



Local drone photographer talks about his passion and capturing Kuwait from the skies

By Faten Omar

Omar Al-Jassem, a 25-year-old Kuwaiti drone photographer, had a goal to capture Kuwait as no one had done before, and show the world the architectural beauty of the country. Together with his 17-year-old school-going cousin Mohammad Jaafar, Jassem has produced a collection of photos and videos of Kuwait and Bulgaria.

Jassem spoke to Kuwait Times to explain his work and passion.

Kuwait Times: How did you get started in drone photography and why did it appeal to you?

Omar Al-Jassem: I started a year ago by using the Phantom 2 Vision drone, shooting scenes with a fisheye lens. My brother gave this drone to me. It was not easy to control it at first, but I became a professional once I got the hang of it.

When I was trying to fly it for the first time, I broke it, so I went to a store to buy a new propeller. That is when I met a group of people who are specialists in drone photography. I joined them on their group on WhatsApp, where they posted their pictures and videos. I sent my videos too, but they weren't as good as theirs, but they taught me and I bought a new professional drone (Inspire 1), which shoots up to 4K video and captures 12 megapixel photos. Even Kuwaiti singer Nabil Shuel loves this and has started to use a drone.

KT: Which is your favorite video and why?

Jassem: My favorite video is the one I shot of the Liberation Tower in Kuwait City. It was an amazing shot from the sky. I love it because it shows the beauty of Kuwait in one scene. I also love my video of Marina Mall. People were shocked that this was Marina Mall, because when you see it, you will get the full picture of the beauty of the building mixed with the beauty of the seaside. The view from top feels different.

KT: How would you describe your style or vision of filming?

Jassem: My vision is to shoot my videos in a different way from others. I recently tried to shoot the same scene from the same angle in the sky at day and night. I used the coordinates and memorized them, then flew the drone again at night to get the same shot but at a different timing.



Omar Al-Jassem

KT: Why do you film Kuwait?

Jassem: Because Kuwait has many incredible buildings, and you can only see their beauty from above.

KT: What do you like to do when you are not shooting?

Jassem: I like to play football. I also like editing.

KT: Who are some of your favorite drone/aerial photographers?

Jassem: My favorite drone photographer is Ali Younes - he uses the s1000 drone. This drone is a highly professional one, and you can add a Nikon or Canon camera to it. It is as if a professional cameraman is up in the sky. I saw his pictures and videos, then met and asked him a lot of questions. He was very helpful and did not ignore me even once. He taught me the basics and keeps me updated.

KT: Can you tell us about your editing process as well as what some of your favorite apps are?

Jassem: My favorite applications are 'Video

Shop' or 'iMovie'. I have downloaded them on my iPad. When you use iMovie, you only have to cut the scenes you want and the music, and the app will turn it into a full video.

KT: Can you tell us about your drone setup?

Jassem: My drone is a strong carbon fiber one with arms out of sight, transforming the way you can shoot. You can get a full, unrestricted 360° view of the world below and create images and videos. You can shoot up to 4K video and capture 12 MP photos. The lens consists of 9 separate elements, including a spherical element for extreme clarity, while Adobe DNG RAW support gives you the power to make every shot a masterpiece. You also can take complete control of your flight system with a comprehensive mobile app.

KT: In your opinion, what will drone technology and/or the drone landscape look like in the future?

Jassem: A few days, a new drone was released in the market with a wide-angle lens. The old lenses shot a picture in eight colors, but this can capture 13 colors, which clearly show all

the things in a picture. They also added SSD, which allows you to save all the pictures and the videos automatically to your computer, and it has a hard disk, so you do not have to add memory cards.

KT: Do you have any advice for aspiring photographers?

Jassem: I advise them to follow security and safety measures, and they should at least take a training course with a well-known drone photographer to know the basics and the problems and difficulties they may face, such as losing the signal of the drone or losing control, and never to fly around communications towers.

KT: Do you remember what it was like your first time shooting from the air?

Jassem: The first time was at a chalet. My brother gave me the remote of the drone to try it out, but I flew it too fast, but thank God I did not lose it.

KT: Are there any places you wish you could shoot from the air?

Jassem: I want to go to Maldives to capture the beauty of thesea - it's like heaven. Also Britain and Bulgaria. But the place that I'm planning to go soon is Dubai, to shoot the Burj Khalifa.

KT: What are some of the cool opportunities that have resulted from your success?

Jassem: Companies always offer me free things because they like what I have done, but I'm not taking advantage of them. I shoot for myself to show the hidden beauty of places. Some companies and stores have also offered to pay me to shoot for them.

KT: Do you use your drone to shoot illegal things?

Jassem: Never - I hate trouble. And also, you cannot do this because you have to shoot from a short distance, so you will be busted. If you shoot from a high and long distance, the result will be just dots as zoom is not possible. But sometimes, curiosity drives me to follow some fishing boats to see them fishing, just for fun.