

EXPLORING ELEGANCE IN CLAY

THE ARTISTIC JOURNEY OF FATIMA AL-MARHOUN

By bazaar Staff

In the heart of Kuwait, where traditional crafts blend seamlessly with modern innovation, one artist has carved out a niche for herself in the delicate art of pottery. Meet Fatima Al-Marhoun, a ceramic artist and pottery instructor whose journey into the world of clay is as inspiring as the pieces she creates.

I stumbled on one of Fatima's videos one night while mindlessly scrolling on Instagram. Bright and cheerful, with her quick-paced voice over explaining how she was trying to create a video about the process of creating a piece, but it kept turning out too long because pottery is a time-consuming craft that can take weeks of work. Her feed was full of thoughtfully made videos that were a mix of her finished mugs and dishes and great tips and tricks for the aspiring potter.

Her aesthetic is whimsical with elements of cottage core but leans slightly minimalist. With colorful red capped mushrooms, cute green frogs and blooming flowers that adorn white or cream-colored ceramics, they have character without trying too hard. Even though I never tried anything with clay before, I was hooked.

Fatima's fascination with pottery began during the global lockdown of 2020. "I always liked art and working with my hands," she recalls. "During the COVID lockdown, I kept being so attracted to pottery-making videos on social media, and since it is not very common in Kuwait, I decided to go for it."

Initially, Fatima took a local course in Kuwait, followed by further refinement of her skills in Dubai and Lebanon. However, much of her expertise is self-taught. "I am mostly self-taught," she admits, a testament to her dedication and passion.

Fatima vividly remembers her first creation, a small bowl, though she never got the chance to take it back from the studio. Despite this early setback, she persevered and now her process is meticulous, taking two to three weeks from start to finish. "The process generally takes from two to three weeks, starting from wedging the clay to shaping, air drying, and then the first firing. After that, we draw the design or do the coloring, and finally finish it with the second firing," she explains.

Balancing aesthetic appeal with functionality is crucial for Fatima. "I go with customer practical products for my business, but I always keep making artistic pieces which boost my imagination and help me improve my technique."

Fatima finds inspiration in nature and her positive outlook on life. "I try to be a very positive person, who likes to live a colorful and joyful life. As a result, I find inspiration mostly within myself and end up with very soulful pieces," she says.



Her signature style is a reflection of this ethos. "I do what makes me and others feel happy. I go for simple, spontaneous, funny shapes. I love nature, so you will always see some flowers here and there."

Working with black clay is a particular favorite of Fatima's. "No matter what you make, you will always get an elegant, classy piece." She also enjoys different techniques based on her mood, opting for hand-building when she wants to relax and working on the wheel when she has a lot of energy.

Like any artist, Fatima has faced challenges, especially in sourcing materials locally. "In the beginning, I couldn't find the materials in Kuwait, so I had to order everything from outside." Despite these hurdles, she has achieved significant milestones, such as the proud moment when she saw the "Wow" reaction from people at her first booth.

Looking to the future, Fatima aims to expand her brand and continue pushing the boundaries of her craft. "I want to get bigger and start my own brand," she declares with determination.

Through her journey, Fatima Al-Marhoun has not only mastered the art of pottery but has also created a space where creativity and joy blossom in every piece she molds.

Fatima's work is available for purchase on her Instagram page @mnkhazaf and her website khazaf.plugn.site, where her unique, soulful pieces continue to captivate and inspire.

