

# Issue 03

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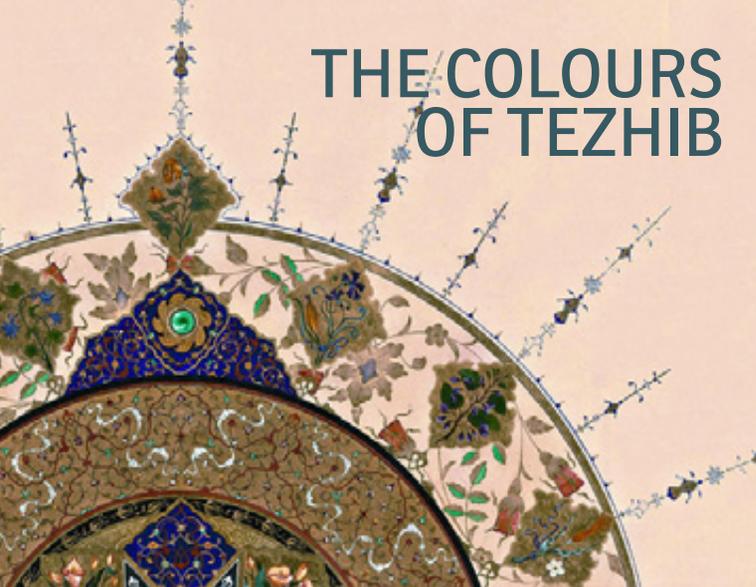
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**BOOK REVIEW**



