

## Ameena Aljerman Alali

Portoflio

### **Biography**

Born in United Arab Emirates, (b.1990), Ameena Alali completed her *Master of Fine Arts* program at Konstfack, Stockholm (2024) and earned her double majors Bachelor degree of *Fine Arts* and *International Studies* at Zayed University, Dubai (2014). Ameena's main interests are focused on history fragments in slaves' history, and slavery after life of Afro-Emirati in Arabian/Persian Gulf region. Working mainly with video installations and sculpture pieces, Ameena focuses on re-introducing narratives of her own family history and trauma amendments.

***Fragments & Particles Solo Exhibition***

- Far & Few, Far & Few, (2024)
- Zirku I
- Zirku II

*A departure with a fragmented return.*

*The African diaspora becomes forced, and the return becomes unavailable, then it turns into multiplicity.*

*As singularity is not an option, the creation of multiplicity is already in motion.*

*The unfamiliarity, the fragility, the void,*

*The arrival and departure, the closed and the conditioned force,*

*The open boats sail in the black waters of the Arabian/Persian Gulf.*

*Upon the discovery of the oil fields in 1958 in Trucial Coast*

*The British officials imposed the abolition of slavery in exchange for economic benefits.*

*With that the pearl diving industry, which was based on enslaved people*

*Was demolished by the oil tankers*

*As the enslaved remained chained into the fragmented return.*

*Fragments & Particles Solo Exhibition*



Far & Few, Far & Few, (2024)  
Video installation  
5 minutes and 31 seconds



Zirku II, (2024)

An audio Interview with Zirku Oil rig platform in United Arab Emirates.

We have a department called oil and gas and they process  
the crude oil

Zirku II, 2024  
Video projection  
5:00 minutes

Zirku I, (2024)

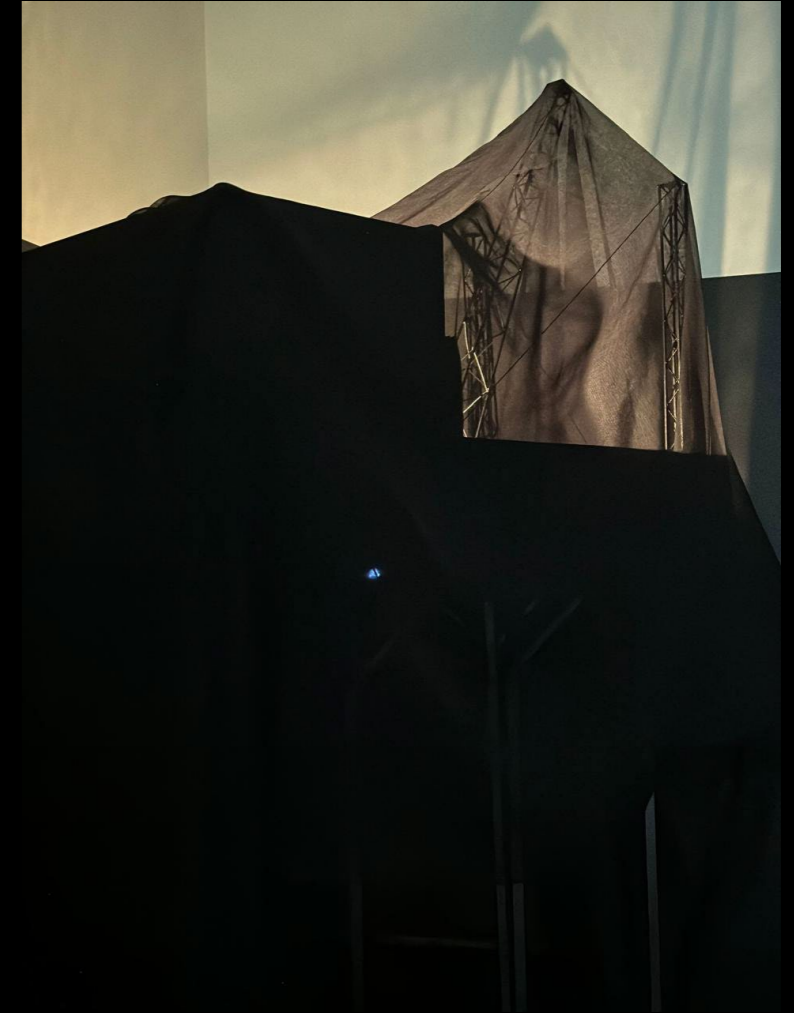
Visual oil rig metal sculpture with video projection and sound.

