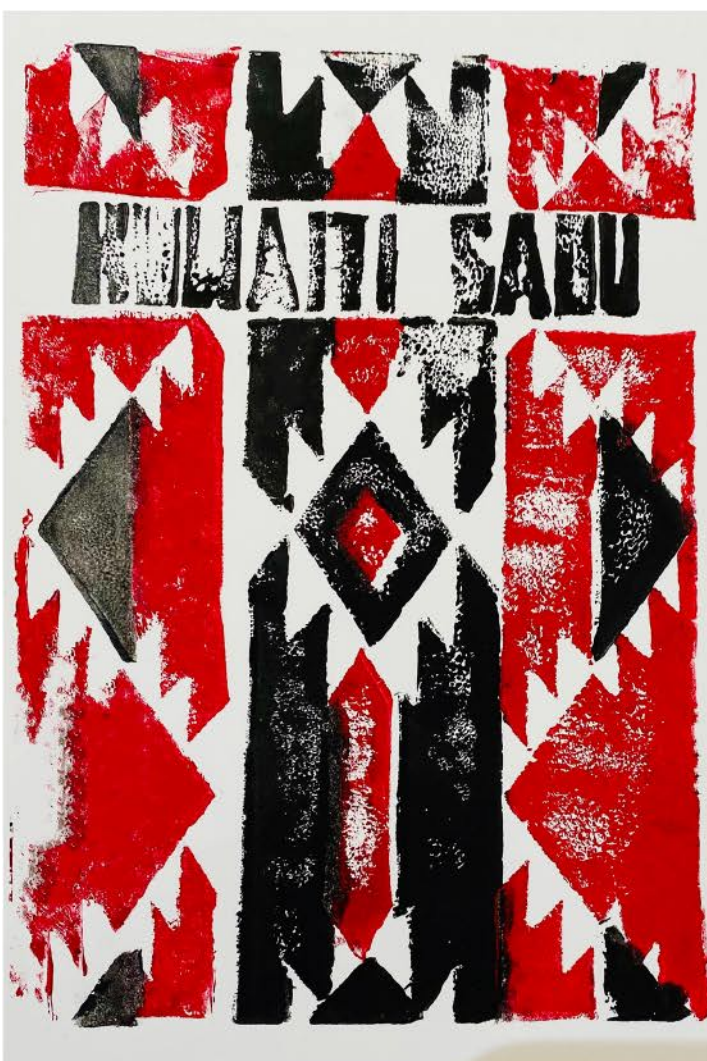
Bedour Al Shamery – Oud & Sadu

"While brainstorming, I came up with this idea: why not do a Sadu pattern as it is an important part of the Kuwaiti culture?"

Although Sadu is famous in other GCC countries, we have our own patterns, and this is the one I chose. It is also one of the most common patterns."

"It was a wonderful experience and the most beautiful part of it was that it was for my country. The project was a postcard representing Kuwait. Kuwait means a lot to me, so I combined the oud and Sadu together, and it became a mixture between hospitality, warmth and the oldest handicrafts in Kuwait."

Suaad Al Khalaf – Kuwait





Munirah Al-Majdali - Abraajna

"My block print was inspired by Kuwait's architecture in the 70's, the golden era of Kuwait, specifically the water towers. I wanted to include two of the most important elements of Kuwait: the sea and a Kuwaiti woman. The sea in Kuwait represents the Kuwaiti seafarers, be it merchants, pearl divers and fishermen. The addition of a Kuwaiti woman dressed in a traditional flowy Abaya depicts how Kuwaitis regard their country as a mother figure providing them with love and protection."



CLICK the link below and choose your top 3 postards!

LINK: <https://forms.gle/w7wmZK5b2bdybWNB7>

Safwana Basheer

Salute to the New



To New Beginnings

-Abdolwahab B Alqarooni

We leave 2020 with memories that won't let us be.
We leave 2020 with the shocks and the surprises of a lifetime.
We leave 2020 with a different version of ourselves; Better or worse, we changed because of the circumstances.
We leave 2020 with the plan to move on with our lives.
We leave 2020 with a passion that we created when we saw what would happen if we had nowhere to aim our passion at.
We leave 2020 after all the lessons it has taught us.
We leave 2020 ready to face the hardships of 2021.
We leave 2020 after a year of unexpected events.
We leave 2020 hoping for a better tomorrow.
We leave 2020 reminiscing on all our yesterdays.
We leave 2020 with our heads held high.
We leave 2020 aiming for the stars and the never content with less than the sky.
We leave 2020 when we thought it would never end but look at you now.
Ready to face a new year with new challenges and new achievements,
New faces to meet and new places to see,
New people to interact with and new information to gain.
We leave 2020 with all the sorrows and heartbreaks and losses,
These things will humanize us and help us make the best of what we are going through.
We leave 2020 without hesitation and go into 2021 with excitement and enthusiasm like never before.
We leave 2020, yet we will still remember how it affected us.
We leave 2020, so keep in mind that 2020 made you the person you are today.
We leave 2020 with more knowledge and more experience.
We leave 2020, thanking you for all that you taught us, may God forgive all that was taken from me and give me the strength to move forward.
We leave 2020 with a tear on our cheeks and a smile on our faces,
With a sad memory and a lesson taught, the loss of a loved one on our minds and the hardship that we overcame.
I'd say thank you, 2020 for showing me what I needed to see but never wanted to.
We leave 2020.
And we start a new chapter filled with mysteries.

