

HORSETIMES



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THE LEADING EQUESTRIAN MAGAZINE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



HORSETIMES EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH

ABDULLA AL MARRI

A LIFETIME JOURNEY OF HAPPINESS

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VIEW POINT FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Readers,

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone! **“Hope and Faith”** are still at the top of our list for the new year resolution. This is our commitment to our readers, clients, and sport.

We kick off this issue with all the dynamics that faced our dear friend and top rider, **Abdulla Al Marri**, regarding his qualifications for the Paris olympics, not just as an individual participant but as a team for the first time.

A heartwarming story of inspiration with two **ADHD-diagnosed brothers, Julian and Cameron**, who discovered their passion for horse riding and galloped towards success with their mother supporting them to overcome challenges.

The one and only **“Morocco Royal Tour 2023”** with outstanding success, winners, and details ranking as one of the most successful tours worldwide, along with the Salon du Cheval becoming a landmark and a beacon to the Moroccan young generation, rooting further into their heritage and love for horses.

Richard Vogel soaring to victory with his stallion, United Touch S, at **CHI Geneva**, along with the young talent, **Zein Shady Samir**, from Egypt, revealing his passion, dreams, and some shade of his favourite things, yet mostly a heartfelt message to his family.

As riding is art, **HT** goes on to interview Marian Duncan about her love for horses and art... and from art to the art of dressage, with **Diana El Shaer** explaining how dressage is more and more a new discipline in the Middle East.

Finally, an interview with **Haitz de Diego** expressing how he was able to live off his passion after so many years.

Read on and enjoy.

Khaled Assem

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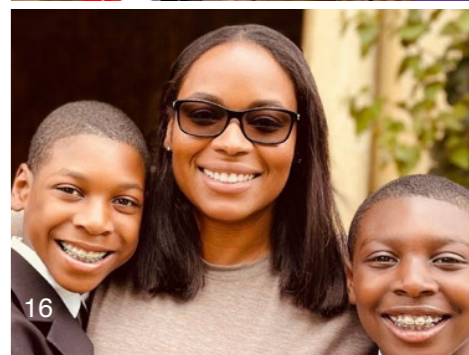
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HORSETIMES EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ABDULLA AL MARRI

By HT team

WE AT HORSETIMES FEEL VERY LUCKY TO HAVE THE INTERNATIONAL SHOWJUMPING RIDER ABDULLA MOHD AL MARRI WITH US TODAY. WE HAD THE CHANCE TO FOLLOW YOUR CAREER, MAKING HISTORY SINCE 2008; NOW YOU ARE HERE AND WE FEEL VERY PROUD FOR YOU TO REPRESENT THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE EQUESTRIAN SPORT.



“Thank you always for having me, it’s been a pleasure for me to be on HT again, and I know how much HT follows the big achievements from Arab countries in the equestrian sport, and it’s always a pleasure to represent my country on such a global platform” Abdulla Al Marri



Congratulations on making history as the first team to qualify for show jumping from the UAE! How does it feel to be representing your country at the Olympics?

It still feels surreal to be honest, It’s a long term goal for a lot of riders, but you never know when it will happen in your career, and It’s an event that happens only once every 4 years, which adds to the pressure for sure when it comes to qualifying, but we made it now & that’s what matters the most for our country. My next goal is to be part of the team that will be attending the Olympics in Paris, and hopefully I can fulfill that dream also. We are a small country as you know, but when it comes to horse riding, I think have always produced good riders, and the fact that we managed to qualify to the Olympics only proves how much the UAE supports & loves equestrian sports in general, and I would like to thank specially **Shaikha Fatima Bint Hazza Al Nahyan**, the owner of Al Shira’aa stables and the main supporter in our country for the Show Jumping sport in general.

What was your reaction when you found out you had qualified?

My reaction was crazy, I was sitting next to my wife in the stadium in Qatar (**Al Shaqab**) after finishing my 2nd round in the team as I was the first rider in, and by that time there was Two more riders left from each country & the pressure started getting to me for sure, we knew few results need to come our way for us to qualify & we needed a bit of luck for sure. By the time the last riders from each country were coming in, we knew exactly what was happening, and gladly we qualified before our last rider needed to jump, which was a big relief for all of us, and happiness at the same time.



What was your family's reaction to your qualification?

My family is special to me, my wife also rides & she was with me in Qatar, so she had to go through all the stress specially handling me on daily Basis at the event. My father & brother are sports athletes and they follow me continuously, which was a great achievement for all of us having one of our family members qualify to such a big event. My mom on the other hand is not much of a sportsperson, but she is a big supporter of our dreams, we are lucky to have her there for us always.

What are your goals for the Olympics?

All riders would love to share a podium moment one day in the Olympics, and that would be our main goal, but also we want to show the elite riders that we belong there by performing at the highest level in all rounds and hopefully be competitive in each event.

Who are your biggest competitors?

Regarding our competitors, I think most countries will be at their peak going to Paris, so for sure it's going to be tough for all, but I believe the European countries & The USA have more experience than us which will give them the edge for sure, but we are already trying to make up for it in our preparation for the games by competing against them in European competitions. We also know that the Saudi Team is also tough & have been successful more than once at the Olympics, so they would be our closest competitor within our region.

What is your favorite part about show jumping?

My favorite part of Showjumping is the journey, and creating special partnerships with these special creatures. Having a bond with your horse is so special, and it's something we cherish so much.

What is the most challenging part about show jumping?

I think the sports is challenging in so many ways as any other sport would be specially at the highest level, but to those who don't know much about horses, you know that our horses are unpredictable, so it's an internal challenge before the external challenge, and getting them consistent is not an easy feat at all, plus in events the course designers who build the courses in events are always finding new ways to challenge us riders, so to find that consistency is key to everything in my opinion, specially with so many unknowns. Not forgetting how to deal with other challenges like weather forecast and the external competition you will face at the show.



What is your training routine like? What are you currently working on?

Our routine is quite the same, as it's one of the things we try to maintain in our schedule, we try not to jump the horses a lot at home, unless we are trying to solve a problem that faced us in an event. We usually do a lot of flat work with our **Olympic Trainer Khaled Al Eid**, and he always analyze our rounds in the show and also in practice, and he tries to improve us regularly in hopes to reach perfection in our riding. We also train Young horses which have a different routine, as they need to gain a lot of experience from seeing new things regularly, which helps them develop their skills & abilities faster.

How is your relationship with your teammates?

It's great honestly, we are different age groups, but we all blend very well together, as we share the same goals, it's also healthy having so many good riders around you, it keeps you on your toes and you always seek improvements from your daily workouts, which helps riders improve a lot.

