



THE CURSE OF KNOWLEDGE

ARTWORK DOSSIER

Khalid Al-Shadadi (Sarab)





ARTWORK DETAILS

Artwork

The Curse of Knowledge

The Artist

Khalid Al-Shadadi

Collection

Human & Condition

Year

2023

Type

Wood Sculpture

Technique

Hand Carving

Wood

Basswood

Final Treatment

Chemical Treatment
and Acrylic

Literary Source

"Sa'at Al-Umr"
("The Hours of a Lifetime")
— Prince Khalid Al-Faisal

Studio

Sarab Art Studio



WHEN ONLY THE TRUTH REMAINS



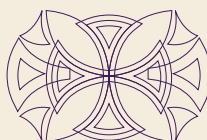
OVERVIEW

The Curse of Knowledge is built around an upright mass that confines a human face within it, while a pen pierces the form from above and continues beyond it along a diagonal axis. The face is never fully revealed; it emerges through a narrow opening, its mouth agape and its features held taut between wood and void.

The composition balances the weight of the block against the directional force of the pen, and the stillness of the wood against the movement implied by its penetration. The eye moves from the face to the opening, then follows the pen through the head and the mass, as though the work were not depicting the instant of a scream, but exposing the pressure that came before it.

CORE IDEA

When understanding arrives after the possibility of change has closed, clarity ceases to offer release and becomes a burden.





IN DIALOGUE WITH

In Dialogue with

“SA‘AT AL-UMR”

“THE HOURS OF A
LIFETIME”

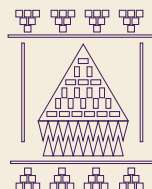
PRINCE KHALID
AL-FAISAL

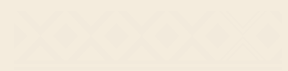
If only youth possessed the
mind that comes with age,
and one’s twenties the
wisdom of sixty.



The Curse of Knowledge enters into dialogue with “Sa‘at Al-Umr”—“The Hours of a Lifetime”—a poem by Prince Khalid Al-Faisal that reflects on the painful distance between wisdom and the stage of life in which it might have been most useful. The poem does not present knowledge as a reassuring possession; instead, it considers what happens when understanding arrives only after the capacity to act, return, or make amends has begun to recede.

The sculpture neither turns the poem into a scene nor uses the pen as a literal translation of its lines. It stands beside the poem around a single question: what remains of knowledge when it comes too late? The poem gives that question its sense of time, while the wood gives it a body compressed between recognition and powerlessness.





GALLERY





METHOD

The work was carved by hand in basswood, selected for the precision it allows in shaping facial features and controlling the transitions between surfaces. The block retains its strict verticality; an opening was carved into it to contain the face, while the open mouth forms the centre of tension within the composition.

The pen pierces both the head and the block on a diagonal, shifting from an instrument of writing into a visual blade. The work relies on deliberate formal restraint: one upright mass, a single face, an open void, and a penetrating element. This economy does not lessen the intensity of the scene; it concentrates it within a limited set of relationships.

The chemical treatment and acrylic deepen the tonal contrasts and bring out the surfaces, while allowing the wood to remain visibly present. Each element therefore performs both a formal and a psychological role, without reducing the work to a direct illustration of its idea.

REFLECTION



The curse is not ignorance,
but seeing what should have been seen
only after the way back has narrowed.

Then knowledge offers no escape;
it gives us clarity
that cannot alter what has already happened.





When wood speaks

This dossier forms part of the Sarab Art Studio archive of selected works. It has been prepared for documentation, presentation, and professional art correspondence.

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