

The Samawi Collection

Photography & New Media

Volume II

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We would like to thank all the team at Ayyam Gallery and the Ayyam Art Center who worked hard and long to make this exhibition and catalogue possible.

We would also like to thank all the artists and galleries who produced and gave us the opportunity to purchase these great works.

Finally we would like to thank the United Arab Emirates and its leaders for having the vision to allow art lovers and patrons from all over the world to call this great nation home.

Khaled Samawi and Hisham Samawi

Modern Patronage of the Arts and the Art Market

Introduction

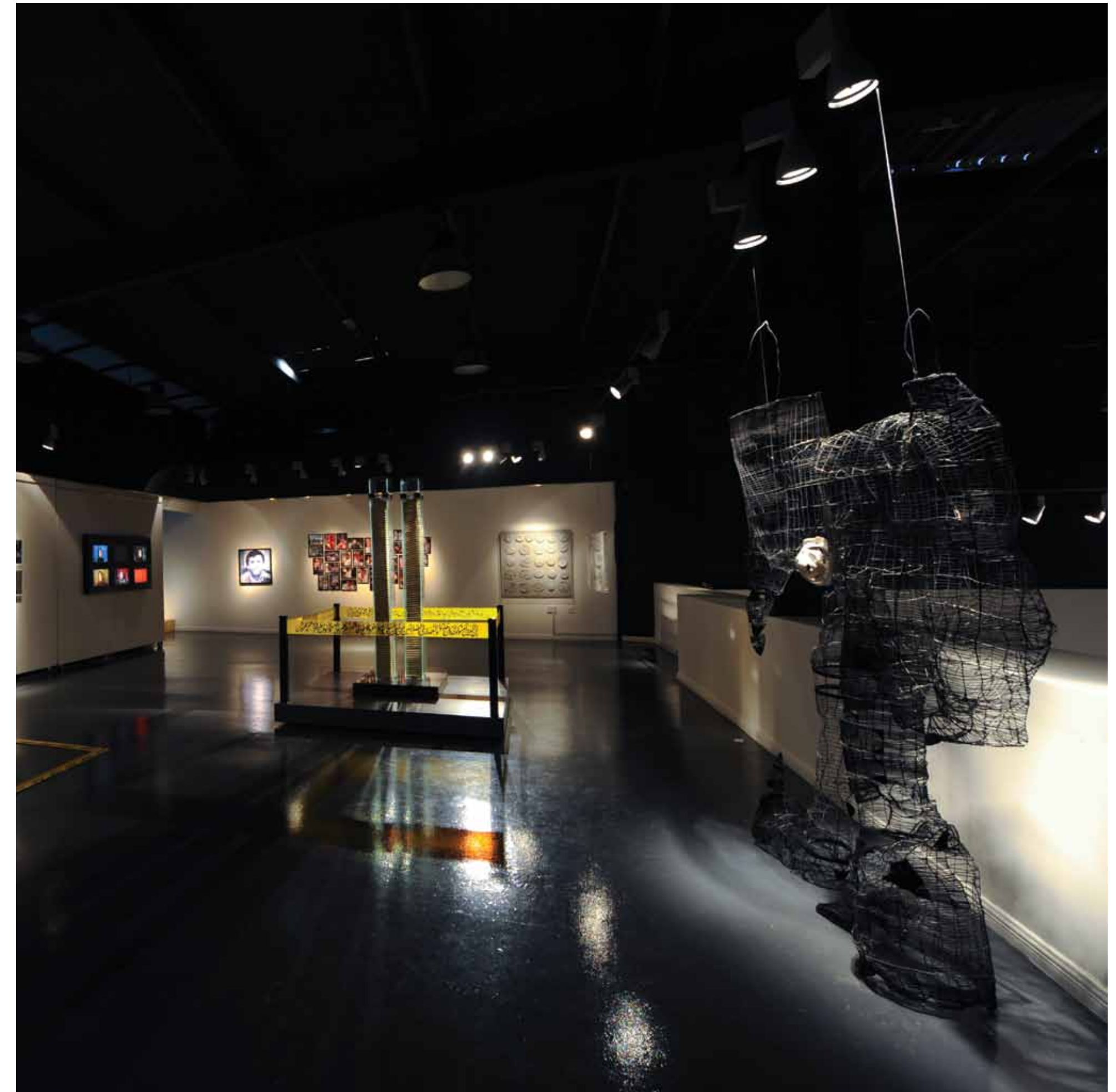
The path to artistic creation is one that is in a perpetual state of flux. The desire to create is inherent to mankind. Though it is the delicate balance between the desire and the realization in which patronage has flourished for centuries, the two are intertwined, often unsteadily, yet this balancing act is required and ultimately beneficial to the continued production of visual culture.

Twenty-first century patronage of the arts has evolved from its origins as a binary relationship to four distinct models: Private Collectors, Corporations, Governmental, and Dealers.

The private individual as a collector has emerged as one of the driving forces of the modern art market. The interest in art aroused by the Grand Tour of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the subsequent rise of private collections heralded a new form of patronage in which the collections amassed were housed for public appreciation. This private collection-turn-institution of the twentieth century paved the way for a model of patronage still prevalent today. The mere act of collecting is not patronage. Patronage denotes an engagement from the inception of a work of art, custodianship once in private hands, and its public display.

Collection and patronage of the arts by private individuals reached a pinnacle with American collectors in the twentieth century, which was surpassed in the 1980s by the Japanese and now with the rapidly rising economies of China, Russia, and the Middle East. Once reserved as a governmental activity, private collectors across the globe establish non-profit foundations and exhibition spaces to share their art with the public.

Considered a form of philanthropy and civic responsibility, especially for collectors of the Middle East, the encouragement and patronage of art is vital to the sustained production of cultural heritage. In burgeoning art scenes such as the Middle East, the emphasis is on creation and education, for the immediate region and larger world.





Art has always played an integral role in politics. A powerful tool for raising social awareness, propagandizing the strength and cultural prestige of a nation, and inducing political change, artists throughout history have been employed by Emperors, Kings and Presidents. Governments also subsidize the formation of national institutions for the conservation, promotion and education of their cultural patrimony.

Two examples of governmental patronage are the NEA in the US and the Patrons of the Arts Awards in the UAE. The NEA, National Endowment for the Arts, was created in 1965 as an independent agency to support and promote artistic endeavors, providing grants to museums and other arts projects. Its predecessor, the Works Progress Administration, developed after the first World War, utilized artists in a manner that was two-fold. Reminiscent of the works created under the Pax Augusta, the WPA created jobs for a class of citizens that were unemployable after the war, employing the skills of painters, architects, sculptors and artisans to rebuild America, testifying its endurance and prominence as a world leader in strength and culture.

The Patrons of the Arts Awards, created in 2010, is awarded by Dubai Culture to honor the individuals or organizations which provide financial or in-kind patronage to Dubai-based artists, cultural projects and institutions engaged in the visual or performing arts, literature, and film. The award is paramount in recognizing those individuals who are shaping the cultural scene of Dubai and creating a social, economical, and educational platform for the arts in the UAE.

Though art has long been supported by government agencies, the two have an adversarial relationship. Artists retained under political sponsorship are typically employed in the propagandizing of a political cause. When artists use their canvases to critique policy, highlight corruption, and provide vivid accounts of war, governmental patronage of the arts is often threatened.

Corporations have evolved into one of the most powerful art patrons of the twenty-first century. Their sponsorship is integral to the production of many large-scale exhibitions, art fairs and biennales. Though the duration of underwriting for these events is usually short term, corporations also actively engage in developing richly varied, prestigious art collections to display in their headquarters and loan to public institutions. Understanding the value of patronizing the arts for projecting a positive public image and furthering their brand identity, corporations also collect art to diversify their portfolio of speculative investments. Corporations have become so engrained in the fabric of arts patronage that early on in 1968, Esquire Magazine established the Business in the Arts Award for the most cutting-edge partnership between business and the art community.

Contemporary artists are no longer under the financial protection of a single individual. Many function as independent agents of their art and are therefore reliant on foundation and governmental grants and prizes to support their production. The classical commission structure of portraiture is no longer relevant in the contemporary art world where artists work in conceptual formats and present dissenting voices, and it is by the grace of the private and corporate collections that art of this nature has a place in the market.

In addition to corporations, private collectors, and government sponsorship, dealers have emerged



as patrons involved in the production and promotion of the arts, providing stipends and assisting with production costs to the artists they represent.

There is debate as to whether patronage is beneficial or malignant to the independent creation of art. Inherent in the contract of commissions is the ability for the patron to dictate to a certain degree the medium, tone, and aesthetic of a work of art. In our present world, corporate sponsorship of large-scale museum exhibitions is common place, and where donors once made vain appearances in medieval art works, museum halls are placarded with the names of the corporations providing endowments. Private collectors are often vilified as amassing collections in order to drive the market interest of particular artists or use art as a means of self-promotion. Even dealer patronage has been accused of manipulating the true essence of artistic creation for financial gain. Yet even with the disparagement of contemporary patronage models, it is undeniable that present day patrons are leaders in perpetuating artistic creativity and are fundamental to the encouragement, education and market of visual culture. Patronage of the arts must be viewed as an investment in human social production, and without the support, mentorship and inspiration of patrons there would be little sustained artistic creation.

As Mishaal Al Gergawi of Dubai Culture stated, "Patronage is the catalyst that drives the growth of the arts. Art continues to thrive under the generous support of like-minded people, who understand and appreciate the importance of providing a sounding board for creative individuals to flourish. The role patrons play in the development of the arts is not only paramount to the development of the cultural scene, but is also a sign of social awareness of an integrated civil society where member of the community support, communicate and react to creative thought."

Into this realm of inspired patrons who further the flourishing of the arts is a new breed of patron, no longer confined into a single model of patronage. The hybrid patron is engaged in collecting, mentoring, financially sponsoring, promoting and dealing in works of art.

Khaled and Hisham Samawi are characteristic of this new generation of patrons. As the founders of Ayyam Gallery in Dubai, Beirut and Damascus, they have been influential in the advancement of the Middle Eastern art scene, initiating The Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator and mentorship program for young artists to develop their raw talent. The Ayyam Art Center in Dubai routinely hosts exhibitions for the public to engage with the substantial private collection of contemporary works of art from the seminal and emerging artists of the Middle East and larger world.

It is through public exhibitions and the promotion of emerging talents that art will continue to thrive and inspire generations to come. 'The Samawi Collection II' provides a comprehensive look into the realms of contemporary photography and conceptual art by presenting museum-quality works from emerging and established artists from the immediate region as well as France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Korea, and the United States. Bridging continents, national borders and divergent cultural identities, this exhibition presents a platform for the viewer to engage with each artwork's powerful and globally relevant statement of our integrated society.

Lee Ann Biddle

Lee Ann Biddle was born in 1984 and raised in Miami, Florida. She attended University of Miami and received her BA in Art History with a double minor in Sociology and Legal Studies. After graduation, she moved to Paris for several months to focus solely on her passion, attending readings at institutions such as Shakespeare and Company and writing as often as she could. She completed her MA in Early European History of Art and Connoisseurship at Christie's Education, London and returned to Paris in 2009 to continue a course of intensive French at La Sorbonne. She has since worked in various London commercial art galleries promoting the talents of emerging conceptual artists and in 2011, relocated to Dubai to work with a private art foundation and collection. In 2012, she began writing in a full-time capacity.

- Lee Ann Biddle



Ammar Abd Rabbo

Syria, born 1966

Born in Damascus in 1966, Abd Rabbo lived in Libya and Lebanon prior to ultimately residing in France in 1978. As one of the Arab world's most important photojournalists, his work has been published in the world's most widely circulated publications, from the Time Magazine, to Paris Match, Der Spiegel, Le Monde, and Asharq Al Awsat, where he signed more than 60 magazine covers. Spanning a twenty-year career, his portfolio amassed intimate portraits of heads of states, war coverage in Iraq, Lebanon and Libya, world-renowned celebrities like the late King of Pop, Michael Jackson, as well as high society events such as the Cannes Film Festival and Paris Fashion Week.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip (not seen on the photograph) await French President Jacques Chirac and his wife Bernadette at Windsor Castle

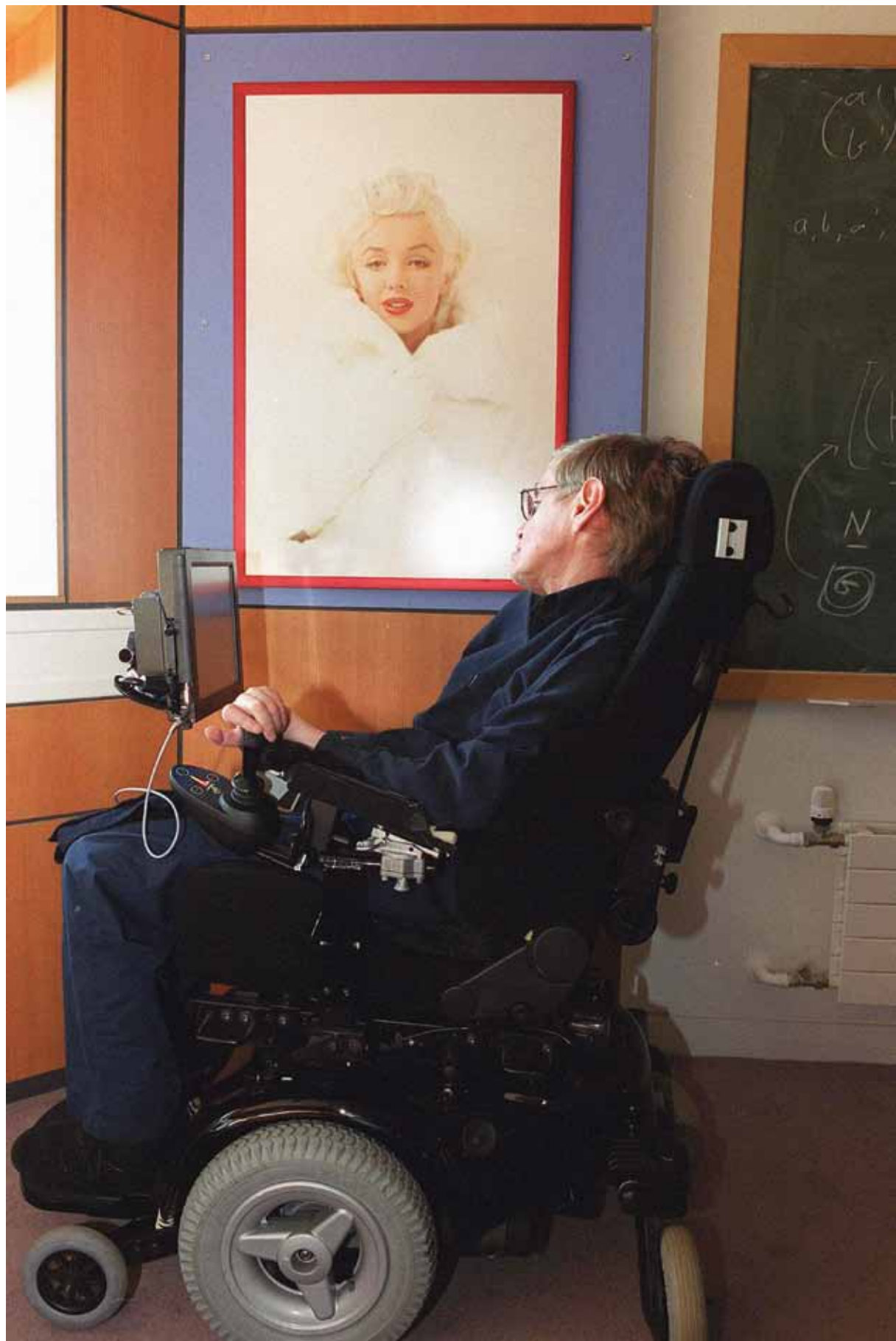
2004

Photography on Archival Paper

80 x 60 cm.

Edition 1 out of 5





British physicist Stephen Hawking, next to a photo of his idol, US star Marilyn Monroe, in his office at the University of Cambridge where he teaches Applied Mathematics

2001

Photography on Archival Paper

80 X 60 cm.

Edition I out of 5

2001

Photography on Archival Paper

80 X 60 cm.

Edition I out of 5



Ebtisam Abdulaziz

United Arab Emirates, born 1975

Born in Sharjah in 1975, Ebtisam Abdulaziz is a multidisciplinary Emirati artist whose work has played an immense role in the spearheading of contemporary art on a national level despite initially being trained in science and mathematics. Exhibiting regularly since 2001, Abdulaziz has frequently participated in the Sharjah Biennial and has represented the UAE in international group shows and events such as the groundbreaking 'Languages of the Desert', organized by the Kunst Museum in Bonn, Germany, and the inaugural Emirati pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2009. Internationally recognized, her work has been featured notable publications such as Bidoun, The Guardian, and W Magazine.

Life in a Bag 22

2009

Digital Print on Aluminum

30 x 42 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Ebtisam Abdulaziz's photographs and videos explore the compiling of information as it is used to form individual narratives. She examines the place of the individual in society and how daily interactions, or representations of such, may be manipulated through the added element of technology. Fascinated by screening devices at airports, Abdulaziz employed x-ray photographs of the handbags of visitors to the Sharjah Art Center Ladies Club, of which she heads, to display the ease at which a small amount of information may inform an identity. The ghostly images of the x-ray and gathering of character information, position the viewer as voyeur.

This handbag portrays the personality of a wealthy woman who enjoys designer labels, as evidenced by the trademark Lacoste alligator on a cosmetics pouch and the wallet filled with credit cards. Extremely organized, with every thing encased in its place, an agenda displays a busy schedule that does not threaten her appearance as her comb is always kept close by.



Youssef Abdelke

Syria, born 1951

Born in Kamishli, Syria in 1951, Youssef Abdelke graduated from Damascus University's Faculty of Fine Arts in the late 1970s. Immigrating to France shortly after, he received a diploma in etching from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts and later went on to complete a PhD in Plastic Arts from University VIII of Paris in 1989.

In addition to his etchings, drawings and collages, Abdelke has worked in various areas of graphic art and is well known for his posters, logos and book covers. He has authored over 30 children's books and has published several texts on the history of caricature in Syria and the Arab world. Having exhibited throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe, his artworks can be found in the National Museum of Damascus, the National Museum of Kuwait, the British Museum, and many other public institutions. With an extensive oeuvre that has been decades in the making, Abdelke's subject matter has ranged from highly political social satire to meditative still lifes.



Part of a Poem by Nazih Abou-Afach

2002

Charcoal on Paper

60 x 190 cm.

Captivated with poetry and considering it closest to genuine human sentiment, Abdelke has incorporated verses from one of his favorite poets, Nazih Abou-Afach, into his charcoal on paper diptych work, Part of a Poem by Nazih Abou-Afach. Renowned for his stunning monochrome charcoal on paper still life drawings that push mundane objects through the realm of realism to that of symbolism, Abdelke presents the still life of a dead man in this diptych. As with Abdelke's other still life drawings, the viewer questions who this man is and what has transpired. The dimensions of the works enhance the ominous tone, long and narrow like the coffin this body will rest in for eternity. The verses of poetry that drip like tears down the paper state,

'What happens on earth?

What happens in the sky?

When a woman opens a coffin's cover and screams... Oh my son'

Abdelke's still life captures the moment this mother screams for her martyred son. The viewer invades this grief-stricken hour and is presented with the singular truth, that in the moment after death no lies, fantasies or forgeries remain, and all is clearly seen in the harsh light of reality.

Ammar Al Beik

Syria, born 1972

Born in Damascus, Syria in 1972, Ammar Al Beik's artistic career stems from unconventional roots. After leaving the University of Damascus where he was pursuing a degree in business administration, his love for photography intensified while working at a camera repair shop. Al Beik has exhibited his photographs since the mid 1990s, at a time when he simultaneously began an impressive career in filmmaking, which has earned critical acclaim from audiences and juries across the globe and has received a number of distinctions. Having participated in screenings worldwide since 1999, his films have been featured at such events as the Venice and San Paulo International Film Festivals. His invitation to the 63rd Annual Venice Film Festival in 2006, where he received the award for best documentary, was a first in the history of Syrian cinema. Equally accomplished in both genres, his photographs have been shown in venues throughout the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Since joining Ayyam gallery in 2007, Al Beik has participated in solo and group exhibitions. In 2011, he returned to the Venice Film Festival with the short film *The Sun's Incubator*, a work that explores the domestic effects of the 'Arab Spring'.



Colored Earth

2010

Installation

This installation by acclaimed photographer and filmmaker, Ammar Al Beik, demonstrates the range by which art can find its realization. Forever embracing experimentation, Al Beik utilizes everyday objects to assist him in his process of artistic creation in *Colored Earth*. Originally utilized to paint the exteriors of facades in cities and villages of Syria, Al Beik re-appropriates this traditional flicker hand wall coating sprayer from its classical purpose to the role of paintbrush, guiding pigment onto the canvas in a Dadaist fashion. Where this sprayer once spouted earth tones onto facades, Al Beik has injected bright colors to enliven both the drab rural life of Syria and place the anonymous artisan within the realm of artist. Within the row of portraits of these unknown artists, Andy Warhol holds a sign stating he is a visitor to the exhibition. Ammar Al Beik uses the image of Warhol to honor the work of these anonymous artisans who daily produce their own artistic creations without recognition. Incorporating elements of video, sculpture, painting and photography, Al Beik presents the complete process to his audience, from jarred pigments to individual hanging flicker hand wall coating sprayers and portraits of the unknown artisans alongside a video documenting the production of this piece. The installation culminates in the final work; a large gilded painting featuring twenty-three of the individual works created from the fourteen flicker hand wall coating sprayers embedded with one archival print referencing his previous collection of photographic works.





Manal AlDowayan

Saudi Arabia, born 1973

Born in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia in 1973, Manal AlDowayan holds a Master's degree in System Analysis and Design and received further artistic training through courses and workshops at various institutions in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Dubai and London. Her work has been reproduced in several local and international publications and has been exhibited in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and North America. Her black and white images have been closely associated with the touring exhibition, 'Edge of Arabia', which was first exhibited at the Brunei Gallery SOAS in London and went on to be featured in the 53rd Venice Biennale. Her works are housed in the permanent collections of the British Museum, the Jordan National Gallery, the Delfina Foundation, the Barjeel Art Foundation, and the Jameel Foundation.

I am a...Doctor

2009

From the series, 'I AM'

Silver Gelatin Print on Fiber-based Paper

47 x 33 cm.

Edition 7 out of 10

Wearing the traditional burqa elaborated with gold coins with a stethoscope and scrubs beneath, Manal AlDowayan has presented her subject in the profession of a doctor, a vital career in any society. Aligned to the side of the frame, the subject peers on from a profile stance into the camera, not wholly accepting her role, as hesitant as the ellipses of the artwork title, I am a...Doctor.

