



HASSAN ZIYAD

i n s i l e n t s p a c e s

HASSAN ZIYAD - *In Silent Spaces*

Hassan Ziyad began to seriously consider a career in the visual arts in the late 1990s. Leaving school from grade 7, the only formal art education he had was the lessons he was given in the art class at school.

In the mid- 1990s, Ziyad together with a friend who was also involved in the production of souvenirs, submitted one of his paintings to a charity art exhibition and competition organized by a primary school in Male where Ziyad's wife worked. Some of the judges of the competition included the established Maldivian artists Naushad Waheed and Hussain Afeef as well as art teachers from the schools of Male. Ziyad had made a painting for the competition which was selected for the exhibition, from which it was purchased by Naushad. He later offered Ziyad to work in his souvenir production studio and offered Ziyad the monthly wage of Mrf 7000/-, which was a relatively high amount for the time (early '90s).

When he accepted the offer, Ziyad was employed by Naushad in his studio where Ziyad's main task was to do the backgrounds of hand-painted t-shirts for the tourist souvenir market. However, after months of Ziyad beginning to work, Naushad's studio was shut

down. Ziyad then began working from home where several of his friends joined him to produce hand painted t-shirts for the souvenir market as well as large scenic paintings for resort interiors. He later registered the label 'Quadro Studio' (Italian for painting) to facilitate the logistics of his growing practice which included billing and receiving payments from customers and clients. Ziyad received many large orders from souvenir retailers for his products which went on to include t-shirts, hand-painted tiles, mugs and glasses.

Although Ziyad was doing well commercially, he wanted more and more to be making work that would allow him to improve his skills as a draftsman and painter, which led him to paint more than make the other items he was producing for the souvenir trade. Mostly working from photographic references, Ziyad's paintings mostly feature sceneries which include beaches and seascapes as well as coconut palms and other trees and foliage found in the Maldives. Additionally, he also paints mosques – old ruins of mosques as well as picturesque views of mosques presently used. And most recently he has also introduced a mosque interior; the meticulously detailed rendering of the interior of Hukuru Miskii (or Friday Mosque) in Male, which is one of the oldest in the country. A very striking aspect of his

work is also how Ziyad handles light and its intricate reflections on objects. And throughout most of his works there is a sense of deep contemplation of nature and forces stronger than anything human. In one of the paintings exhibited in the inaugural exhibition of the National Art Gallery, Maldives Contemporary 2005, the painting 'Tsunami' shows the destructive power of this force. A house where once people lived is destroyed to rubble. The painting of this scene is a detailed depiction of the destroyed house, with rays of light reflected on the once standing structure now reduced to pieces of brick and cement. In the paintings where nature is depicted as a life-giving and positive force, for instance the thick vegetation and coconut palms, the sense of contemplation even borders on something akin to reverence. And it is all the more impressive when we know that Ziyad's detailed and highly realistic paintings – which are often layered to produce the desired effects including the right shades and hues of colors, are produced using acrylic based poster colors which are quick to dry and difficult to correct mistakes with unless an entire area of the painting, or sometimes the whole of it, has to be reworked.

'In Silent Spaces' is Hassan Ziyad's first solo exhibition.



Tsunami
Acrylic on Canvas
69 x 89 cm, 2005



Hakuru Elhi
Acrylic on Canvas
62 x 80 cm, 2002



Island Scene
Acrylic on Canvas
43 x 62 cm, 2007



Ruhgandu
Acrylic on Canvas
56 x 41 cm, 2006



Palm Tree
Acrylic on Canvas
118 x 88 cm, 2007



Island Scene (2)
Acrylic on Canvas
40 x 30 cm, 2007



Huraa

Acrylic on Canvas
61 x 94 cm, 2002



Fangandu
Acrylic on Canvas
56 x 66 cm, 2007



Kaani
Acrylic on Canvas
90 x 70 cm, 2005



Kashikeyo
Acrylic on Canvas
72 x 49 cm, 2007



Boats
Acrylic on Canvas
30 x 40 cm, 2007



Artwork Title
Acrylic on Canvas
23 x 45 cm, 2006



Himmafushi Miskih

Acrylic on Canvas
33 x 43 cm, 2006



Hukuru Miskih
Acrylic on Canvas
56 x 40 cm, 2006



Rose
Acrylic on Canvas
46 x 30 cm, 200

In Silent Spaces, Hassan Ziyad

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Catalogue published by the National Art Gallery

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Cover image: Fangandu, 56cm x 66cm

acrylic on canvas, by Hassan Ziyad

Design & layout: Ayesath Fadwa

Printer: Novelty Printers and Publishers, Maldives



National Art Gallery

Ministry of Legal Reform, Information and Arts, Maldives