What would you say are the top 3 qualities that will help your team succeed during the Olympic Games?

The top 3 qualities are very simple,

#1 Having the right support system, which we are lucky as Al Shira'aa stables provided the UAE the perfect platform to achieve the impossible, they invested in Experienced & Young riders at the same time, plus they invested in Experienced & Young talented horses for the riders. They also had the right infrastructure to support such a big operation, and they injected that with the right people with the right experience and background, finally we have a leader in Shaikha Fatima who knows exactly what she wants, and she pushes all of us to perform at the highest level and help us reach our full potential.

#2 Having the right trainer in place, who can analyze your strengths and weaknesses, and understands you as a rider & helps you improve by combining you with the right horses that will help you shine.

#3 Unconditional support & love from the outside, by that I mean family & friends. Doing the sport at the highest level takes a lot of sacrifice and suffering from your side & your family & friends, and they need to know that & keep supporting you anyways, because you as a rider will face a lot of challenges, ups & downs, and you need something consistent to fall back to, and nothing is like family for sure.



What is your favorite memory from your career?

I have been lucky enough to have experienced few heights in my career, for example winning the Arab League in 2008, and few Grand Prix wins along the way, but for sure representing my country with the team is definitely special & being a crucial part of that, and in that winning the Challenge Cup in Barcelona 2017 & of course qualifying to the Olympics in 2023 will be the best achievements by far.

What advice would you give to aspiring equestrians?

It's a beautiful sport, and one of the best parts of it is the long careers we have, which means you can always improve and achieve new goals along the way, but also always keep learning, there is too many ways to be successful, and there is loads of information you can learn along the way, but it's not only the riding part that matters, there is also horse management skills, breeding, producing horses, adding value to horses, teaching & training & learning the ins & outs of your horses and what are their needs in order to perform at the highest level, because every detail counts.

What is your favorite thing about the UAE?

My favorite thing about the UAE is that it, by itself, **nothing beats home honestly**, we have everything we need when it comes to family & horses, and we are lucky as we have the best life style here, we are lucky to be part of it.

What is your favorite thing about Paris?

Paris is special, I actually rode in Paris a few times already and a lot of my summer camps were in France, it's truly one of the capital cities of the world, which makes the Olympics even more special. Plus their food is so good, especially their pastries.

What are you most looking forward to at the Olympics?

I think the experience itself is something I am looking forward to. I have done two Asian Games & hopefully a 3rd one in October this year in China, which is so special being at an event with different athletes seeking excellence. It is a way to motivate you honestly, and I love following other spots personally.

What are you most nervous about at the Olympics?

I think the new format for the team with no drop scores, it's a lot to handle especially with the first riders going in, cause the pressure will be huge, specially with different owners & athletes involved. The risk is huge & the riders need to be able to handle such kind of pressure.

What is your message to the people of the UAE?

We want their support in order to achieve great things at the Olympics, and we already feel it since the qualification happened. 🇦🇪

THE HORSE OR THE PILLS?

The Kimberly, Julian, and Cameron Harrison Interview

By Nadine Britain





HORSE TIMES IS DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO SHARE THIS NEXT STORY ABOUT HOW HORSEBACK RIDING TRANSFORMED A FAMILY. AFTER JULIAN AND CAMERON HARRISON WERE DIAGNOSED WITH ADHD, ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER, AND PRESCRIBED DAILY MEDICATION INDEFINITELY, KIMBERLY HARRISON WAS FACED WITH A CHOICE; TO LET ADHD AND THE PILLS CONTROL HER FAMILY'S DAY-TO-DAY LIFE OR SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES TO TAKE THEIR LIVES BACK INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. IN JUST A COUPLE OF YEARS, JULIAN AND CAMERON HAVE MADE A FULL TURN AROUND AND SAY THAT THEY OWE A LOT OF THEIR CHANGE TO THE VALUES PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE EQUESTRIAN SPORT. JULIAN AND CAMERON NOW HAVE DREAMS OF BEING THE FIRST BLACK BROTHERS TO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES IN SHOWJUMPING AT THE OLYMPICS ONE DAY, A TRULY INSPIRING STORY. WE GOT TO ASK THE HARRISON FAMILY SOME QUESTIONS TO GET TO KNOW THEM BETTER, LET'S HAVE A LOOK;

Can you tell us a little bit about your life before COVID?

Before COVID, there was a lot of hustle and bustle with Kim in regards to work and the kids going to school. Our life, to a certain extent, revolved around the **ADHD** medication because everything was about timing. From getting up in the morning, to lunch time and then finally going to bed at night, we had to make sure that Julian and Cameron's medication was timed out. If things didn't go as planned, Kim would receive complaints from the boys' teachers about their behavior, or that they weren't eating at lunch time.

From the boy's perspective, they always enjoyed basketball, soccer and track. They would hang out with friends in the park after school. There were a lot of play dates and comradery between team sports and school, only for them to eventually be in horseback riding, which ended up being a very individual sport.

What were some symptoms of ADHD that you experienced which led to diagnosis and medication?

Some of the symptoms from the boys included a lack of focus which was affecting their school work. It was something that the school had brought up a few times and had been weighing on me for a number of years until I finally gave in [*and got them on the medication*]. I never wanted my ego to be a factor in denying the kids the kind of help that they needed. From the kid's perspective, they'd say as much as; they tried to focus during class and they just weren't able to do it. It would often lead to getting bad reports from their teachers.

What made you want to take Julian and Cameron off of their ADHD medication?

Right after the schools went into lockdown [due to the Covid-19 pandemic], Cameron came to me and had done some of the math; he explained to me the number of pills he would have to take by the time he turned 18 and said that he thought "this can't be healthy". It made me rethink the whole process of using medication as a fix for their symptoms. If we were going to take them off their medication, the time had to be now while the schools were shut down.

Take us through the process that led to discovering horseback riding for Julian and Cameron?

Early on into COVID, with the boys unable to do any sports, they turned to each other to play with. I noticed that one of the games they were playing over and over again was “horseback riding” where they would take turns being the horse and the other the rider. Come to find out, horseback riding was one of the only things that remained in operation during the pandemic. Previously, the sports they had been playing were only being offered over ZOOM [virtual meeting platform]. That wasn’t something I was going to let happen in my kitchen, so we started looking at horseback riding as an option.

What advice would you give to other families who might experience ADHD with their children?

The advice that I would give would just be to listen to your child and in doing that, their needs will be revealed in whatever capacity is right for them. I think oftentimes we write off kids’ perspectives, especially when it comes to something medical. But honestly, who knows what they’re going through better than they do?

