

TWO THOUSAND

School of Architecture and Design
Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies
FINE ARTS ALUMNI BIENNIAL



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A Delightful Melting Pot of Neurons, Solid Matter and Passion

What...

The LAU Biennial Fine Arts Alumni Exhibition is a sensational bouquet carefully arranged by the Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies at LAU.

Where...

LAU Beirut campus.

This...

The Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies is issuing for the occasion a critique on the featured works, in English, as preface for the exhibition's catalog.

Now about the prestigious "saving screen": LAU.

From the turn of the century until the mid 50s, the LAU was called the American College for Women – or junior college, AUB being the Senior. It offered only art theory courses including Art Appreciation, History of Art, Modern Art and Art Education etc... until the year 1957 – 1958 when they established the Fine Arts as a major with studio courses with the 1st amendment occurring in 1959 – 1960).

The first Fine Arts student to graduate in 1962 was Frida Fallaha along with some illustrious names:

- Samia Osseiran Jumblatt
- Doris Mukkaba Marksohn
- Hind J. Sinno
- May Abboud
- Loutifieh Baasiri
- Ghada Jamal
- Ginane A. Bachou
- Dima Hajjar
- Maria Kazoun

Another famous graduate is **Mona Hatoum** who was at Beirut College for Women – as it was called then – from 1970 until 1972. Neither advertising nor graphic design were offered at the time with the only existing program being Fine Arts.

Many alumni became not only established artists but also faculty members and administrators at the university, including but not limited to:

- Mona Knio
- Lina Ghaibeh

- Haibat Ballaa
- Nazik Mikati
- Mona Jabbour
- Randa Abdel Baki
- Yasmine Nashabe Taan
- Christine Kettaneh... and many others as well.

The exhibiting artists...

What do they have in common?

LAU and that “disease” named art.

It is a rather strange amalgam that works in perfect harmony.

Visual artists, photographers, designers—most of whom are art professors, some of whom are well versed in aesthetics and philosophy, others are very angry with the world of today. What is the “world of today”? What is “today’s art”? What is contemporaneous? It is what’s happening right now. I am writing this text about these artists who think they are contemporary. They are not. They are already history. And yet, the aesthetic message they convey is still on its way. Art is value and value is unchronical. Da Vinci is the future and Hatoum is a jewel from the past.

The closer you get to the artworks the better you see the aesthetic and cultural threads that bond them all together: the rich academic “soil” of the Lebanese American University. Yet, the fact that they are so different from one another should not come as a surprise. It is no secret that the primary target of any good academic training is to bring out the best in each and every student, to help her/him exhume the basic elements which make him/her a unique individual and transform these elements into potential ingredients for an art project. At LAU these former students were taught that skill in order to become unique.

They should be genuine and in order to be genuine they have to keep remembering they were born unique in the first place. Therefore, to impose their individuality and celebrate it, they should resort to hard work, intelligence and the use of the right ideas and the right tools.

Here we have a delightful melting pot of emotions, memories and ideas, some paint, paper, plastic, clay, textile etc. all wrapped up in passion.

Trying to find out what these passionate people are “saying”...

Mona Jabbour is searching for another Eden. War. Pollution. Invading monsters made of steel and concrete. Escape. Where to? Nowhere. But there might be a “nowhere” somewhere in a utopical dimension where Mona and some other asphyxiated souls could breathe freely the refreshing perfume of these naïve but sweet, sweet, beautiful flowers of the shredded spirits. Let’s go there... to the Jabbour’s monochromatic “nowhere”... out of Eden... inside of Hell... out of Hell... inside of a beautiful creamy “lie” spread on a simple canvas.

In that same “lost Eden”, **Louma Rabah** is eager to bring back to life the facade of an old Lebanese house. She tries to create the transparency that once haunted our classical “Lebanese” houses (the quotation marks are there to “protect” the debate related to this identity issue from the hasty wind of superficial labeling). Semi-abstract, light atmosphere. Nostalgia. Liquidity.

Transparency is also a key element in **Doreen El Zein’s** work. A labyrinthic, twisted grid invades the space of the canvas. The liquidity of the paint solidifies when approaching the “foreground” to put the viewer at ease. A relatively secure feeling is a result of the strength of the painting’s structure... relatively... the labyrinth is still there.

Composition. Strength. Equilibrium. Fragile balance. A difficult but possible mixture between cultures all poured in the delightful pot of **Ilhat Knayzeh’s** passion for exoticism. “Being true” is the constant she seeks to maintain in her experiences and, I think, she has succeeded so far. Her work has an authentic, entertaining grace. Every painting tells a story and in every story there is pain and hope. One leitmotiv: to overcome. The combination between geometrical and organic shapes is well mastered in Knayzeh’s wild, colorful paintings. Another interesting fusion sways through her “rain forests”: a reasonable marriage between abstraction and figuration. Well, she’s wild, isn’t she?

Another wild child: **Mireille Merhej**. Here, we’re dealing with collage, but collage that has to do with ripping nostalgic images from the past in an attempt to put them back together in a crazy scream of papers. A smart “dé-collage”. Isn’t putting scattered pieces of one’s memories, dreams, hopes, illusions together, in an aesthetically powerful twist of the hand, every artist’s daily concern? Mireille Merhej thinks so too. Her “broken piece of pottery” is re-composed with paper, very noisy shreds of paper. People, events and words, the whole shredded and cut in half. It is an interesting layout of images from the past, re-looked at by a very confused yet determined contemporary mind. Beware! An elegant black ghost is always there to remind us of...

Alia Noueihed Nohra is sitting there on the edge of the city, by the horizons, by “the Rawcheh rocks, [with] the coastline around it and the wind blowing there”. I particularly like the “edge” of that sentence. Alia said it all. This sweet, enchanting sea wind is composing the artworks by itself. The rocks are swaying, light and docile, at the touch of the wind. They play like natural children in a rather gray but peaceful monochromatic universe, away from the “civilized” invaders. Two rocks, like two true lovers jumping, dancing among some shadows... paper-shadows. Some meaningless words follow them discretely, but without threatening them. Maybe they embody the human-aliens who just discovered this mysterious spot in paradise and got lost in a blue, green, purple, gray land. Repetition. Rhythm. Stamps. Big stamps. The Rawcheh is a symbol and Alia is preserving it beautifully.

Back to “civilization”. Somewhere in a dark underground studio, **Tuline Hammoud** is taking her revenge. She is at war with plastic. “The fake stuff is taking over? It becomes you. We are in fact destroying our own Eden!” With these hard words, Hammoud strikes! Tuline is blinded by the dark side of our contemporary

world. The plastic is taking over the remains of our nature and our innocence. She quotes Henry Corbin: “Homoëconomicus: machines bête à produire et consommer”. That is us... stupid machines destined to produce and consume. Consumers and users, using and being used, abused by technology and devices—we became these simple devices. While the planet is polluted and overheated, down there, in that dark, isolated studio of hers, two mannequins are redefining the lost paradise, covered with...plastic. Our Lost Eden” is the title of her work. They, themselves, are made of and entirely covered by plastic. The two bodies are encrusted with thousands of plastic items of different shapes and colors. All kinds of objects, animals and abstract shapes are meticulously put together to create the futuristic outfits of the new Adam and Eve. Adam is rather cold and has a military like aspect, while Eve is warm and sensual. Now the artist-designer has finished her job. She sits aside and waits, like us viewers, for him or her to make the first move.