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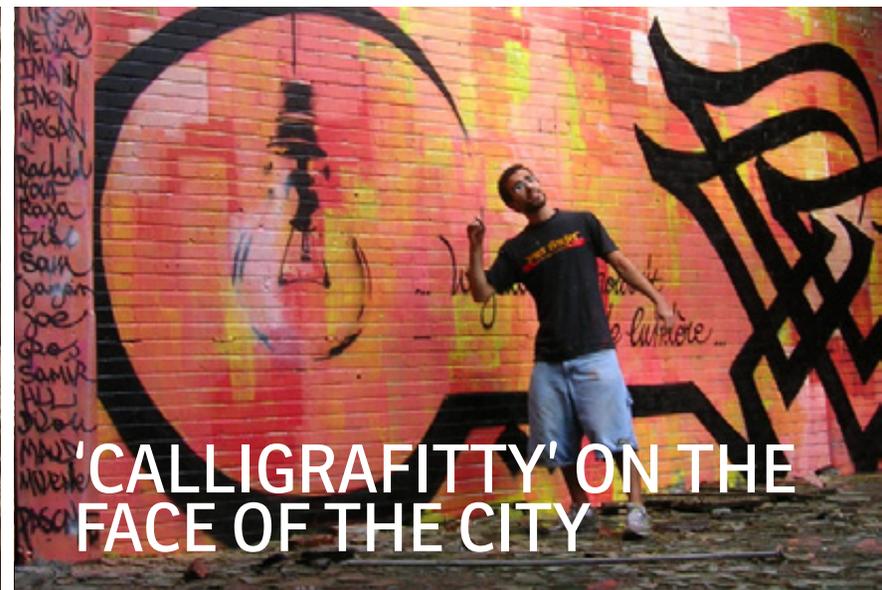
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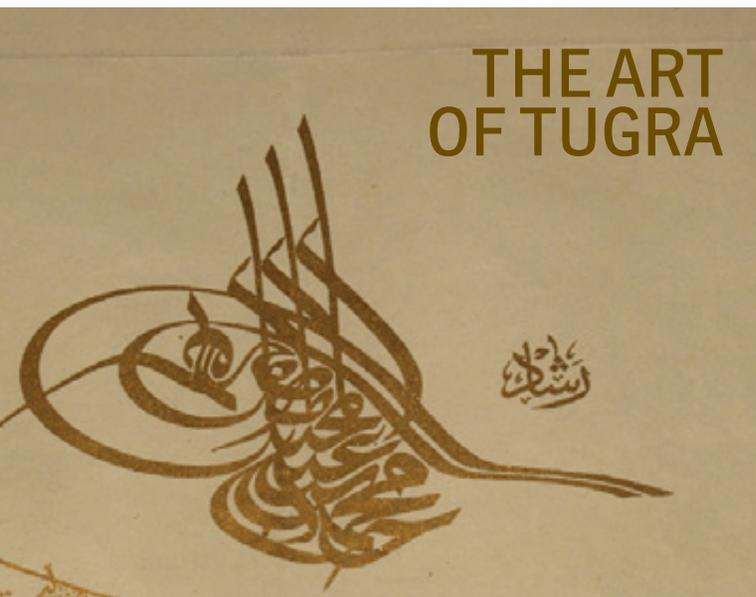