What changes have you noticed in Julian and Cameron’s character or behavior since they have started horseback riding?

After horseback riding, I’ve noticed that the boys have become extremely disciplined and focused. They have a routine that they follow every day and that keeps them on track with their school work. There’s also a new sense of pride that they’ve taken on in all aspects of riding – from cleaning, to competing or simply grazing. I’ve also seen their self-esteem improve by leaps and bounds.

“Let’s chat a little with the boys;”

What are your favorite subjects in school?

Julian: My favorite subject in school is math.
Cameron: My favorite is English and Grammar.

What other hobbies or activities do you enjoy?

Julian/Cameron: Before the end of COVID we discovered Latin Ballroom Dancing, which we both love. We train 3-4 times a week to show at competitions with our partners. When we’re not dancing, we’re definitely playing Fortnite on our Nintendo Switches.

What are your favorite foods?

Julian/Cameron: Pizza!

J & C: What music do you like?

Cameron: I like all kinds of music but right now, I’m really into Taylor Swift.
Julian: Anything we can dance to, from Taylor Swift to Drake.



How regularly do you ride and what level do you compete at?

Julian: I compete at 2.6 Hunter and Jumper. (*Two feet six inches = 76.2cm)

Cameron: And I compete at 2.6 Hunter. We ride at least four times a week. (*Two feet six inches = 76.2cm)

What are some things you are working on in your training right now?

Cameron: We’re working on counting strides. It’s something our trainer is constantly drilling into our heads.

Julian: I’m also working on both Jumper and Hunter – Hunter being a new experience for me.

What is a typical day like for you?

Julian/Cameron: We wake up at 5AM every morning and do 60 minutes on the treadmill. Then after that, we eat a big breakfast before doing our morning duties and heading out to the barn for training. After training we have a tutoring session, followed by a dance lesson in the evening. Our nights usually end with a big Fortnite gaming session! And THAT’S when things get competitive.

Who do you look up to?

Julian/Cameron: We really look up to people like our trainers or barn mates. inspires us to do better.

What is it like to compete against one another?

Julian: Bizarrely enough, we don’t think about it like that. *We’re each other’s biggest fans.*

Cameron: Yeah, like if Julian gets a blue ribbon, it’s like I got it too and same goes for him.

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Julian: I’m interested in being an equine chiropractor!

Cameron: And I’d like to be an equine veterinarian!

How has horseback riding affected your life?

Julian: Horseback riding has given me the confidence to keep pushing for what I believe in and not be afraid to take on new challenges. Showing in Jumpers for the first time was something really special, but took a lot of me having to convince my mom.

Cameron: For me I know that if I work hard at something, I can be really good at it. It’s taken a lot of practice for me to get where I am today. Taking pride in the smallest things really makes a difference.

What has horseback riding taught you that anyone can apply to their lives?

KIM: I would have never thought about horseback riding for me and my kids. Not because I was scared, but because I didn’t know anything about it. But the fear of not knowing should never prevent you from exploring something that ultimately ends up being the best thing for you. Also, sometimes the best medication doesn’t come in the form of a pill, but a rather large animal!

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Morocco Royal Tour 2023

Exciting Victories Mark Each Week of Equestrian Excellence

By Nermin Marwan



THE MOROCCO ROYAL TOUR, ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS EQUESTRIAN EVENTS IN THE WORLD, CAPTIVATED AUDIENCES IN OCTOBER 2023 WITH ITS THRILLING DISPLAYS OF HORSEMANSHIP AND FIERCE COMPETITION. SPANNING THREE WEEKS AND FEATURING TOP RIDERS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE, THE TOUR SHOWCASED REMARKABLE TALENT AND CELEBRATED THE SPIRIT OF EQUESTRIAN SPORTS. THIS ARTICLE TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT EACH WEEK OF THE TOUR, HIGHLIGHTING THE STANDOUT PERFORMANCES AND THE VICTORIOUS RIDERS WHO LEFT AN INDELIBLE MARK ON THE COMPETITION.