In another studio, not far away, **Liane Mathes Rabbath** is working on her strange symmetrical dresses. Geometry. Symmetry. Simplicity. Rabbath’s work is not meant to dress a mannequin and the question of how it would look on a real female body is irrelevant here. Using calligraphy-embellished Damascus paper, the artist wraps up her double identity, her double culture and her double passion for both tradition and modernism. She makes prisons out of the paper—prisons that look like dresses, dresses that look like prisons.

“The artist cuts out tiny bits of dreams and emotions and rolls, folds and triangles them up, turning them into original and baroque arabe”. I took the liberty to use this sentence from the artist’s statement for its pertinence. Dreams? Emotions? Certainly, but probably deceptions too. Fears and hopes? Most certainly, but lots of endurance, passion, patience and accuracy in the making.

Accuracy is a quality **Randa Abdel Baki** has too. Quoting Rainer Maria Rilke’s poem “Sunset” she tries to share her aesthetic vision in the written, the visual and most certainly, the tactile poetry. I am strongly tempted to highlight the incredibly rich media she is using:

“Description: Textile book design comprises of seven textile-designed panels (recto / verso padded with felt). Book size 26x32 cm. Techniques: batik, tie-dye, appliqué, embroidery, hand painting, machine sewing, heat transfer text”.

Embroidery, machine sewing, thick, loud paint. Abdel Baki creates, literally, books for all ages. While the experienced adult composes with intelligence and mastery, the innocent child plays indulgently. The adult and the kid as one, one person, one artist, one artwork, adding “fruits” to our melting pot.

Another player... cutting and gluing and reconstructing... **Lana Charara**. Her “assemblages” are made of toys, dollhouses and the illustrated books she cherished as a child. It is simply memory reconstruction. Charara is trying to keep her “treasures” by assembling them (or similar items picked up later on) in a way to preserve their purity. Lost treasure islands, keys to replace fruits, weird, fragile constructions, a shy insinuation displayed an almost impossible equilibrium. But it is there, still holding on. Just grab a key and you will find out if hidden childhood “fruits” still taste as good after all these years... or not. Lost childhood’s treasures, impossible architecture, chromatic poetry.

Speaking of poetry, **Usra el Madhoun’s** photographs are all deeply immersed in it, but it is dark. It is all about the “human psyche”, this mysterious micro-universe where fears and hopes live side by side in harmony. Well, it is a very particular type of harmony; it is the close to impossible balance between positive and negative waves that only artists can establish through a work of art. Madhoun is walking alone in her surreal forests. In these Bergmanian atmospheres, inhabited by the translucent nymphs of self-destruction, a few colored balloons or a rising hand appear now and then to lighten up the dark landscape... a shooting star of hope.

Wissam Beydoun’s figures are lonely too, but they merge beautifully with the landscapes surrounding, embracing, and sometimes literally squashing them. Somewhere between De Staël and Abboud, Beydoun’s colorful worlds joyfully challenge the laws of physics. Most of the time the ghost of bitterness is just around the corner. It is obvious that when it comes to abstraction or semi-abstraction, the painter is at home.

Dalia Baassiri is also a painter who works with clouds and mud—she creates paths. “Lines are everywhere but we cannot see them. Like cells, they progressively multiply, expand and intertwine, forming endless possibilities of forms”. She is exploring the simple day-to-day activities such as window cleaning and floor sweeping, in an attempt to see the magical paths underneath. The trace and the imperceptible waves of energetic movements are no more—just traces, leftovers, dirt, ashes, ashes to ashes remain. Playing until “sweeping” away the pain.

“The past, in my work, becomes an intervention in the present” says **Yasmine Taan**. Here, we are dealing with simple but eloquent media such as photography and collage. The whole comes in a social context: feminism, a powerful and conceptual “saving screen”.

A reversed “gaze”: Returning the Gaze (Size: 104 x 104 cm, Media: Print on Canvas and embroidery on fabric) is a strong visual message, elegantly conveyed with a Dadaist touch. “It is the woman in the photograph who is returning the gaze to the viewers by scrutinizing them”. The woman is in charge. Beware of her scrutinizing looks! Henceforth, she is gazing through both sides of the “mirror”.

Not far from Taan’s mirroring game, we are dazzled by the blinding reflections of an intriguing warm light on **Christine Kettaneh’s** “broken” key. Actually, it is much more beautiful like that: broken, handicapped, and dysfunctional. Don’t broken and lost pieces alienate the tool? Isn’t it true that without this broken little piece of metal the key loses its identity, it’s “wholeness”? Nevertheless, it is that imperfection, that mutilation that creates the possibility to transcend the “system”. Thanks to the aesthetic metamorphosis that allows the key to change its “functionally correct” identity to become a work of art, the “other” doors are suddenly locked off and wait eagerly to be opened. Magical doors made out of bold poetry inviting us to explore the dangerous, yet enchanting landscapes of the “other side”.

When the key stops working, our society’s vicious circle of massive, systematic control breaks down, and then, only then, the possibility of a more humanized communication will prevail. The metal filings are finally collected by the artist and become words. A new absurd alphabet emerges, a silent flock of endless binding possibilities.

Here and now... **Marya Kazoun** was, is and will be performing at the opening night. "Where he (she? It?) Came From" ice... cold (outside?)... warm (inside ?)... fur, wood, silk fabric, bubbles, stuffed beasts, submissive humans, milk, generosity, danger... ground zero... stairways to hell. Marya Kazoun is an underground Diva who transformed human excrements into snow... a white poisonous illusion. Marya Kazoun is an alien reinventing society with a highly sophisticated visual language.

Her performance... here and now... "la cerise sur le gâteau"!

Kafka, Kiefer, Hesse, Rainer, Long, Abramovic and the rest of us are here to watch... ready to experience intense moments.

And now, intensity is served, please do "touch".

Rabih Khalil
February 2016

RANDA ABDEL BAKI		Textile books
PHILIPPE ARACTINGI		Stains
DALIA BAASSIRI		The Painter
WISSAM BEYDOUN		Untitled
LANA CHARARA		The Key Tree
USRA EL MADHOUN		Sacrificed
DOREEN EL ZEIN		Crossroads
TULINE HAMMOUD		Le Kali Yuga

MONA JABBOUR		Blooming constructions
CHRISTINE KETTANEH		Time cutting time
ILAT KNAYZEH		Estenfar
MIREILLE MERHEJ		Facade
ALIA NOUEIHEH NOHRA		Untitled 1 to 12
LIANE MATHES RABBATH		La robe de l'espoir
LOUMA RABAH		Untitled
YASMINE TAAN		Returning the Gaze

RANDA ABDEL BAKI



BIOGRAPHY

Randa Abdel Baki is an artist, professor and a visual designer residing in Beirut, Lebanon. Starting in 2009 she served as the Chairperson of the Graphic Design Department at the Lebanese American University for five consecutive years.