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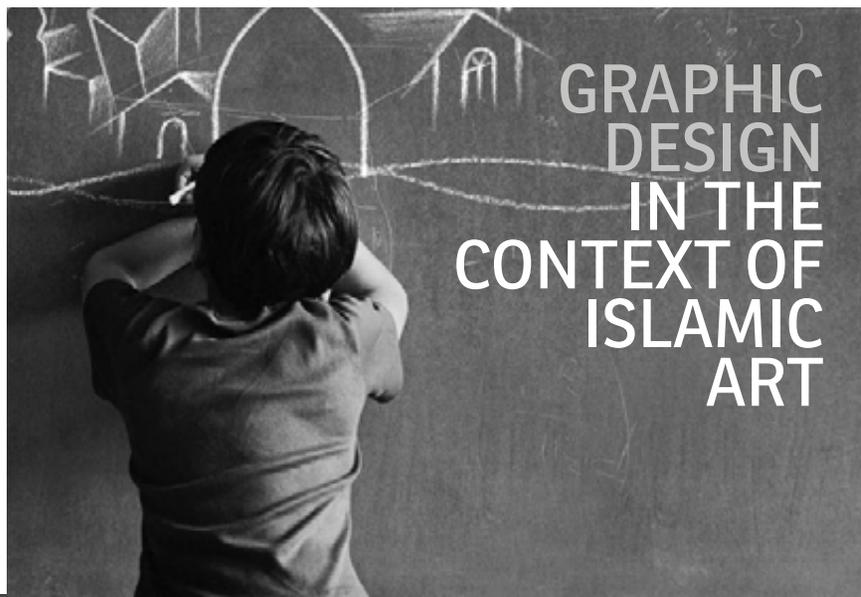
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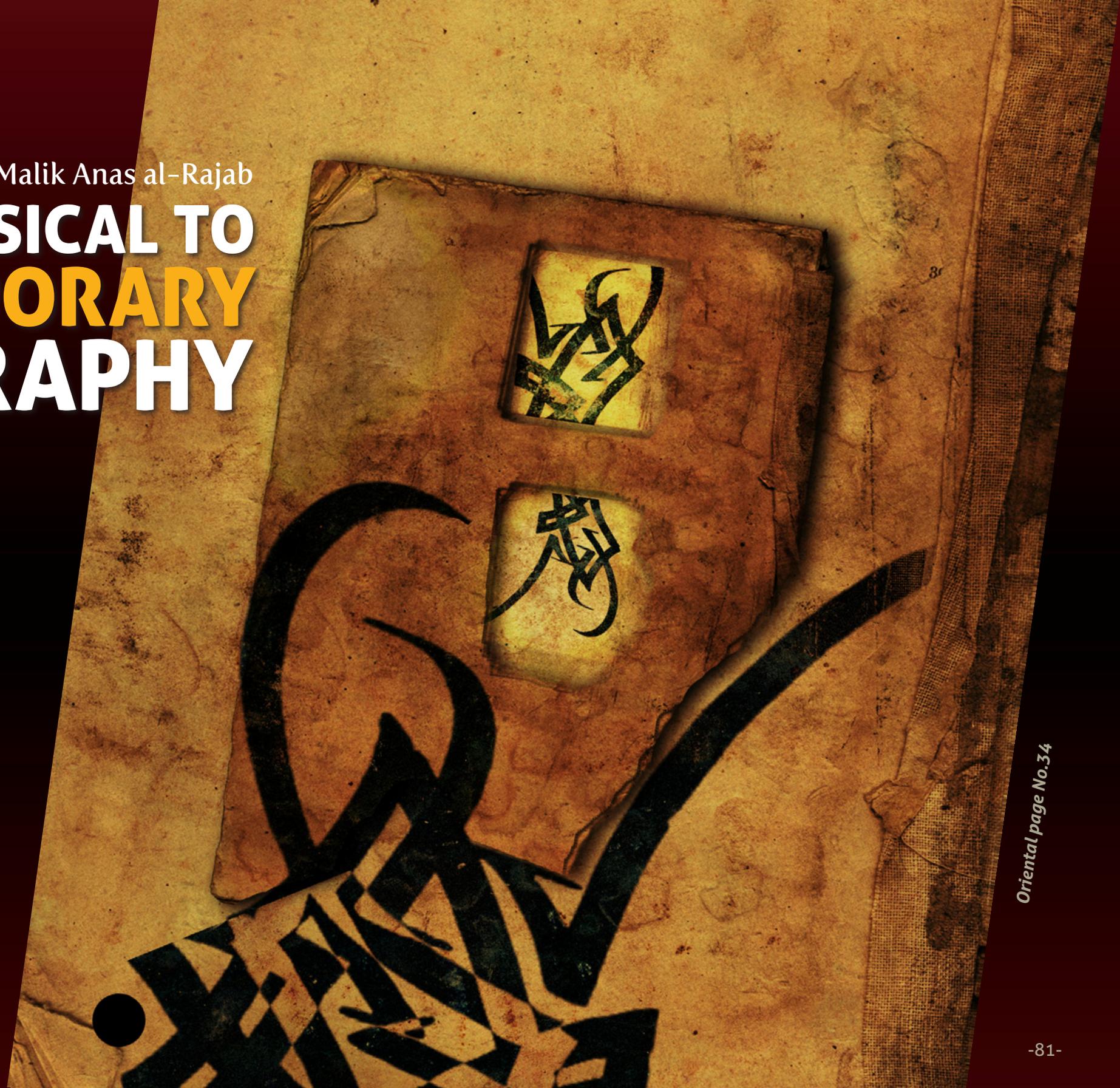