The void to her right signifies a longing, as does the side-glance of her darkly rimmed eyes. The jeweled burqa positioned prominently across her face presents an apparent barrier to the conception of Saudi women engaged in such positions.



Wrapped

From the series, 'Look Beyond the Veil'

2009

Silver Gelatin Print on Fiber-based Paper

47 x 33 cm.

Edition 8 out of 10

From her series, 'Look Beyond the Veil', Manal AlDowayan's stunning portrait, Wrapped, depicts a woman layered in delicately embroidered fabric, with one eye uncovered. AlDowayan's objective is here met, as it simply forces the viewer to take more time and further observe the portrait, looking beyond the partial view of the subject's face and past her method of attire to reflect on the personality of the woman hidden beneath the folds. With time, the elements of the face are revealed to the viewer. Emphasizing the veil as a barrier that grants only a partial view into one facet of a woman and her desires, AlDowayan displays the complexity of the Western gaze on veiled women of the Arab region and encourages a deeper understanding of the individuals that lie beneath.



I am an...Interior Decorator
 2008
 From the series, 'I AM'
 Silver Gelatin Print on Fiber-based Paper
 33 x 47 cm.
 Edition 3 out of 10

Particularly interested in drawing upon the relationship between historical and contemporary gender roles in the Arab world, Manal AlDowayan's portraits portray the shift in perception and the ability of woman to pursue careers that were once out of reach. I am an...Interior Decorator finds our heroine dressed in traditional attire with beautiful ornamentation peering at the viewer from behind a stack of blueprints. Reversing the gender stereotypes herself, AlDowayan maintains an international career as Saudi Arabia's most recognized female artist and lectures about gender roles and photography in art classes around the Gulf. AlDowayan's photographs portray the expansion of Saudi woman into the workforce, yet there is a sense of timidity present in each of her images. The disruption between a piece of jewelry positioned obstructively symbolizes the barriers faced by women and questions the cultural traditions which prevent woman from expanding their roles in Saudi society.



I am a....Scuba Diver
 2008
 From the series, 'I AM'
 Silver Gelatin Print on Fiber-based Paper
 33 x 47 cm.
 Edition 7 out of 10

Manal AlDowayan does not break with tradition in her subject's portrayal; she remains covered by a headscarf with characteristically kohl-rimmed eyes. Although fabric does not veil the bottom portion of her face, the breathing apparatus of the scuba gear does cover her nose and mouth in a similar fashion. The composition of I am a....Scuba Diver is not centered, the subject strays towards the left of the frame, though she engages the viewer fully. AlDowayan stated that it is the history of the Arab woman that inspires her, yet it is the modern Arab woman that motivates and gives her courage to continue her own work and through this work she captures one facet of that modern Arab woman.



And We Had No Shared Dreams
 2010
 Archival Gicle e-Prints Mounted on Dibond & Aluminum lettering LED Back Lights
 93 X 140 cm.
 Edition 1 out of 2

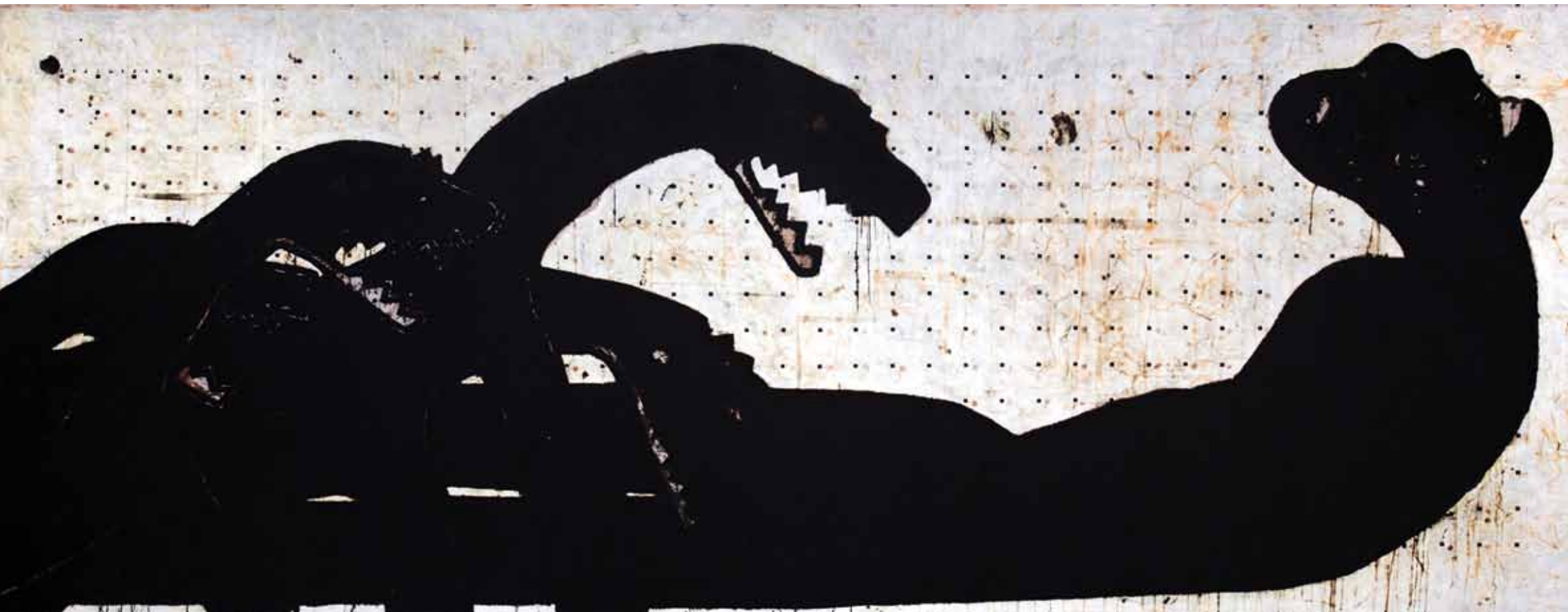
Sadik Alfraji

Iraq, born 1960



Born in Baghdad in 1960, Sadik Alfraji studied at the Institute of Fine Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Iraq, from which he graduated with a diploma and degree in plastic arts, respectively. In 2000, he pursued a High Diploma in Graphic Design from the CHK Constantijn Huygens in the Netherlands, where he presently resides. Having participated in exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the US since the 1980s, his work is housed in the collections of the National Museum of Modern Art in Iraq, The National Gallery and the Khalid Shoman Foundation in Jordan, the Novosibirsk State Art Museum in Russia, and the Cluj-Napoca Art Museum in Romania. Alfraji was invited to produce new work for 'Told/Untold/Retold', the inaugural exhibition of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar.

A visual artist, print maker and designer, Alfraji has often blended art and philosophy as a means of expanding the formalistic and conceptual boundaries of his aesthetic. His mixed media compositions explore a variety of themes, from the universal human condition to experiences of exile and fragmentation.

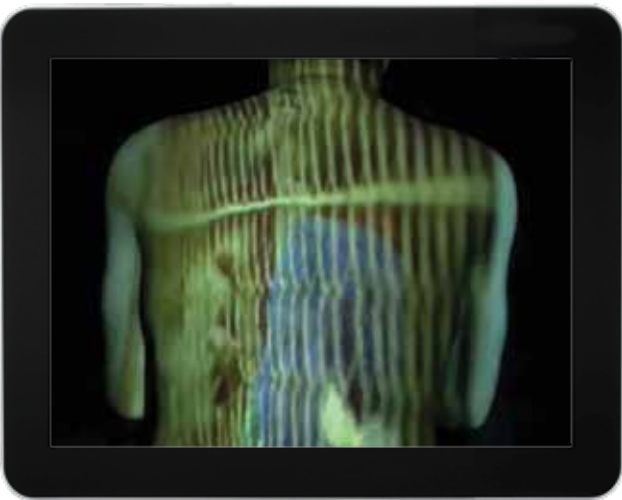
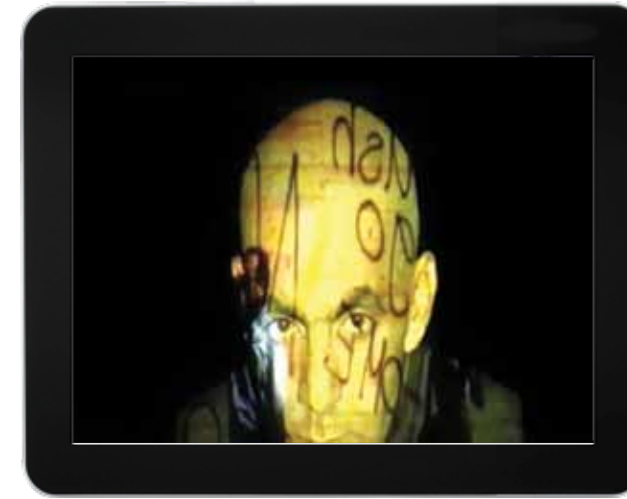


In the Name of Freedom

2007

Indian Ink and Rice Paper on Canvas

300 X 800 cm.



Born April 9th
2007
15 Channel Video Installation

As Sadik Alfraji states about his project, "This exhibition is not a description of a war or a daily death lived in Iraq. It is a birth certificate of a plague that filled the air in the name of 'Freedom', a freedom that has been dreamed of by the Iraqis for generations. I invite you to read the picture, not to look at it."

Combining the painting, *In the Name of Freedom*, with a 14 channel video installation, each image provides another page to be decoded by the viewer. Upon the body of the artist, various scenes unveil. Moving in a pattern from his turning head, to his open palm pointing in a specific direction, cupped hands, and finally projected on his back, it is almost as if Alfraji lets us into his mind, showing us the scenes which have imprinted themselves into his memory. Scenes flash of wounded people, aerial maps and explosion sites of Baghdad, walking soldiers, a crying woman, restrained men, and an aggressive dog interspersed with images of the American flag and graffiti sentiments telling the foreign soldiers to return home. This powerful installation portrays the hardships the people of Iraq have faced during the war and no image is more powerful than that on an open palm showing a soldier pointing his rifle at a young girl standing before him. Using his body as the canvas, Alfraji positions himself as the vehicle of representation for all Iraqis who have witnessed the destruction of war firsthand, and allows the viewer to visually read these secrets and experiences of turmoil endured by those in war torn countries.

This project has been shown in 2007-2008 at Stedelijk Museum in the Netherlands, curated by Elly Stegeman and Jos Poodt, and from 2008-2009 at the Station Museum in Houston, Texas, curated by James Harithas and Alan Schnitger.

Halim Al Karim

Iraq, born 1963

Born in Iraq in 1963, Halim Al Karim received an undergraduate degree in Ceramics from the Baghdad Academy of Fine Arts in 1988, and later attended the Gerrit Reitveld Academy in Amsterdam. Having exhibited abroad since 1992, his work has been featured in international events such as the Venice Biennale, Art Abu Dhabi, and the Bastakiya Art Fair. In recent years, Al Karim has had solo exhibitions in venues such as XVA Gallery in Dubai, Darat Al Funun in Amman, and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art in the USA. His work can presently be found in the collections of the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, The Barjeel Art Foundation in Sharjah, The Farjam Collection in Dubai and The Victoria & Albert Museum in London, among others.

Known for his out-of-focus images in which a veil of silk creates an added layer of distance between his subjects and their viewers, his works often speak of issues of power, violence, and collective memory. Having experienced unimaginable hardships during his time in Iraq, he injects his own narrative into the seemingly hidden narratives of his photographs. For the artist, "these techniques, which have become the hallmark of my work, are a means to overcome the effects of politics and deception and, in turn, transform me and the camera into a single truth seeking entity."

Hidden Love 3

From the series, 'Hidden Love'

2009

Lambda Print

145 x 110 cm.

Edition of 5



Abstracting and diffusing his portraits, Halim Al Karim invites the viewer to meditate on the clear referent of the eyes and the blurred periphery. Similar to his 'Urban Witness' series, the innocently beautiful faces are cloaked in a grey mist of anonymity and their mouths are taped in forced silence. Yet in the series 'Hidden Love', Al Karim significantly utilizes a vivid and wide-ranging color palette to depict various human emotions. Through the overlaid color, the subjects of these photographs reveal their stories, love and pain. Aspiring to portray his perspective on politics, conflict, and life, and resist being part of the reality of violence and the deception in politics, Al Karim creates universal figures that express his views through their beauty and present the truth in their clear, wide eyes.



Untitled

From the series, 'Urban Witness'

2002

Lambda Print

3 x (73 x 53 cm.)

Artist Proof Edition 2 out of 2



Begun in 2002, Halim Al Karim's 'Urban Witness' series provides a social critique on the psychological state of Iraqis during the Gulf War. Particularly concerned with collective memory of times of violence and its subsequent effect on the urban population, Halim utilizes photographic abstraction to present the viewer with illusionary images in a constant struggle of what is seen and what is hidden.

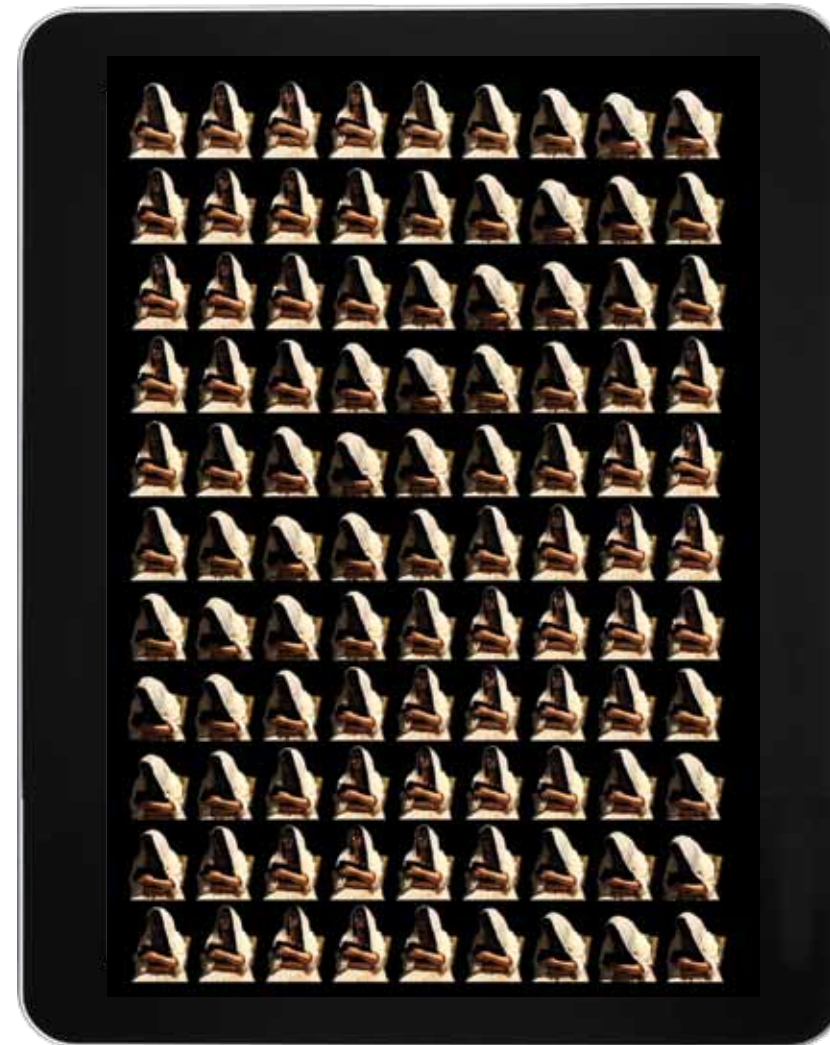
The portions of the photographs that are clear are notably the eyes, forcing the gaze of the viewer to consider the reasons for the clear sight, yet forced silence of these figures. These figures in the photograph clearly observe the atrocities happening around them, yet are veiled in disillusion and detachment. Mouths covered, they speak of what they witness to no one thereby erasing their purpose as a witness to these events. Though attractive and innocent, each figure is marked with distrust and confusion, reflecting their perceptions of the outer world.

Halim Al Karim has described this series as, "a form of self-preservation and an act of resistance, a mentality adopted by many Iraqis... You are witnessing this violence and you cannot talk about it, yet you cannot hide the beauty of your soul which appears through your eyes."

Sama Alshaibi

Iraq, born 1973

Sama Alshaibi's art evokes the language of dislocation and loss, articulating negotiations between body, disputed lands, and shifting political realities. A photographer, installation and time-based artist, Alshaibi has exhibited in over 20 countries including Selma Feriani Gallery in London, Exit Art in New York, Al Hoash in Jerusalem, DARB in Cairo, The Bronx Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver. In 2010, she participated in a travelling group show, 'Hiwar', in Tunis and Cairo with Adel Abidin, Nadia-Kaabi Linke and Moatez Nasr, amongst others. Her time-based works screened in numerous film festivals internationally, including the Thessaloniki International Film Festival in Greece, CinemaEast Film Festival in New York, DOKUFEST in Kosovo, and MidEast Cut in Copenhagen and Helsinki. Her works are part of notable collections and Baghdadi Mem/Wars project was recently acquired for the forthcoming Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Tunis. In 2010, she was listed as the one to watch in the 2010 ArtTactic Middle East Report. Alshaibi is an Assistant Professor of Photography and Video Art at the University of Arizona.



vs. the Son

2011

From the series, 'vs. Him'

Video Art

H66 x W45.7 x D7.6 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Sama Alshaibi's project, 'vs. Him', explores the prototypes of Middle Eastern masculinity and patriarchy and their manifestations in contrast with a female protagonist. Inspired by the Arab Spring, Alshaibi contemplated on whether the newly found voice of the Arab youth would alter the ingrained gender inequality. Her aim is to present thought-provoking photography and video installations that challenge this gender inequality.

In this single channel video, Alshaibi presents ninety-nine separate images of a mother rocking a child. The veiled figure is reminiscent of a Renaissance pieta and her use of ninety-nine images alludes to the ninety-nine names of Allah. Vs. The Son explores the relationship of the mother and son in Arab culture. While the mother feels blessed to have a child, in Middle Eastern society, she is burdened by her role to produce male children who will inherit the father's family name.

The repetitive undulation of the white veil as the figure rocks sweeps across the screen in an almost meditative fashion. Soothing, like being rocked as a child, the white veil against the dark background transfigures into a trickling of petals or the rippled folds of a fabric being shaken. This lends a particular femininity to the work, focusing the attention of the viewer onto the role of the woman.



Chul-Hyun Ahn

South Korea, born 1971

Korean artist Chul-Hyun Ahn received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Chugye University for the Arts in Seoul, Korea. In 1997, he moved to the United States and received a Master of Fine Arts from the Mount Royal School at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore in 2002. Soon after he had his first exhibition with C. Grimaldis Gallery in the winter of 2003 in a solo exhibition titled 'Infinity'. Since 2003, Chul-Hyun Ahn has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally, and his work can be found in numerous important private and public collections.

In a review of Ahn's C. Grimaldis Gallery solo exhibition in 2008, 'Phenomena: Visual Echo', art critic Cara Ober wrote: "What does infinity look like? Chul-Hyun Ahn's show of thirteen mirrored light boxes answered this question over and over, in subtly different ways. The constructions of plywood and fluorescent light with exposed electrical cords unavoidably recall Donald Judd and Dan Flavin, but Ahn uses these industrial materials to a different end."



Void Platform

2011

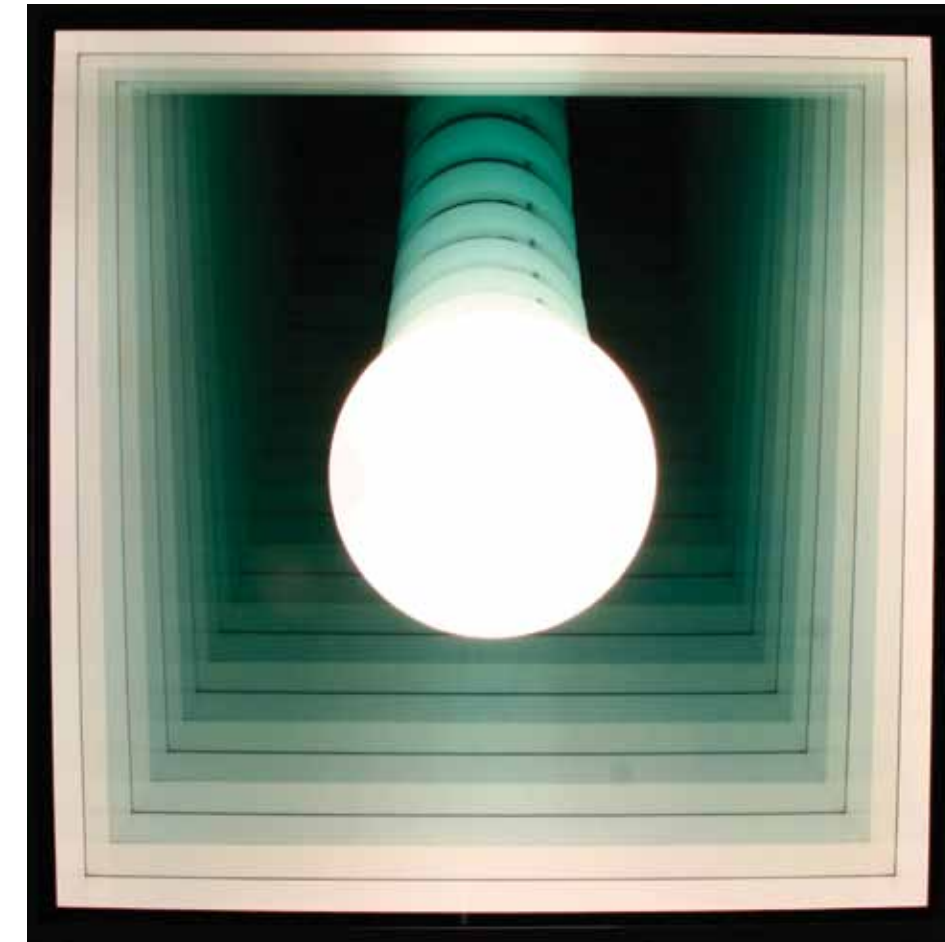
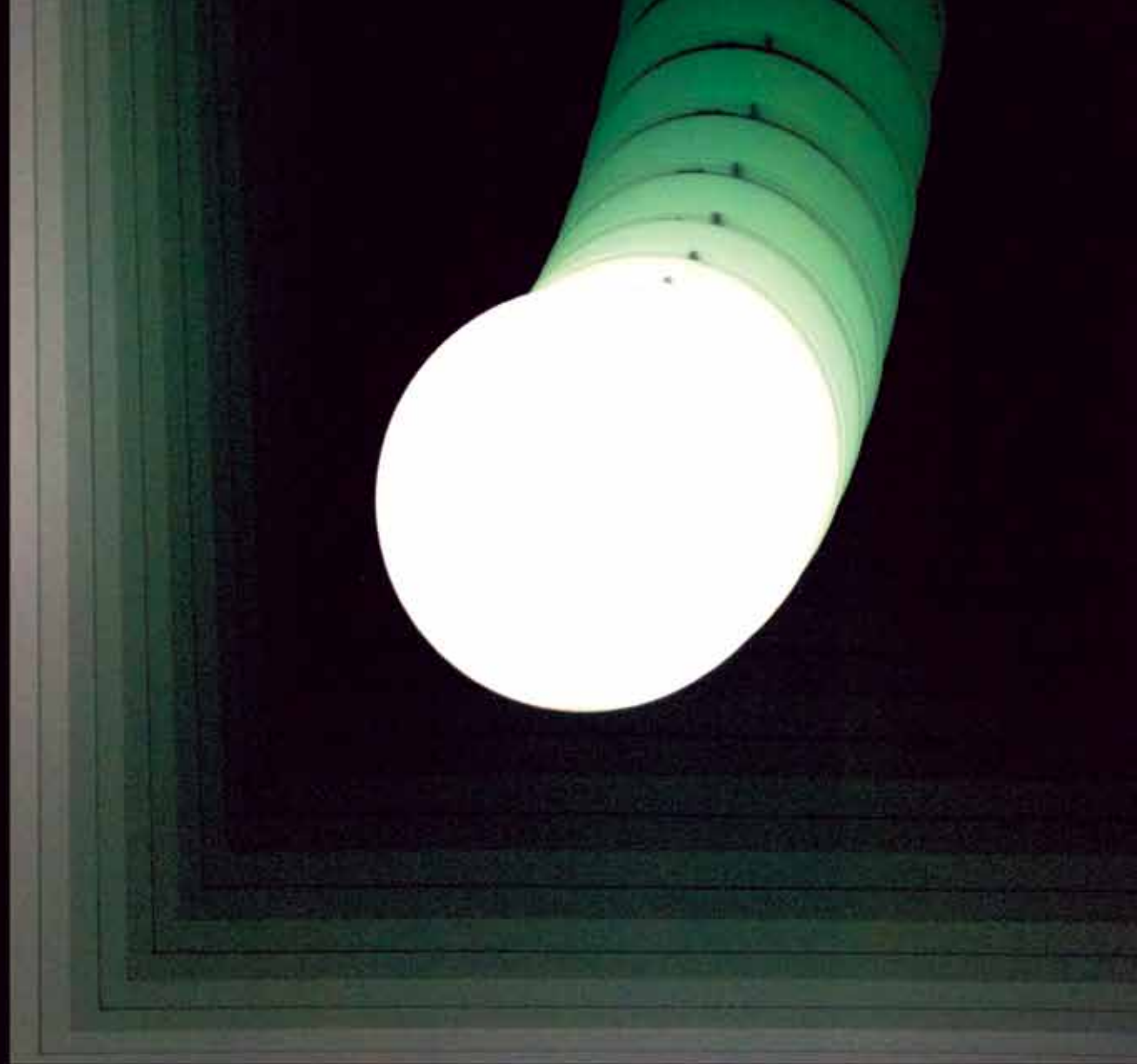
Installation of Plywood, Mirror, Acrylic and
Fluorescent Light