Zirku I

Metal structure, fabric, video projection

2 minutes and 37 seconds

150 cm x 70 cm x 210 cm



### Toub Toub, (2023)

Toub Toub is a ceremonial performance artwork recorded in Ras Al Khaimah Emirate-UAE. The installation re-produces the original practice of singing the song Toub Toub Ya Bahar and is inspired by the ceremonial practice done by women pre-oil period. The act is performed to converse with the sea as a person, to make merit, to form a power-play with the spirit world to bring back the pearl divers from the depth of the sea realm. The ritual performance was a prayer to some women, to others it was a way to express resentment to slave owners and the sea. Some might view it as affirming one's devotion by carrying out a particular commandment or practice. Exhausted women would perform the ritual on the fourth month during the pearling season, they would gather and walk in rhythmic movement into the sea, some will sing, some will play the drums, others perform repetitive ritualistic acts, like dipping a cat into the water to communicate with the sea, also burning the sea with hot iron or a wooden piece, others throw sharp items to cut the sea open and lastly, they perform a cleansing act by pouring a laxative herb. The sea becomes the rival, and the only way to its salvation is to redeem itself.



Toub Toub, (2023)  
Two screens video projection.  
3:00 minutes.

### Fairoza, a passage, (2021)

Statment: Fairoza is the resistance of the known knowledge and acceptance of the unknown history to be the resistance, like the continuous waves traveling through the oceans becomes a tradi- tion passed on. I investigated the continuity of my family's history in the present time and brought in to light the intimate slavery memories that represents the intended alienation and integration with the passage - the sea. Creating a ritual is a momentary per- sonification of an experience with the sea and the ritual of dancing in an unbroken circle. With the attempt to recall the spiritual and mythical role inherent to the sea and its associated rituals, ges- tures and movement. Its existence questions what it was and what it could be bringing this collective memory to live again.



Fairoza, a passage, (2021)  
Video Art installation  
1 minute & 19 seconds

### Rowing Home I (2021)

“The sea and us are dancing partners with settled disturbance through generations. The sea communicates by waves and wind through a rhythmic communication as language to us. The communication starts with the sound of waves calling and the interaction starts only when you enter the waters. We have the freedom to enter and exist with it, to go and come back to be in the intersection of rhythms and belong to the rhythm of the waves. And each of us carry a part of the sea “within” us. The sea does not care about disturbance of the sea wave rhythm sequence it builds upon creating new rhythm sequences with us that our bodies - the sea and us- becomes one”.



Rowing Home I (2021) - 5 photographs.  
Photography on canvas  
39x27 inches



### Grandma Ameena Wishes (2019)

“I asked my Grandma Ameena why she used dip our hands in goats blood in AlAdha Eid celebrations, and it seemed that she believed the ritual will bring our wishes come true and protect, And I vividly remember all the colors, smells and sounds , every- thing that she is then” .

*“Grandma Ameena Wishes” is a visual narrative series depicting my grandmother Ameena’s wishes, and soul-searching journeys that have been passed on to her children and grandchildren. It all began when she first traveled to India in 1949 and she always said: “ with these hands( referring to her hands) , everything is engraved, even my eternal love of the sea”.*

My grandmother Ameena was a slave, yet she freed herself from what is known now as un-spoken past.

- Video installation
- Mixed Media - Scanography & Thread



Grandmother Ameena Wishes (2019)  
Mixed Media - Scanography & Thread  
24x20 inches



My Grandmother Ameena's wishes  
(2019)  
Video Art installation  
2 minutes

### Sidroh Series (2018-2019)

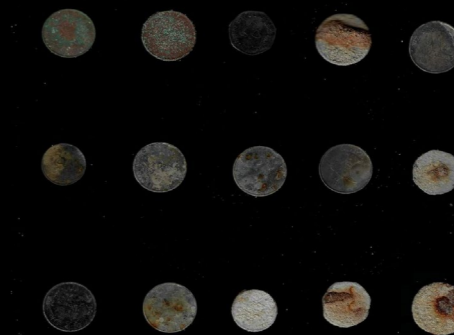
“Sidroh” is a result of a daily 1 month visual documentation project of Sidroh area located in Ras Al Khaimah, U.A.E. A presentation of sentimental attachments of space, memories, objects and unseen links. Named after the Sidr tree, a plant of paradise, Sidroh rests beautifully in distortion of human interactions, objects, space and time, the space were slaves rested in the city. The intersections are pleasantly distorted and the connection here is the reflection that is merely imagined, like a human-made paradise that still lives.

