



Sleight

of hand

By Nawara Fattahova

Shows of illusion are rare in the Gulf. Some think they involve magic, which is haram. But a group of young Kuwaitis are trying to change local perceptions, offering a fun and entertaining performance through the group, Imagine.

Formed by Abdullatif Al-Saleh, Ayed Abdullah, Khalid Al-Muharib and others, Imagine presents sleight of hand tricks and illusions in a comedic way. "We are the only illusionist comedians in the Middle East. We also interact with the audience. Our shows are for adults, but children from the age of 10 will also enjoy them, as the shows include animals, in addition to visual tricks," Saleh told Kuwait Times.

Saleh, the founder of Imagine, got the idea to form the team in 2014, and in March 2015, he brought this idea to fruition. "In January 2016, the last member joined our team. Although our team is complete now, I don't mind if a new member seeks to join us. We are the best in what we do, but

we don't mind having another member if he has new skills or a special talent that is different," he pointed out.

Presenting tricks and illusions is the sole source of livelihood for some members, while others do it as part-time job or hobby, along with studying or working in other jobs. "I was an employee before starting this activity. I then resigned to be fully dedicated to my hobby and passion. It was hard in the beginning, but it's getting better now, and I can live off it. I also did standup comedy in 2015, and it was one of the biggest shows," said Saleh.

Imagine have presented shows in various places. "Besides this theatre, we have held joint shows in Arraya, Hilton, Hamra Mall and Discovery Mall. These shows were organized by companies and charity organizations. We also held a show in Qatar during a national festival held there. Now we are planning to hold shows in London, Dublin and the US," he noted.

The show presents popular tricks Kuwaiti style. "We use some of the common props used in magic shows such as

Imagine will present a show Sept 29, 2016 at the Hmeli Theatre (previously the Medical Professions Theatre) in Jabriya.



Abdullatif Al-Saleh, Ayed Abdullah, Khalid Al-Muharib talk with Kuwait Times about their upcoming show, overcoming challenges to creating an illusion show in Kuwait and the growing popularity of live performances in Kuwait. File photos show some of the Imagine team's previous performances. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and courtesy Imagine team.