H40.5 x W241 x D305 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Chul-Hyun Ahn's interest in the gap between the conscious and subconscious compels him to construct illusionistic environments providing a space for contemplation. The viewer engages with this installation, Void Platform, by standing atop the work. When gazing down, an infinite abyss is created beneath the viewer. This optical and bodily illusion of infinite and limitless space, created through the utilization of light and color, investigates the relationship of man to his physical environments, the void emphasizing meditation and spiritual travel.





Visual Echo Experiment

2007

Plywood, Light and Mirror

H80 x W80 x D14 cm.

Chul-Hyun Ahn translates geometric painting and the Zen practice of meditation into an art of light, space and technology, enticing the viewer to look deeply into his frame of environments. Visual Echo Experiment creates an optical illusion of a circle of light traveling into limitless space. Reminiscent of a sound wave traveling through a vacuum, this work invites the contemplation of the eternal echo of spoken words.

Ansen

Turkey, born 1978

Turkish artist Ansen was born in Kayseri, Turkey, in 1978. He obtained his Bachelors degree in Painting from the Mimar Sinan Faculty of Fine Arts. Ansen has held four solo exhibitions at x-ist' between 2004 and 2009 entitled, 'x-ist-ence', 'Resistance', 'Menace', and 'The Trace'. He also participated in international group exhibitions and Biennials such as The Contemporary Istanbul 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2010, the Cologne Art Fair in 2006, the China International Gallery Exposition, Beijing, in 2008, Shanghai Asia Pacific Contemporary Art Fair, in 2009, 'Tradition of the New: New Aspects in Contemporary Asian Art' at Sakshi Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan and 'Confessions of Dangerous Minds' at the Saatchi Gallery in London. Ansen's works have also been featured in Sotheby's Contemporary Turkish Art Auction in 2009. Ansen presently resides and works in Istanbul.



The Paranoid

2004

Diasek Monoprint

70 x 100 cm.



Abel and Cain

2011

Diasek Monoprint

125 x 236 cm.

Ansen's Abel and Cain presents one of the most infamous stories of the Bible. The offspring of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel signify the first murderer and martyr. Cain, the eldest son, worked the land while Abel was a shepherd. Both presented gifts to God, Abel gave his first born and fattest sheep and Cain, a bag of his crops. God accepted Abel's gift over Cain's and Cain later killed Abel in revenge. Cain was then cursed that any land he worked would not yield crops. In Ansen's rendition, the viewer is positioned looking down upon the scene. Cain has just slain his brother and raises his fist with a vengeance towards the heavens. The barren cracked earth displays the punishment Cain sustained for this murder. The immediacy of the position of the viewer and the desolate monochrome strongly contrasted with the richly hued bloodstain emphasizes the brutality of this traitorous act.

Lara Atallah

Lebanon, born 1989

Lara Atallah was born in Beirut in 1989, and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from the American University of Beirut. Passionate about photography and armed with both an insatiable fascination with her urban surroundings as well as a limitless curiosity, she aims to explore the dynamics of life in the city through the depiction of objects, spaces and people.



The Girl with the Fuchsia Hair

2011

Photography on Archival Paper

96 x 80 cm.

Edition 1 out of 5

Unidentifiable, with her face partially concealed behind her long colored hair, her gaze positioned away from the camera staring at something outside of the audience's sight, this woman intrigues. The viewer questions who this slightly out of focus woman is and what has captured her attention. It is this captivating sense of intrigue that Lara Atallah wished to create with this portrait titled, The Girl with the Fuschia Hair. Atallah's aim is further enhanced by the contradictory nature of the woman and her surroundings. The tiling and the derbake furnishings are reminiscent of traditional Lebanese heritage, yet the juxtaposition of this conventional space and the modern subject with her brightly colored hair provokes further consideration of her relation to such a space.





Pandora's Box of Madness

2012

Photography on Archival Paper

105 x 68 cm.

Edition I out of 5

In classical Greek mythology, Pandora was the first woman on Earth, crafted by the God Hephaestus at the request of Zeus. She was presented with a beautiful container that she was not to open under any circumstance. Curiosity consumed her and she opened it, releasing all the evil contained within. Realizing her error, she hastened to close the container but the contents had escaped except for one thing that lay at the bottom, which was hope. Lara Atallah's adaptation is a commentary on the current situation in the Middle East where all hell has broken loose and the element of hope that many cling to is found in the intimacy in which they seek refuge.

Mad Hatter

2012

Photography on Archival Paper

105 x 68 cm.

Edition I out of 5

Social media outlets have created a pseudo-world in which we are the masters of creation, carefully directing each image and word the audience will see, we craft the distinct personality we wish to portray to the outside world. More often fiction and theatrics than reality, The Mad Hatter represents this contrived performance. Masked, with a fake smile and an 'on air' sign, he plays for the world stage. Presenting this character to the masses, Lara Atallah challenges the veracity of social media platforms and the information they present.



Michel Ayoub

Lebanon, born 1985

Born in Lebanon in 1985, Michel Ayoub's background as a musician and a producer taught him the arts of sound while he recorded and released three demo and two full-length albums. His album, 'Language of The Fairies', was credited on several webzines from its public release in 2006. With a deep interest in logic and the sciences, Ayoub attended the American University of Sciences and Technology and received his BA in Management Information Systems in 2009. He continued to receive his Masters in Fine Arts with Distinction from the University of Southampton in 2011. Ayoub's art practice explores themes around language and its limitations; the dominance of form over content, the female sex, imagination and its ends and the connection between art and the sciences. Research and concept oriented within a social dimension, he views art itself as a tool with the power to shape human nature. He is presently researching the use of speech in the Abrahamic religions of the Middle East and its relationship to the use of speech in Lecture-performance, as well as developing a solo exhibition on the relationship between man and machine.

Rima Chahrour

Lebanon, born 1986

Lebanese artist Rima Chahrour describes herself as "running with a pair of scissors and a needle seeking to cut things and stitch them back into a new hybrid dimension of existence" Having received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Lebanese University in 2008, Rima carried on to follow a short course in Graphic Design at the American University of Beirut, and receive her Masters degree in Fine Arts in 2009 from the University of East London. Rima is presently engaged in a PhD course in Fine Arts at the University of Southampton. Working in various media such as printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, installation and collaborating with other artists, Chahrour's work provokes the perception of reality through conveying existentialist statements with various layers of social illusions. Ideas, colors, and forms are sewn into dolls heaping of playfully poignant artifacts. Chahrour has been extensively exhibited in Lebanon and abroad, including the United Kingdom, New York, Cyprus and Algeria, and in 2011 she was awarded the 'Ministry of Culture Award' from the Ministry of Culture and the Lebanese Art Association.

THE FREAKS

A collaboration between Michel Ayoub
and Rima Chahrour

MAD: A Happy Explosion

2012

Mixed Media Sound Sculpture

H190 x W220 x D350 cm.

An artistic collaboration from 'THE FREAKS', Lebanese artists, Rima Chahrour and Michel Ayoub, MAD: A Happy Explosion represents rebellions with a smile. A large-scale installation piece, MAD: A Happy Explosion bombards the viewer with repeating praises consisting of a series of verses removed from the praising poetry of Al Mutannabi and placed in the context of a common person's blind faith in his leader, echoing present situation in the Middle East. These blind followers are portrayed as deformed figures smiling in the back of an exploded, immobile car. The forms integrate as a single mass, yet this rebellion like the vehicle carrying it, has no foundation and will not proceed. The mutilated corpse of the vehicle, highly polished in the fashion of a child's toy, represents the inherent madness of rebellions. MAD: A Happy Explosion is a vivid reminder of the distortion of the senses during a revolution.



THE FREAKS

Fuchsia Has Spoken

2011

Mixed Media Sound Sculpture

H100 x W100 x D60 cm.



THE FREAKS

MAD: The New Mother

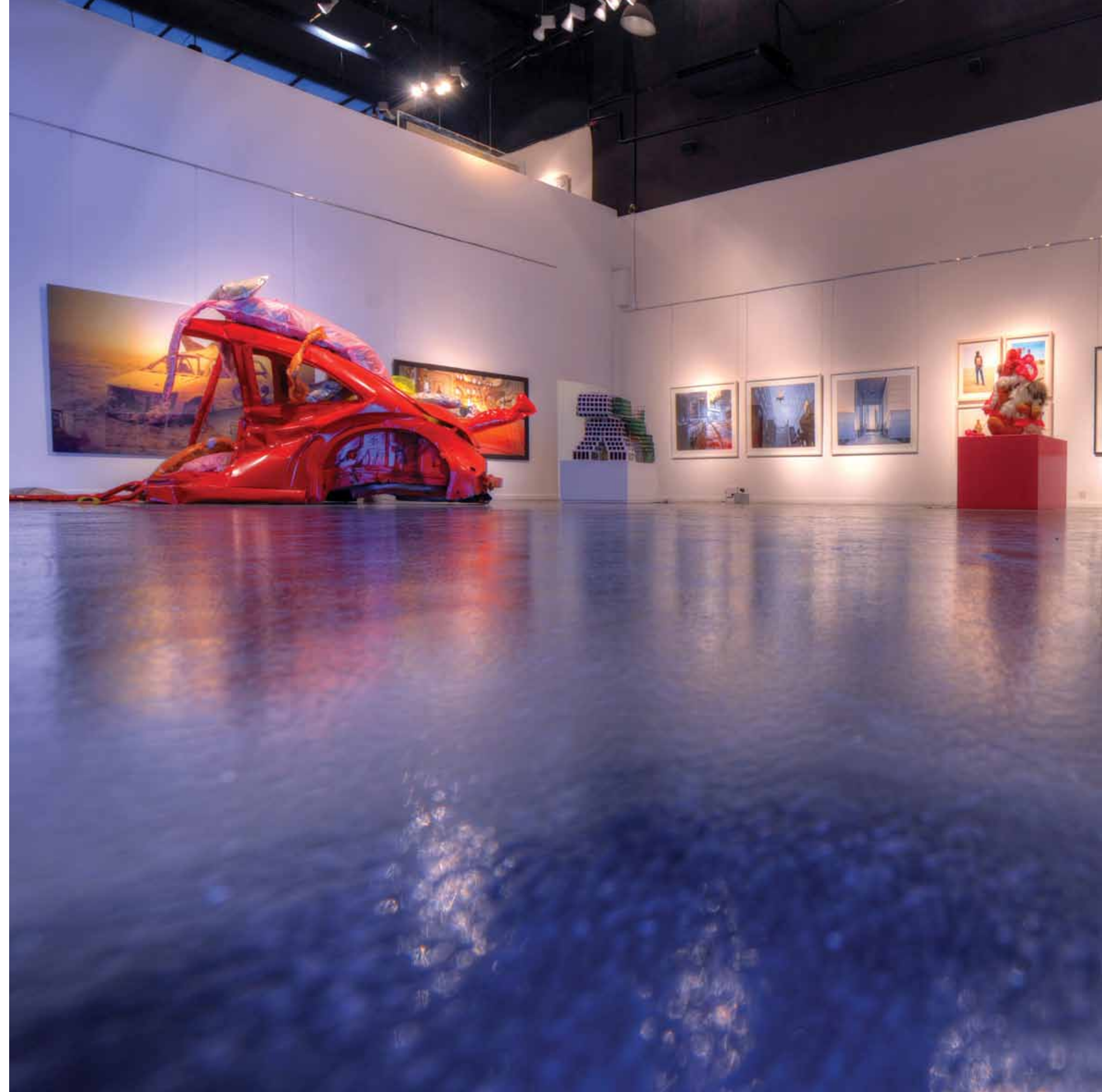
2012

Mixed Media Sound Sculpture

H129 x W120 x D106 cm.

An artistic collaboration between Rima Chahrour and Michel Ayoub, known as 'THE FREAKS', this sculpture presents an intellectually outspoken doll. Once the doll is kissed on the lips it possesses, it will speak to the viewer of art. This speech is not a mere history lesson; it is a violent, yet comical assault on contemporary artists, who have stripped the land of traditional, worthy forms of art. As the speech flows from an obviously contemporary work, the wit lies in that the doll does not realize it too is a form of the contemporary art it questions and calls 'shame'. This speech is based on the traditional attitude towards art that is still prevalent in the Arab World today. Vocalizing the dilemma of the perception of 'art' in the Arab World, being at once stuck between past traditions and contemporary extremes, Rima Chahrour and Michel Ayoub's Fuchsia Has Spoken intend to remove the conflicted perceptions of Arab art and provoke new standards for contemporary art in the region.

This work reflects today's Arab woman, presenting the conflict between the traditional conservative mother and the independent sexually liberated woman. The figure in this work is stuck between heaven and hell. This woman is the new mother of MAD.

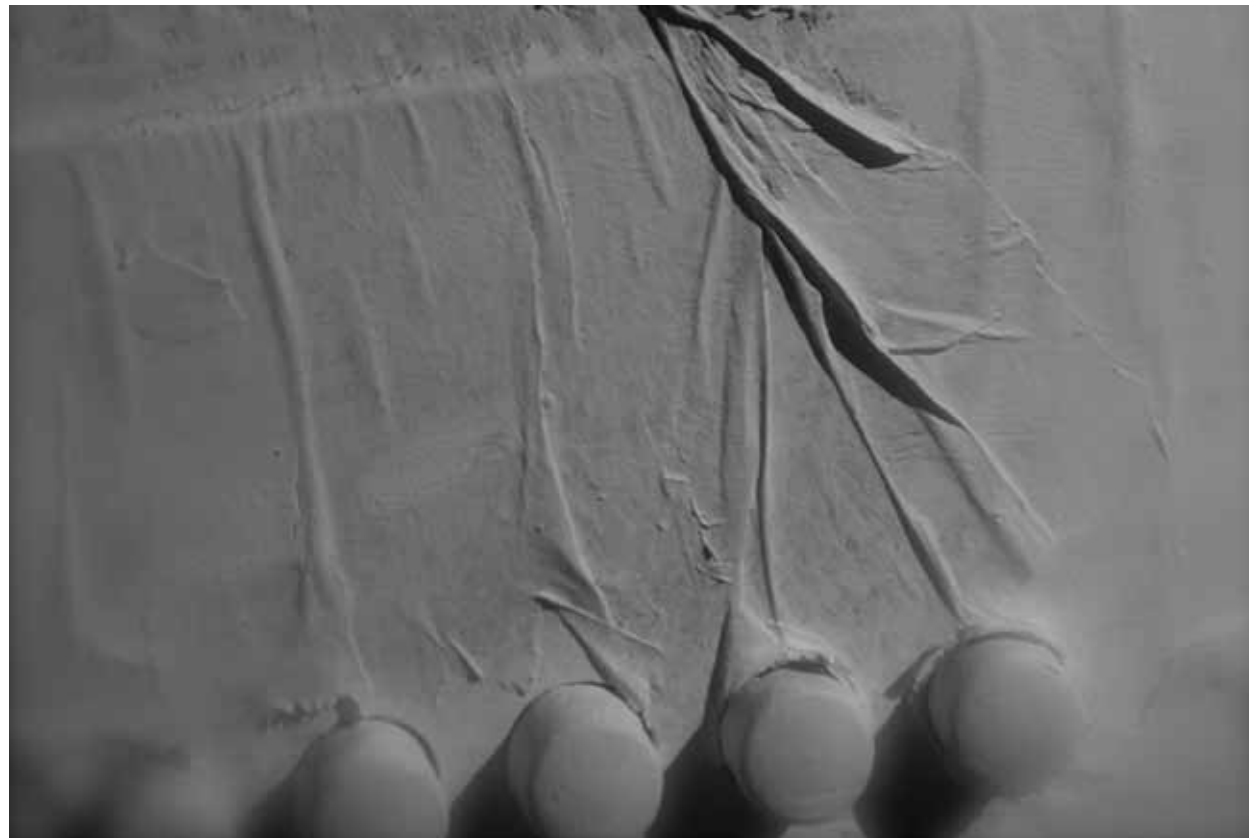


Tammam Azzam

Syria, born 1980

Born in the Syrian capital in 1980, Tammam Azzam graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus with a concentration in oil painting and subsequently obtained a Fine Arts Certificate in 2001 from Darat al Funun's Al Kharif Academy, an esteemed artist workshop series led by Syrian master, Marwan Kassab Bashi. Since joining the Shabab Ayyam Young Artists Programme in 2008, he has been featured in several significant events including the group show, 'Stories from the Levant', Scope Art Fair, Basel, in 2009, and Art Miami 2010.

Azzam's approach to painting focuses on the tactical application of media; how a variety of components can be employed to create depth, texture and space, achieving a striking balance between the ordinary objects that he portrays and the grand terrain that he evokes. Clotheslines with actual pins are often depicted with quick brushwork resulting in compositions infused with a playful yet enigmatic narrative. In the same regard, these inanimate items work to emphasize the vigor of the space around them, as the remainder of the composition is rendered with vivacious strokes and bold markings that imply a sense of movement and energy.



7kg of Brainwashing News

2011

Mixed Media

H84.5 x W60 x D92 cm.

Tammam Azzam's 7kg of Brainwashing News is an evocative piece composed of a washing machine covered with newspaper clippings of the recent uprisings in the Arab region layered with red paint. The soap compartment, also painted red, lies open. Azzam uses this installation as a visual demonstration of the Arab world's 'dirty laundry' on show for the world to see. The revolutions of the Arab Spring and the attempted cleaning of dirty governments is an evident reference, as is the soap compartment representing the bloodshed required to obtain this clean slate. Also questioning the role of the media when portraying the stories, 7kg of Brainwashing News investigates whether the stories are properly informed or contain unclean stories bleached of their original content.





Mohamad Badr

Lebanon, born 1981

Born in 1981, Mohamad Badr is an award-winning Lebanese social entrepreneur, photographer and poet. Inspired by a day-dream, he wrote the poem, 'Lakum HamraZakoum wa Li Hamra2i' ('Your Hamra, My Hamra'), giving its spirit and name to the first professional photography project in Lebanon that brought together more than 100 photographers, seven exhibitions and a photography book. In 2010, Mohamad returned to his passions of photography and art by launching the photography project, 'Mosaic: Achrafieh International Photography Contest'. As Lebanon's first and largest international photography competition, it fueled the creativity of 300 local and international photographers and thousands more who actively followed its progress with their opinions, votes and encouragement through twelve exhibitions in Achrafieh and through major social media networks. In 2011, Mohamad Badr was awarded the Live Achrafieh Honorary Award for his contribution to the community. With his 2011 series, 'Prayer of Light', he placed among the top 5 winners in the Pan-Arab Shabbab Ayyam Photography competition. In 2012, Badr was nominated for the fourth cycle of the Prix Pictet, the world's leading photographic award in sustainability for his series, 'Ashoura - Bloody Streets'.

Bloody Streets; The Manifestation of Religious 'Power' – Ashoura, Nabatieh, Lebanon

2011-2012

Photographic Installation of 30 Photographs

30 x (30 x 20 cm.)

Edition 1 out of 5

Bloody Streets captures the spirit and moments of the 2011 Ashoura rituals of the Muslim Shia community that took place in the area of Nabatieh, south of Beirut in Lebanon. What might be considered by some as shocking is a simple and natural reality for others. Though the majority of Shia scholars forbid these practices, hundreds of thousands commemorate this day around the world in similar fashion. The art of the image lies less in their ability to shock and more in the attempt to portray a reality that's distinctly red and white onto the consciousness of the beholder who is unable to escape the stares of these faithful souls. It is an unsettling stare, which looks beyond the viewer towards a different reality. A reality with the ability to exert its power over these people of faith, while empowering them to stand through a bath of their own blood and face the prejudiced eyes of the world.