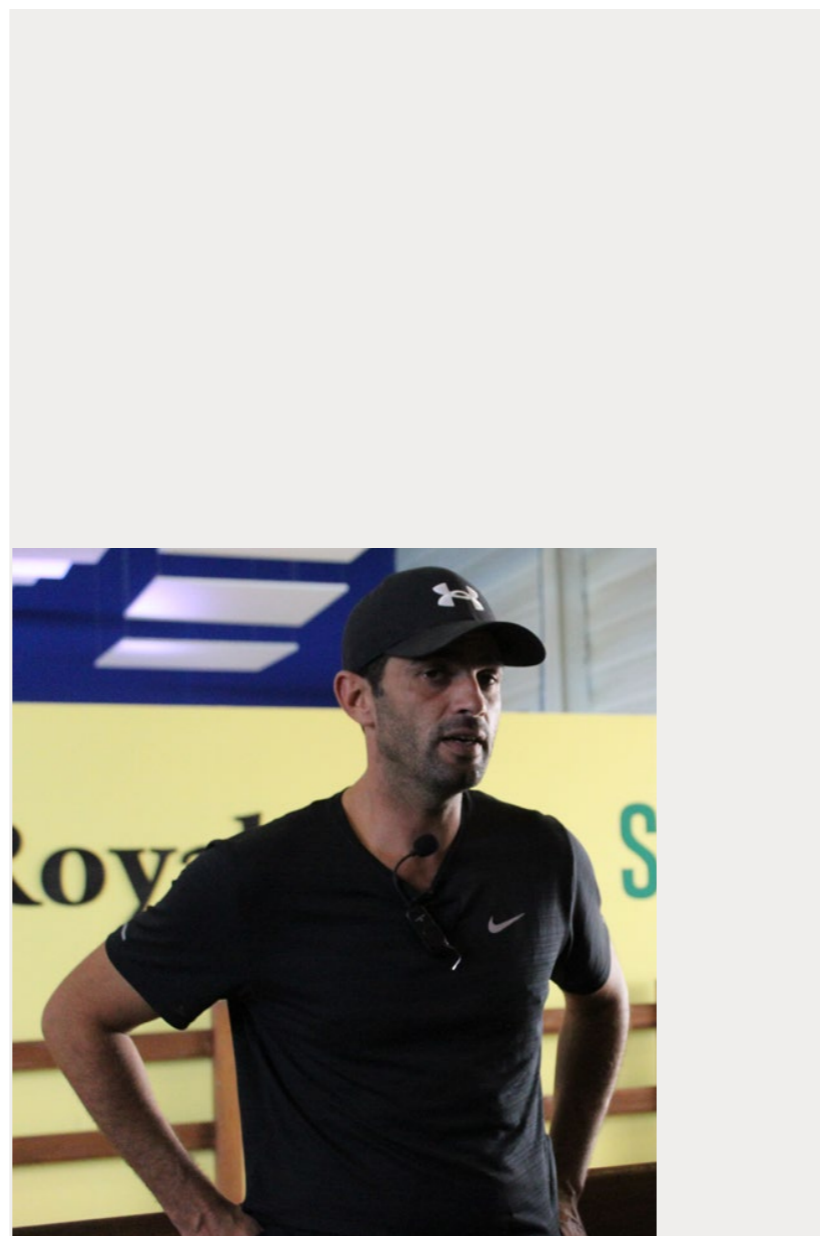


TETOUAN

CSI4* – 1.50m – World Cup Grand Prix

The first week of the Morocco Royal Tour kicked off in Tetouan, where riders and their equine partners demonstrated remarkable skill and determination. One of the standout moments of the week was the victory of Italian rider Emanuele Gaudiano in the Grand Prix. Mounted on his 10-year-old stallion Nikolaj de Music, Gaudiano showcased his expertise and precision, navigating the challenging course flawlessly. His exceptional performance earned him the top spot on the podium, bringing pride to Italy and solidifying his reputation as a formidable competitor.

The podium was completed by Cyril Cools from Belgium riding Milton Z, who finished with an impressive time of **41.15** seconds, and Germany's Andre Thieme aboard Conacco, who finished just behind with a time of **41.41** seconds. Roberto Previtali from Italy riding Conthargo-Blue claimed fourth place with a time of **42.85** seconds, while Barbara Schnieper from Switzerland riding Canice rounded out the top five with a time of **43.21** seconds.



RABAT

Belgium wins for the 2nd time Rabat's Nations Cup

The highlight of the second stage of the Morocco Royal Tour, the Nations Cup was won by a fine young team from Belgium... at the end of the suspense. This is the second Belgian victory since the Moroccan Nations Cup was born in 2016.

On a course that was fluid at the start and more technical towards the end, Switzerland struck hard from the outset, stringing together three clear rounds that enabled Barbara Schnieper to rest Canice in the first round and drop Belgium to 4 points behind. An option for victory, but nothing is definitive in the Nations Cup after the first round, as the rest of the story proved.

After a second clear round from Elian Bauman (**Little Lumpi E**), the foundations of the Swiss castle were shaken by the twelve faults scored by Mehdi Roessli-Dobjanschi and Valderama Tame. Alexandra Amar and Vincy du Gue's small overtaking time fault further weakened the Swiss edifice, while the Belgians lined up clear rounds in succession: Virginie Thonon and Edgard de Préfontaine, Cyril Cools and Milton Z and above all Marine Scaufaire and Hortus d'Hoogpoort, who erased their poor first round result (**16 faults**) in style: *"I was actually very confident for this second round, as I know my horse well. It was my first Nations Cup, and I missed my first round, but I didn't ask myself any questions and went into the second round with full confidence"*. Jérôme Guéry didn't need to start, as his team-mates' triple zero could not be improved, of course.

Barbara Schnieper, on the other hand, had to take Canice out of the stall with the onerous responsibility of producing a clear round with no alternative for the Swiss to win. But the blue oxer after the water-jump proved fatal for Barbara and the "Nati", who slipped back to second place: *"It's the law of this sport,"* philosophized Jérôme Guéry, *"one man's misfortune is another man's gain. I put myself in Barbara's shoes... It's true that when she came out onto the arena, we honestly hoped she'd make a small mistake... the pressure couldn't have helped her, and I know what it's like to have been in that situation"*. France completed the podium by moving up one place in the second round!

The HRH Princess Lalla Amina Prize, awarded by Charifa Lalla Soumaya Ouazzani, to Marine Scaufflaire and Cuba Libre de Nevada Z, winners of the **CSIO4*W** World Cup Grand Prix in Rabat. The Grand Prix at a height of **1m55** which saw **38 pairs**, rider-horse, compete and which was contested in two rounds goes to Belgium. The difficult course, designed by the international course designer, Uliano Vezanni, saw only three couples achieve double clear rounds. This was the case of the **Belgian Marine Scaufflaire**, who scored her first victory in a **4*** Grand Prix, in second place, the Italian **Roberto Previtali and Conthargo-Blue** (**4th in the Prix SAR Le Prince Héritier Moulay El Hassan in Tetouan on last Sunday**) and finally the French rider Jeanne Sadran and her Kosmo Van Hof Ter Boone on third place.

The **Swiss Barbara Schnieper and Escoffier** are the fastest in this second round but had one pole down and leads them to **4th place** in this World Cup Grand Prix, ahead of the **Portuguese Duarte Seabra and Dourados 2** who are also penalized by four points in second round.



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EL JADIDA

Emanuele Gaudiano and Nikolaj de Music Triumph in the Grand Prix of His Majesty King Mohammed VI at the Morocco Royal Tour

The twelfth edition of the Morocco Royal Tour came to a thrilling conclusion with the Grand Prix of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, where Italian rider Emanuele Gaudiano and his talented mount Nikolaj de Music emerged victorious.

Emanuele Gaudiano reshowned his exceptional riding skills and partnership with Nikolaj de Music to claim victory in the Grand Prix. This win marked his second victory in the 12th edition of the Morocco Royal Tour, following his triumph in the Grand Prix World Cup in Tetouan. Gaudiano's flawless performance highlighted his ability to navigate challenging courses with precision and finesse.

Final Results – **€126,200** His Majesty King Mohammed VI World Cup Grand Prix **CSI 4*-W**

- 1) Emanuele Gaudiano (ITA) & Nikolaj de Music – 0 / 0 – 32.00
- 2) Cyril Cools (BEL) & Milton Z – 0 / 0 – 33.89
- 3) Olivier Robert (FRA) & Careca LS Elite – 0 / 0 – 34.24

The Grand Prix also saw noteworthy performances from other riders. Belgian rider Virginie Thonon and her horse Q - Famous Van Berg Op Zoom emerged as the winners of the OCP Grand Prix of the **CSI1***. Thonon's skillful riding and her horse's exceptional performance secured their well-deserved victory.

As the twelfth edition of the Morocco Royal Tour concluded, organizers expressed their gratitude for the successful event and announced the dates for the next edition. Equestrian enthusiasts can look forward to the thirteenth edition, which is scheduled to take place from **October 3 to 20, 2024**.

The Morocco Royal Tour once again provided a platform for top riders from various nations to showcase their talent and compete in world-class equestrian events. The tour's thrilling conclusion left audiences eagerly awaiting next year's edition, where new triumphs and memorable moments are sure to unfold. 🏆



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Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida 2023

A Celebration of Horses, Culture, and Sustainable Development!

