

Arab Horse Couture

ARTIST FEATURE



# A PORTRAIT OF



Ali Almimar is one of the most important Arabian horse artists of our time. His works of art are easily recognizable: energetic pencil strokes, apt reproduction of his subject and striking colors are the main characteristics of his paintings.

Written by Judith Wich-Wenning

When I think of Ali Almimar, I vividly remember a scene at an Arabian horse show some years ago. I was sitting with Sheikh Saoud Al-Thani from Qatar and Ali Almimar when Ali took a pencil and a piece of paper and started to draw some beautiful Arabian mares. I was hooked; it was fascinating to see how easily he created a small, enchanting piece of art in a few moments. Finally, he gifted his work to Sheikh Saoud. Ali Almimar's talent impressed me. But how did his career as an artist begin?

Ali Almimar was born in Bagdad, Iraq in 1965. He graduated at the Institute of Fine Arts, Bagdad in 1985 and at the Bagdad College of Fine Arts in 1991. The real start for Ali Almimar as an artist took place at the Youth Festival in 1985 where he received the Faïk Hassan's Gold Medal for Painting. His teacher was the Iraqi





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Fa'ik Hassan (1914 – 1992). Fa'ik Hassan was one of the founders of modern art in Iraq. In 1939 he established the Institute of Fine Arts in Bagdad. Today Christies, Bonham's and other renowned auction houses and art dealers offer his paintings. Fa'ik Hassen had supervised Ali Almimar and discovered Ali's great talent. A close relationship between the two developed. One of Fa'ik Hassan's most favorite subjects were Arabian horses.

So this time was also the beginning of Ali Amimar's deep love for Arabian horses. He started to immortalize them in his works and steadily turned into one of the most significant Arabian horse artists.

Already in 1985, Ali Amimar had his first solo exhibition in Bagdad. Numerous were to follow, as for example solo exhibitions at the Sheraton Hotel in Doha, at the Sharjah Art Museum,

the international Biennale in Sharjah, the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, at the Gallery de Biblion in Toulouse, France and many more. Especially noteworthy are also Ali's exhibitions at important Arabian horse shows.

His work is regularly displayed at the International Festival of the Arabian Horse in Qatar, The Egyptian Event in Kentucky, USA, many European shows, etc. Furthermore, Ali was the first artist who started to paint live during an Arabian horse show.

Simultaneously to the beginning of the event, he starts his work and finishes just before the end of the show. He then often donates his newly completed painting for charity auctions taking place at the closing of the Arabian horse event.



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In the year 2000, Ali Almimar had received a very special commission from the Dubai International Airport. He was asked to execute a huge piece of art for buzzing Terminal 1. The dimensions for this were remarkable: Ali's masterwork spans now over 28 x 5 meters! Ali Almimar first painted in oil on canvas measuring 1 x 5,20 meters.

He created a beautiful desert scenery with impressive Arabian horses. Then this work was transmitted on its final scale. As the foundation excerpts from volcanic stone were used, which had to be polished carefully. In the meantime, this magnificent tableau is one of the trademarks of Dubai International Airport, greeting innumerable travelers from all over the world.

Today we can find Ali's artwork in innumerable private collections. His

clients come from Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, U.K., USA, Germany, etc.

"I most often paint in oil," Ali explains. "But sometimes I use acrylic, because this technique gives me more freedom."

The painting of a "Nazar", a blue bead believed to protect against the evil eye, can be found on many of Ali's works, close to his signature. With its turquoise color and the golden framing it has become something like a trademark for the famous artist.

Only few people know that Ali is also an excellent photographer. At many shows you will find him strolling around with his camera, always on the hunt for new models for his next paintings. Very typey Arabian horses in lively, impressive sceneries, often with a romantic touch, characterize Ali Almimar's works. Ali knows how to capture the most beautiful



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Arabian horses of our time, as shown by his paintings of *Ansata Halim Shah*, *Ansata Hejazi*, *Al Adeed Al Shaqab* and many others.

Furthermore, Ali Almimar's portraits of Arabian rulers or personalities from the world of Arabian horses are well executed to the point. Asked about his most favorite Arabian horse, Ali ponders: "There are a lot of horses I loved and that have affected my work. But the horse closest to my heart is certainly *Al Adeed Al Shaqab*. For me he is the perfect horse for painting."

After living in Sharjah for many years, Ali Almimar has moved to Canada in the end of 2010. The Arabian horse determines his life. Ali is deeply fascinated by these unique creatures. "In addition to their beauty, I appreciate most the lofty and noble expression of the Arabian horse", Ali remarks. "*I see the world through the love of Arabian horses. Art is the most precious gift God gave to my life.*"



Photo: Artist Ali Almimar

#### ABOUT THE WRITER:

Straight Egyptian Arabian Owner and Breeder, Judith Wich-Wenning, is a freelance photographer and journalist and works for numerous Arabian horse magazines around the world. Moreover, she is the author of the highly acclaimed book "*Jewels of the Desert - The Magic of Egyptian Arabians*," published by Orienta Publications.

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