Seon Ghi Bahk

South Korea, born 1966

Korean artist Seon Ghi Bahk graduated from Chung-Ang University in 1994, majoring in Sculpture at the Fine Arts Department, Seoul, Korea and in 2002 took further courses in Sculpture at the Accademia di Belle Arti Brera in Milan, Italy.

Bahk has been actively engaged in solo exhibitions since 1994 in Korea, Italy, Germany, Portugal, China, Spain, Switzerland and South Korea. Seon Ghi Bahk creates sculptures from pieces of charcoal suspended from nylon filaments. Fascinating viewers with his large, site-specific installations, he has created tables, stairs, circles and picture frames, from which pieces of charcoal seem to escape. The artist re-interprets mundane objects, presenting them to the viewer in a context disassociated from their real environment. Floating in a play of light and space, his installations embody the relationship between humans and their surrounding nature.

Existence – Stairs

2008

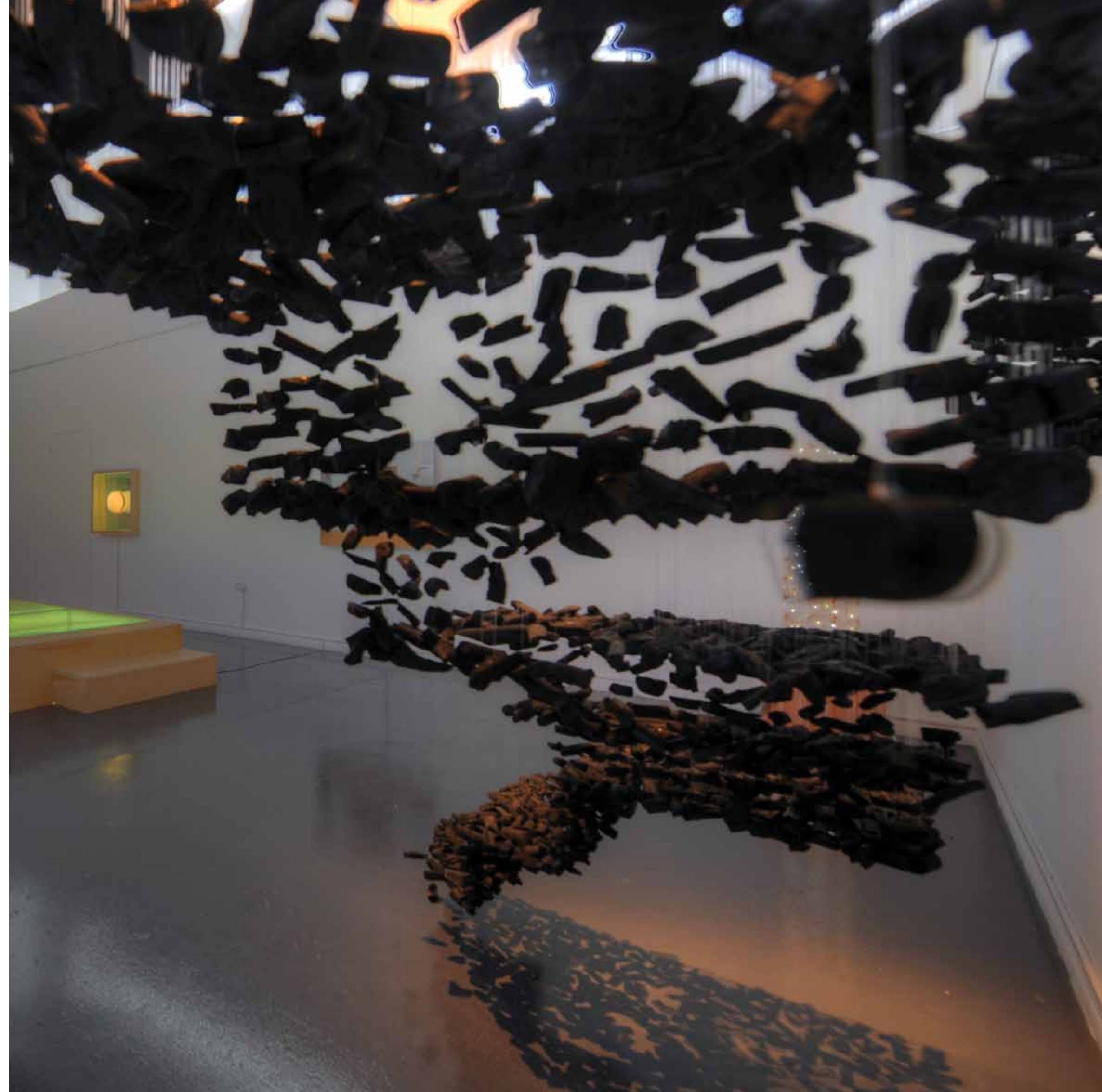
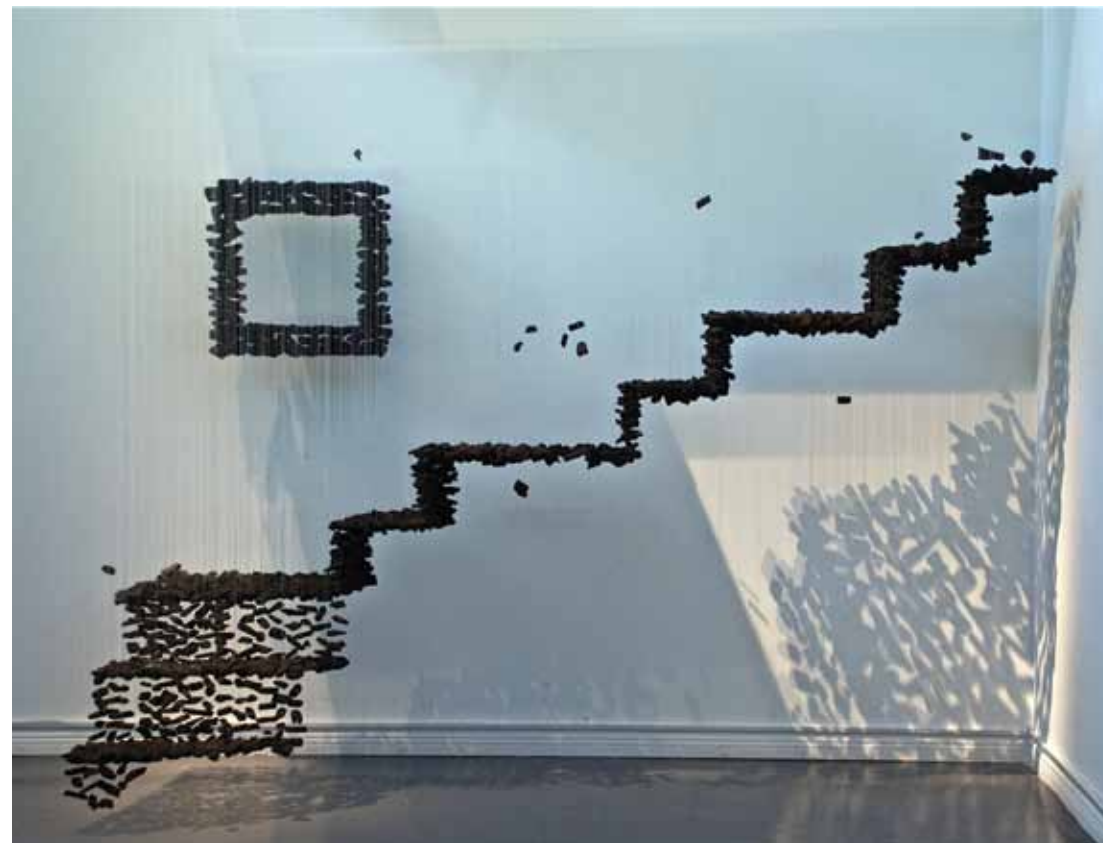
Charcoal Installation

H275 x L275 x D150 cm.

Seon Ghi Bahk reinterprets mundane objects with charcoal pieces suspended on translucent nylon fibers. The relationship of the frame and staircase, which would occur in any number of domestic stairwells, float eerily annexed from their real environment and is placed in a metaphysical context. Assuming the empty frame houses a mirror, the interpretation is one of reflection.

The staircase signifies the various stages of life, the escalation one experiences in their growth from child to adult, as well as in the context of career and social status. The sixth step of the staircase is missing, yet the staircase does not cease, it continues along its course.

Inviting the viewer to evaluate his progress along his individual path, Seon Ghi Bahk's installation promotes the investigation of one's surroundings, whether terrestrial or transcendental.

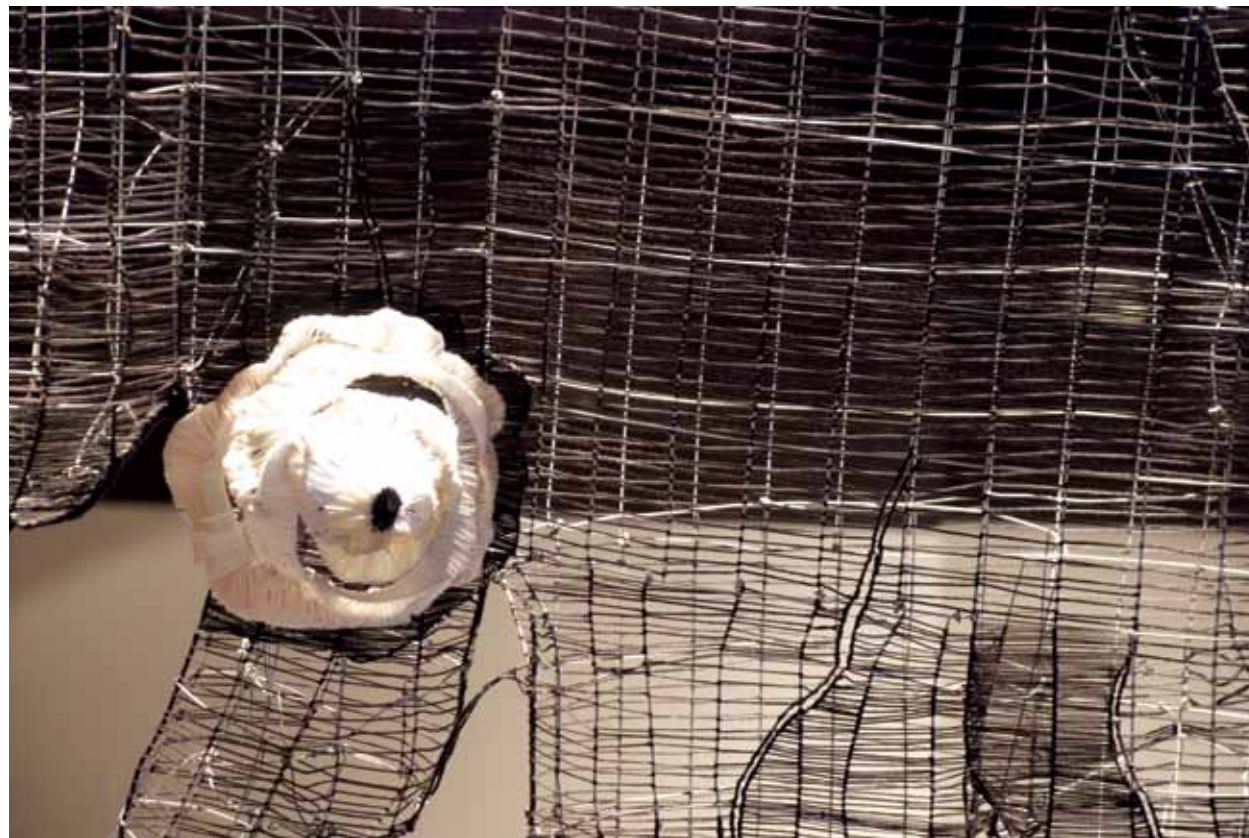


Huguette Caland

Lebanon, born 1931

Artist, fashion designer, curator and important figure of the Los Angeles cultural scene, Huguette Caland is practically a walking institution. Born in Beirut in 1931, she began embroidering and painting hand-made gowns while in her mid-thirties. Although married with children, she enrolled at the American University of Beirut in 1964 to study art. Relocating to Paris in 1970 then living in New York for a year in 1981, she returned to France in 1983. In the capital, she studied in the atelier of Romanian sculptor, George Apostu, and worked on a series of stone, wood, and terracotta works, expanding the already diverse range of her oeuvre.

After settling in Los Angeles in 1988, where she presently lives, she began exhibiting regularly in the US, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Janine Rubeiz gallery in Beirut has been representing her work since 1993, where it remains on permanent display. Through exhibiting in Lebanon she developed a significant following in the Arab world and most recently participated in Art-Paris Modern Art Fair in Dubai, Art Dubai, Art Abu Dhabi and was featured in one of the first public sales of Christie's Dubai in 2006. Her work has been highlighted by the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC, Tokyo's Museum of Modern Art, The Joan Miro Foundation in Barcelona, and the Monaco Art Center in Monte Carlo. In addition to her success as a visual artist, her talent in fashion design led her to draft a clothing line for the illustrious Pierre Cardin.



Rossinante

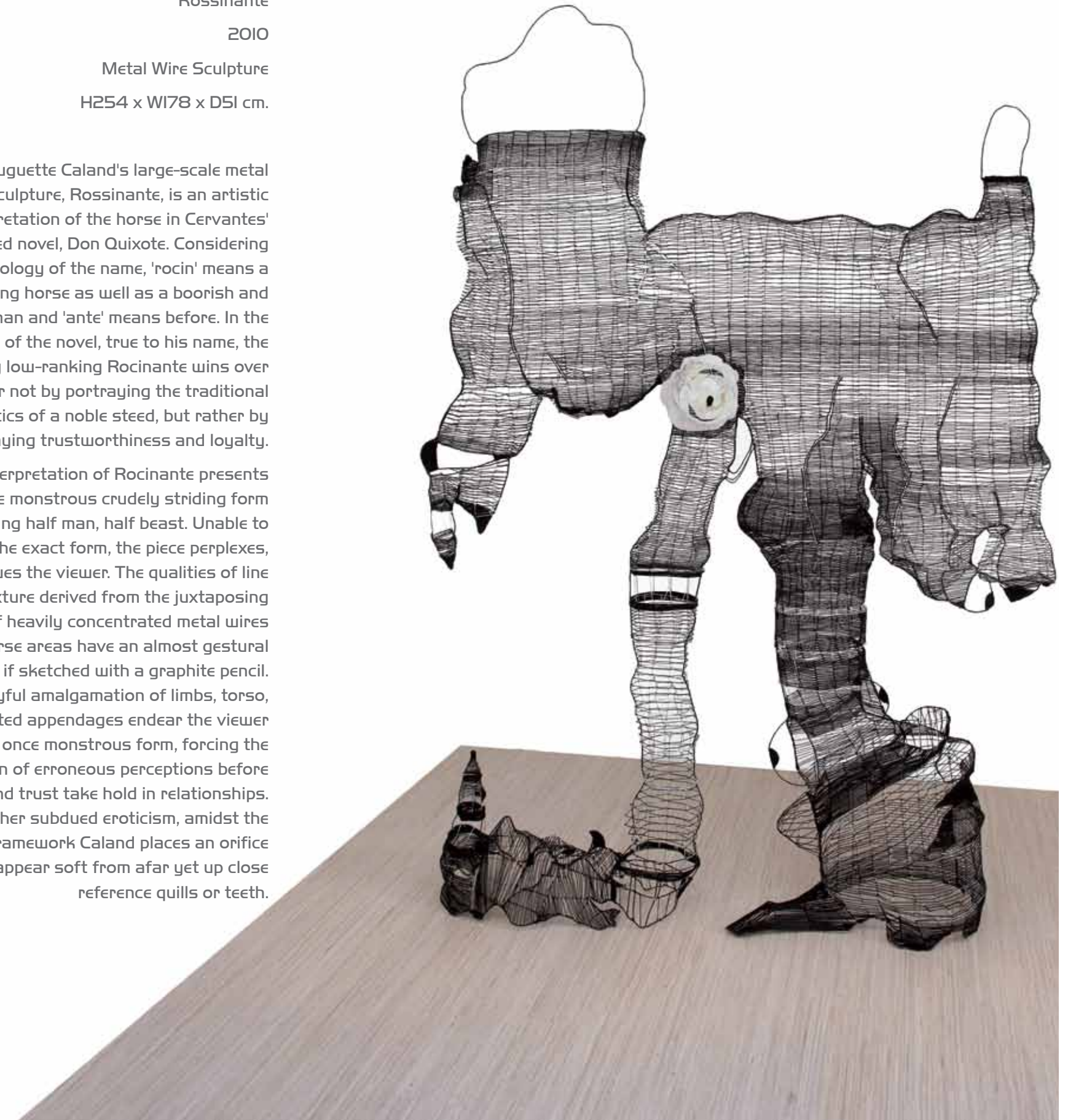
2010

Metal Wire Sculpture

H254 x W178 x D51 cm.

Huguette Caland's large-scale metal wire sculpture, *Rossinante*, is an artistic interpretation of the horse in Cervantes' acclaimed novel, *Don Quixote*. Considering the etymology of the name, 'rocin' means a low-ranking horse as well as a boorish and illiterate man and 'ante' means before. In the course of the novel, true to his name, the previously low-ranking Rocinante wins over the reader not by portraying the traditional characteristics of a noble steed, but rather by displaying trustworthiness and loyalty.

Caland's interpretation of Rocinante presents a large monstrous crudely striding form appearing half man, half beast. Unable to decipher the exact form, the piece perplexes, yet intrigues the viewer. The qualities of line and texture derived from the juxtaposing areas of heavily concentrated metal wires with sparse areas have an almost gestural quality, as if sketched with a graphite pencil. The playful amalgamation of limbs, torso, and pointed appendages endear the viewer to the once monstrous form, forcing the reflection of erroneous perceptions before familiarity and trust take hold in relationships. Known for her subdued eroticism, amidst the metal framework Caland places an orifice rendered to appear soft from afar yet up close reference quills or teeth.



Matthew Carver

Canada, born 1968

Matthew Carver was born in Toronto, Canada in 1968. In 1992, he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from York University, Canada and his Master of Arts from Chelsea College of Art and Design in London, in 2005. He participated in a thematic residency for media and visual arts with The Banff Centre of the Arts in 2001, and in 2006, was artist in residency with Taksu Singapore and Gallerie Taksu in Kuala Lumpur. His works are held in the collections of the Museum London in Ontario, Canada, the RBC Financial Group, Ontario Securities Commission and the Saatchi Collection, London. Carver presently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.



Anamorph

2009

Acrylic on Wood with Garbage Can

H28 x W58 x D50 cm.

Matthew Carver's anamorphic works display reality through distortion, similar to a hologram. A technique Carver taught himself from a book in a Toronto reference library, he makes complex geometric calculations resulting in a distorted image that when viewed in a shiny, cylindrical object becomes an identifiable picture. When the viewer engages Kowloon Anamorph reveals a high-density urban shopping area of Hong Kong. Carver's anamorphs create a relationship between the viewer and the piece and causes viewers to lose themselves in the rapid energy of the urban sprawl.

Matthew Carver's paintings and sculptures explore the urban space of modern cities such as Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Las Vegas, London and New York. The dizzying brushstrokes of his cityscapes gives the viewer the sense he is passing the city in a vehicle travelling at high speeds. Decidedly impressionist in influence, the blurred canvases reveal an illusory approach to the modern city.



James Clar

United States, born 1979

James Clar is a media artist whose work is a fusion of technology, popular culture, and visual information. His work explores the limitations of various communication mediums and its effect on the individual and society. Focusing on the visual arts, his work often controls and manipulates light - the common intersection of all visual mediums.

Clar studied film as an undergraduate at New York University focusing on three-dimensional animation, and continued on to his Masters at NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Program. It was here that he moved away from screen-based work and started working directly with light, creating sculptural lighting pieces. By developing his own systems with which to manipulate light, he discovered he could create unique visual displays, as well as circumvent the limitations of screen-based work, namely resolution and two-dimensionality.

While his early work dealt with analyzing how technology and media work, a move to the Middle East in 2007 has seen his focus shift to how technology and media affect. As an American living in Dubai, his art has progressed towards deeper conceptual themes, which include nationalism, globalism, and popular culture in the age of mass information, often analyzing the discrepancy of information between Western and Middle Eastern media along with its effects on people.

James Clar lives and works between New York and Dubai.

Lover's Quarrel (Don't Leave)

2011

Fluorescent Lights, Filters

64 x 117 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Using fluorescent lights and manipulating direct and indirect light, James Clar's Lover's Quarrel recreates the hidden messages and turmoil of an argument between lovers. Directly facing the viewer, vivid red words spell out 'LEAVE', yet reflecting off the wall behind the piece, the words 'DON'T' are spelled backwards in blue light.

The viewer can almost feel the tension and anguish of the person who is repressing the urge to scream for their lover to stay. Lover's Quarrel presents a foreboding sense of loss, while visually recreating the contrast of what is said and what is meant and ultimately illuminating the arrogance of pride and how it can overwhelm and force undesired consequences.

Got Recession?

2010

From the series, 'Construction'

Magis 'Puppy (XL)', Brass Rod, Steel Rod,
Acrylic, LED Lighting

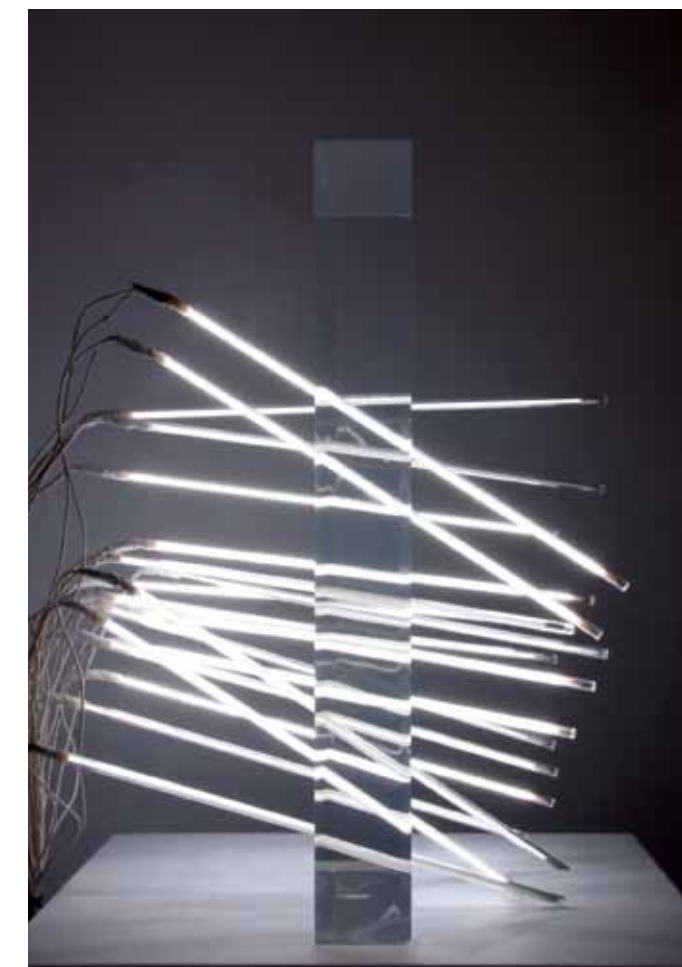
1100 x 780 x D60 cm.

