

#تسقط بس



White March

“WHITE MARCH” WAS a visual demonstration in honor of Sudanese women and their fight against violence, oppression, and violations of their rights. During the month of March 2019, in the middle of the Sudanese revolution, Sudanese women all over the world were encouraged to wear the traditional white Toub and jewellery for both online and street protests.

The fact that I am genderfluid made my response to the campaign come as a duty.

I present myself in a classic look inspired by women, who have historically been among the leaders of the revolutions in Sudan. The “Toub” التوب, is a 4.5 m length of white cotton fabric draped around the body. White is worn by working and mourning women. I chose to be adorned with pieces of significant cultural references, such as the moon shaped “Gamarbouba” القمربوبا, a type of traditional earring worn in the middle regions of southern Sudan, and up to southern Egypt in the north. The earring is linked to the nose piecing by a pearly chain forming what we call “Zumam ab Rashma” الزُمَام اب رَشْمَة. The nose piercing has gone from being the norm to being a sign of moral degeneracy in our time. The hair is parted in the middle and braided in a style called “Masayir” مَسَايِر. Note the “Sholokh” الشَّلُوكْ on my cheeks, an old Sudanese scarification tradition (the scars are painted in my case) that was practiced in Sudan until a couple of decades ago. The “Sholokh”

are deep scars, vertical or horizontal, on the cheeks, high on the cheek bones or in some tribes on the forehead. Scarification was practiced as a rite of passage and the scars marked which tribe or region one belonged to. Scarification was also considered a beautification practice and has made its way into literature and music. It was done on men and women.

AHMED UMAR (b. 1988) is a multidisciplinary artist and activist who lives and works in Oslo, Norway. Ahmed came to Norway from Sudan in 2008, as a political refugee, and graduated from Oslo National Academy of the Arts in 2016, with an MA in Medium and Material-Based Art. His practice is strongly influenced by the themes of his upbringing and his experiences of living in a society structured around religion. Umar's works recreate a narrative of his own life story utilizing various techniques such as sculpture, printmaking, painting and performance. In his attempt to resolve the contradictions of living in a distant and secular place, Umar mobilizes these methods to explore the complex relationship between identity, authority, sexuality, depression and art. His work is charged with social critique, a sense of directness, Arabic calligraphy and a hint of his Nubian visual heritage. They reflect his memories and signal a long process of self-understanding and acceptance. Umar is a featured artist in the *Call Me by my Name* exhibition at the Munch Museum, Oslo, Norway (until October 2021). Find out more at: <https://www.ahmedumar.com/>