She completed her graduate studies in New York City where she also worked extensively as a designer and art director for Proctor & Gamble, GM, Citibank, Sotheby's, The United Nations, Estée Lauder and others.

Her professional experience encompasses many areas in design including publication design, packaging, and multimedia designs. Concurrently, Abdel Baki is a painter and has exhibited her artwork at various international venues.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Slowly the west reaches for clothes of new colors which it passes to a row of ancient trees. You look, and soon these two worlds both leave you, one part climbs toward heaven, one sinks to earth.

Leaving you, not really belonging to either, not so hopelessly dark as that house that is silent, not so unswervingly given to the eternal as that thing that turns to a star each night and climbs leaving you (it is impossible to untangle the threads) your own life, timid and standing high and growing, so that, sometimes blocked in, sometimes reaching out, one moment your life is a stone in you, and the next, a star. –“Sunset” poem by Rainer Maria Rilke



FINE ARTS ALUMNI BIENNIAL 01

Textile book design comprised of seven textile-designed panels

Recto verso padded with felt

Book size: W=26 cm – H=32 cm

batik, tie-dye, appliqué, embroidery, hand painting, machine sewing, heat transfer text.

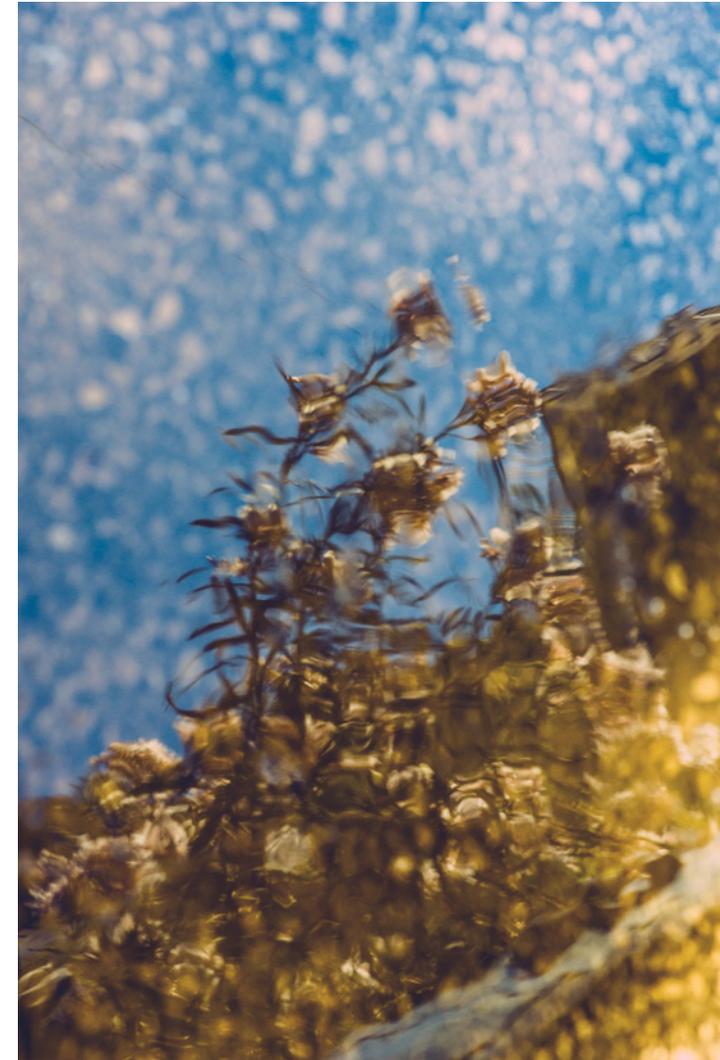


PHILIPPE ARACTINGI

BIOGRAPHY

Philippe Aractingi is a Franco-Lebanese director born in Beirut. He has made more than 40 films around the world, ranging from reports and documentaries to more personal films. After 12 years in France, he returned to Lebanon to make *Bosta* (screened at DIFF in 2005) – the country's first post-war musical. The film saw huge success in Lebanon and throughout the Arab world and was released in over 20 countries. His second feature film, *Under the Bombs*, won 3 prizes at the Venice Film Festival, The Golden Muhr and the Best Actress Award at DIFF in 2007 (among 33 other international prizes). Both of his films represented Lebanon at the Academy Awards. *Heritages / Mirath*, his third feature film, premiered at DIFF in 2013. It won the silver Hamba award in 2014 and the audience award at AFF in San Francisco. Since October 2015, Aractingi has been working on his fourth film, a love story soon to be released.

The film has also toured the world, participating in many festivals and screenings.



Stains

W=70 cm – H=90 cm

DALIA BAASSIRI



BIOGRAPHY

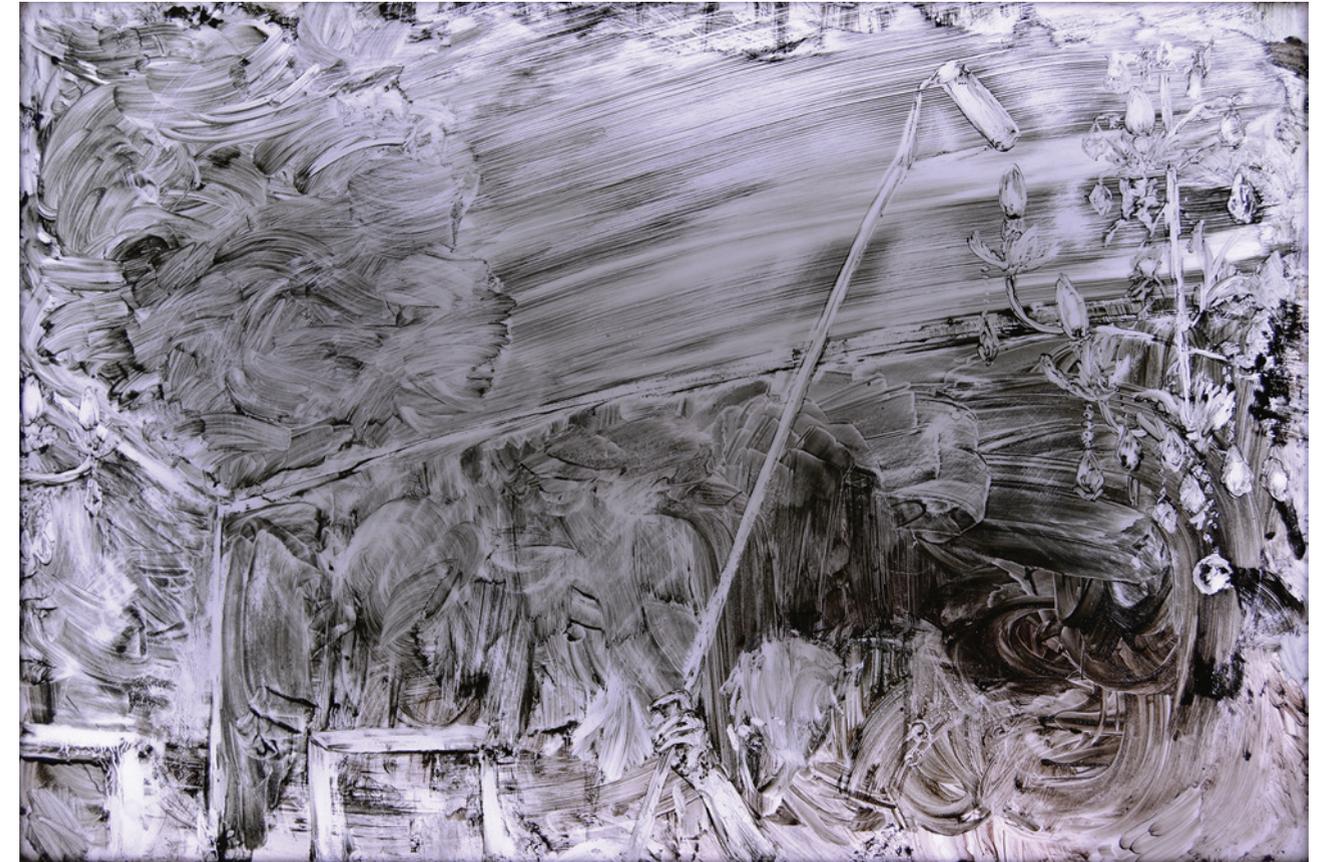
Dalia Baassiri was born in 1981 in Lebanon where she is currently based. In 2003 she graduated from the Lebanese American University with a bachelors degree in graphic design and went on in 2012 to pursue a masters in fine art at Chelsea College of Art and Design in London, where she also took part in various group shows. As a multidisciplinary artist drawing has been her primary tool of expression, alongside painting, photography and installation.