# TUTORIAL HOW TO MAKE A DIGITAL ARABESQUE

Interview with Iraqi artist Malik Anas al-Rajab

# FROM CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY CALLIGRAPHY

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# MALIK ANAS AL-RAJAB

Born in Baghdad - Iraq, 1976.

BSC in Economics. University in Baghdad.

Studied traditional calligraphy (1990-1995).

Member of Iraqi Calligraphy Society since 2007.

Currently working in Baghdad as a  
contemporary calligrapher and  
freelance graphic designer.

CLICK > [www.malikanas.deviantart.com](http://www.malikanas.deviantart.com)

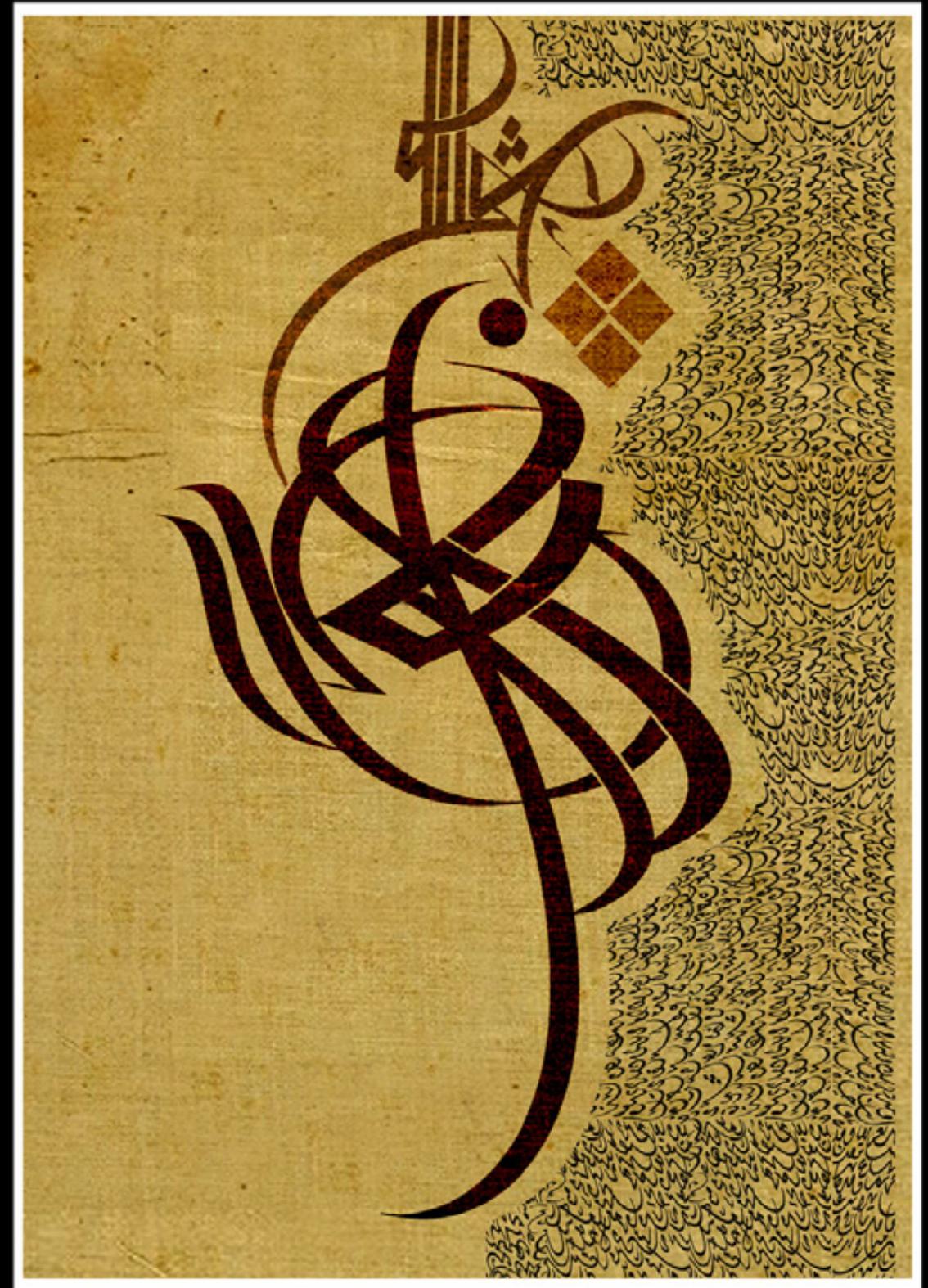


***Tell us about your artistic path and how did you start making calligraphy. Was it your first choice?***

I can still remember that day vividly! I was about 15 years old when I saw my elder brother practicing calligraphy, I was amazed instantly and I started paying attention to calligraphic types and styles around me... a few months later I started my first lessons on Thuluth Style. In last 4 years I became more attached to this form of art and made a lot of connections and contacts with most of the famous masters in Baghdad.

In 2002 a new passion of graphic design and computer generated images was growing in me so I started to learn the tools of the trade by myself.

In 2005 I decided to specialize in contemporary calligraphy using my practice in classical form of Arabic Calligraphy tradition as a background and merge it with graphic design, after reaching a certain level I was able to infuse calligraphy with graphic design the way you see it now.