Edition of 2

The second part of James Clar's 'Construction' series, the first being Coming Soon, replicates the tangled complexity of building scaffolding, the smooth fabric of construction gauze, and the inner glow of lighting. Got Recession? features a larger dog and now, a year later, part of the building cladding has been completed. However, due to the recession the project is 'On Hold'. A skeletal network of scaffolding encases part of the dog, which hauntingly glows throughout the night.

The use of a dog lends a humorous take on contemporary architecture and the rapid development and decline of Dubai, though it is also quite symbolic. Partly beast and partly domesticated, it was the power and will of man which took this creature out of nature and into civilized society. The same could be said of the urbanization of desert lands into a cityscape.





A Moment Defined by a Point and a Line

2010

Acrylic, CCFL

3 x (H30 x W42 x D20 cm.)

Edition 1 out of 3

James Clar's A Moment Defined by a Point and a Line is composed of three pieces, each representing a historical assassination. They reduce a pivotal moment in history to basic math; the point of impact of each bullet and the angle of trajectory are displayed as lines of light intersecting a clear acrylic block.

The three people chosen for this series are Malcolm X, King Faisal, and Amadou Diallo. Malcolm X was shot 15 times during a speech on Black Nationalism. King Faisal was shot in the head twice by his nephew in what is believed to be a CIA driven assassination. Guinean immigrant, Amadou Diallo, was shot at 41 times by police. Though 19 bullets hit him, the four policemen involved were found not convicted of manslaughter.

Violently attacking our perception of versus the reality of historical events, these jagged lines poignantly depict the brutality of each assassination and force the viewer to consider the cultural impact each of these figures had in their time and the lasting effects they have in present day society. It also begs the question of how the media would portray these killings if they took place today.



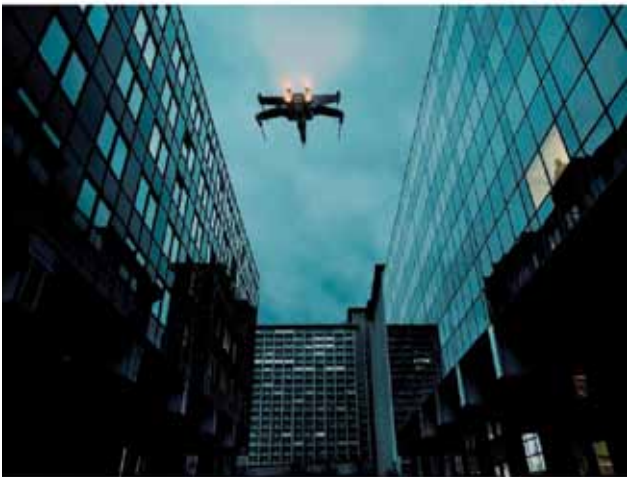
Cedric Delsaux

France, born 1974

Born in 1974, Cedric Delsaux studied Literature and Cinema in Paris where he presently lives and works. He looked after an antique bookshop in the 9th arrondissement of Paris before entering the advertising world as a copywriter. In 2002, he decided to devote his entire time to photography. Alongside his personal work, he grew as an advertising photographer and signed campaigns for major advertising agencies. In 2005, he received the Bourse du Talent, French photography award. Widely exhibited in France, the US, the UAE and China, Delsaux was the winner of the 27th scholarship of talent organized by Kodak and photographie.com. His work, 'Here to Stay/Nous Resterons sur Terre', published in 2008, explores the ambivalent relationship between man and nature, and his two recent projects 'Dark Lens' and '1784' have garnered critical acclaim.

The Dark Lens Project

Removing the reality of Dubai's landscape and interjecting characters and hardware from the Star Wars mythology, Cedric Delsaux's 'Dark Lens' project questions our relationship to the world, creating a new time frame where divisions between reality and fiction fade and the past and the future are trapped in the present. Challenging our relationship to time and space, Delsaux forces his viewer to reflect on their perceptions. Elements of our common visual memory, holding a different relationship with every human being, inhabit each of his series.



Xwing & Vader

From the 'Dark Lens – Dubai Invasions' Project

2009

Fine Art Print 'Fiber Royal'

100 x 133 cm.

Edition 2 out of 6

In this simply composed photograph looking skyward in between two buildings of the Dubai International Financial Center, Cedric Delsaux places a Star-Wars X-wing fighter plane to lend an ominous ambiance. Although the X-wing was an interceptor and dogfighter of the Rebel Alliance and New Republic and the suggestion is one of safety rather than peril, the overwhelming grey tonality, somber quality and palpable tension of the image is enhanced by the lone figure standing at the window.

The Droid Army Under Arch

2009

From the 'Dark Lens – Dubai Invasions' Project

Fine Art Print 'Fiber Royal'

100 x 133 cm.

Edition 2 out of 6

Staging his photograph within 'The Gate' in the Dubai International Financial Center, an iconic structure based off Paris's La Defense, the perception in question is whether the army below the arch is nefariously congregating or protecting this structure. Employing fictional characters destroys preconceived notions and leaves the viewer to objectively question the position of this army formation.



The Falcon's Route

2009

From the 'Dark Lens – Dubai Invasions' Project

Fine Art Print 'Fiber Royal'

100 x 133 cm.

Edition 4 out of 6

Delsaux arranges his Star-Wars themed pictures against notorious Dubai backdrops such as a construction site to provide the ideal other world quality. Sparse, cold, and metallic, the starship hovers above the structural bones of a civilization. An evolving construction site, this original location has changed beyond recognition in the years since Delsaux turned his lens to capture it, providing a temporal quality and adding an additional layer of fantasy to the piece.



Oleg Dou

Russia, born 1983

Multiple award-winning photo artist Oleg Dou was born in Moscow in 1983. Born into a house of artists, his mother was a painter and his father was a designer, Oleg was immersed in a creative environment. At the age of 13, he began to experiment with Photoshop to manipulate images of his friends' faces. Studying design eventually led him to become a web designer. In 2005, he purchased his first camera and in 2006, he joined Galerie RTR in Paris. Inspired by fashion and surrealism, Dou's works fuse reality with artificiality. Dou was the recipient of the Professional Photographer of the Year in Fine Art award at the International Photography Awards in 2008, receiving first place in a subcategory for his 'Toy Story' series.



Ronald
From the series, 'Toy Story'
2008
Photo Plasticization
180 x 180 cm.
Edition 4 out of 6

Oleg Dou is interested in human individuality and self-expression, yet he presents portraits that lack distinctiveness with eyebrows and eyelashes removed, blanched skin, and suppressed emotions. Dou explores the relationship between a person's inner character and outward behavior. Inspired by the Surrealists, Dou creates a new aesthetic by combining reality and artificiality. In this piece, Ronald McDonald, the mascot of the McDonald's fast-food restaurant chain, is referenced by a red clown nose and curly hair. Lacking 'the smile known around the world', brightly colored clothing and face paint, Dou portrays another facet of Ronald's personality, one that is quiet and reflective and not shown to the outside world.

Brad Downey

United States, born 1980

Brad Downey was born in Kentucky, USA in 1980. A 2005 graduate of the Master of Fine Arts in Painting program at London's Slade School of Art, and a 2003 Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film graduate from New York's Pratt Institute, he was a resident artist at the Oxylane Foundation in Berlin in 2011 and the Museum Quartier 21 in Vienna in 2010. Downey was both a resident artist and a recipient of a project production grant at the Goethe Institute in Amsterdam in 2008, the SEEDA Arts Plus in 2007, and the Anita Shapolsky Foundation in 2006. He has had various solo exhibitions since 2009 in the UK, Germany, Austria, and the UAE. His works can be found in the collections of Sammlung Teuchtler, Sammlung Reinking, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Roskilde, the Von Der Heydt Collection and The Farook Foundation. Downey currently lives and works in Berlin.

When the Lights Go Out

2008

Digital Video

Duration: 5 min 44 sec

Edition 1 out of 6

As Brad Downey stated of his video, When the Lights Go Out, the work appears materialistic.

The audience is able to see the commerciality and capitalist associations that flash through the cityscape in each scene. One is also able

to connect the film's aim to highlighting the shortage of energy and resulting fragility of our modern society. Downey was not interested in these obvious connections when creating his film. Instead, he looked toward the mysterious and magical in the unknown elements of our common surroundings.

Filming in Paris, this 5 minute 44 second video was quite challenging as the urban planners of the city were more developed in their security of the city than others he had utilized as urban canvases for his art. Paris became an opponent for Downey and he had to look at the city in a more complex way. The resulting film was shot in secret, adding an element of charm to the nighttime cityscape and an investigation of the mysterious in daily life.



Philippe Dudouit

Switzerland, born 1977

Philippe Dudouit graduated from the Vevey School of Photography in Switzerland in 2000. He has since been awarded second place in the Swiss Press Photo in 2003. In 2004, he was the recipient of the Kiefer Hablitzel Art Award, and in 2005 he was invited to participate in the World Press Photo Master Class. In 2008, he won first prize in the prestigious World Press Photo competition for his work on the PKK fighters in Northern Iraq, and two silver medals at the China International Press Photo Contest. In 2009, he received third prize in the World Press Photo competition for his work on the Tuareg rebels in Mali and Niger. In 2011, his work in progress, Sahel – The Dynamics of Dust, received a Swiss Design Award by the Swiss Cultural Office. He is regularly published in Time Magazine, GQ, D Magazine, L'Hebdo, Neon, Das Magazine, l'Espresso, Le Monde 2, Russian Reporter, and Du Magazine.

Ahmada, A Tuareg Nomad Working as a Camel Shepherd, Watching Day and Night More than 200 Heads

From the series, 'Northern Niger – The Dynamics of Dust'

2010

Archival Inkjet Print

64.5 x 50 cm.

Edition 1 out of 8

Philippe Dudouit uses classic photojournalism portraiture in his series, 'Northern Niger – The Dynamics of Dust' to portray the effects of the arms and drugs smuggling and rebellions in the Sahara and how this conflicted zone has been forgotten by the outside world. Tuareg nomads would lead tens of thousands of western tourists into the most beautiful places of the desert, areas famously known along the route of the Paris-Dakar rally. Now off-limits to foreigners, the loss of income forces Tuareg nomads to find other methods of employment. Ahmada, A Tuareg Nomad Working as a Camel Shepherd, Watching Day and Night More than 200 Heads is an example captured by Dudouit.



Sale Ag Moussa, 20 years old, Joined the Tuareg Rebels of the 'Democratic Alliance for Change'

From the series, 'Northern Mali - The Dynamics of Dust'

2008

Archival Inkjet Print

64.5 x 50 cm.

Edition 1 out of 8

A young man of twenty, Sale Ag Moussa, stands before the camera in a red-brown batik robe with a beige turban and white plastic sandals. A quiet portrait amidst the desert background, it is only upon a second glance that we notice the green army pouch that probably contains ammunition hanging from his neck. Sale Ag Moussa, 20 years old, Joined the Tuareg Rebels of the 'Democratic Alliance for Change' is another portrait from Phillippe Dudouit's 'Northern Mali - The Dynamics of Dust' series, an ongoing project.



Mohamed, Freelance Worker. Northern Niger

From the series, 'The Dynamics of Dust'

2010

Archival Inkjet Print

64.5 x 50 cm.

Edition I out of 8

Swiss photographer Phillipe Dudouit captures portraits of the people inhabiting a forgotten region of conflict. Mohamed, Freelance Worker. Northern Niger shows a young man clothed in a green turban, blue flip-flops, and an orange t-shirt with 'King's County' printed on it, holding a Kalashnikov. Describing himself as self-employed, Mohammed lives in a rebel and civil war zone in the North of Niger. Self-employed and armed, the insinuation is that Mohamed is a mercenary rebel.



Ahmed, 15 years old, Nail cutter in Agadez, Northern Niger

From the series, 'The Dynamics of Dust'

2010

Archival Inkjet Print

64.5 x 50 cm.

Edition I out of 8

In 2011, Phillipe Dudouit's series in progress, 'The Dynamics of Dust', received a Swiss Design Award by the Swiss Cultural Office. Ahmed, 15 years old, Nail cutter in Agadez, Northern Niger is a portrait from the series, depicting a young boy standing in the village of Agadez holding nail cutters. With dust covered feet, his printed shirt of Barack Obama with the popular election slogan displays his hope for change. At fifteen years old, his sullen expression and employment in manual labor reveals a loss of innocence in a country plagued by violence.

Raneem Farsi

Saudi Arabia, born 1987

Born and raised in Saudi Arabia, Raneem Farsi utilizes different mediums to produce mixed media works including installations, prints, paintings, and photography, most of which delivers messages of sociological issues in the Kingdom. She views her work as vehicles of transportation for the voices that were frequently ignored, or in some cases heard and neglected, the eyes that were constantly directed within margins, and the ears that forever reflected the echo of these neglected voices.

Trained as an artist at Tufts University and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in the United States where she received her BFA and DFA. She then continued her higher education at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London earning a Masters Degree in Art Business with a distinction on her thesis entitled 'Unveiling the Structure and Development of the Saudi Art Market'. Her previous work experience whether as interning or managing GASP gallery in Boston, MA, as well as her educational networking has allowed her to gain knowledge of the business and commercial aspects of the art world. Today, Raneem combines her artistic and business knowledge in order to create and engage in initiatives that fill the gaps in the development of the art market in the Kingdom.

Qaswra Hafez

Saudi Arabia, born 1973

Born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 1973, Qaswra Hafez has been experimenting with conceptual art since 2006. Prior to embarking on an artistic career that has run parallel to his involvement in the Middle Eastern cultural scene in various capacities, Hafez studied business at Newbury College in Boston and University of Colorado, and later trained as an interior architect with the Art Academy in San Francisco, California. As the son of the late Hisham Ali Hafez, a prominent Saudi publisher of over a dozen leading newspapers and magazines including Asharq Al-Aswat and Al Majalla, Hafez has worked in both publishing and retail for over ten years. His first exhibition, 'A Short Story' was held in April 2011 at Jeddah Atelier followed by a September exhibition of 'Blink' at Q Contemporary in Beirut. In February 2012, he exhibited 'Work in Progress' at Ro'iya Gallery in Saudi Arabia. Hafez's work most recently sold in Ayyam's Young Collectors Auction.



Blink

2011

Wooden base, yellow plastic tape with hand-embroidered verses, Qurans encased in glass columns

H200 x W200 x D200 cm.



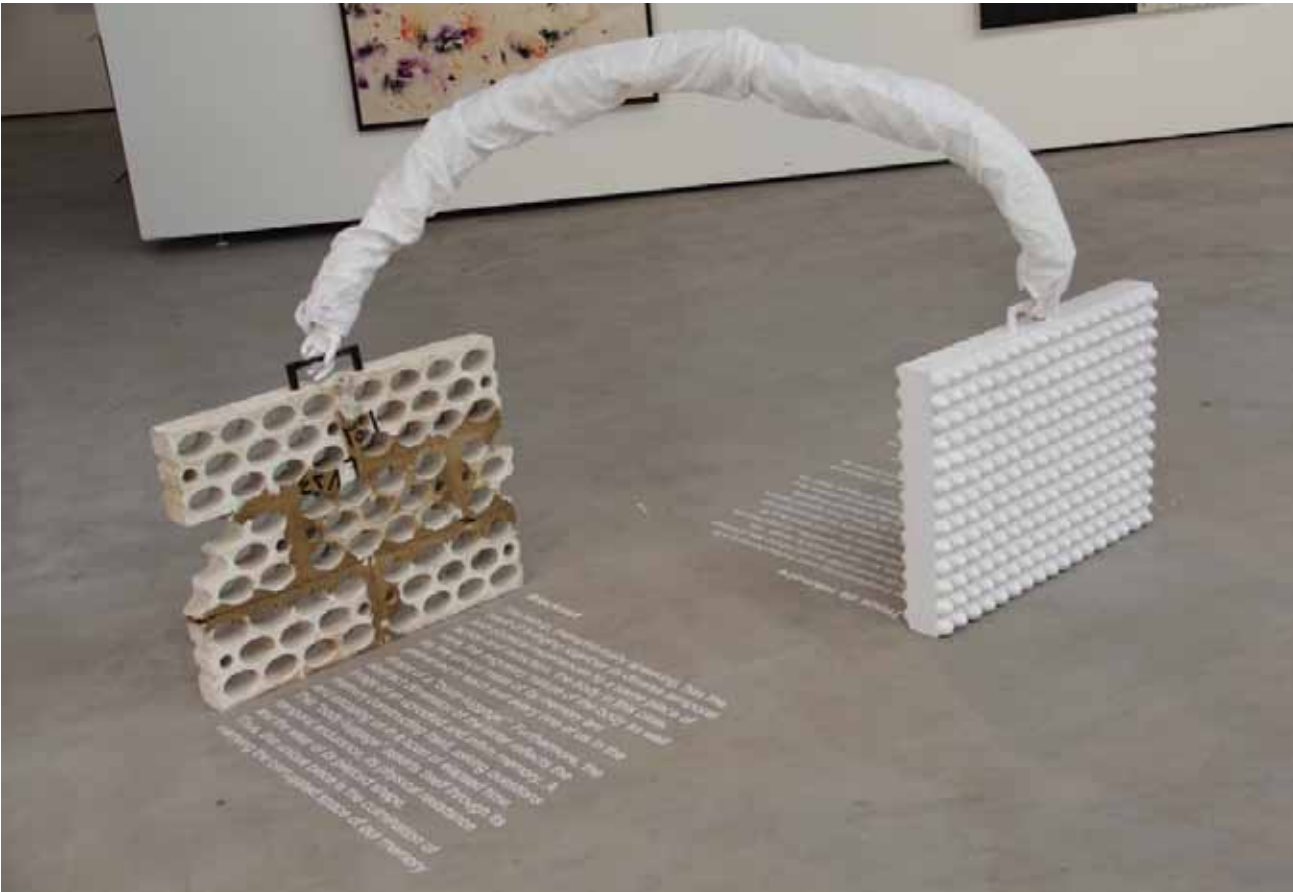
A collaborative towering installation by Qaswra Hafez and Raneem Farsi, Blink presents a beautifully subdued social critique of the events of 9/11 and the subsequent awakening of the world to Islam and the Middle East. The twin towers of the piece immediately place the installation within the 9/11 context, yet the towers are built with manuscripts of the Quran and cordoned off with boundary tape. The duality of this conceptual piece is evident. In the blink of an eye, with the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Twin Towers fell. With these attacks, Islam was placed under immense scrutiny. Constructing the twin towers from Qurans and placing Quranic passages along the boundary tape which confine the towers, the artists place the peaceful message of Islam just out of reach, in inaccessible towers of knowledge where the threat of collapse is imminent with the ongoing terrorist attacks which misuse the religion.



Ghassan Ghazal

Lebanon, born 1961

Born in Lebanon in 1961, Ghazzal immigrated to Canada in 1979 where he completed both his undergraduate and graduate education in visual arts at the University of Quebec, Montreal. Since 1989 he has participated in both solo and group exhibitions in Lebanon and North and South America. In 2006, he returned to Lebanon where he currently resides and teaches at the American University in Beirut. A recognized member of the Beirut art scene, his work has been featured in such notable venues as the Sursock Museum, Espace SD and Galerie Janine Rubeiz and has been reviewed in such publications as L'Orient - Le Jour, Al Nahar and the Daily Star. For Ghazal, "art is an experimental, universal, contingent and liberal language of communication." A multi-disciplinary artist, he works in painting, installation, photography and performance art. His mixed media canvases are melodic compositions that speak of the instinctive, and inspired, nature of art and seek to unlock the subconscious.



Blackout

2011

Wood, plaster, concrete, resin, metal, and textile

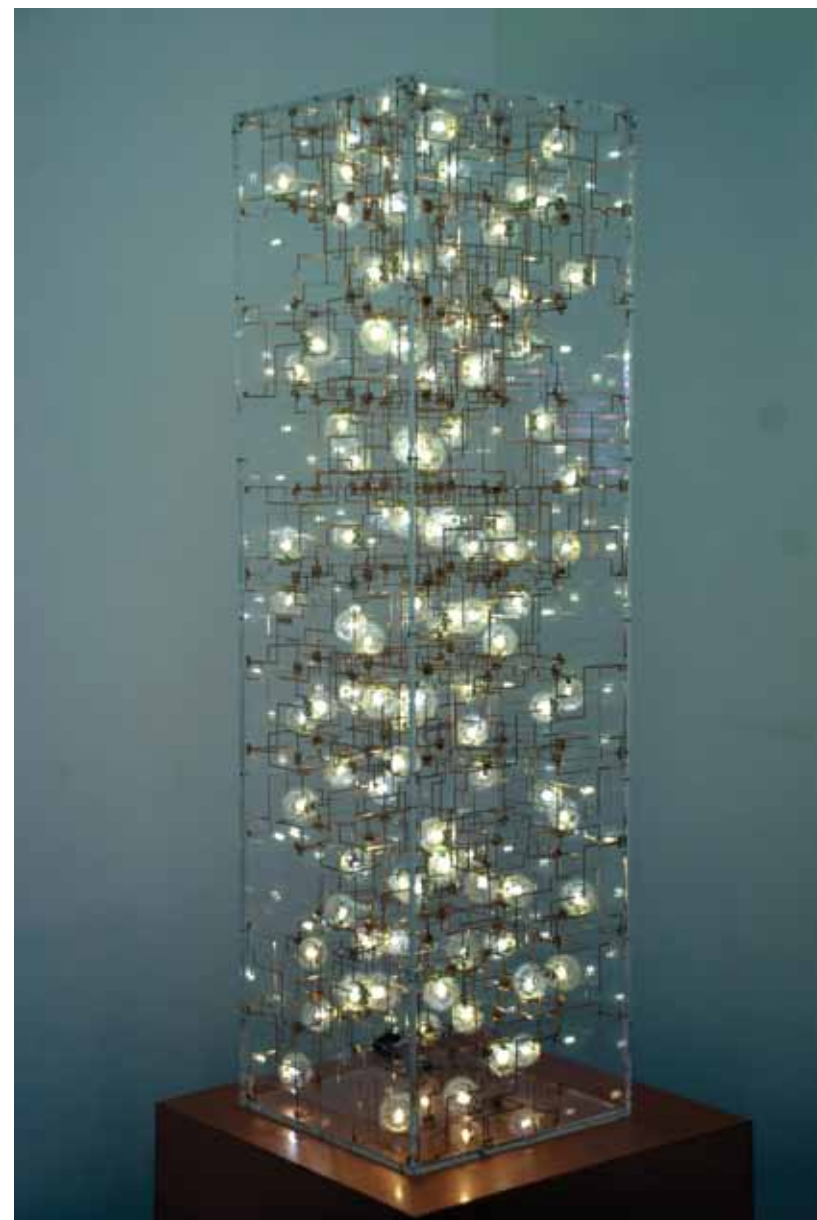
H60 x W80 x D8 cm.