New Year's Resolution

-Sayed Ali Altabtabai

Consult any new year's resolutions statistics and you are pretty much guaranteed to get the same answer: the overwhelming majority of people do not commit to their new year's resolution. At best, new year's resolutions are really just January and February resolutions. In fact, sometimes it can even be used to procrastinate. Someone will have a goal in their mind and they will delay it a few months to make it part of their new year's resolution. Only so they can commit to it for one or two months before dropping their commitments like a hot potato. So, with that in mind, why do people make new year's resolutions?

Many people seem to think that, somehow, the Earth completing its rotation around the sun will change them. That on the 1st of January they are going to wake up with the strange superpower of discipline. Or maybe they don't actually believe that. Maybe it's just a fantasy. Either way, it is evident many people desire change. New year's resolutions are just a reflection of that and it's totally understandable. Speaking as someone who is not very satisfied with his current life, I too desire change.

My desire for change has taken me down the motivational speech path many times. I would watch Ted talks, conferences and consult other self-help guides in hopes of finding the magical tip, the one nugget of wisdom that will alter my life and give me the superpower of discipline. However, much like the new year's resolution, this too is a fantasy. So, how does one change? What is it that people must do to attain the superpower of discipline? Or are we all just forever prisoners of our unchanging selves and habits?





-Safwana Basheer

Now, although I never got a simple trick to be more disciplined from the motivational videos I watched. I wouldn't say that the time I spent watching the motivational videos was wasted either. While some of the videos I watched were useless and made absurd promises, others were actually effective at doing their job. Those were the videos that were realistic. They were very candid with the audience and had a clear message: discipline is simple, not easy. And truthfully, that is something most of us know but won't admit. This is why it was very useful for me to hear it from someone else. In order for change to happen there has to be a sacrifice and one must find themselves doing things they may not wish to do. So, what about new year's resolution?

For me, I am not waiting for the new year to come to start implanting the changes I want to see in my life. Already, I have started working on getting up earlier. It's an uphill battle. Sometimes you lose and sometimes you win. But it is a daily choice. Every morning I choose victory or defeat. I don't wait for the new year or the next semester or some other arbitrary date. I just do it.

As for the new year, I have replaced resolutions with plans. Instead of focusing on what habits I want to develop, I will focus on what I want to achieve in the new year. I am already thinking of a set of goals that I want to accomplish before 2022. Hopefully, by then, I would have developed the positive habits and discipline necessary to complete my list.



LAW OF ATTRACTION

- Sarah F Zayed

Every year by December, we hear every possible expert talking about the new year's predictions. You can go anywhere in the world and you will still easily manage to find someone predicting the new year. We need to ask ourselves, why do we get excited for new year's? Why is it a fresh start? Do we just need an excuse to get a day off and celebrate? Or is it really the kickoff of a new beginning?

January is the most interesting month for me as I always see the discipline that comes out strong by January 1st and fades out by February when almost everyone forgot their resolutions. Something shifted in 2020, nobody is predicting 2021 to be a good year; at least I did not catch "2021 will be my year" tweets. Leading us to one popularized concept which is "speaking things into existence", or "manifestation"; now, I have to intention to prove such a tentative statement, but the law of attraction exists. It might not single-handedly change your reality, but it can reshape how you view the situation you are put in, thus, making the best out of your year.

Law of attraction is not just a business success story that you found on LinkedIn, and it is also not just reading your zodiac sign's predictions for the year; it is more than that. The law of attraction is the belief that thinking positively or negatively will bring or attract more of what you thought of. 2020 is a prime example that negative thoughts bring negative situations. People at the beginning of quarantine were terrified of coronavirus, thus, bringing more media to focus on how dangerous the virus is, which made people terrified of leaving their homes even with health precautions or even after governments disbanded curfews. Plus, since we all expected 2020 to keep getting worse even as a meme, it was actually getting worse, or maybe that is just the media emphasizing on the negative news because people feed off them.

Now, we are at square one: January 2021. How do we learn from our mistakes? Do we just “start thinking positively”? “Thinking positively” is the most counterproductive advice you can give anyone, that is not just it. Calling wars or pandemics a “blessing in disguise” you were not affected by, is a classicist notion; and unkind to share with the rest who barely make ends meet in a pandemic or they got fired due to budget cuts. Mentioning such a point is important because having a bad year does not just translate to being locked at home or not being able to travel. But for those who did not encounter anything bad, was your year really bad or did the media cultivate your brain to believe that? If that is the case, then cut down on your media intake to a minimum. Browsing the news the second you wake up will put you in a bad mood and build up the notion that the world is falling apart. Even if that is true, you cannot control your surroundings.

One point we need to remember, has there been really a good year? The idea that every day will be blooming and successful is unrealistic. Giving yourself the space to let out the bad thoughts will let the good ones in as piling up emotions and covering them to hit a record of good days will backfire.

When evaluating any year we usually think of our progress, whether it is emotional, academic, or professional progress. Planners are conventional for an organization but have anyone used their 2020 planner? 2020 would have looked so good on many covers (this one is for graphic designers). Another thing that builds up high expectations but actually makes us feel awful about our year is new year’s resolutions. Setting resolutions should not be tied to a certain timeframe and should not just be done by the end of the year as they are ongoing, so start at your own pace, and pause if needed. If you are one of those people who have spilled over resolutions, take them up to this year.

Before we leave you off to start rethinking your resolutions, remember that people’s success does not translate to your failure, and it also does depict how their life behind the screen is actually going. Also, remember that some people started earlier than you did, so you cannot compare five years of progress to your first trial.

VOICE

DEC/JAN ISSUE 2021