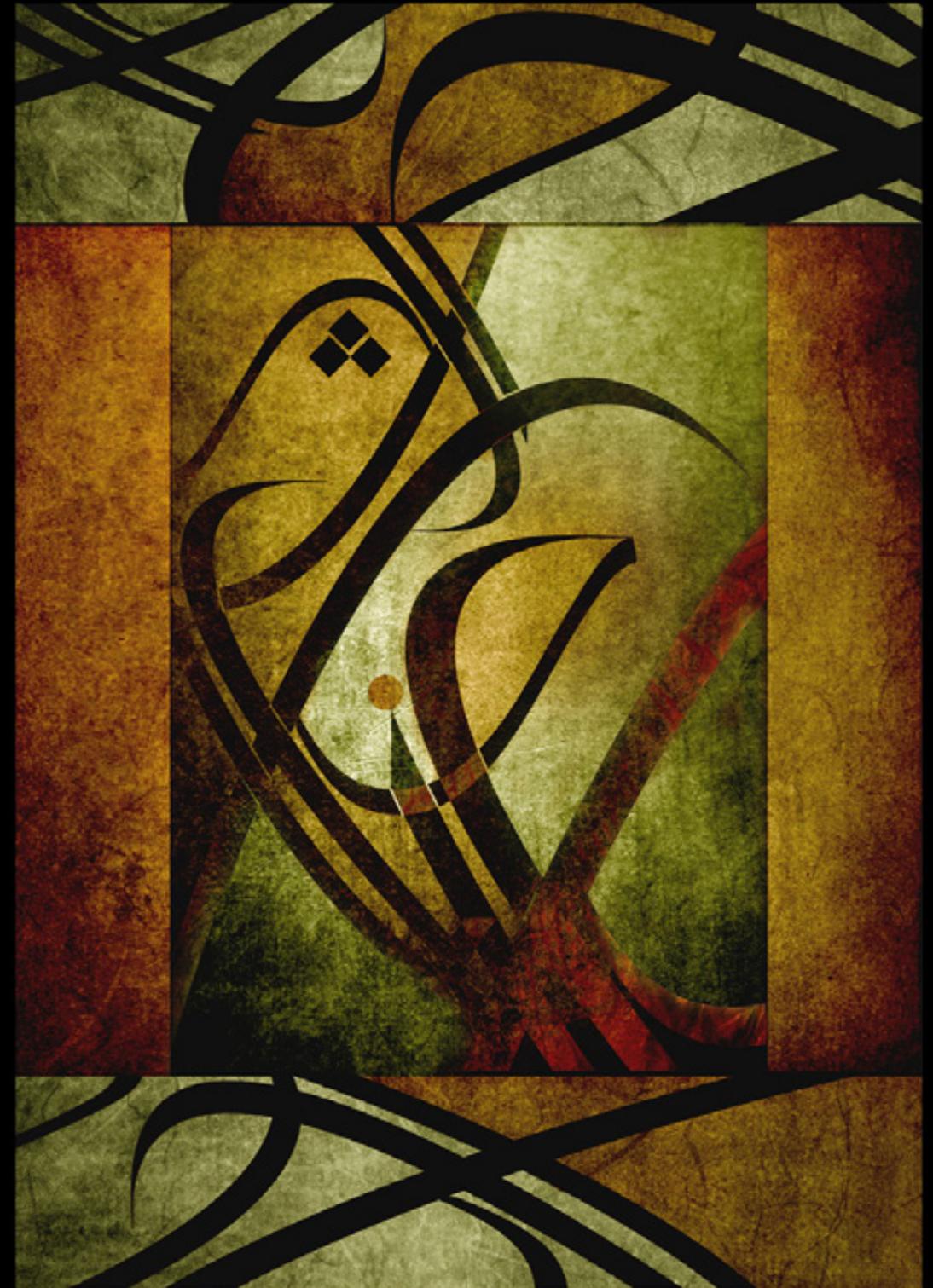
***Your calligraphic expression is a free style. I suppose that, in the very beginning, you had some classical models. How did you come to the style that you work on now?***

I studied the artworks of many contemporary calligraphers from around the world. I noticed that there is many ways to express calligraphy and you still get the reaction and the reflection of a calligraphic piece. There were lots of sleepless nights and tryouts trying to come up with my own voice.

***Can you explain the technique you use in your work?***

I used to make several drafts using a breed pen and a paper, then scan it and generate a suitable background which I feel relevant to the piece. A few years later I was able to do the first step digitally using a digital pen and some brushes that I've created for the job. I still using the breed pen sometimes, depending on the project that I'm trying to do.