Blackout metaphorically combines the body's diverse temporal and physical experiences in the moment of action and reflection. In this moment, the migratory nature of the body as well as the ethical mass of its memory are preserved in all men in the shape of a 'luggage body'. The abstract notion of this 'luggage body' reflects the image of an uprooted and unstable memory. This memory constructs itself, poses questions and escapes us, asserting itself through its temporal endurance, its physical resistance and the wear of its pierced shape. Thus, this unique piece is the culmination of marrying the corrugated space of our memory and the fragile nature of the host body.

Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta

Netherlands, born 1980 and 1978

Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta graduated from the Design Academy Eindhoven in the Netherlands. They formed the Dutch Collective in 2005. Their skill sets are quite complimentary with Nauta's knowledge of craft, materials and production techniques and Gordijn's awareness of concept and composition. The resulting works are a blend of enchanting design with a strong narrative that questions the relationship between nature, technology and humankind. Fragile Future has received much acclaim. It won the first 'Artprize' in 2006 and was awarded the prize 'Light of the Future' by the German Design Council in 2008. It also received the first prize in Dutch art competition 'Artiparti' and the Young Talent Prize of 'Stichting MS-Research'. In 2010, they were awarded the 'Moët-Hennessy PAD London' prize for their Fragile Future Concrete Chandelier.



Dutch Collective, Est. 2005

Fragile Future III

2010

Dandelion Seeds, Bronze, LED's, Plexiglas

1117 x W33 x D33 cm.

Edition 1 out of 20

Fragile Future III by the Dutch Collective, artists Lonneke Gordijn and Ralph Nauta, tells the story of the amalgamation of nature and technology. In the distant future, these two extremes have made a pact to survive.

Fragile Future III combines an electrical system with real dandelion seeds in a light sculpture that is predestined to overgrow a surface. The sculpture reminds the viewer of the quiet, childlike joy of blowing the pistils off a dandelion flower. The immediacy and innocence of this experience is heightened with LED lights. Encased in Plexiglas, the work is suggestive of encapsulated innocence, the suspension of time in an ever-changing world.

This system is different from earlier versions as it is possible to build three-dimensional constructions with the newly developed modules. Therefore, we have total freedom in creating different light installations.

This project, held in collaboration with the London-based Carpenters Workshop gallery, presents a modular system that is not limited in scope. As one module system is comprised of a visible circuit with three dandelights, the variety of compositions is endless and depends only on the space, atmosphere, and number of modular elements used.



Hassan Hajjaj

Morocco, born 1961

Designer, photographer and Pop Artist, Hassan Hajjaj was born in 1961 in Larache, Morocco. Deriving his inspiration from the every day in Marrakech, his diverse work ranges from the design and production of furniture including lamps, stools, and poufs to custom-made clothing and photography, all created from recycled materials and items found in Moroccan markets. He employs new technology in the vernacular of every day from matchboxes, recycled bicycle tires, paint and soda cans and creatively shapes these pieces into a frame encasing his photographs. Since 2000, Hajjaj has had solo exhibitions in France, England, Morocco, Wales, Mali, and Qatar. His works have been shown in numerous public collections including Le Salon at L'Institut Des Cultures d'Islam in Paris, the Nido Bouchra Wedge collection in Toronto, the Jama Fna Angels and Saida Green collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Kamel Lazaar Foundation in Tunisia. The British Museum, the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, and The Farjam Collection in Dubai have acquired his works. Ever the versatile artist, he is best known for designing the 'Andy Wahloo' bar-restaurant in Paris. The artist presently lives and works between London, England and Marrakech, Morocco.

Vogue Bike

2000

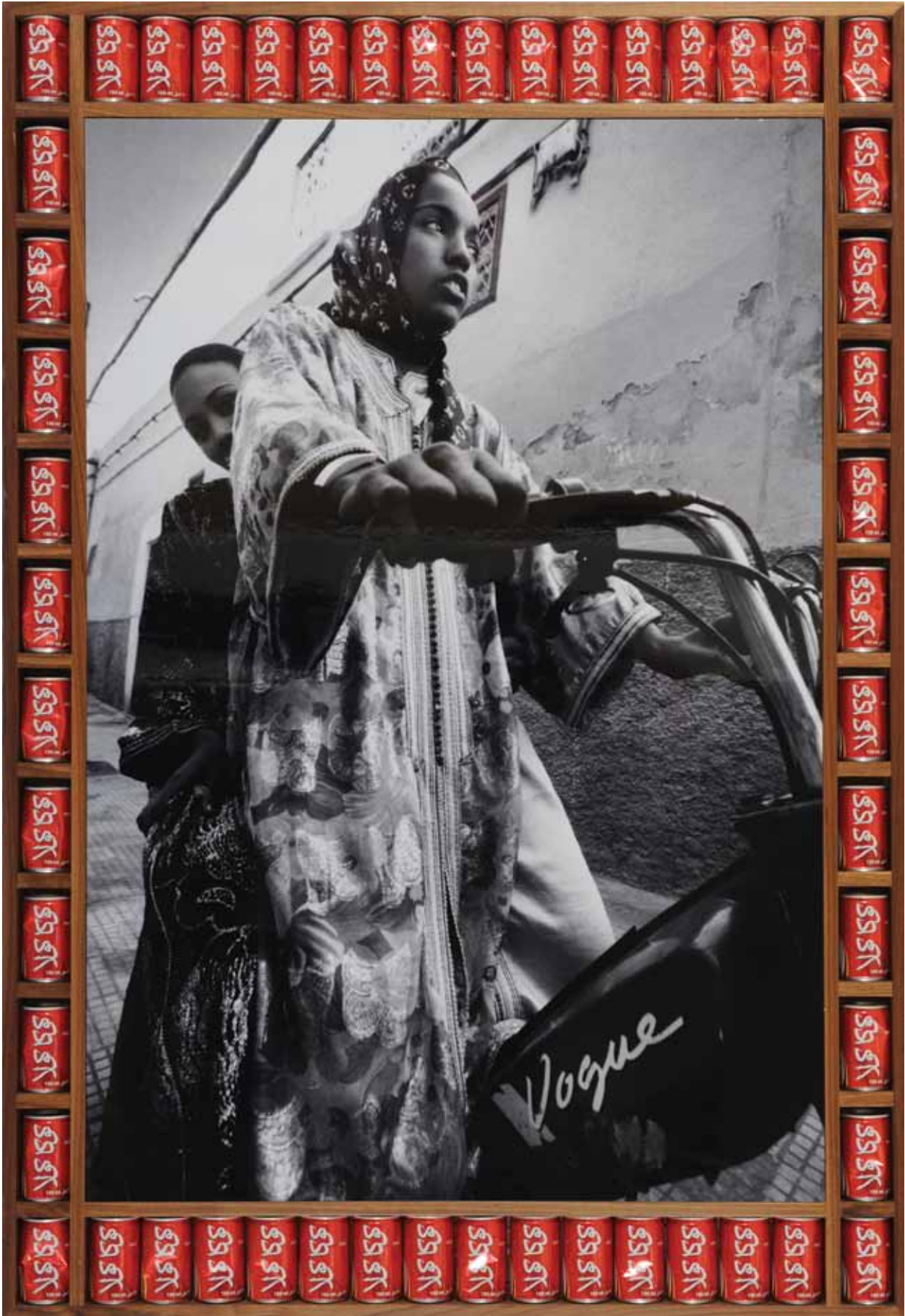
Mixed Media

135 x 93 cm.

Edition 3 out of 10

Hassan Hajjaj's works symbolize a meeting of old and new, traditional and modern, and for much of his work, this influence comes directly from fashion photography. Hajjaj describes his work as a celebration of the culture that he is engrossed in each day.

This piece, Vogue Bike, presents a black and white photograph of two young women riding a Vogue motorbike encased by a frame of Coca-Cola cans. The brightly colored red cans contrast with the monochrome photograph, and true to Hajjaj's fashion photography inspiration, the women ride on a fashion branded motorbike and wear a Louis Vuitton monogrammed headscarf. This juxtaposition of colors and the traditional attire with modern luxury brand insignia provide the duality of the antique and the modern the artist seeks to achieve in each piece.



Rodin Hamidi

Iran, born 1983

Photographer and cinematographer Rodin Hamidi was born in Tehran in 1983. Developing an early interest in photography, Hamidi obtained his diploma in Cinematography from the School of Contemporary Arts and continued his studies at the Azad University of Arts and Architecture, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Photography. Throughout his studies, Hamidi participated in several exhibitions in the top art galleries of Tehran and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Hamidi relocated to Dubai in 2006 to further his academic studies and obtained his BA in Digital Filmmaking from Middlesex University SAE. In Dubai, he has had two solo exhibitions that showcased his 'Mega Cage' and 'Temple of the Mind' series. In 2009, Rodin won first place in the Global Democracy Video Challenge, an international competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. His works have been published in several notable magazines and in 'Iranian Photography Now', a book by Rosa Issa. In his own words, he has "chosen cinema and photography in order to capture and conceptualize elements of nature and thoroughly express his thoughts and visions."



Nostalgia

2007

From the series, 'Mega Cape (Tehran)'

Print on Wood Panel

100 X 150 cm.

Edition 4 out of 7

Meera Huraiz

United Arab Emirates, born 1989

Meera Huraiz, born in Dubai in 1989, received her Bachelor degree in Visual Arts from the College of Arts and Design at Zayed University. Huraiz started her early career in 2008 in her first group exhibition, 'Beyond Conventions', at Elementa Gallery, Dubai. In 2009, she was part of a group show entitle, 'Emerge', at Isola San Servolo in Italy. In 2010, she took part in a women's group exhibition, 'The Reflective Mirror', at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and recently was part of 'Sharjah Cultural Days' at the Gyeonggi Museum of Modern Art in South Korea. Huraiz also collaborated on the project, 'Fatto a Mano', with the Italian fashion house FENDI, in 2011.

The refashioning of the traditional garments and fabrics provides a basis for her visual vocabulary, enabling the artist to articulate her explorations. Huraiz uses appropriation as a method to convey her understanding of a globalized History of Art, creating a fused integrated visual vocabulary that enables her work to transcend into a wider public. Although the work she creates is not geared to an international audience, it is born out of a genuine necessity to explore themes and concerns that surrounds her, such as the homogenization of culture and the imminent loss of identity. Huraiz's intent is to document the present evolution of Dubai's identity in the physical, cultural, and psychological realms.



Dances with Wolves
2010
Lambda Print Mounted on Aluminum
100 x 150 cm.
Edition 1 out of 3



Madonna
2010
Lambda Print Mounted on Aluminum
100 x 150 cm.
Edition 1 out of 3

Meera Huraiz references one of the most iconic moments of the 1990s in her work aptly entitled Madonna; the Blonde Ambition Tour where the singer famously debuted the cone bra designed by Jean Paul Gaultier.

Masking the face of the subject in her photographs, Huraiz emphasizes the suppression of identity. Though the subject's multiple pierced ear is revealed, her features are covered and she will remain forever blind and silent. With the intention of documenting the evolution of Dubai's identity in the physical, psychological and culture realms, this work highlights the suppressed sexuality of women.

Shrouded behind her sexuality, there is still a sense of power in this piece due to the inherent irony in the construction of the bra, which turns the sexuality and femininity of a woman's figure into something hard and dangerous.

Karen Kalou

Lebanon, born 1979

Photographer Karen Kalou was born in 1979, and received her Bachelor degree in Women Studies and Human Relations in 2004 from Concordia University. Shortly after, Kalou enrolled in a professional photography program at Dawson's Institute of Photography in Montreal, Canada. Presently residing in Beirut, Kalou's photographs are engaged with the daily scenery of Lebanon. Her photography focuses on reflecting the empowerment of nature and reflecting the passing of time and the thematics of street life, the self, and psychological portraiture.



Just Is

2011

From the series, 'Rain'

Ultrachrome Pigment K3 on Enhanced Matte Paper Mounted on Aluminium

50 x 75 cm.

Edition 1 out of 5

From Kalou's acclaimed 'Rain' series, Just Is can be classed as photographic impressionism.

Cityscapes disfigured from the drops of rain on a windscreen, Kalou's image takes on a vibrational quality, turning a melancholic moment into one that is charged with energetic movement and confusion. The transient effects of light and movement render the car and building almost unrecognizable in this image, producing a surreal landscape from an otherwise mundane scene.



Forever Everyday

2011

From the series, 'Rain'

Ultrachrome Pigment K3 on Enhanced Matte Paper Mounted on Aluminium

50 x 75 cm.

Edition 2 out of 5

Karen Kalou's photographs alter ordinary urban scenery into dizzying images with the play of light. Forever Everyday features a plain clothed gentleman walking down a sidewalk. As if the viewer is passing quickly in a car, this otherwise momentary glance is forever captured for further scrutiny. We know not where his direction will lead him and are left to ponder whether he will, as the signs dictate, continue on ahead or turn left or right. With letters of the signage blurred, this scene is applicable to any drive where a brief encounter allows for longer contemplation of the many individual paths taken throughout the course of a single day.

Nadine Kanso

Lebanon, born 1968

Nadine Kanso was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1968. She graduated from the Lebanese American University with degrees in Communication Arts and Advertising Design. In 2006, Nadine was invited to exhibit at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London as part of a group exhibition entitled 'Arabize Me.' The artist's photography and collage work has been exhibited in numerous fairs. She has dealt with themes of identity and nationalism, reflecting upon her native Lebanon and her adopted city of Dubai. In November 2010, the artist was commissioned by Louis Vuitton to create a series that celebrated Dubai's relationship with the ocean and the sport of sailing. The exhibit was auctioned for charity by Bonhams. Alongside her photography, Nadine Kanso created 'Bil Arabi,' a jewelry line inspired by the Arabic alphabet. 'Bil Arabi' was showcased in Design Miami 2008.

Smile

2012

From the series, 'Makan Fi Al Zakerah 2'
(Memory of a Place)

100 x 100 cm.

Collage on Photographic Lambda Print

Nadine Kanso's 'Makan Fi Al Zakerah 2' (Memory of a Place) photography series captures images of today's Beirut and highlights with an eerie familiarity the resemblances they have with times long past. Kanso's longing for her native Beirut is powerful in her honest depiction of dilapidated buildings in its older neighborhoods, juxtaposed with words and images from publications of the 1950's, 60's and 70's. The artist puts forth a compelling comparison of Beirut's glory days with the reality of contemporary Lebanon. Images of elegant men and women peer out from the balconies of once luxurious buildings, most likely similar to those they once occupied. Words and phrases from these publications of times gone by resonate with the spirit, energy and issues that are relevant in today's world.



Amal Kenawy

Egypt, born 1974

Born in Cairo in 1974, Amal Kenawy studied film and fashion design at the Cinema Institute and received an undergraduate degree in painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Helwan University in 1999. Beginning her career while studying in Egypt, Kenawy quickly gained recognition for her multimedia works and installations, winning the UNESCO Grand Prize at the International Cairo Biennale. Later, she received the Pro-Helvetia Swiss Arts Council artist residency in 2004 and was honored with the Global Crossings Prize in Los Angeles in 2005. Among Egypt's internationally recognized artists, she has been given solo exhibitions at Townhouse Gallery in Cairo, Darat al Funun in Amman, and Galerie El Marsa in Tunis, and has participated in group shows and collective events such as Ashkal Alwan's Home Works Forum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art's inaugural exhibition, 'Told/Untold/Retold', the Sharjah Biennial, and the Venice Biennale.



The Journey

2004

Installation

H76 x W92 x D72 cm.

Edition 3 out of 5

Amal Kenawy's work often explores issues of existentialism, spirituality, and the experiences of man within a physical and metaphysical world. Using an intricate approach to installation, she attempts to surpass cultural borders, speaking to viewers that experience her work in a variety of contexts. Of this aspect of her work Kenawy said, "I don't think of my work as feminist in the traditional sense of the word. In a way, I am concerned with pain and isolation among other sentiments. On a technical level I try to create a visual language accessible to different audiences, a language that transcends the specificities of culture, be it Eastern or Western." (Darat al Funun, 2007).

The Journey is a work that does just that. Two female legs amputated just below the knee stand atop a silken ruffle-edged pillow. The legs are mounted by various Monarch butterflies, tufts of hair in the shape of bows, and crystals. Decidedly feminine and innocent, the latex sheen of the partial legs bolted together denotes a sordid violence as well. Symbolizing the various journeys a young girl takes through her life, the butterfly is a symbol of her metamorphosis into a woman, as is the hair on her legs. The pillow is reminiscent of one used during a Communion as well as that upon which a wedding ring rests during the marriage ceremony. The bolt through the two legs signifies her inability to escape this metamorphosis into adulthood.



Jeffar Khaldi

Palestine, born 1964

Palestinian artist Jeffar Khaldi was born and raised in Lebanon and lived in Texas for many years before moving to Dubai in the late 1990's. The exhibition, 'Remove the Invisible Blindfold', was Khaldi's fourth solo show in Dubai and his first exhibition since Charles Saatchi's 'Unveiled: New Art From The Middle East' in London and the Mathaf, Arab Museum of Modern Art's 'Told Untold Retold' in Doha. He is also featured in the book New Vision, Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century, TransGlobe Publishing's latest publication on artists and institutions in the Arab world which showcases dynamic and provocative art from the region highlighting artists with diverse styles and subject matters in a number of essays and artistic profiles.



Read More

2011

Mixed Media Works on Paper

6 x (29.5 x 42 cm.)

Typically complex in form, Jeffar Khaldi's works draw corollary inspiration from the bold-faced declarations of the international press. Khaldi brings forth a varied cast of characters, depicting positive and negative sentiments with equal ardour. His controversial works employ a visual language appropriated from his Palestinian homeland. Israeli Children Sending Palestinian Children Messages is at once touching and horrifying. One imagines the children on opposite sides of conflict communicating in a secret game with words of hope and friendship exchanged. Yet upon closer observation, these messages are written on weapons of destruction that will deliver an entirely different sentiment. Observing young girls writing on missile heads, one questions whether these children know the atrocities caused by war. The lines of reality and fantasy are blurred until the powerful final frame when the text 'Palestinian children receiving the messages' appears over a clouded sky of smoke from these volatile missiles.

Saeed Khalifa

United Arab Emirates, born 1989

Saeed Khalifa was born in Dubai, and continues to develop his work with a focus on digital photography. In Khalifa's practice, he uses digital photography to allow him to bend traditional views of the medium itself. Within his photographs, there is a natural honesty and clarity maintained with the subject. Layers of various objects are used to transform the subject into a surreal environment.

Believe I

2007

Digital Print

146 x 91 cm.

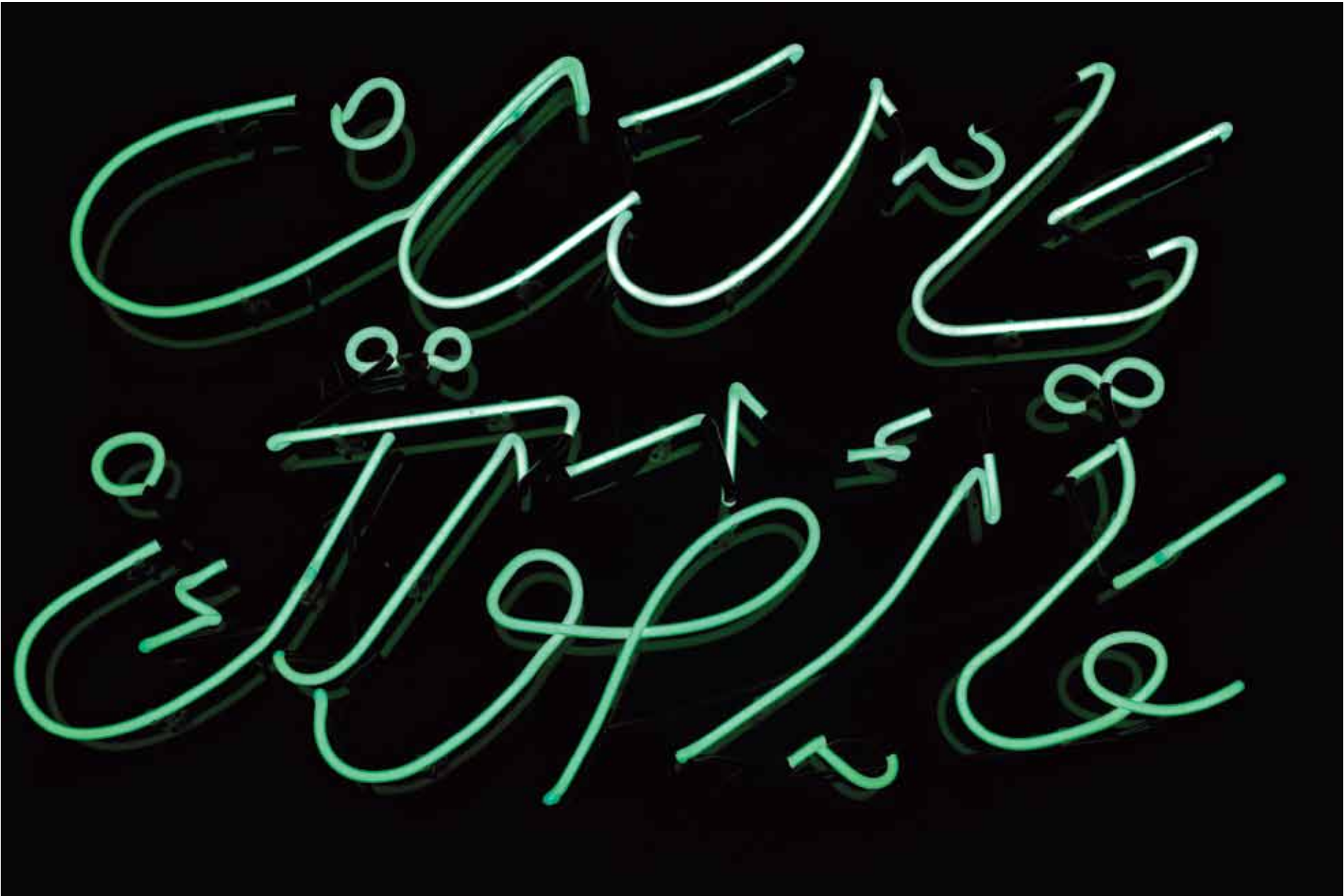
Saeed Khalifa uses digital photography to bend traditional views of the medium itself. Within his photographs, there is a natural honesty and clarity maintained with the subject. Believe I envelops a man in a flowing black silken fabric as if he is immersed in a dream or in an afterlife state. The choice of black for the fabric is suggestive of death and only a portion of the man's face is visible, as if he was shrouded. His eyes closed in slumber or death, Believe I offers the viewer a sensual and serene view of the transcendental.