By Nermin Marwan



THE 14TH EDITION OF THE SALON DU CHEVAL D'EL JADIDA, HELD FROM 17TH TO 22ND OCTOBER 2023, UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI, MARKED A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN PROMOTING THE EQUINE SECTOR IN MOROCCO AND SHOWCASING THE COUNTRY'S RICH EQUESTRIAN HERITAGE. THIS PRESTIGIOUS EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER OVER 1000 HORSES, 160 RIDERS, 100 EXHIBITORS FROM 40 DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES, AND ATTRACTED MORE THAN 600,000 VISITORS, INCLUDING 600 JOURNALISTS. WITH A DIVERSE PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES, THE SALON DU CHEVAL D'EL JADIDA 2023 CELEBRATED THE DEEP CULTURAL CONNECTION BETWEEN MOROCCANS AND HORSES, WHILE EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD.



Tbourida Show

One of the captivating highlights of the Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida was the **Tbourida** show, an awe-inspiring display of traditional horsemanship and Moroccan heritage. **Tbourida**, also known as Fantasia, is a thrilling equestrian spectacle that showcases the skill and precision of Moroccan horsemen. The country's finest Tbourida troops (Sorbas) participated in the Grand Prix of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Tbourida, captivating the audience with their synchronized movements, thunderous gunshots, and stunning display of horsemanship.

Grand Prix de Sa Majesté Le Roi Mohammed VI Tbourida - 6th Edition winners:

El Assri Oussama from Casablanca-Settat with an impressive score of 76.00.

Serfak Hamid from Marrakech-Safi, secured second place with a

score of 72.50.

El Yaqout Rachid from Beni Mellal-Khenifra, achieved a commendable score of 72.30.

Gissen Mohamed from Marrakech-Safi, earned fourth place with a score of 69.97.

Ennasihi Brahim from Guelmim-Oued Noun, displayed a remarkable performance and scoring 69.92.

Oublal Mohamed from Souss-Massa, captured the audience's attention with a score of 69.70.

Moroccan Arab Horse Breeders' Cup Winners

Colts Championship

The Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida 2023 also showcased the Moroccan Arab Horse Breeders' Cup, a prestigious competition highlighting the





beauty and elegance of Arabian horses. **In the Colts Championship category**, the winners were:

Gold Champion: **Azzar ME**, owned by **El Atouani Mohamed Amine**, showcasing exceptional qualities and securing the top position.

Silver Champion: **Jaouhar HD**, owned by **Darim Hassan**, impressing the judges and earning a well-deserved second place.

Bronze Champion: **Borj Al Arab ME**, owned by **El Atouani Mohamed**, displaying remarkable characteristics and achieving the third position.

Stallions Championship

In the Stallions Championship category of the Moroccan Arab Horse Breeders' Cup, the winners were:

Gold Champion: **Jamil BM**, owned by **Benlafkih Mehdi**, exuding grace and elegance to claim the top position.

Silver Champion: **Menara Ar-Ra'd**, owned by **Benlafkih Karim**, impressing the judges and securing a well-deserved second place.

Bronze Champion: **Qadamous Al Boraq**, owned by **Jamai Ghizlani Anas**, showcasing remarkable qualities and achieving the third position.

Presidential Message - Charif Moulay Abdellah Alaoui

Under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida 2023 was a testament to Morocco's commitment to the equine sector. Charif Moulay Abdellah Alaoui, in his message as the President, emphasized the Salon's role in promoting the equine industry, highlighting its cultural significance and the

profound bond between Moroccans and horses. The Salon's diverse program of recreational, cultural, artistic, and sporting activities attracted a wide-ranging audience, fulfilling its mission of promoting the equine sector.

Commissioner's Message - Dr. El Habib Marzak

Dr. El Habib Marzak, the Commissioner of the Salon du Cheval, highlighted the theme chosen for the 14th edition: *"Horses and Sustainable Development."* This theme aimed to explore the role of horses and the equestrian sector in achieving sustainable development goals. The event program showcased Morocco's rich equine cultural heritage and the versatility of horses in various domains, including sports, culture, and festivities. The Salon provided a platform for experts and stakeholders in the equine sector to exchange knowledge and foster collaboration, while also emphasizing the importance of passing on equestrian traditions to new generations.

The Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida 2023 was a resounding success, captivating attendees with its vibrant display of equestrian excellence, cultural heritage, and commitment to sustainable development. From the exhilarating Tbourida show to the Stallions Championship and a wide array of activities, the Salon celebrated the profound connection between Moroccans and horses. With its international participation and diverse program, the Salon du Cheval d'El Jadida continues to play a crucial role in promoting the equine sector and honoring Morocco's enduring equestrian traditions. 🐾



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RICHARD VOGEL SOARS TO VICTORY AT CHI GENEVA

By Farah Rezeika

THE CURTAIN HAS FALLEN ON ANOTHER YEAR OF SHOW JUMPING MAGIC, AND WHAT A GRAND FINALE IT WAS! LAST WEEK, THE PALEXPO ARENA IN GENEVA GLITTERED UNDER THE ROLEX SPOTLIGHT AS THE CHI GENEVA SHOW BROUGHT THE 2023 SEASON TO A BREATHTAKING CLOSE. AND LET ME TELL YOU, RICHARD VOGEL AND HIS INCREDIBLE PARTNER, UNITED TOUCH S, ABSOLUTELY LIT UP THE COURSE!



The Rolex Grand Slam is no ordinary competition. It's a test of horsemanship excellence, a stage where equestrian legends are forged. Last week at the CHI Geneva, the prestigious Rolex Grand Prix became a battleground for equestrian legends and rising stars alike. All participating riders were hoping to claim it and be remembered as champions in the equestrian history. But under the dazzling lights of Geneva, victory soared on the wings of **Richard Vogel and his magnificent stallion, United Touch S.**

Vogel, barely 26 years old, isn't your average champion. He's not burdened by a long legacy or seasoned in countless victories. His career began at a young age. His mother's side of the family was involved in horses, and his uncle was a professional rider. After his mother's death, his uncle took over his training. Vogel started competing at a young age and quickly rose through the ranks.

Vogel has been steadily climbing the ranks, but his win on December 10th marked a monumental leap. He is currently ranked the 12th in the world by the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) after a respectable 31st place ranking last year.