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Malik Anas

“

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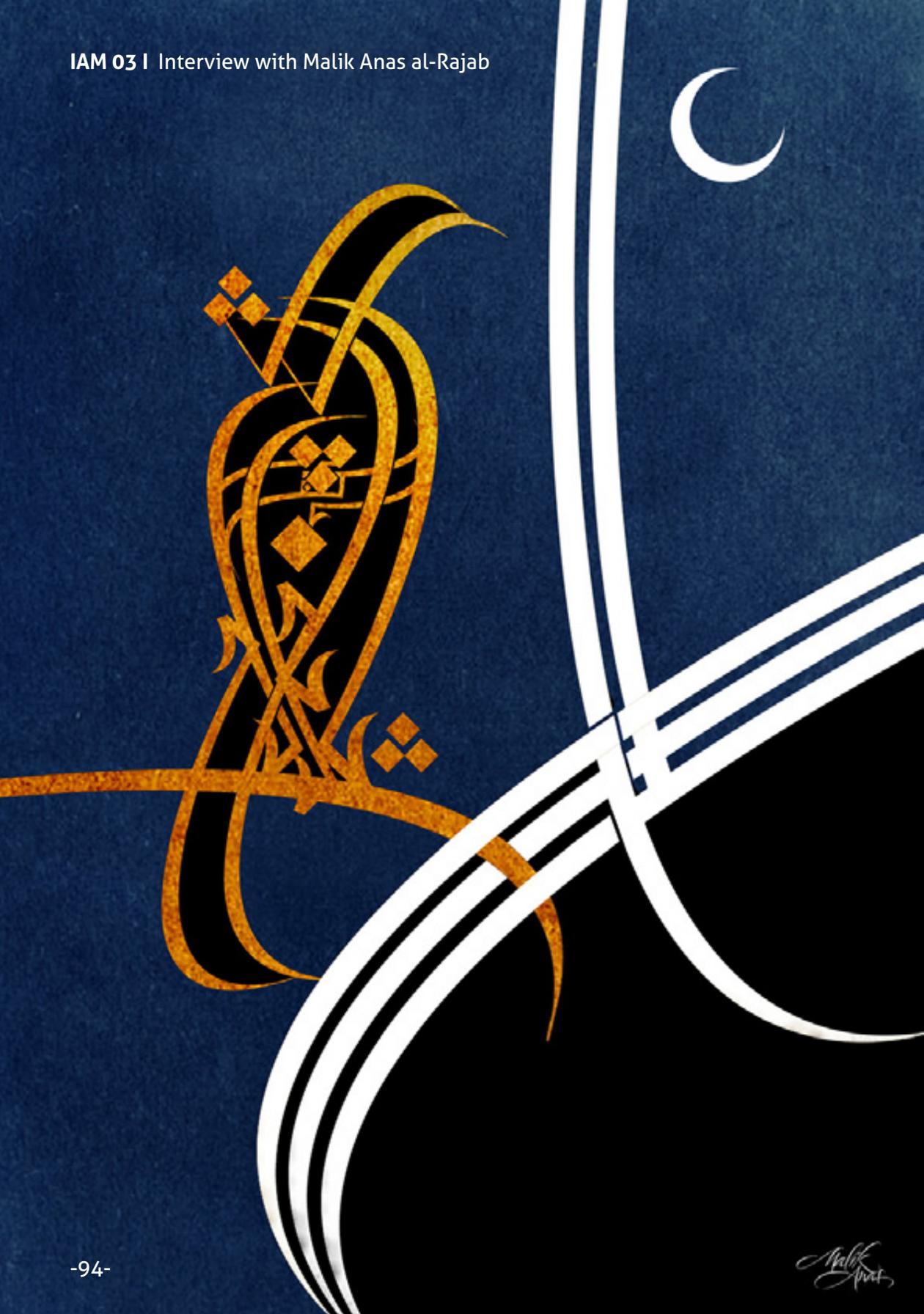
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*In your pictures we can feel the sensibility of the oriental arts, like Chinese or Japanese art. Were you perhaps influenced by those arts as well?*

Off course, Chinese or Japanese calligraphic tradition is a very rich heritage that can not be overlooked. I think that I've learned so much about how a single stroke can be more than enough in balancing the canvas, composition and the power of empty space from browsing their artworks.





Aesthetics of your image is very recognizable. We would say that this is the combination of purely decorative aspects of Islamic art and the expressive treatment of calligraphy. Is the development of calligraphy in Islam a finished story, or there are some new possibilities today?

Thank you so much, calligraphy in Islam is far from being a finished story but – unfortunately - it's being neglected in many ways for the past few decades.

Did you know that a few centuries ago, a man lived in Baghdad called Ibn Muqla was responsible for generating and developing many of the calligraphic styles that we know today... One man! It seems that the process of developing the original styles of calligraphy has been put to a halt for many reasons, you have some attempts to develop this incredible heritage by some artists who – most of the time - have a little knowledge of the Arabic/Islamic calligraphy traditions, on the other hand you have the masters of this tradition who - most of the time - are not keen on changing this solid rules and guides. I have noticed some attempts to solve this dilemma from some calligraphers from Iran and Turkey but it will take time to be adapted by others.



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