Pierre Koukjian

Lebanon, born 1962

Pierre Koukjian is an award winning designer and painter. Having fled Lebanon with the outbreak of civil war in the mid 1970s, he spent many years living as a nomad of sorts in Germany, France and later the Far East. With little opportunity to complete a formal education, Koukjian jumped into the field of jewelry-making as a young man. As an apprentice in workshops throughout Europe, he perfected his craft and used painting in the planning stages of his designs. He worked vigorously in the medium, while also turning to sculpture as a form of creative expression. After long runs as a designer for some of the world's most recognized brands, he launched his deLaCour atelier in 2002, obtaining immense artistic freedom. His work recently sold at auction in Christie's Dubai.



Ya Leil Ma Atwalak (Oh Night, it's been too long)

Green Neon on Black Chassis

100 x 110 cm.

Edition 2 out of 6

Since its creation in 1911, neon has graced the facades of the world's most famous city squares and strips, lending a touch of the magical to signage and invoking childlike excitement and a sense of wonder with its brightly colored aura. Utilized to emphasize text, the neon script glows forth, strongly impressing its message upon the viewer. A favorite medium of artists of recent decades such as Tracey Emin and Bruce Nauman, neon is employed to explore the potential of language. Pierre Koukjian joins ranks with these artists with his exploratory neon work, Ya Leil Ma Atwalak (Oh Night its been too long!). In his own script, Koukjian's general phrase can be considered a scream in any oppressed situation, which breaks forth as a sudden burst. Though a scream of suffering, it is also one that is filled with hope for a solution.

Thaer Marouf

Syria, born 1972

Born in Syria in 1972, Thaer Marouf attended Lebanese University and received his Diploma of Higher Studies in Fine Arts in 2001 followed by a Masters of Fine Arts acquired in 2010. A working member of the Plastic Fine Art Association since 2002, Marouf has had many solo exhibitions and has been featured at international art festivals in Lebanon and Syria. His paintings may be found in the permanent collection of the Farhat Art Museum in Lebanon.



Missing Identity

2012

Installation

H218 x W288 x D309 cm.

Thaer Maarouf's installation questions the validity, symbolism and power impressed into an identification card and what it means to have a 'national identity'. Employing the deconstructionist view of philosopher Jacques Derrida, Maarouf's powerful installation investigates the issue of belonging in today's world by attempting to expose the oppositions in play that are necessary to produce meaning in the construct of identity.

Once a hallowed document spelling the rights bestowed upon a person as a citizen of a particular nation, the identification card has now become a barrier for many, imposing further restrictions and obstacles. The inescapable destiny of identity as given by birth and subsequent delineation of peoples by border, which has for years created conflict and dissolved the idea of unity, is further enhanced by the segregating documentation forced upon us by the governments under which we live. The realization that this definition is brought out by a mere piece of paper disassociates the bearer from his given identity.

In Maarouf's installation, the half figure represents those who believe they should be elsewhere. Their identity photograph claims their torso, that which is officially recorded and revealed from their portrait. The lower extremities are removed, no claim lies on this half of the person. Though this may be the case, the lack of a lower body suggests that while they wish to flee the confines of this construct, they are rendered inactive.



Rania Matar

Lebanon, born 1964

Born and raised in Lebanon, Rania Matar originally trained as an architect at the American University of Beirut before immigrating to the US in 1984 and continuing her studies at Cornell University. After attending the New England School of Photography and studying in Oaxaca, Mexico under Magnum photographer Constantine Manos, she became a full-time artist. Having exhibited throughout the US and abroad, she is the recipient of several honors including first prize in the Women in Photography International and an honorable mention from the UNICEF Photo of the Year Award. Matar's work is housed in international collections such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and in the private collection of the Emir of Kuwait. Based in Boston, she teaches documentary photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and makes frequent trips to Lebanon where she conducts workshops with teenage girls in the country's refugee camps with the assistance of NGOs.

A Girl and Her Room

Often focusing on the lives of women and the issues that surround them, Rania Matar has highlighted the experiences of women and children in the Middle East with the intention of giving voice to the 'forgotten or misunderstood.' Recently, she has expanded this theme with 'A Girl and Her Room', which has already garnered critical praise. In this series, Matar revisits the private spaces of teenage girls in the US and Arab world and sheds a light on their hidden ambitions, insecurities, and aspirations, revealing the many often conflicting facets which comprise the personality of a teenage girl.

Rania Matar
Sidonie 13, Belmont MA
2010

Archival Pigment on Museo Silver Paper
112 x 168 cm.
Edition 1 out of 3



Rania Matar
Danielle #1, 21, Boston MA
2010

Archival Pigment on Museo Silver Paper
112 x 168 cm.
Edition 1 out of 3





Christilla #2 I9, Rabieh Lebanon

2009

Archival Pigment on Museo Silver Paper

112 x 168 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Rania Matar's Christilla #2 I9, Rabieh Lebanon from the 'A Girl and Her Room' series, depicts a young woman seated in a languid pose with her Pomeranian on her lap. Her leisurely pose and the reposed image of Marilyn Monroe as well as the dichotomy of pink and white of the adjoining walls balances the image. If it were not for the title, the viewer would not be able to differentiate whether this bedroom belongs to a young woman in the US or the Arab World as all the markings of globalization are present in dress, celebrity and accessories.



Elham I8, Shatila Refugee Camp, Beirut

2009

Archival Pigment on Museo Silver Paper

112 x 168 cm.

Edition 1 out of 3

Starkly different is the bedroom of Elham I8, Shatila Refugee Camp, Beirut. Though the bright linens, iron wrought and wooden framed bed try to liven the room, it is evident from the smoke stained unadorned cement wall that this room is part of a refugee camp. The modern conveniences of a personal computer are at once paralleled with the extension and power cords that dissect the length of the room. Etchings on the wall and a portrait of Sheikh Ahmed Ismail Hassan Yassin are the only decorative elements to this room, though it is unclear whether they are intended to form part of our character's personality or were part of the room before she acquired it as her own.

Richard Mosse

Ireland, born 1980

Born in Ireland in 1980, Richard Mosse graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art from Goldsmiths, University of London in 2005, and received his MFA in Photography from Yale School of Art in 2008. He has exhibited at venues including Akademie der Künste in Berlin, the Barbican Art Gallery in London, Dublin Contemporary, Fotofest Houston, the Kemper and Nelson-Atkins Museums in Kansas City, Kunsthaus Munich, MCA Chicago, Palais de Tokyo Paris, and London's Tate Modern. Mosse has been featured in the pages of Aperture Magazine, Art in America, Art Review, Frieze, Modern Painters and Source. He was awarded a Leonore Annenberg Fellowship in 2008 and a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011. He presently lives and works in New York City.

Space Wagon Mosul

2009

From the series, 'The Fall'

C-Print

180 x 245 cm.

Edition 1 out of 2

Richard Mosse's *Space Wagon Mosul* highlights the ensuing chaos in Iraq from the American invasion. The stark desert landscape has a sole inhabitant, the remnants of a Mitsubishi station wagon. Riddled with bullet holes, its roof ripped wide from an explosion within, the hollowed carcass lays silent in defeat. Beautifully photographed, as if at the first hint of dawn when the dense air rises from the ground, the sepia tonality lures the viewer in, providing a layer of serenity to the atrocities this vehicle suffered.

The title, *Space Wagon Mosul*, alludes to the overall ambience of the photograph. A landscape at once familiar has been turned into something quite alien. The station wagon, the symbol of a family vehicle, emphasizes the destruction to civilian life as a result of war and the transformation of safe homelands to battlefields.



Yousef Nabil

Egypt, born 1972

Youssef Nabil has established himself as one of the most influential photographers of his generation. Nabil began his photography career in 1992 by staging tableaux in which his friends acted out melodramas recalling film stills from the golden age of Egyptian cinema. Later in the 1990s, while working as a photographers' assistant in prominent studios in New York and Paris, he began photographing artists and friends, producing both formal portraits as well as placing his subjects in the realms of dream and sleep, on the edge of consciousness and far from their public personas. Youssef Nabil's work has been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions at Les Rencontres Internationales de La Photographie, Arles, The British Museum, London, Villa Medici, Rome, Savannah College of Art & Design, USA, KunstMuseum, Germany, Institut Du Monde Arabe, Paris, The Third Line, UAE, Centro Andaluz De Arte Contemporaneo, Sevilla, Spain, The Aperture Foundation, New York City, and Centro De La Imagen, Mexico City. In 2003, Nabil was awarded the Seydou Keita Prize for portraiture at the Biennial of African Photography in Bamako. His first film You Never Left starring Fanny Ardant and Tahar Rahim is a self-portrait mirroring the feelings he experienced when leaving Egypt and the relationship between leaving and dying and is in the collection of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar.



Youssra, Sinai, 1996

1996

Hand Coloured Gelatin Silver Print

35 X 24 cm.

Edition 2 out of 10

Sleep Cairo

1997

Hand Colored Silver Gelatin Print

115 x 75 cm.

Edition 3 out of 3

One of the most influential photographers of his generation, Youssef Nabil's work is at once beautiful and conflicting. Fascinated with the golden age of early Egyptian cinema, Nabil has created an imaginary reality where staged scenes from melodramas thrive. Inspired by the glamour of the stars and hand-colored family portraits that adorn most Egyptian living rooms, Nabil hand-colors his gelatin prints to achieve a similar effect, removing the reality and infusing the photograph with a sense of the enigmatic. Sleep Cairo captures this mystery. A young Apollo is crouched at the knees of a beautiful woman who stares forcefully into the camera, her hand caressing his locks of hair. The height of the ceiling, dilapidated condition of the walls, and the framed portrait enhance the gothic appearance and suspense of the scene.



Shirin Neshat

Iran, born 1957

Born 1957 in Qazvin, Iran, Shirin Neshat presently works and resides in New York. Neshat's photographs and videos have been included in many major international exhibitions, including Documenta II, Kassel, Germany, Moving Pictures, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York in 2002, Arte Contemporaneo Internacional, Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City in 2001, Lyon Biennial, Lyon, France in 2000, the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 2000, Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh in 1999, the Venice Biennale in 1999, and Trade Routes: History and Geography: 2nd Johannesburg Biennale in 1997. Solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at Castello di Rivoli in Turin in 2002, the Irish Museum of Art in Dublin in 2001, Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York in 2001, the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2000, Dallas Museum of Art in 2000, the Wexner Center in Ohio, also in 2000, and the Art Institute of Chicago in 1999. In 1996, Neshat was awarded a grant from the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation. Neshat's 2009 feature film, 'Women without Men', based on Sharmush Pasrsipur's novel, is composed of five video installations and garnered international acclaim, winning the 'Leone d'Argento' at the 2009 Venice Film Festival.

Faezeh

2008

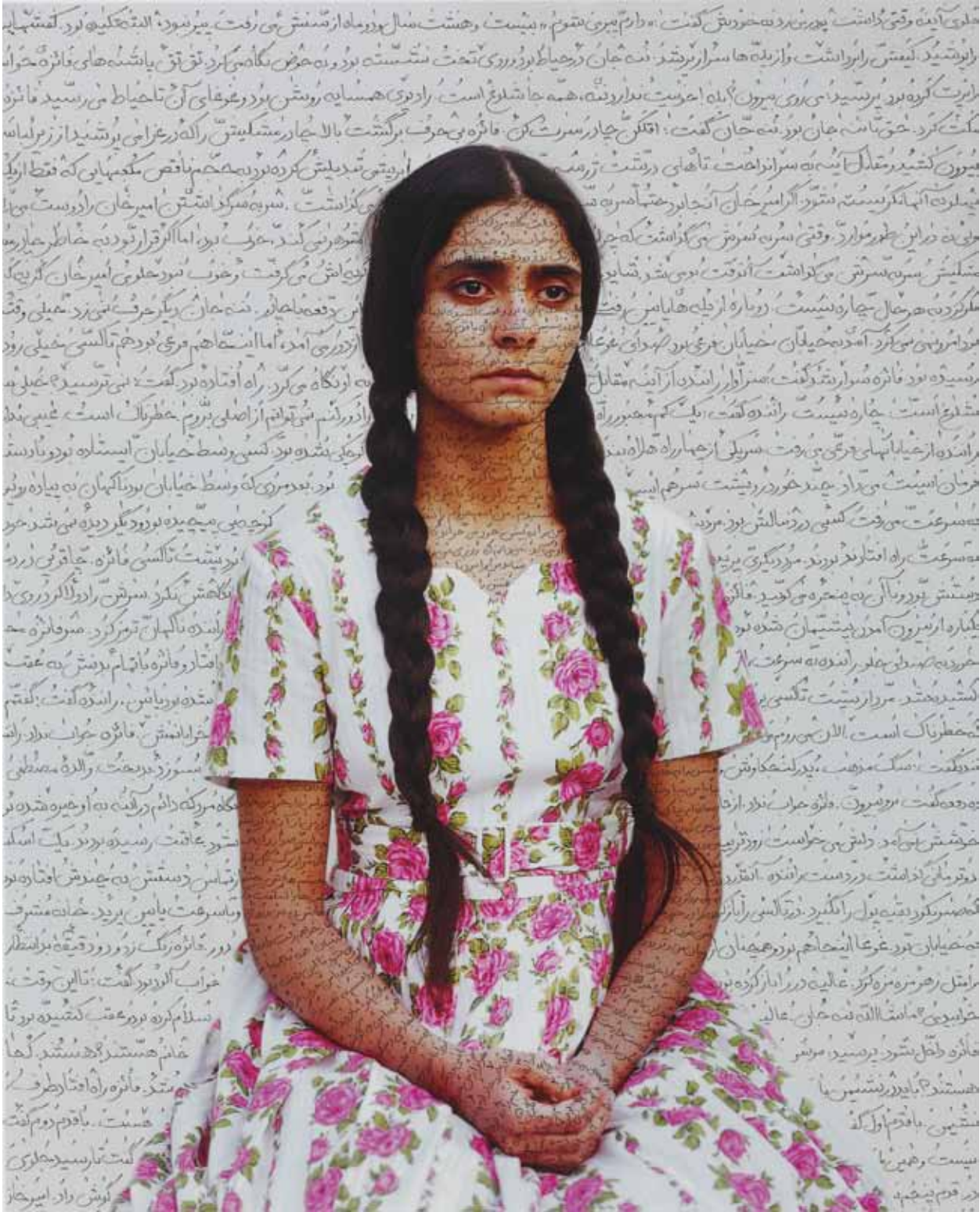
Ink on Silver Gelatin Print

36 x 25 cm.

Edition I2 out of I5

Faezeh, a character from Shirin Neshat's internationally acclaimed feature film, 'Women Without Men', which won the 'Leone d'Argento' at the 2009 Venice Film Festival, is portrayed here in dejected solitude. Calligraphic verses from the novel by Sharmush Parsipur, from which Neshat adapted her film, cover the background of the photograph and Faezeh's body.

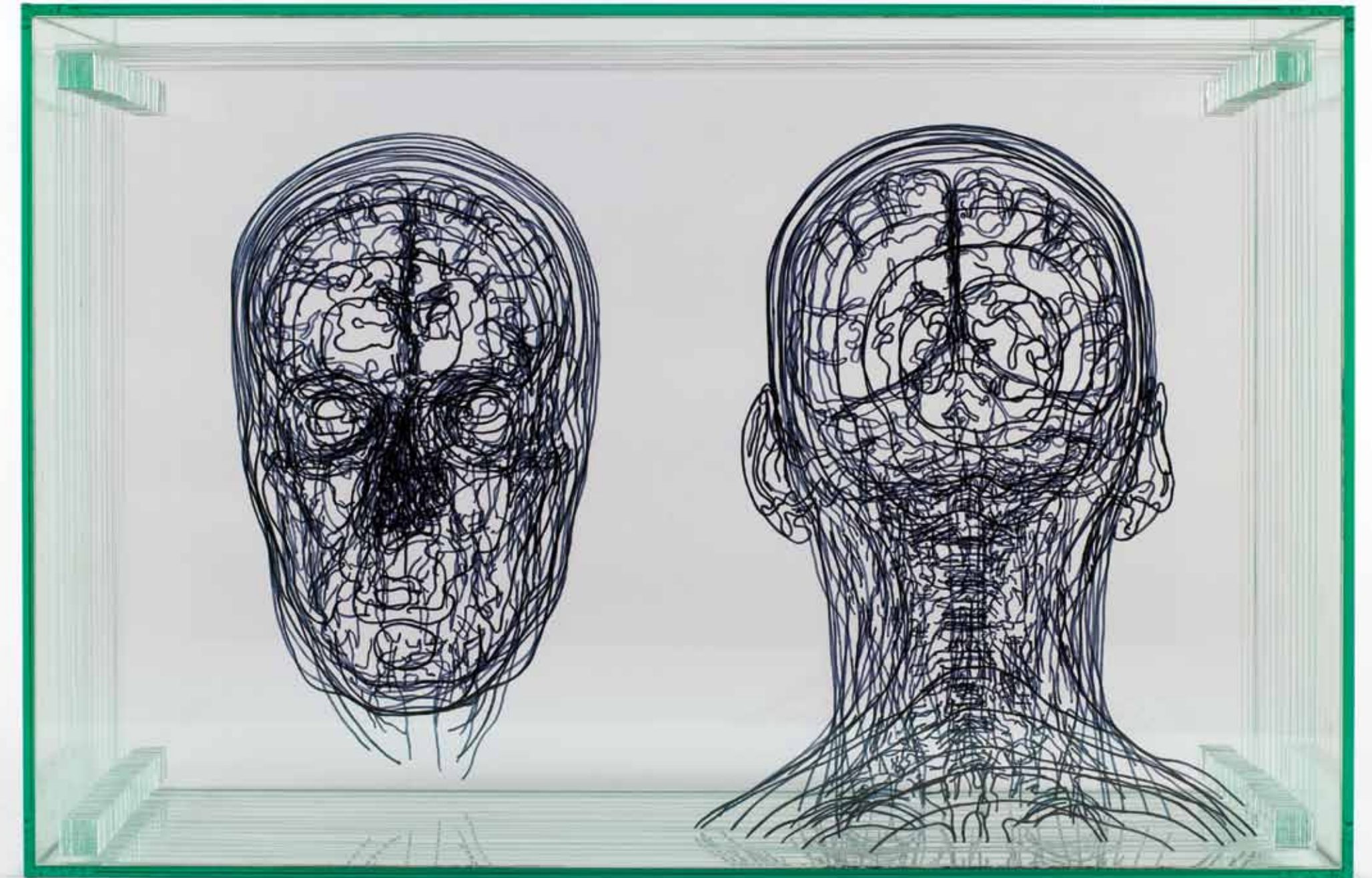
Comprised of five video installations focusing on each of the women in the novel, Faezeh's story is one of social injustice. Faezeh's hopes of marrying Amir Khan are dashed when her reputation is sullied because of sexual abuse she experiences. Left to confront the unfortunate reality of the community in which she lives, Faezeh is here depicted as an innocent, melancholic woman with a tear cascading down her cheek.



Angela Palmer

Scotland, born 1957

Angela Palmer, Scottish Oxford-based sculptor and installation artist, was born in 1957. In 2005 she obtained her Bachelor of Fine Arts from The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University. She received her MA at the Royal College of Art in 2007, followed by an awarded scholarship and the Fitzgerald Prize. Angela Palmer has been featured in several notable publications such as The Times, The Guardian, and The Daily Telegraph. She has participated in several group exhibitions in 2005 at the Royal Academy's Summer exhibition and in 2006 at The Fleming Collection, Berkeley Street, London, and held her first solo exhibition in 2008 at the Hunterian Museum at the Abu Dhabi Art Fair and at Waterhouse & Dodd Gallery in London.



Double Self Portrait

2008

Unique Drawing on Multiple Sheets of Glass

H19.5 x W45 x D29.5 cm.

Edition 2 out of 5

Angela Palmer employed CT and MRI scans of her head for this piece, making her the subject of the portrait, though not recognizably so. The scans are hand-etched onto sheets of non-reflective glass and displayed together, creating an intricately laced web of lines which, when layered, produce a final image that is only visible from certain angles. Presented looking forward and backwards, the work is reminiscent of an anatomical sketch by Renaissance master, Leonardo Da Vinci. Like Da Vinci, Palmer explores the human form through its anatomy. Instead of cadavers and dissection, the latest innovations in medical technology are utilized for Palmer's artistic purpose, resulting in a work that surpasses the flesh and questions what constitutes portraiture in our modern day.

Gregory Scott

United States, born 1957



Gregory Scott was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1957 and received his Bachelor Degree from the IIT Institute of Design in Chicago in 1979. At the age of 49, Scott returned to graduate school to strengthen his knowledge of art history and video and he received his Master of Fine Arts from Indiana University in 2008. His recent mixed media work combines traditional oil painting on panel with flat screen HD video and archival digital printing. He often includes paintings by other artists in his work, from 17th century Dutch masters to the contemporary 'Painter of Light', Thomas Kinkade, to achieve a poignant and occasionally ironic effect. Gregory Scott has had various solo exhibitions throughout the United States and Russia and his works are found in the permanent collections of the Columbus Museum of Art, Ohio, Fundacion Privada Sorigue, Spain, Harris Bank and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, Illinois.

At the Beach

2010

Photographic Print, Oil on Panel and HD Video

92 x 117 cm.

Edition 2 out of 4

Gregory Scott's video installation was displayed at Abu Dhabi Art Fair held in Emirates Palace in November of 2010. An eight-minute looping video, this piece garnered constant attention. A mixed media work combining traditional oil painting on panel with HD video and archival digital printing, layers of illusion are created with a series of frames within frames depicted in an exhibition space, which culminate in a painting of a mother and her two children at the beach. Throughout the film, dimensions are crossed, realities skewed, and the viewer's perception is confounded as the man in the video transgresses each dimension, and objects once considered static are removed from their place and brought to life. A film representing true interaction with an artwork, At The Beach investigates not only perception and the degree of relation a viewer has to an artwork, but also human conditions of humour, play, desire, identity, loneliness and melancholy.



Lale Tara

Turkey, born 1957

Born in Istanbul in 1957, Lale Tara expanded her knowledge of photography by attending courses at The New School and the School of Visual Arts. Through her photographic works, Lale Tara is an artist who projects on the face of the world 'the reality of the image', rather than 'the image of the reality'. Presently residing in Istanbul and continuously working on new photography projects, Tara's visual diary, seven months seven days, was published at the end of 2005 by Robinson Crusoe Kitabevi.