Vogel wasn't just another face in the crowd. He was a real champion with his trusty partner, United Touch S. This wasn't his first time jumping these super-tough courses. He'd already participated in three Grand Slams, coming out clean twice and sniffing one sweet victory. Geneva was his chance to grab the gold, and he was ready to gallop for it! Richard Vogel was the very first rider to enter the exciting jump-off. He made it super thrilling right from the beginning. The pair soared over the course at an amazing speed. *"I cannot thank my horse enough for what he did today,"* Vogel said. *"He was unbelievable. To win here at the CHI Geneva and become a live contender for the Rolex Grand Slam is a dream come true."* And with that, Richard Vogel and United Touch S galloped off, their names forever etched in the golden annals of equestrian history. 🏆




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STAR SIGN: Gemini

PROFESSION: Student at Geneva

Business School University



“

“I have always dreamed of being a show jumper. A sport that took a big part of my childhood.”

”



Tell us a little about yourself.

I am a 19-year-old who has always dreamed of being a show jumper. A sport that took a big part of my childhood. Since I was always in shows watching my father.

When did you start with horses?

I started riding at the age of 6. I had to stop riding for a medical problem then I started riding again at the age of 9.

Describe your typical practice.

I ride 6 days a week multiple horses a day and I spend my whole day in the stable most of the year.

Where is your favorite place for practice?

Belgium

What was the best advice you were given?

To face my problem and to stop focusing on the surroundings and only focus on the sport.

Who's your role model?

My father is always my role model and I always look up to him. Also, if I can add something I admire Mouda Zeyada's mentality.

What is your best achievement so far?

At that moment I feel that now there is nothing I should call {an achievement} for me because I am not even that close to what I dreamed of achieving.

What are the goals that you aspire to achieve?

A Gold medal in all championships possible such as the Olympic Games, WEG, and the World Cup final, etc.

Who has been your greatest support?

My family and friends; they always have my back.

If you were given a chance to change something in this world, what would it be?

I would love to stop the wars all over the world.

What is your second favorite sport?

Squash is an amazing sport in my opinion.

What is your favorite genre of movies?

My favorite genre is comedy movies.

What kind of music do you enjoy listening to?

Every single type of music makes me happy.

What is your favorite book and who is your favorite author?

I haven't finished it yet but **(The Secret)** is a great book that taught me a lot.

What is your favorite food?

Pasta and pizza

If you had to choose a superpower, what would it be?

I think flying would be great.

What is the most memorable place you have ever visited?

What makes places memorable are the people you have with you. For the last few years, I've been surrounded by the best group of people with a lot of fun trips.

What is your strength and what is your weakness?

I can say my strength is my persistence. My weakness is that I am impatient sometimes.

What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced?

I think what I can say is that hard times where I doubted myself were challenging enough and they have played a crucial role in my life.

What is the biggest reward you ever got?

The biggest reward I've ever had is a second chance to go to a show actually.

If there is something about yourself that you would like to change, what would that be?

I am too dreamy and I should be a bit more realistic but at the same time to keep the dreamy side but just to decrease it a bit.

If you weren't who you are today, what would you rather be?

Squash player, I think, because it's a sport that I have always loved

What's the message you want to tell to your parents?

I would say I am sorry for not always being there and for missing family gatherings and important moments for many family members. On the other hand, I would thank them all for their support and for always being there for me. 🏠



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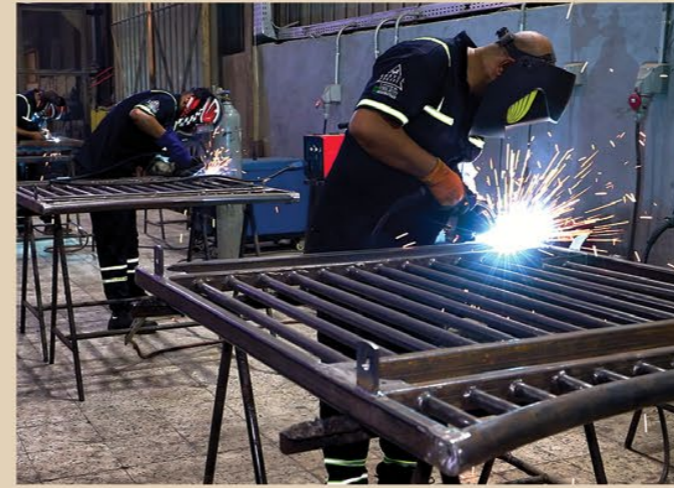
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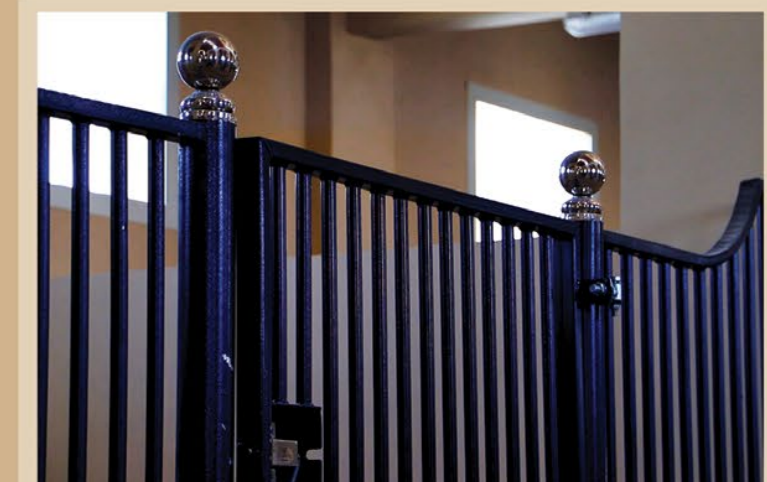
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THE NEW WAVE OF DRESSAGE

IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By Diana Al Shaer

THE WAVE OF DRESSAGE IS SLOWLY, BUT CONFIDENTLY, APPROACHING THE MENA REGION.



IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL OLYMPIC EQUESTRIAN DISCIPLINE TO CONQUER THE HEARTS OF OUR PEOPLE.

Dressage is a classical equestrian discipline with a long history, ancient roots and traditions. The main goal of dressage is to develop the natural potential of horses; their movements and fitness to its perfection; as well as to achieve the highest level of harmony between horse and rider. Apart from being a sport discipline, dressage can be compared to art and even philosophy. Its main ingredients are beauty, grace, perfection, technique and patience.

Dressage is a new developing discipline in the Middle Eastern countries yet some individuals have already managed to raise their flags at the biggest international events. Morocco, for example, was represented by Yessin Rahmouni at the **Olympic Games 2012, 2020** and the **World Equestrian Games 2014, 2022** and by Ismail Jilaoui at the 2018 World Equestrian Games. Palestine was represented by Christian Zimmermann at the **Olympic Games 2020** and World equestrian Games 2016 and I had an honor to compete at the **World Equestrian Games 2022**.

