



AL-MAABAD

ARTWORK DOSSIER

Khalid Al-Shadadi (Sarab)





ARTWORK DETAILS

Artwork
THE TEMPLE

The Artist
Khalid Al-Shadadi

Collection
Beginnings and Origins

Year
2023

Type
Wood Sculpture

Technique
Hand Carving

Wood
Basswood

Final Treatment
Chemical Treatment

Literary Source
The Mu'allaha of Antarah
ibn Shaddad al-Absi

Studio
Sarab Art Studio



When the Guardian Becomes a Fortress



OVERVIEW

Al-Maabad—an Arabic word meaning “the temple”—is built around the meeting of two contrasting masses: the head of an Arabian horse rising in an organic gesture, and a miniature architectural structure grounded beneath it with geometric weight. Neither serves merely as the support for the other; instead, they enter into a single form. The neck descends toward the architectural plane, while the arches and façades lift the horse as though they were extensions of its body.

The eye moves between the curves of the head and the order of the structure, between the suppleness of the organic mass and the firmness of the architectural detail. From this tension, the work derives its presence: a form suspended between creature and place, belonging fully to neither.

CORE IDEA

When the guardian becomes one with the place,
.protection ceases to be an act; it becomes a form





IN DIALOGUE WITH

In Dialogue with

THE MU'ALLAQA OF
ANTARAH IBN
SHADDAD

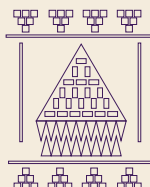
A celebrated pre-Islamic
Arabic ode

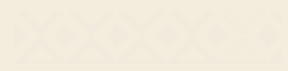
They sheltered behind me from
the spears; I did not falter—
only the path before me had
grown too narrow.

Al-Maabad enters into dialogue with the Mu'allaqah of Antarah ibn Shaddad—a celebrated long ode from pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, shaped by themes of courage, honour, battle, and belonging. The selected verse presents Antarah as a shield for those behind him, standing firm before the spears without retreat. It speaks not of fear or hesitation, but of a force that had pressed forward until the space before it had grown too narrow.



The sculpture carries this meaning through the union of horse and architecture. The horse does not appear as a creature separate from the fortress, but as part of its defensive structure. Al-Maabad does not illustrate the battle or translate the poem into a scene; instead, it retains the deeper idea of steadfastness—a presence that protects the place by standing at its forefront.





GALLERY





METHOD

Basswood was chosen for the precision it permits in carving and for the quiet transitions it allows between surfaces. The horse's head was shaped as a curved mass with restrained features, set against an architectural base built through repeated arches and minute details. The chemical treatment deepened the tonal variations and visually bound the two elements together.

The intention was neither to dissolve the horse into the architecture nor to reduce the structure to a mere base. Each remains legible within the composition: the organic form retains its movement, and the architectural form its order, while the point of contact between them becomes the essence of the work.

The sculpture derives its presence from this balance between an ascending mass and a grounded one, between the flow of the figure and the precision of the structure.

REFLECTION



In The Temple, the horse does not charge away from the place it guards.
It remains at the threshold, steadfast.

Strength here lies not in reaching the battle,
but in bearing the place as the place bears it.





When wood speaks

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