She has held two solo exhibitions and participated in several group exhibitions and international art fairs in Austria, Taipei, Hong Kong, Paris, Istanbul and Mumbai.



Hello Earth Goodbye

2006

Photographic Print

127 x 190 cm.

Edition of 3

Lale Tara's Hello Earth Goodbye features a baby doll lying on the expansive red carpet of the Hagia Sofia in Istanbul. In the distance, a man can be seen walking out of the building, abandoning this doll to the fates. Symbolizing all orphaned infants, this baby doll signifies that those abandoned within the walls of a religious structure will grow within that certain religious framework. Just as the fates will lead the course of an infant's life, the religion he will grow having faith in is also a choice that is out of his control. While having an unfortunate beginning to life, orphans throughout literary history have lead extraordinary lives from Oedipus to Romulus and Remus and Superman. It is the unknown path that an individual life will follow which intrigues Tara. Much like the structure she places this doll within, every life possesses the ability to commence on a single path and alter its course several times till discovering its ultimate purpose.

Newsha Tavakolian

Iran, born 1981

A self-taught photographer, Newsha Tavakolian began working as professional photographer in Iranian press at age 16 with the women’s daily newspaper Zan, and later with nine other reformist dailies, all since banned. At 21, she began working internationally, covering wars, natural disasters and social documentary segments in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Yemen. International magazines and newspapers such as Time Magazine, Newsweek, Stern, Le Figaro, Colors, New York Times Magazines Der Spiegel, Le Monde, NRC Handelsblad, and National Geographic have published her work. Tavakolian is particularly known for focusing on women’s issues.

Dream CD Covers

Newsha Tavakolian's photographs present feminine issues in present-day Iran. Each photograph depicts a dejected subject conscious of their barriers yet unable to surpass them. Collectively titled, 'Dream CD Covers', this series ironically highlights another limitation placed on women. As female vocalists are prohibited, these album covers are in fact mere dreams and each cover, which presents a socio-political commentary on the status of young women with popular feminist Persian slogans.

Glass Ceiling
From the series, 'Dream CD Covers'
2010
100 x 100 cm.
C-Print
Edition 1 out of 7

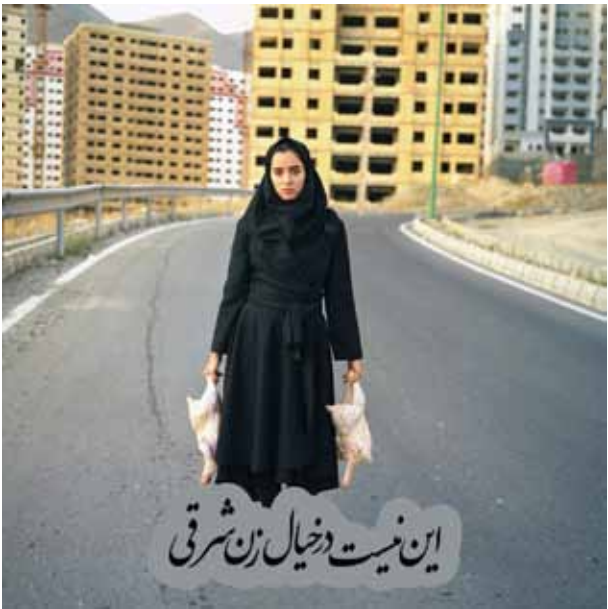
In this piece, Iranian artist Newsha Tavakolian quite literally depicts the Glass Ceiling faced by women in Iran by encasing the subject's head within a translucent Plexiglas box. Directly facing the camera, her expression is one of resignation and hopelessness. Not only is she trapped under this ceiling; the calligraphic script of the title also serves as a barrier, blocking her movement, whether lateral or vertical. Her arms hang over this barrier, yet they show no action or feeling. They hang limp and, like the spirit of this woman, do not push past the fence of gender inequality.



When I Was Twenty Years Old
From the series, 'Dream CD Covers'
2010
100 x 100 cm.
C-Print
Edition 2 out of 7

When I Was Twenty Years Old speaks to the viewer of wasted ambitions. The boxing gloves are symbolic of her fight, though they are pointed down in surrender. The dripping calligraphic title further represents this defeated attitude, referencing bloodshed or tears. The monochrome urban scene of Tehran and the solid black chador-clad woman standing in the middle of the highway are starkly contrasted with the bright red boxing gloves and text, emphasizing the focus of this struggle.





This Is Not In The Dream Of Eastern

From the series, 'Dream CD Covers'

2010

C-Print

100 x 100 cm.

Edition 1 out of 7

Newsha Tavakolian's This Is Not In The Dream of Eastern takes a more stereotypical approach to issues concerning women in present-day Iran, and the socially imposed domesticity of woman throughout the larger world. Returning from the butcher with a chicken carcass in each hand, our Iranian heroine walks slowly in the street to her destination, passing hollow shells of buildings on her way. The title, This Is Not In The Dream of Eastern, states the opposition present between the dream and the reality. The wish to surpass gender boundaries is again present yet met with a sense of despondency.

Don't Forget This Is Not You

From the series, 'Dream CD Covers'

2010

C-Print

100 X 100 cm.

Edition 2 out of 7

Newsha Tavakolian presents the subject standing quietly with her hands at her sides, though immersed in the freedom of the waves of the ocean. In the surf of the sea where the waves break, one can almost imagine her rocking with the force of the incoming tide and smelling the salty air which breezes through her hijab.

The calligraphic text takes on a free form in this photograph. The words float playfully in the surf spelling, Don't Forget This Is Not You. The freedom of the sea and the wildness of nature paralleled with the conservative dress and repressed stance of the woman reinforce this character disparity.



6 Channel Video

From the series, 'Listen'

2010

Edition 2 out of 5

Since the revolution of 1979, Iran has prohibited solo performances by female vocalists. They may only sing in the presence of other woman if they possess a license from the Ministry of Culture and Guidance. Newsha Tavakolian's 6 Video Channel displays six chador-covered women standing against a glittering backdrop reminiscent of the Rangarang television show where famous female singers such as Googoosh performed prior to the revolution. Each of the six women sing fervently; their sentiments ranging from serenely amorous to melancholic and desperate as dictated by the song. Though all the audience can experience from this video are the emotive expressions as the beautiful poeticism of Farsi song lyrics has been silenced.

Sadegh Tirafkan

Iran, born 1965

Born in Iran in 1965, Sadegh Tirafkan trained as a photographer at the University of Fine Arts in Tehran. Since the late 1980s, he has participated in numerous solo exhibitions and group shows, primarily in Tehran and Paris. His works are in the collections of several museums including the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the British Museum, Brooklyn Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Tirafkan employs different media in his work: photography, video installation, and collage. His series Manhood, deals with the perception of masculinity in Persian culture. Other projects, such as Human Tapestry, Persepolis, Ashoura, Secret of Words, Iranian Man, Whispers of the East, The Loss of Our Identity, Multitude and Devotion, reference Iranian history, identity, sociopolitical, religious and gender issues.

The Loss of Our Identity #6

2007

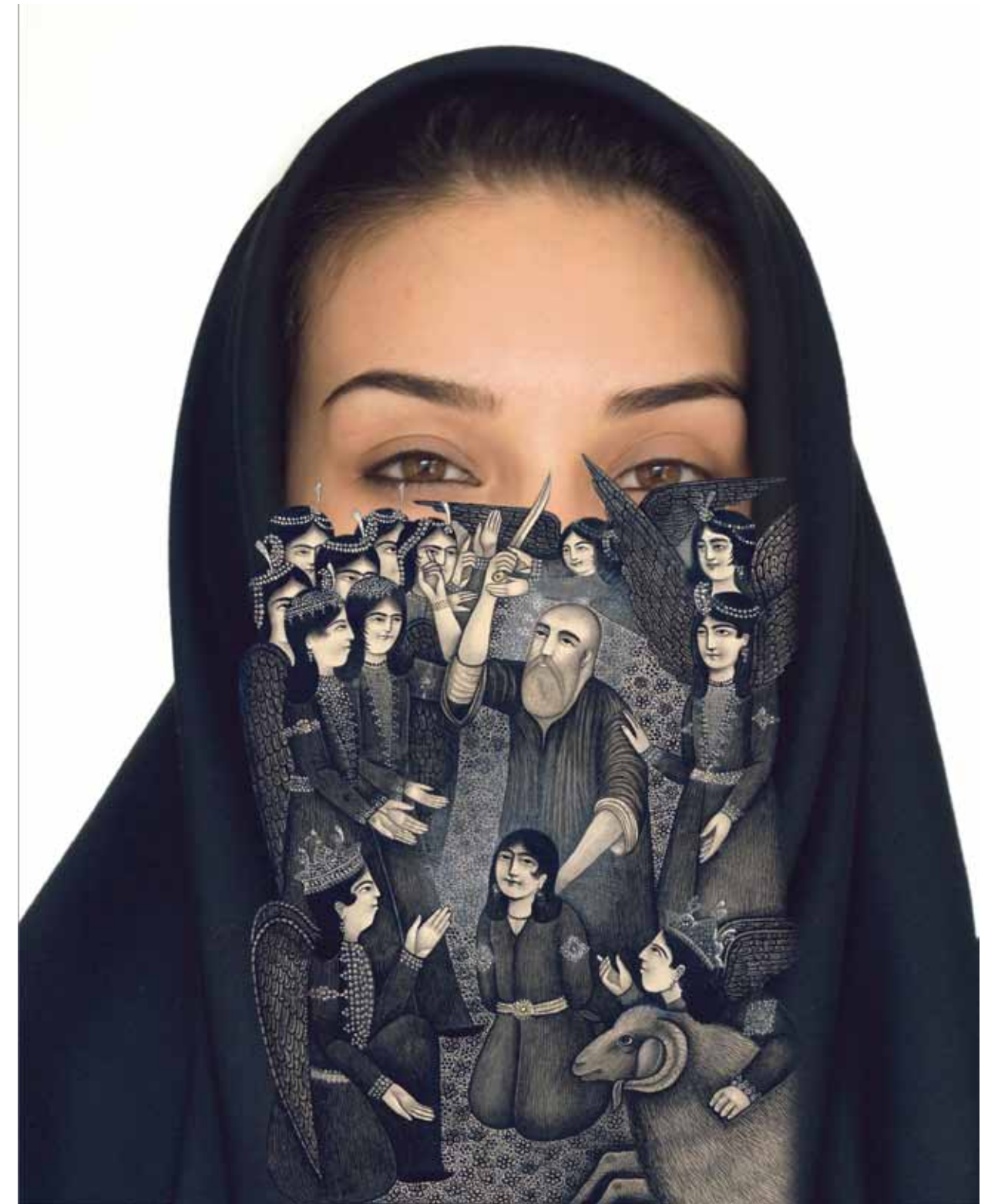
Digital Photo Collage

94 x 74 cm.

Edition 4 out of 6

Sadegh Tirafkan photographs explore the Iranian population. In this series, Tirafkan focused on the youth of Iran and the negative effect of media as cause for the loss of the true Persian culture and identity. Overlaying portraits of young Iranians with miniature paintings, illuminated book covers, metalwork, and carpets, Tirafkan literally coats his subjects in their true identity.

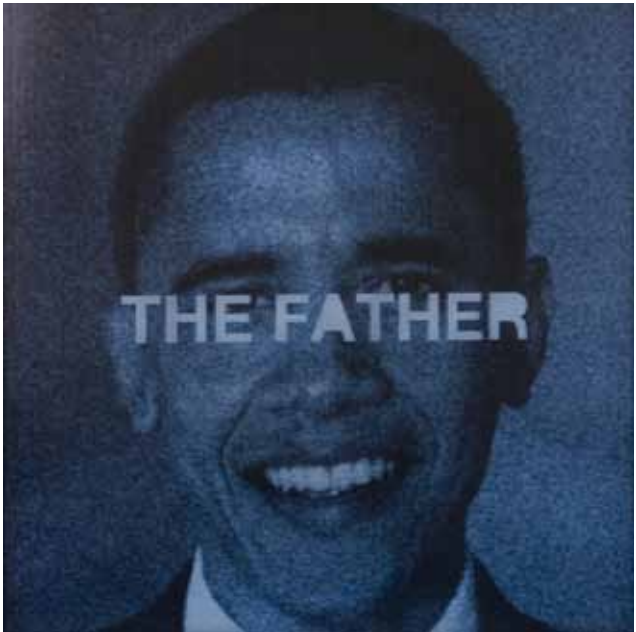
In this piece, the young woman wears a hijab and the bottom half of her face is covered by a monochrome miniature painting depicting the story of the sacrifice of Abraham. The moment depicted is when Abraham is given a sheep to replace the sacrifice of his son. It is interesting that Tirafkan chose to cover the bottom half of the subject's face, transforming the Iranian hijab into a niqab. This too forms a loss of the true Persian identity, as the alteration of Iranian dress has grown more conservative since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.



UBIK

India, born 1985

UBIK is an Indian artist living and working in Dubai. His work experiments with a variety of mediums and is not positioned within a specific genre. The core of UBIK's work deals with the relative ideology of chaos. It renders the absurdity of the world order and comments on the machinated playgrounds of human clichés in a sarcastic and realistic way. The ambition of his work is to urge and provoke the viewer to self-reflect. UBIK is heavily influenced by film, beatnik and gonzo literature, music, street art, anarchism and existentialist thought. His previous works include drawings and paintings while his more recent work has moved into a more conceptual direction, with a strong focus on text. UBIK also works in graphic design and publishing. He has held solo exhibitions in Dubai and participated in group exhibitions in London, Dubai and Israel.



Father, Son and the Holy Ghost

2011

Lenticular Lens (Three Layers)

70 x 70 cm.

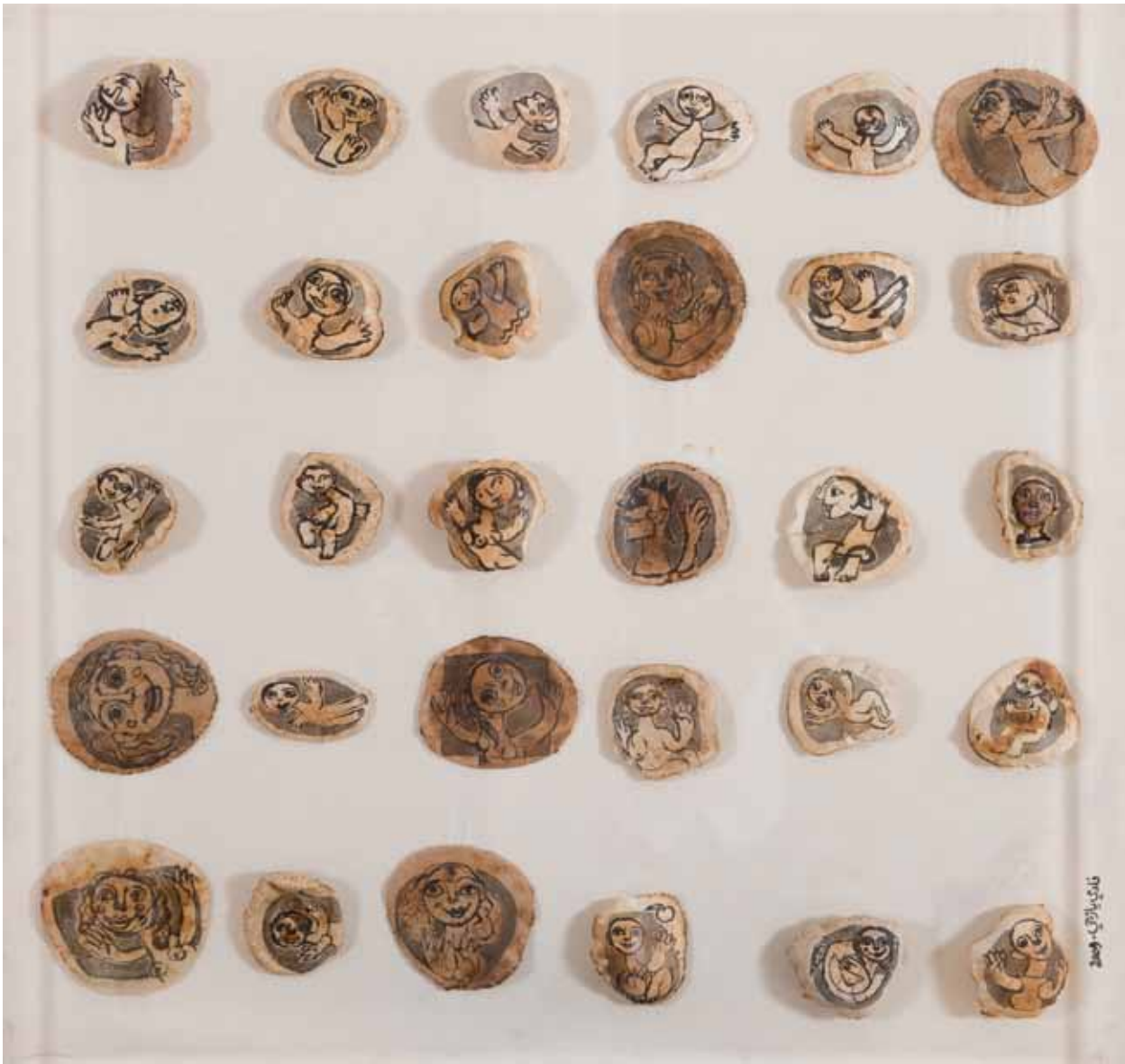
Edition 3 out of 3

Portraying the Trinity of Christian doctrine in his artwork Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, UBIK presents US President Barack Obama as the Father, he who generates; President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Son, who is begotten; and Osama Bin Laden as the Holy Spirit, who proceeds. Though distinct in their relations with one another, they coexist in unity. If Ahmadinejad is the Son and Obama is the Father it implies that America triggered the present political regime of Iran. As we are presently considered living in the age of the Holy Spirit, that which is to bring restoration, Osama Bin Laden is positioned as such as he brought his jihad to the world. Portraying opposing world leaders as the Trinity, UBIK harkens to the fact that politics are not as clear-cut as one might imagine, and though media presents these three figures as distinctly separate in opinion and policy, they are actually intertwined in both time and casual relationships.

Fadi Yazigi

Syria, born 1966

Born in Lattakia, Syria in 1966, Fadi Yazigi studied sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus. Since obtaining his BFA in 1988, Yazigi has built an oeuvre that consists of two strands of creativity, not solely in medium but also in subject matter, direction and mood. His playful robust sculptures of smiling figures are at once whimsical and enchanting, yet his sobering works on canvas suggest a more pensive, graver outlook on life and a distinct sense of foreboding. Yazigi has held nineteen solo exhibitions of his work in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Bahrain. He has participated in a large number of exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, and his works have been showcased in a number of international biennials and art fairs, including Art Paris, Art Paris Abu Dhabi, Art Dubai, Art Palm Beach and the Hong Kong International Fair. He lives and works in Damascus.



Fadi Yazigi

Untitled

2009

Mixed Media on Canvas

120 x 120 cm.

Fadi Yazigi

Untitled

2009

Mixed Media on Canvas

120 x 120 cm.



Fadi Yazigi is known for his comical characters with distorted mask-like faces, large heads and small bodies. Whimsical as they may be, his characters depict innumerable human emotions and the narratives of those he encounters daily. His objective in creating them with disproportionate heads and bodies is to remind the viewer to mature and metamorphose. Distorted as they may be, these characters abound in hope.

Drawn in ink atop Arabic bread, Yazigi's characters represent the thousands of starving Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. In 2008, Israel caused a humanitarian crisis by banning the imports of basic foodstuffs such as flour, wheat and cooking gas from entering the Gaza Strip and forced the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees to cease sending food aid, leading to the widespread hunger of over 750,000 refugees. Though depicting the narrative of widespread food shortages and starving families, Yagizi's characters are smiling, cheerful figures with open arms and wide eyes, a testament to the will and spirit of the Palestinian people.

Nassouh Zaghlouleh

Syria, born 1958

Born in Damascus, Syria in 1958, Nassouh Zaghlouleh's expansive body of work has been compiled over several decades. Developing a love for the medium at an early age, he went on to refine his craft in France and received a graduate degree in Photographic Communication from L'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1987. In 2003, he began teaching at the city's International Institute for Image and Sound.

Since launching his professional career, Zaghlouleh has taken over 80,000 photographs and has assisted with the filming of 20 documentaries, yet his images were unveiled to the public for the first time in 2007 when he held a solo exhibition at Ayyam Gallery, Damascus. Featuring over two-dozen works, the exhibition 'From Paris to Damascus', marked an important milestone in his career. Since then he has received significant exposure through a number of events including the Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair, the exhibition 'Dialogues with the East', which was featured in several venues in Spain, and solo and group shows with Ayyam Gallery throughout the Arab world.

Striptease Series

2008

C-Print Plexi Frame

165 x 110 cm.

Edition 7 out of 7

Nassouh Zaghlouleh's striking images of Damascus, in which he exhibits seasoned variations on light and composition, capture the essence of the city, one defined in the artist's eyes by its old alleyways. The barren structures, dark passages and looming shadows cast the perfect light for his explorations. His images are of a solitary existence, of the quiet that falls over the arteries of the city as its inhabitants go about their daily lives, merely passing between these walls as they make their way to their destinations. For Zaghlouleh, it is this often overlooked side of Damascus and its complex system of channels that give life to the metropolis. Titled Striptease Series, the complex shadows of hidden alleyways and only partially revealed figures and architectural elements allude to a voyeuristic observance of the city.





Une Minute de Silence

2011

Installation

H80 x W220 x D30 cm.

Une Minute de Silence, an installation by Nassouh Zaghloleh, features twenty-two standing roses surmounted by five striking images of Damascus from his series 'Damas Carree'. The complex shadows of twisting alleyways resulting in starkly contrasting geometric forms alongside the petals that fall atop the platform and beneath onto the floor leave the viewer to reflect on the many secrets hidden within these dark shadows. Behind each stem a blood red reflection is painted on the platform. This reflection, the suggestive title and cascading crimson droplets captivate the audience's attention and alter the viewer's mood to one of somber reflection. A visual minute of silence, the viewer is left to quietly reflect on the innocent lives lost in Syria. The once beautiful streets and narrow alleyways in which light playfully danced are now covered with bloodshed and shaded in sorrow and appear unwelcoming as if the darkness is concealing this pain from the outer world. The Damascus that was beautiful in Zaghloleh's eyes a few years ago, which he immortalized through his 'Damas Carree' series, is now threatened and suffering. Incorporating these images into Une Minute de Silence, Zaghloleh calls on the viewer to pray or reflect for one minute on the present destructive state of his beloved country.



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