Until now it was more about the individuals, but I believe that major development or big success is only possible to achieve with a team spirit within the community.

The increasing number of people interested in dressage brought up the idea to create a dressage committee in **FEI Regional Group 7 (MENA)** in **2021**, since that moment the dressage movement started slowly to gain its structure. I was honored to become a chairman of the committee and the first step for me was to identify people who could join the team.

Our committee consists of successful riders and equestrian entrepreneurs who have dedicated their time and efforts in development of the discipline in their region. Collectively, we set out to identify the demand for dressage and its target audience – and

after doing some research we were surprised with the results.

Apparently admirers of the sport have been present for some time, but felt lonely on that journey and didn't have the chance to develop the practice further. Therefore, creating a community was our initial motivation and after studying the requests, we cooperated with national federations in order to arrange educational clinics throughout the region.

Good thing that we can currently do it on a regional level, this is something that helps move dressage forward as well as builds bridges between our countries. As I come from a diplomatic family, I believe that sports can be a powerful tool of public diplomacy and when neighboring countries focus on building something together it can be considered as a step in the positive direction. We are working with the **FEI Solidarity Department** on educational and sport programs that will be implemented on the regional level. The aim is to guide and support riders on their dressage journey and gain attraction of this wonderful sport in a new part of the world.

An upcoming plan is to arrange a **MENA Dressage Tour** with classes for different experience levels including easy tests - which we hope will spark interest to join the discipline. For example, jumping riders can try to do these dressage tests with their horses - this will improve their rideability and, who knows, they might change their mind and become dressage riders. I have three students, now in training, who changed from jumping to dressage and they just felt that they wanted to go further on that path.

Dressage is not just a sports discipline; it gives much more to one's life than you can expect - it's a philosophy, it's a lifestyle. It develops a lot of self-discipline, patience, focus and even emotional intelligence. If you can't control your own state of





mind and your body, you won't be able to control your horse; if you can't achieve harmony with yourself you won't be able to achieve it with the horse either. This discipline will get you out of your comfort zone, but if you work and stay consistent you will achieve harmony not only in riding but also in other spheres of your life. Dressage is all about details and this is why harmony and perfection are crucial – if you get there, you will take them with you far away from the riding arena.

The greatest part of all about dressage and equestrian sports is that it doesn't matter how many years you ride... you can still learn all your life. There is no routine and it never gets boring.

We have a beautiful growing community in **MENA** and everyone is welcome to join this exciting dressage journey. 🐾

About the author:

Diana Al Shaer - Athlete, public figure, sports, and cultural diplomat.

International Grand Prix dressage rider representing Palestine, the first Arab woman who competed at the World Equestrian Championships in dressage. (ECCO FEI World Championships in Herring, 2022) .

Diana combines sports and a diplomatic career as her main goal is to build bridges using the most efficient tools of public diplomacy - sports and culture.

She has work experience in different international organizations as a former co-chairman of People's Assembly of Eurasia, current president of the International Association of Equestrian Amateurs, and chairman of the Dressage Committee in FEI regional Group 7(MENA).



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MARIAN DUNCAN WITH HORSETIMES

By Nadine Britain

MARIAN DUNCAN HAS BEEN PAINTING HORSES PROFESSIONALLY SINCE 1986. SPECIALIZING IN ARABIAN HORSE PORTRAITS, HER ART HAS REACHED AROUND THE GLOBE FROM AUSTRALIA TO THE US, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE, AND INDONESIA. SHE ADDS HER OWN CREATIVE EXPRESSION WHEN PRODUCING COMMISSIONED PIECES OUT OF PHOTOS THAT ENHANCE THE DELIGHT AND BEAUTY OF THESE EXCEPTIONAL BEINGS. MARIAN IS CURRENTLY BASED IN NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.



Hi Marian, can you please tell us a little about yourself?

I grew up in a large family in Orange, central NSW Australia. I used to draw and paint all the time with my older sister, Jane; fairies, ballerinas and with me, it was always horses. My mother always made sure we had art materials to use. I used to sit under big trees and sketch our neighbor's horses.

When did your love for Arabian horses begin and why?

I first discovered Arabian horses in my Fathers Land newspaper (for agriculture); arched necks, tails held high, it was love at first sight. I then kept a lookout for them in horse books and magazines, and local agricultural shows.

You're trained in Graphic design. What made you transition to a more classic method of painting?

I had always painted and did art at school, I trained as a signwriter, hand painted signs, this taught me great brush control, which comes through in my paintings, also layout, balance and spaces of graphic design. I also studied fine art at Orange TAFE for a few years, it all comes together.

We love how you capture the horse's expression, your technique and use of color. Can you explain the process and how long it took you to learn and develop your skill and personal style in art?

It takes a whole lifetime to learn and evolve as an artist. Knowing horses, observation of shape, form, movement, behaviour, plus colour, light and shade, time, patience and spontaneity. Feelings and emotions come through in my paintings, it's in my heart.

What other artists inspire or influence your art?

Sir Alfred Munnings, Carle Verntte , Victor Adam... my favourite living artists are Andre Pater, and Mary Haggard, plus many others.

You've been painting horses professionally for 36 years! What knowledge have you gained about horses or specifically Arabians compared to others? What's the most important lesson horses have taught you?

Owning riding , observing their behaviour, body language, movement, etc. Treating them kindly, gaining their trust, is your reward. I have given up riding now, but I love being with them everyday at feed times, they always inspire me. What you put in you get back, my Arabians are my friends.

Was there ever a time in your life when you felt like you wouldn't be a successful artist and how did you overcome this hurdle?

Haha, always up and down for years. It was not always easy at first, it's many many hours of painting almost every day, I treat it like work but I do enjoy it. It didn't matter if I was successful or not I just had to paint beautiful Arabian horses, it's inside of me. It's luck , hard work, and getting seen or known.

Does your family love horses as much as you do?

My Father and Mother's families always had horses before I was born, after I married I got my first horse,





then eventually my Arabians, only my daughter shares my passion for horses.

Can you explain the process from receiving a picture of someone's horse to turning it into your final masterpiece?

Any painting starts with sketching, it's the most important thing for me to try and get everything correct first, it's the bones of a painting. It might take days or weeks to sketch, depending on how much work and the size of a painting. Mostly, I paint from my imagination, not any particular horse. If I'm required to paint somebody's horse, from one photo or many, I must ask for the photographer's permission, there is copyright plus it is their art.

