WATER IS GONE, YET THE SALT REMAINS

What happens when fresh water becomes more valuable than oil?

At a time when worldwide water shortage is increasing, seawater is viewed as an inexhaustible natural source of freshwater through the process of seawater desalination.

As a result, seawater desalination is becoming more popular, especially in areas where freshwater is scarce, such as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which accounts for half of all global saltwater desalination activities. (**Al-Jabri, Siddiqui,** 2022)

Salinification is caused by both natural factors (evaporation, ice formation) and human activities (desalination brine discharge, saltwater intrusion) and results in many environmental and climatic impacts.

Salt

Increased salinity in the Arabian Gulf is a significant environmental issue with multiple causes and severe ecological and economic impacts. Desalination removes salt from saltwater and converts it to freshwater, but the process has negative environmental impacts as plants produce waste and toxic chemicals that are harmful to wildlife and the planet. The primary driver is the discharge of highly concentrated *brine from desalination plants*, exacerbated by the Gulf's natural shallow, semi-enclosed nature, high evaporation rates, and the effects of climate change. (**Williams**, 2022**)**

The process also raises salt levels in seawater, which affects fish, while desalination plants that use diesel also produce greenhouse gas emissions.

Essential yet destructive, salt plays a significant role in highlighting a hidden problem, It is important to distinguish between what is temporary and what lasts, as well as what slowly dissolves away.

About the Artwork:

Water is gone, yet the salt remains

Water is gone, yet the salt remains, a work that explores the dynamic interplay between long-standing traditions and developments in the Gulf society and environment. **Al Aradi** seeks to discover what dissolves, what crystallizes, and what remains as societies transition from traditional structures to a capitalist consumer culture.

A constructed environment, created by the artist provides insight into what lies beneath, with poetic metaphoric representations connecting the Gulf's environmental issues such as pollution, and increased salinity in the Arabian Gulf seawater. Paired with significant objects used regionally, the artist establishes a connection between the two, presenting clues to her intent while leaving room for the viewer's understanding and experience of the piece and its content.

Pendulums swing between high tide and low tide, tension and release, holding on and letting go. Through the rise and fall of sea levels, significant elements rear their head, raising many questions and provoking contemplation and curiosity, leading to diverse interpretations and a deeper understanding of the current situation.

Traditions, prayers, and natural resources have always been the pillars of the Gulf society, yet… the tsunami of consumerism has come and shaken most, if not all of these pillars. What will remain standing is up to society. Pondering these paradoxes in an attempt to create a neurological trigger that, once pulled activates an evolutionary/ survival mechanism or set of actions.

A tide that hopefully prioritizes natural resources by balancing immediate needs with long-term sustainability, initiating a conversation about the importance of holding on to what matters in our ancestral traditions and practices.

Characteristics of Desalination Brine and Its Impacts on Marine Chemistry and Health, With Emphasis on the Persian/ Arabian Gulf: A Review, Mustafa Omerspahic[1] Hareb Al-Jabri[1] ,[2]Simil Amir Siddiqui[1] Imen Saadaoui[1,2*]

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