Documentation resulted to :

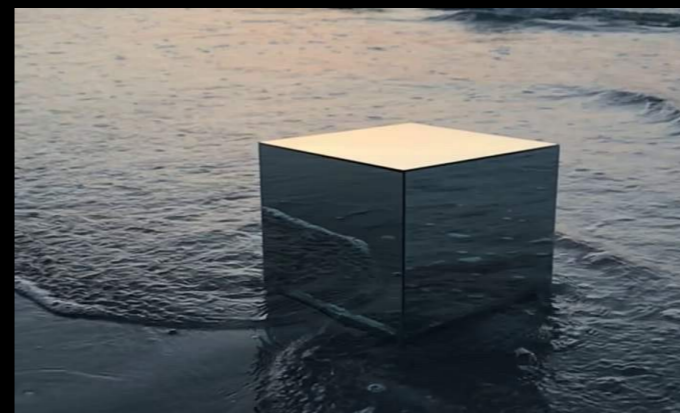
- Sidroh Series I, Mixed Media : photography and thread
- Sidroh Series II, Video installation
- Sidroh Series III, Scanography printed on canvas paper
  
- Titles: *Link | Root | Focus | Seen | Subtle*



*LINK*, Sidroh Series I (2019)  
Mixed Media  
Photography & Thread  
24x20 inches



*SEEN*, Sidroh Series I (2019)  
Mixed Media - Photography & Thread  
24x20 inches



*SUBTLE*, Sidroh Series II (2019)  
Video Installation  
2:00 minutes

### **Freedom Beyond Belief (2018)**

“Freedom Beyond Belief” takes a distinct approach to focusing on materials and their historical importance. It explores the idea of “owning” rights - the right to exist and the right to be represented - by looking at the African roots of the UAE, and the history of slavery. The exploitation of slavery increased drastically upon the Omani conquest of Zanzibar, after which pearl diving and date farming boomed in the region. At this time there existed a cycle of trading slaves for dates and pearls - commodities collected and planted by previous slaves - with these pearls and dates then in turn being traded back to Zanzibar. For Emiratis with African roots, this cycle of traded value creates a strange view of their history and self-representation, and fosters a narrative that often neglects the crucial role of the spread of the pearl and date industries.

The artwork reveals these hidden aspects of our story by reflecting on the historical techniques, beliefs and hand gestures involved in date farming and pearl diving.



Freedom Beyond Belief (2018)  
Plaster, pearlescent and Date syrup  
47 x 59 inches

### Heritage I (2018)

Self-portrait studies - reflecting on African features.

“My sisters and I always joke about our appearances going through some old family photos, realize that joke isn’t so far off the mark. I’m built like some of the women in my family who share African roots. Looking at features that may seem as unacceptable for the beauty standards such as darker knuckles, knees and elbows, Afro hair, big lips, wide forehead, yet I realize looking at these pictures is a good reminder of what’s realistic and not for my body type. Much as my sisters and I have often aspired to look less African, it’s just not in the cards (or genes) for me. I spent so many years thinking my looks was “wrong” rather than understanding that my build was mostly a result of my genetic heritage, and not recognizing the origin of that heritage.”



Heritage I (2018)  
Wax  
6 x 3 inches

**Farewell Series I, (2020)**

I have always lost things on the way, whether it is intentionally or internally, yet the process of losing is sometimes beautiful as the process of receiving. It is like a ceremony of ghosted objects, emotions, spaces and meaningless forms. It is the way we say goodbye without having a choice or control. Detaching process to understand ourselves without it, to understand the with and without.



Farewell Series I, Drops 1/5 (2020)  
Scanography on Lightbox  
44 cm x 55 cm

## Exhibitions List

2024: Particles & Fragments - MFA Degree show, Stockholm, Sweden

2023: Time & Identity Exhibition, Dubai, U.A.E

2023: SEESAW Exhibition, Stockholm, Sweden

2023: Concept Online Exhibition, Florence, Italy.

2023: ADMAF, Abu Dhabi, U.A.E

2021: Tashkeel, Farewell Series, Covid edition - COVID Conversations, Dubai, U.A.E

2021: Art Dubai - Fairoza, a passage - Campus Art Dubai March, Dubai

2020: Golden Heart, The BoxJelly Coworking, Hawaii, United States.

2020: Ras AlKhaimah Fine Art Festival, Breaking the cycle of social identity, SEEN, Sidroh Series I- Jan - Feb, Ras AlKhaimah

2019: Sustain -SEEN, Sidroh Series I- Art Society, Ras AlKhaimah

2019: Emirates Fine Art Society Annual Exhibition -My Grandmother Ameena's wishes II- Oct - Nov, Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah

2019: Emerge III: Converging Lines Exhibition, My Grandmother Ameena's wishes I - May, Venice ,Italy

2019: Sikka Art Fair, SUBTLE, Sidroh Series II - March, Dubai

2018: The Salama Bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship (SEAF) Exhibition - Freedom Beyond Belief - Sept - Nov, Abu Dhabi

2016: World Art Dubai -DETACHMENT, Unstained by thought - Winner , April 2016 of Video -Emirati Emerging Artist, Dubai

2015: The Sheikha Manal Art , Untitled - March 2015 Exchange program: AEP Exhibition, Dubai

2014: The Big Picture Exhibition- Playground of my Mind, 2014 , Dubai

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