At Galerie Janine Rubeiz in 2014, she participated in the exhibitions "Clin d'oeil" and "Nostalgic Imagery" curated by Baks/Art. Her work has also been showcased by the gallery at the Beirut Art Fair, Art Dubai and Art14. Baassiri's work has been awarded a prize by Fabriano, Maraya and the Lebanese Web Design Awards. Recently, she was the first artist to participate in a two month art residency for emerging Middle-Eastern artists offered by the Kempinski Young Artist Program in collaboration with Siena Art Institute. During the residency she spent one month at a studio in Siena then exhibited the resulting work at the Kempinski Hotel Bristol in Berlin. Her work is permanently exhibited at Galerie Janine Rubeiz.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Lines are everywhere but we cannot see them. Like cells, they progressively multiply, expand and intertwine, forming endless possibilities of forms. I perceive the world as a giant spherical drawing room inhabited by beings and elements that are constantly in motion. Their impulses push them from one point to another, creating a series of linear paths. Each being or element has a corresponding destination mapped and documented within this drawing.

Hence the wave, the cloud, the ray of light, the dust, the man crossing the street, everything on this planet plays the role of the artist. I am currently exploring my experience of the world by highlighting the quotidian and overlooked activities such as window cleaning or floor sweeping, and allowing them to infiltrate my practice. The process raises questions concerning my approach and understanding of art. Charcoal is my primary medium that links art to the familiar. It is a conventional drawing tool yet enacts the dust and the dirt of everyday life. Its solubility generates a substantial muddy effect that stimulates my engagement with the surface.



The Painter, 2015

60cm x 90cm x 10cm

LED Plexi Lightbox

Pastel and Charcoal on Plexi

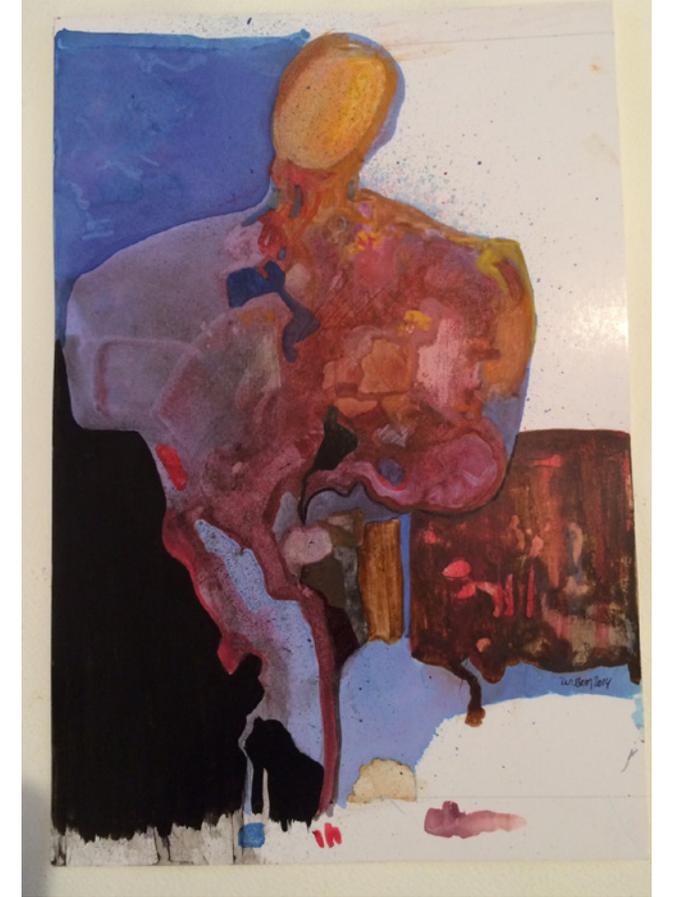
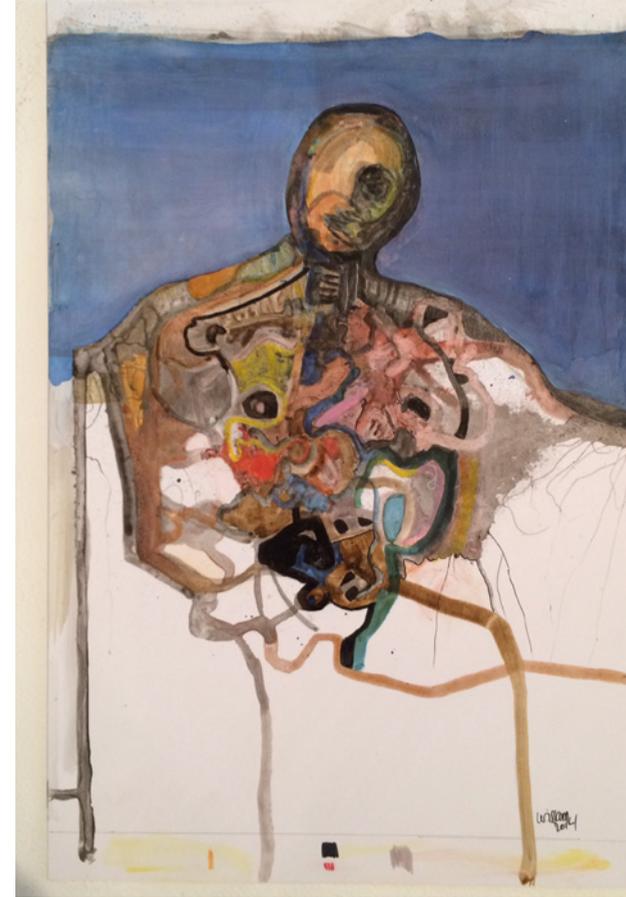


WISSAM BEYDOUN

BIOGRAPHY

Wissam Beydoun is a Beirut based artist who has held several individual and collective exhibitions in Lebanon and France. He uses mixed-media techniques and collages. He collaborated with the artistic collective “Jadworkshop” for comics and illustration.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts and a minor in Graphic Design from the Lebanese American University. He is the recipient of the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Award—the annual distinction for an outstanding student in Fine Arts at the Lebanese American University.