When I'm happy with my sketch I paint many layers to try and make a flat surface look 3D. Light and shade, some colours take your eye away, strong colour comes forward, the eyes for me are very important plus good brushes, I take very good care of them. Mostly new brushes for a new oil, as the sharp tips wear out quickly on canvas, for the finest detail. I also like worn brushes, also useful...I have a lot of brushes...I have a lot of materials.


Have you ever visited or thought about visiting the Middle East?

I would like to very much, although I have too many animals to look after, I was planning a trip in 2020, but Covid hit, perhaps in the future.

What advice would you give to young horse enthusiasts on making their passion a career?

Follow your dreams and work hard.

How have you spent your days recently; is there anything else that you would like to accomplish?

I am happy enjoying my art, and my family, I am hoping to continue to paint for many more years. Each painting I do, I think I still learn from. Nothing is perfect, I always want the next one to be better and I think that's how you evolve as an artist. 



HORSETIMES INTERVIEW WITH HAITZ DE DIEGO ARRIZABALAGA

By Nadine Britain

BORN IN 1979 IN ONDARROA, BASQUE COUNTRY. HE FELL IN LOVE WITH ART AS A YOUNG BOY AND COULD BE FOUND PAINTING IN HIS GRANDFATHER'S LAP WHILE HIS PARENTS CONTINUED TO FINISH THEIR EDUCATION. HE WOULD GO ON TO PURSUE HIS PASSION AND STUDYING GRAPHIC ARTS. HAITZ WORKED IN FILM AND ADVERTISING TO SUPPORT HIS EDUCATION BEFORE EMBARKING ON HIS OWN ARTISTIC INITIATIVES. CURRENTLY BASED IN BARCELONA, SPAIN.



What is it like growing up in Basque Country and how does that inspire your art?

It is a wonderful and inspirational place. The brave sea dances in harmony with the mountains. There are many small towns who live from livestock, so I have always been linked to animals. Winter there is dark and mysterious, there is a special light, and that has made my way of painting. Now I live in a mountain town near Barcelona, on a farm with animals.

How old were you when you decided to focus on your own art? Can you share a reflection about what that time in your life was like?

I was in my 30's when I decided to focus exclusively on painting; I had been working for many years as an illustrator and storyboarder, but always for clients. This prevented me from taking full advantage of my potential, being able to capture everything I had inside without conditions. I knew it would be a very hard road

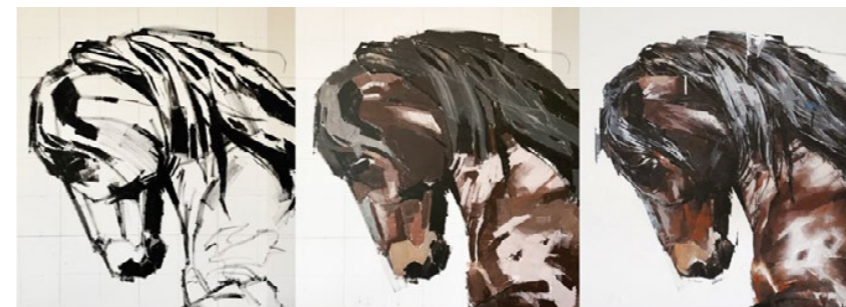
to travel, but it was clear that one day I would take the step, so I did it.

What is your inspiration behind painting horses?

It is an animal I feel I identify with. It is noble, transmits power, elegance, majesty and is therapeutic. This means that I can transmit my feelings in painting with more transparency.

Have you ever played a sport before? If so, are there any similarities you can relate between creating art and participating in sport?

Discipline, work, perseverance and dreams. I was a semi-professional swimmer and I've been a triathlete for many years as well as surfed dangerous waves all around the world. I have always seen many similarities between sport and art. It has helped me to be creative, spontaneous and see that the goals that you set yourself with effort can be achieved.





Horse people have such a passion for their sport, similar to the passion you have for painting. How did you know that art was ‘it’ for you; how did you shake the thoughts of not being able to live from this passion and push through to be what you are today?

Since I picked up a pencil it was clear to me, but virtue has to go hand in hand with hard work. The art world is not easy – being recognized isn't only based on having talent – it takes perseverance, patience and being at the right place at the right time... and I'm working on it.

Your scenes are quite mysterious but the same techniques leave your depiction of horses so charismatic. What is the difference in feeling when painting these distinct subjects?

There is no difference, I paint both scenes with the same emotional intensity. Although the theme is different, I like to transmit that mysteriousness with “chiaroscuro” (an effect of contrasted light and shadow) in the form of brushstrokes and a very reduced palette. I combine transparencies with very firm and edgy strokes... it goes with my personality.

There is so much talk these days about artificial intelligence (AI) and we are curious; what's your take as a student of graphic design? How do you think AI can be used or compete with art in the future?

The truth is that I have not delved much into this topic. Possibly it has its positive side, but I paint with my heart and this is what AI does not have.

You don't only paint horses, your collections from Syria are beautifully haunting; there is a glimmer of hope surrounded by destruction in each piece. Can you tell us a bit about this experience?

I needed to convey my feelings about such a massacre, with the helplessness of not being able to support as I would have wanted. Despite not being able to be there, I contacted several journalists and Syrian families to be able to feel, in some way, a thousandth part of what they left, and thus to be able to express that feeling in my paintings. The idea came from my partner Núria. She makes me see things more clearly. She's my light.

Have you thought about visiting Egypt or other countries in the Middle East?

Egypt, not yet, but I'm looking forward to visiting you! I have been to Turkey, Jordan, and the Emirates. Traveling is one of my passions. Enriches your soul.

I've read that your large pieces take 3-5 weeks to complete, in the horse world we are aware that good things come with time as well; can you describe this process for an artist?

I contact horse specialists and I go to visit them so as not to lose any detail when painting. Sometimes I make sketches of what I would like to paint, and sometimes I go directly on canvas. Then I see what atmosphere goes well with that sketch.

Where will we be able to see your works in the future and can we expect more horse portraits?

Of course. I have many requests for horse portraits and it is something I really love. This summer I will exhibit 2 paintings at the **MEAM (European Museum of Modern Art)** here in Barcelona, a work at the Minima Gallery in Mykonos (**Greece**) and another piece at a private gallery in Qatar. I am also preparing a presentation of all my work in Barcelona soon.

Are you able now to live off of your passion?

After so many years, I began to be able to live from my passion.

You seem to have unlocked the key to happiness, is there anything else you can share about maintaining a happy life?

Being able to be with your loved ones, living in a magical place surrounded by beloved animals, makes happiness come with open arms. Seeing how our world deteriorates for the interest of “those” few makes me very angry. *I will continue expressing my feelings in the form of painting. I hope that the light of my artwork reaches many hearts.* 🐾



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