

## Rund Alarabi رند العربي

## Rigid Time أزمنة أبدية

*Mahjoub Sharif* is a visualisation of "I Say it Without Fear", a poem by Sudanese poet Mahjoub Sharif. In the video we see Sharif with his daughter sometime in 2006, as he recites his poem to her after rumours of his death circulate. Sharif is a monumental figure in Sudan's literary legacy, and one of the most influential poets in Sudanese history. Mahjoub Sharif lived and died as "the people's poet", deemed a messiah by many for his remarkable insight into the politics and lived realities of Sudanese society. In this work, Rund Alarabi resurfaces his poem in a video installation that foregrounds the hand written words of Sharif's poem side-by-side images from the Sudanese revolution of 2018/2019. As he recites "I die without fear", images of protesters holding up banners flash on the side of the screen and a growing red blotch permeates through the written text. The rapid influx of text is reminiscent of the Sudanese experience at the time of revolution. With poetry, calls to action, and blood permeating the streets and online spheres.

Alarabi's choice to employ this specific poem in her work, at a time when Sharif's more prominent works were pulsating through the streets of Khartoum— repurposed as chants in protest and painted across walls, is especially poignant. Not the obvious choice, but perhaps the most fitting as it spoke to a certain fearlessness that Sharif shared with the protesters. The temporal specificity of Sudanese poetry often stretches beyond time and space. In this case, extending to mirror the sensibilities and rebellion of many young people during the revolution, which erupted five long years after Sharif's passing. In the final line of the poem, he reconfirms as the tenet of his poem that he is in fact not afraid of dying, but declares that he is instead terrified of the death of his conscience. We understand then that the afterlife of a person in rebellion is the moral legacy they leave behind. For Mahjoub Sharif, that is his crystal clear political stance and alignment with the Sudanese people. For the revolutionaries, it is their probable martyrdom. Both understanding and ensuring that their mortality is only fuel for further rebellion.

Rund Alarabi's 'Rigid Time' alludes to this exact rupture in time that allows for contexts to live in the same space so far apart. The works in this exhibition all toy with the concept of time as a fluid space and space as frozen time, inspired by the thought and studies of Arab scholar, Ibn Arabi. Through Rund Alarabi's exploration of contemporary Sudanese poetry and music, she traces points in history, and the space created within them that affords them the fluidity to recur and manifest. Alarabi paints rigid and fluid times over familiar landscapes to stretch the time even further, encompassing other possible histories and futures all at once.

## Qutouf Elobaid