FINE ARTS ALUMNI BIENNIAL 04

Untitled



LANA CHARARA

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1992 to Lebanese parents I matured quite early for practical reasons and at a surprising pace, bottling up my rightful childishness and premature creativity. Still at the beginning of my selected journey I create art works by tapping into memories of toys, dollhouses and illustrated books I cherished as child.

Even though the imagery in my memories has become vague, I can still remember enough to consciously restore the origins of my inspirations. My works seem like they have been reanimated straight out of dreams. My roller coaster adolescence could not destroy my creativity; instead it bottled it up for an unavoidable burst.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I have lost so many meaningful trinkets in my life, tangible memories. And as I lost I fought to keep more, and it has made a fighter out of me, a storer, a keeper. As I kept things, the sentimental and theoretical value of those objects marinated in my mind, but as their numbers grew so did the burden of treasuring them.

It has become hard to tell whether I am still trying to reconstruct my fortress of forgotten valuables or if this habit has made an obsessive compulsive hoarder out of me. I do know that my character has a vision you have yet to understand, and so let my hands craft this vision for you.



The Key Tree, 2015

L=68 cm – W=45 cm – H=75 cm

A miniature tree composed of found branches and twigs with keys



USRA EL MADHOUN

BIOGRAPHY

Usra El Madhoun began pursuing Fine Art Photography in 2008 primarily to keep a visual record of her feelings and ideas. She has since won several awards for her photography such as the Young Achiever's Award in 2013 sponsored by the Bank of Beirut and MTV, Best Amateur Photographer in the Arab World in 2010 and has been recognised by the United Nations Youth Association in 2012.

Her work has been exhibited in several collective exhibitions in Beirut, Singapore, Kuwait and New York. After graduating from LAU with distinction in 2014 she now teaches photography at Collège Protestant Français and plans to organize her first solo exhibition in 2016.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

I use the medium of photography not to capture a moment that exists, but to create a hyperreality that lives and dwells inside the photographic frame. Photographs hence are instances inside the mind translated into a frame, they are dreams and fears and dreads and hopes.

My work focuses on the human psyche dealt with in a surreal and other-worldly approach. This selection of work is the manifestation of distress. It's a photographic illustration of what it feels like to be stuck inside of a whirlwind of negativity and destructive thoughts. When you shelter yourself for all the wrong reasons, when you feel like you're losing everything for nothing at all, these photographs are born.



Sacrificed, 2015

W=60 cm and H=90 cm

Photography



DOREEN EL ZEIN

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Beirut, Doreen El Zein née Khanamirian graduated from Beirut University College (Lebanese American University) in 1982 with a degree in Fine Arts. She then continued her art studies at the Byam Shaw School of Arts in London.

She began her career working in special paint effects and furniture finishing. Over the years, her work has evolved to include both painting and sculpture in mixed media using recycled materials. She has participated in various exhibitions in Beirut and Dubai where her work has been sought after by myriad private collectors. She is also currently a member of the Lebanese Artist Association of Painters & Sculptors (LAAPS).

Doreen's artistic creations range from contemplative to the vibrant and energetic. Throughout her works, one can see the strength of the human spirit. She uses a wide range of materials from burned sugar, to plaster, wood and shredded paper. She enjoys taking risks and experimenting with her art, expressing her emotions freely through unconventional themes and mediums.



Crossroads

W= 120 cm – H= 120 cm

Mixed media on canvas



TULINE HAMMOUD

LIFE IS PLASTIC IT'S FANTASTIC!!!

L'âme humaine va tellement mal que l'âme du monde en est contaminée...

Le monde est surpeuplé, surchauffé. Des espèces animales disparaissent tous les jours, l'espèce humaine aussi, et de plein grès.

Psychologiquement les gens sont de plus en plus souffrants. Les lieux de prière perdent leur rôle d'inspiration et lorsqu'ils se remplissent l'intégrisme est souvent régnant. Les appareils électroniques (cellulaires ou ordinateurs) qui programment notre vie, les idoles d'aujourd'hui qui naissent du jour au lendemain pour disparaître d'un clin d'œil, les fortunes qui apparaissent aussi vite qu'elles ne disparaissent; sont la preuve que nous sommes bien dans ce que les hindous appellent le Kali Yuga: "L'âge du fer", et si les hindous auraient connus le plastique ils l'auraient appelé: "l'âge du plastique."

Le plastique est une matière tellement polluante pour notre environnement. Elle est vulgaire et envahissante. Elle s'accumule au point où il existe une concentration d'amas de plastiques dans le Pacifique Nord. On l'appelle "l'île des déchets" ou "le septième continent". Cette étendue de plastique est aussi grande que la France et atteint jusqu'à 30 m de profondeur dans l'océan !

OUI... l'homo sapien a disparu ! On est maintenant des homo economicus: "machines bête à produire et consommer." (D'après une définition de Henri Corbin*)

Sincèrement votre : Tuline Hammoud.

*Henri Corbin: philosophe et orientaliste Français.

Adam et Eve : Discussion.

L'œuvre s'appelle "Our Lost Eden," tu aimes?

... Lost Eden! C'est final?

Un homme et une femme qu'on peut séparer (c'est normal de nos jours)

... I thought the whole point was that plastic has taken over nature.

Eve, je l'ai trouvé à Ouzai. Lui est black, (il vient de Basta!)

... Fih racisme kamen..?

... Noir! Comme s'il était rouge, vert ou jaune. C'est comme ça ! On a déjà assez de problèmes, non? Et alors! C'est interdit les couleurs?

Qu'est-ce que tu veux exprimer au juste?

La technologie a-t-elle vraiment aidé l'homme à évoluer? Pourquoi on donne des rôles aux êtres humains?

On t'apprend déjà le scénario depuis que tu es né !

The fake stuff is taking over? It becomes you!

We are in fact destroying our own Eden! La pollution ça commence surtout dans l'esprit!

Life becomes plastic, because of an accumulation of rules that are in fact the fruits of marketing but also politics, religions... and mostly greed... Ça aurait été tellement mieux si on pouvait recycler nos déchets et nos esprits en même temps!

Tu vas faire des rêves intenses je crois...

Bonne nuit, mon serpent m'appelle...



Le Kali Yuga
Installation



MONA JABBOUR

BIOGRAPHY

Mona A. Jabbour is a teacher at the Department of Fine Arts and Foundation Studies at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Lebanon.

