

ABDULRAHMAN NAANSEH

(703) 987-3373 | abduhrahman.naanseh@gmail.com

Website: abduhrahman-naanseh.com | Facebook: Naanseh Artwork

Instagram: [@abduhrahman_naanseh](https://www.instagram.com/abduhrahman_naanseh)

Syrian-born artist working at the intersection of Arabic calligraphy and abstraction. Practice spans modular ink installations, artist books, and site-responsive drawing. 2022 Artist-in-Residence at George Mason University and Artist Protection Fund fellow. Teaching and public programs across universities, museums, and community partners.

EDUCATION

Damascus University

2010 - 2016

Bachelor of Fine Arts

GRANTS & AWARDS

- AL BURDA AWARD, CONTEMPORARY ARABIC CALLIGRAPHY, UAE, DEC 2024
- IIE ARTIST PROTECTION FUND FELLOWSHIP, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, JAN 2022

ART RESIDENCIES

- VIRGINIA CENTER FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS (VCCA), AMHERST, VA, FEB-MARCH 2026
- TEPHRA INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, RESTON, VA, JAN-FEB 2026
- GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, FAIRFAX, VA, 2022-2023

ACADEMIC & TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Adjunct Professor, Arabic Calligraphy and Drawing George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Jan 2022-June 2025

- Teach Arabic calligraphy and drawing at all levels
- Integrate traditional and modern techniques
- Lead workshops and one-to-one instruction

Researcher and Scholar, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Jan 2023-June 2025

- Lead practice-based research on Arabic calligraphy and abstraction, with a focus on modular ink works, artist books, and site-responsive drawing
- Translate research into exhibitions and public programs at Fenwick Gallery and Mason Exhibitions
- Organize cross-disciplinary conversations with faculty and students, including "Uncovering the Kingdom of Red Lines," Fenwick Library, Nov 16, 2022

- Publish and present work in public venues, including Asymptote Journal and GMU News features
- Mentor undergraduate research through workshops and open studios aligned with solo exhibitions
- Build partnerships across departments and community programs to link studio practice with public scholarship

Curator Assistant

George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

Jan 2024-June 2025

- Support curation, layout, and event coordination
- Manage exhibition logistics and collection tasks

ART & DESIGN EXPERIENCE

- Freelance abstract and calligraphy artist, 2018-present
- Designer and painter, Waw Design, Alef by Stitching Hope, Le Marais 101, Bel_Sarabeh, 2017 to 2021
- Produced calligraphy across media, including fabric and jewelry
- Instructor, BNA Institute for Arts, Syria, 2014-2017
- Taught 700-plus students, developed three curricula, and led UNHCR art therapy programs

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

- Durham University Oriental Museum, Durham, UK, Oct 2, 2023

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- Tephra ICA at Signature, Reston, VA, USA, Feb 26- Jun 6, 2026
- Displacement, Rhizome DC, Washington, DC, USA, Nov 2024
- Arabic Cultural Weeks, Otto Schäfer Museum, Schweinfurt, Germany, Oct-Nov 2023
- Letters in Isolation, Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, VA, USA, Jun-Sep 2023
- The Kingdom of Red Lines, Fenwick Gallery, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA, Oct-Dec 2022
- PRESSURE.MOVEMENT. EFFECT, Mason Exhibitions, Arlington, VA, USA, Jun-Oct 2022

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, USA, Aug-Sep 2026
- HANDLE WITH CARE, Gallery Y, Washington, DC, USA, Jul-Sep 2025
- Struggling to Be Heard, Glen Echo Park, MD, USA, Jul 2024
- Artomatic, Washington, DC, USA, Mar-Apr 2024
- Walter Reed Arts in Health, MD, USA, Oct-Dec 2023
- Without Words, James Madison University, Sep-Oct 2023· Edges of What I Feel, Mason Exhibitions, Jun-Aug 2023

- Parallel Realms, Zico House, Beirut, Feb 2022
- Additional group shows in Japan, Dubai, Spain, and Lebanon

JURY & CURATORIAL ROLES

- Juror, Tephra ICA Arts Festival, May 2025
- Co-Curator "Appearance", "Singularity", & "Beyond", Workhouse Arts Center, 2024-2025

MEDIA COVERAGE (SELECTED)

- My Culture, My Survival – Dr. Lisa Gilman
- Asymptote Journal – Heather Green
- Washington Post – Mark Jenkins
- The New Arab – Salam Abou Naser
- Mason Magazine & Mason Exhibitions films

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENTS & WORKSHOPS (SELECTED)

- United Nations Headquarters, Performer, New York, NY, Feb 2025
- Rhizome DC, Workhouse Arts Center, Calligraphy Workshops, Washington, DC, Dec 2024
- Guest Talks, Georgetown University, GMU Carter School, College of Visual and
- Performing Arts GMU, Washington, DC, and Fairfax or Arlington, VA, 2024 to 2025
- Panelist and Presenter, Global Humanities Symposium, Middle Eastern Studies Day, other programs, 2024 to 2025
- The Catholic University of America, Band Aid Art Workshop, with Young Marines and Women Veterans United Committee, Inc., Washington, DC, Aug 12, 2023
- Mason Exhibitions Arlington, Arabic Calligraphy, Open Workshop, Arlington, VA, Jul 15, 2023
- Walter Reed with Mason Exhibitions, Healing by Art and Arabic Calligraphy Workshops, Arlington, VA, Jul 13, 2023
- Federal Reserve Board, Arabic Calligraphy Workshop, Arab America Heritage Month, Washington, DC, May 10, 2023
- George Mason University, 12 plus lectures, panels, and class workshops, Fenwick Library, Gillespie Gallery, School of Art, Fairfax, VA, Sep to Nov 2022
- The Phillips Collection, Words and Images panel, Annual Day of Translation, Washington, DC, Sep 13, 2022
- Mason Exhibitions Arlington, Cultures of Calligraphy, with Amy Quach and Corey Posner, Arlington, VA, Jul 27, 2022
- Panelist & Presenter – Global Humanities Symposium, Middle Eastern Studies Day, etc.