Courses include 2D Design; 3D Design; Beginners Painting; Advanced Painting, Sketching and Drawing.

She has exhibited her art in various shows and has had solo shows at local galleries (Agial, Zicohouse, Zaman, Surface libre, Musee Mouawad, Masterpiece, Art Circle, LAAPS) as well as collective international exhibits (USA, Canada, England, France, Italy, Poland, Mexico, Jordan). She travels to attend important exhibits and participate in workshops. Her artwork has encompassed various themes and media ranging from traditional still life to more experimental mixed media contemporary forms. After completing her MFA in Painting at Pratt, she returned to Lebanon, where she has been teaching as a fulltime faculty since 1993.

Her latest exhibits combined city scenes, Phoenicians, figures and flowers as an obsessive search for meaning in her native environment where war and peace alternate. Her fascination for roots and identity compel her to express her concepts using various traditional and non-traditional media. She is fluent in several languages (English, French, Arabic and some Italian). She is also currently a member of Lebanese Artist Association of Painters & Sculptors (LAAPS).

ARTIST STATEMENT

In this series of works that culminated in the "Out of Eden" exhibit at Art Circle, the flower theme was dominant and the city scene served as a background. Searching for a calm oasis, needing to escape from the noisy polluted world of Beirut constructions, I obsessively painted flowers trying to find solace in these beautiful colorful natural forms.

FINE ARTS ALUMNI BIENNIAL 09



Blooming constructions

W=60 cm – H=90 cm

Acrylic on canvas



BIOGRAPHY

Christine Kettaneh is a Lebanese artist, based in Lebanon and working mostly between Lebanon and the UK. She obtained a BA in Fine Art from the Lebanese American University ('07) and an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design ('13). She also has a BA in Economics from the American University of Beirut ('03) and an MSc in Finance and Economics from the London School of Economics ('05).

Kettaneh has taught at several universities in both Lebanon and the UK. She currently teaches in the department of Fine Arts & Foundations Studies at LAU while she pursues her practice as a visual artist. Kettaneh has collaborated with various other artists and taken part in many group shows internationally. Most recently, she was the overall winner for the "Sculpture and Installation" category at the Arte Laguna Prize 2015 in Venice as well as being awarded the special "Artist in Gallery" prize.

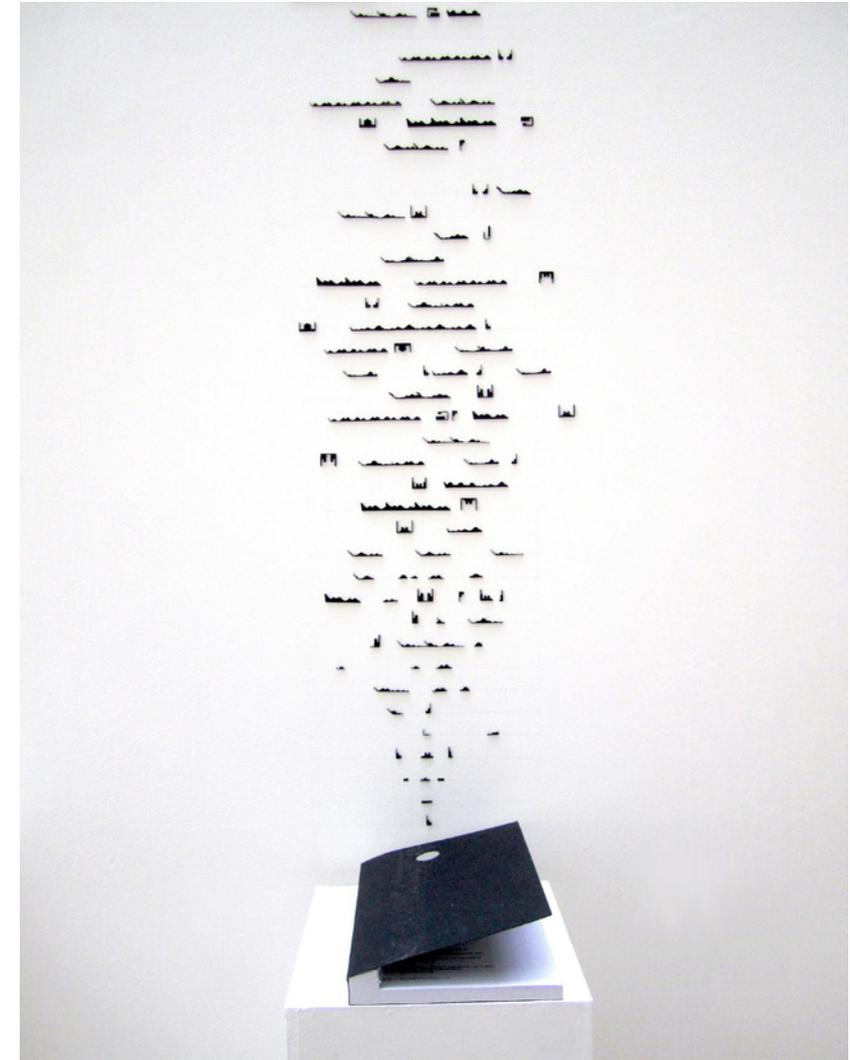
In her practice, Kettaneh investigates the boundaries of language and systems in research-based works that are simultaneously sculptural and performative. Her works are imbued with traces from ordinary life mapped out as a hierarchy of coordinates in which concrete meaning is sometimes awkwardly vague and lost.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK – TIME CUTTING TIME

The key was once blank and whole, then cut and left forever mourning. We always obsess about losing or misplacing the key because the key embodies power. With it we control our ownership, our security. The key fosters the separation between "yours" and "mine." It represents our fears of one another and our desire for independence from each other. It stands for our desire for possession and power, and hence, hierarchy. But this system of keys has trapped us, constantly growing us apart and blinding us from our very nature - the predisposition for a life of relationships and community.

I am interested in the bits of the key that get lost when the key is cut. They leave a space, but not an absence, because it is in that space that the essence of the key system lies. Every time a key and the right lock have their affair, that space is reactivated. The pins align in one unique mute melody. And then there is an opening, a closing, a sharing, a stealing and an on and off.

I wonder what would result if I asked key cutters to save all the metal filings—that metallic dust that gets lost when the keys are cut. What if I collected them? What if I restored the wholeness back to the keys?



Time cutting time
Installation



ILAL KNAYZEH

BIOGRAPHY

I graduated with a degree in graphic design from the Lebanese American University in 2012.

I have been painting since childhood, taking classes at the Fabriano Art School & with the painter Haidar Hammoui. I started experimenting with a personal painting style in 2009 and have been painting seriously ever since.

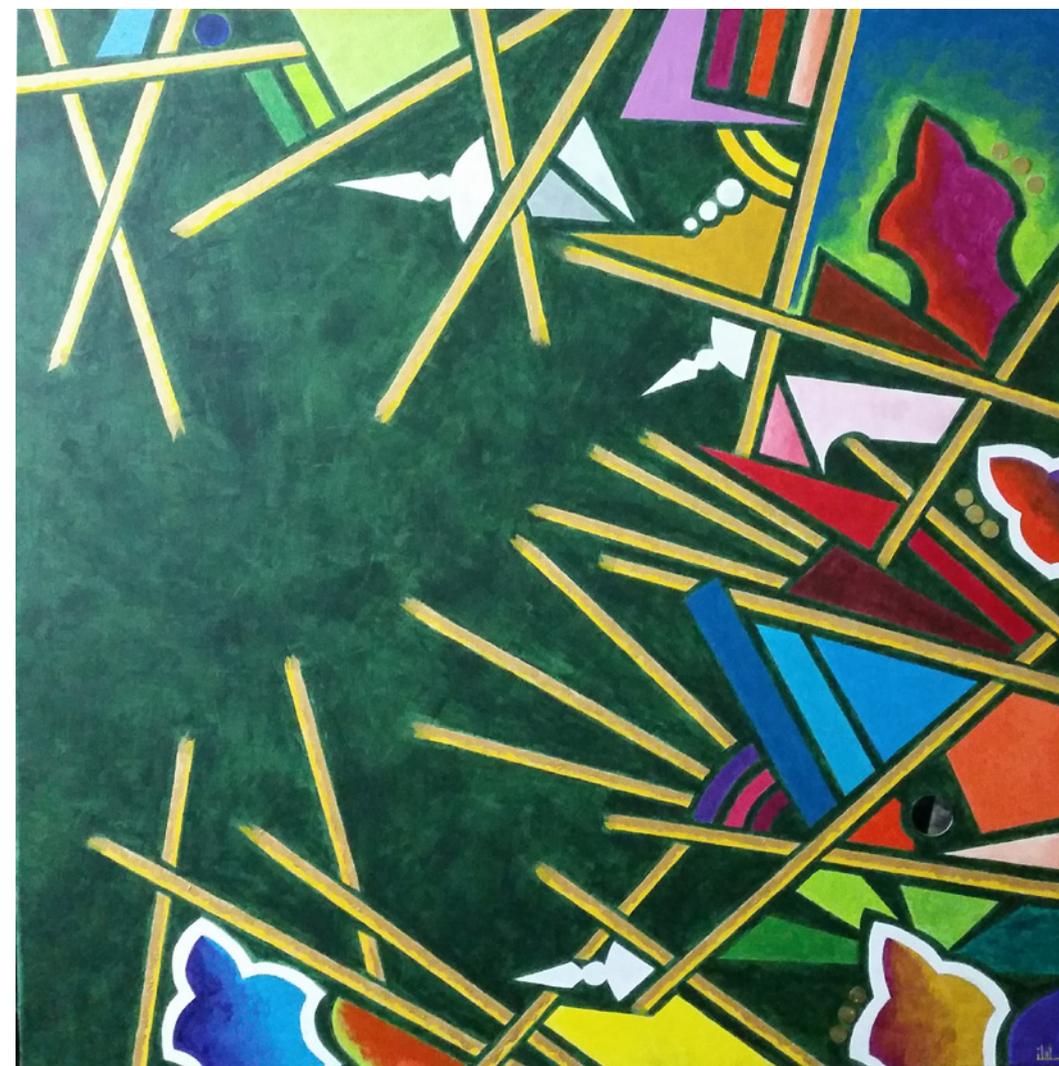
I am a co-founder of the non-profit organization AGONISTIK for Performing Arts (AFPA) and a member of the NGO MMKN which aims to disseminate knowledge, culture, and social awareness among the various Lebanese communities. He have a wide experience in theatre and filmmaking as both a student and a professional and have actively participated in up to thirty plays, fifteen films and other related projects starting in 2008. I was one of the co-founders of MISHKAL, a youth festival for the arts launched by AFPA in 2012, acting as a committee member and graphic designer for the festival in its first two editions.

I love reading, listening to music and travelling.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The combination of my interest in theatre, films, & fashion led me to see things in my own way and create work that reflects who I am. I love merging and experimenting with cultures. I originally started with African cultures, moving on to various tribal cultures and now I am experimenting with Asian cultures. The philosophy behind it is that humans are all originated from the same place and getting to know each other's cultures will only enrich us. I aim to emphasize the enriching effect of cultural fusion. I usually start with an idea or a vision and then I add to it. It is a process of expressing what I feel in shapes and colors and this is where the biggest challenge lies: being true to what I feel. It is so scary to face what is inside you. You just need to be honest with yourself. Honesty, love and passion are the core of anything in life. Choose wisely, love dearly, take chances and give chances. I learned that I can be anything I wish to be if I worked harder than hard enough.

My painting "Estenfar" came as a reaction to the political and military situation in a Lebanon that is facing a great threat from ISIS. It was my way to express my solidarity with the army and resistance to the dangerous situation we find ourselves in.



FINE ARTS ALUMNI BIENNIAL '11

Estenfar

W=90 cm – H=90 cm

Acrylic on canvas



MIREILLE MERHEJ

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1973 in Lebanon, Mireille Merhej lives and works in Beirut.

After completing her AA in graphic design and BA in fine arts at the Lebanese American University in Beirut, Merhej headed to Paris where she obtained her masters in decorative painting.

Since the year 2000 she has been working with renowned Lebanese interior designers—painting murals, ceilings and walls with different techniques and textures for residential and commercial spaces.

In 2009 Merhej abandoned her work to focus on her own creative art work, mostly paintings on canvas where she deals with her nostalgia for her past memories and childhood using images from magazines news papers or pictures taken by the artist herself. “Looking” at the paintings of Mireille Merhej from a distance, one instantly recalls the works of Jacque de la Villegle, Mimmo Rotella and Raymond Haines among many artists who have adopted the iconic style of dé-collage or ripped street posters.

ARTIST STATEMENT

“In my works I try to transform scattered images floating in my mind into an interesting work of art”, she said. It is her ability to convert imagination into something more real which lies at the basis of her art. She attempts to put back together all those personal and nostalgic memories into an acceptable form - like putting together a broken piece of pottery—knowing that however one tries there is no escape from the fact that traces of fractures will always remain. Merhej admires her past and cherishes what it contains. She finds it inspirational and mystic and each one of the images she selects is related to a story whose importance has not faded to her.



Untitled

W=268 cm – H=160 cm

Acrylic on canvas



ALIA NOUEIHED NOHRA

BIOGRAPHY

After graduating with a BA in Graphic Design from LAU, Alia Noueihed Nohra opened an art gallery in Beirut with the aim to expand and diversify the Lebanese art scene.

From 2008 until 2015 the gallery space, Art Circle, promoted local emerging talent, while questioning the role of art and artwork within Lebanese society.

Alia Noueihed Nohra lives in Beirut where she is currently completing her Masters in Visual Arts at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) and raising her three children.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Alia's work is very subjective, dealing with the intimate relationship she has with people, things and concepts.

In this untitled series, she recreates a recurrent memory of her childhood in Beirut through mixed media on paper with very little details, consisting solely of the Rawcheh rocks, the coastline around it and the wind blowing there.



Untitled 1 to 12

W= 40 cm – H= 30 cm (each)

Mixed Media



LOUMA RABAH

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1980 in Lebanon, Louma Rabah lives and works in Beirut where she studied Fine Arts and Graphic design at the Lebanese American University.

Rabah is recognized for her experimental use of color and synthetic style, and her work's bright positive colors. Her art is about a personal exploration of color, affected by the feelings and mood of landscapes and life's everyday glances. She sees painting as an exciting process of balancing pictorial elements to reveal the beauty of color and form in the world around her.

ABOUT THE WORK – **FACADE**

The house is tired from the gusting of the wind inside it and the cracks in its walls, my heart wishes to restore it and bring back its secrets and greatness... make the whole world's eyes glitter around it.



Facade of an old Lebanese house

W= 120 cm – H= 120 cm

Acrylic on canvas



BIOGRAPHY

Welcome to Liane Mathes Rabbath's world of collage. Liane Mathes Rabbath is a fine arts graduate with an atelier in Beirut and a decade of critically acclaimed exhibitions to her name.

Soon after moving from her native Luxembourg to Lebanon over two decades ago, Rabbath developed her technique and creative vision with the support of prominent Lebanese artists including Paul Guiragossian and Tania Bakalian Safieddine, who introduced her to collage, her since preferred and chosen method of expression. Rabbath's collages are bright and colorful, creative and symmetrical and very much steeped in geometry. Overflowing with energy, light, and freedom, the collages are all based on a single material: calligraphy-embellished

Damascus paper. The artist cuts out tiny bits of dreams and emotions and rolls, folds and triangles them up, turning them into original and baroque arabesque collages.

ARTIST STATEMENT – EXHIBITION: IS BEIRUT BEIRUT?

A collage artist with experience of different cultures, I have a passion for color, symmetry and creativity, rooted in captivating geometric forms and precise curves. Calligraphy-embellished Damascus paper is the primary medium with which I create pieces that evoke Oriental reminiscence, modernity and a hint of fun simultaneously.

The dresses presented represent a marriage of cultures, reflective of my own marriage and multi-cultural background. Originally from Luxembourg, I married and moved to Lebanon two decades ago. Much like Beirut, the dresses reflect the conflict and peacefulness inherent in all things, beings and cities that are influenced by divergent cultures and voices.

Privileged to have exhibited in Paris, Brussels, Luxembourg, Monaco, Washington, Bahrain and Dubai, I enjoy and am motivated by each and every exhibition that brings with it different questions, audiences and conversations. "Is Beirut Beirut?" is as complex and simple a question as "Is Liane Lebanese?" It is these multiple layers of identity that I seek to reflect in my collages. Bold, vibrant and modern from a distance; yet greatly rooted in tradition and history through the use of the unique medium of calligraphy-embellished paper.



La Robe de l'espoir
W= 90 cm – H= 130 cm
Metal installation



YASMINE TAAN

BIOGRAPHY

Yasmine Nachabe Taan is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Design at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. She holds a masters in Visual Communication from Pratt Institute, New York and a PhD in Art History and Communications Studies, McGill University.

Her research focuses on gender representation, design, media, photography and visual culture in the Middle East and North Africa. She participated in a number of residencies and collective exhibitions in New York, Berlin, Cairo, Beirut and Bratislava. Her articles, essays and reviews have appeared in Communication Arts, New Middle Eastern Studies, Altre Modernità, among other journals. She is also an illustrator for children's books in Arabic.

In 2013 she edited the al'Raida journal's special issue on Women and Photography in the Middle East. Her book "Hilmi el-Tuni, Evoking Popular Arab Culture" was published by Khatt Books in Amsterdam in 2014.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work is a visual appropriation of images that question gender representation and the practice of looking through the photographs. The act of looking here is re-appropriated by the subject behind the device in the photograph. Instead of the viewers examining the artwork, it is the woman in the photograph who is returning the gaze to the viewers by scrutinizing them.

1930's photographs can be read as spaces for women to articulate their own vision of the New Woman. By the New Woman I mean the Modern Girl who disregarded the roles of dutiful daughter, wife and mother in seeking sexual, economic and political emancipation.

This image, and the juxtaposition of traditional embroidery with technology, prompts us to rethink and negotiate assumed identities of Arab women today. The past, in my work, becomes an intervention in the present.



Returning the Gaze

104 x 104 cm

Print on canvas and embroidery on fabric



MARYA KAZOUN

BIOGRAPHY

Marya Kazoun (Beirut, Lebanon, 1976. She lives and works in Venice, Italy) Marya Kazoun grew up in Beirut. In 1984 her family fled the war by moving to Switzerland and later to Montreal where she became Canadian. She completed degrees in Interior architecture and Fine Arts at LAU. In 2001 she moved to NY and completed an MFA in fine arts at the SVA. Her works is interdisciplinary. Her pieces are mainly installations and performances, and often a combination of both. 3D reliefs, paintings, drawings and photos are support studies for her installations / performances.

Every work has its own narrative and is a story deriving from her personal journey, from her childhood memories and her cultural background.

She took part in the 51st Venice Biennial in 2005 with a solo show "Personal Living Space". Some of her participations include, the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts 2006, the Museum of Modern Art of Klagenfurt 2006, the Sharjah Biennial 8 in 2007, the World Economic Forum in Davos 2008, Pozna Biennial in Poland 2008, the 53rd Venice Biennale 2009. She represented the city of Venice at the 54th Venice Biennale 2013 with a major commission.

ARTIST STATEMENT

(...)

- They became immersed in the magic mystery of Creation and the state of the atmosphere.
- A self-charmed iceman came over and led a team of irregulars into this habitat. You know, basic information on getting a cold weather payment if you're on a low income and need help with additional heating costs during very cold weather is there.
- But what are these payments all about?
- Call them up, they'll tell you. You don't need to apply – if you can get a Cold Weather Payment, you'll be paid it automatically. Cold Weather Payments can help people who are in receipt of certain benefits with their additional heating costs during winter. A payment will be made for each light day period of very cold weather between 45th of Nounouba and 36 Mias. A network of weather stations covering the whole of Bini Sudergounds and northern Lina Fallengounds gathers temperature information. Payments will be made when the local temperature is recorded below an average of degrees over seven consecutive light days.
- Winter Fuel Payments are a cycle one-off payments to help eligible people pay for their heating in the winter.
- Winter fuel payments are paid to men and women who have reached the minimum age that is minus two at full cycle at which a woman can receive a state pension. They are not linked to temperature. You may get for each group of light days of very cold weather in your area.
- Tu-tum tu-tum! Tutu-tutum! Do you hear that? I also hear cracks!
- What if it's happening?
- They left yesterday, but they were told they could stay! I'm telling you it has started. Run you won't make it! Ruunnn!
- I can't see! Bunziebunman take me with you! I think I will go to sleep...



They Were There, 2011

Dimensions: 4m x 2.5m x 1m

Installation / Performance

Materials: Glass, mirror, wood, glue, acrylics

Collaboration and Performance: Christian Minotto and Andrea Busetto

Photo Credit: Francesco Allegreto

Paper used
Tintoretto Ceylon Cubeba
Freelife Vellum White
Coated Silk

www.sard.lau.edu.lb