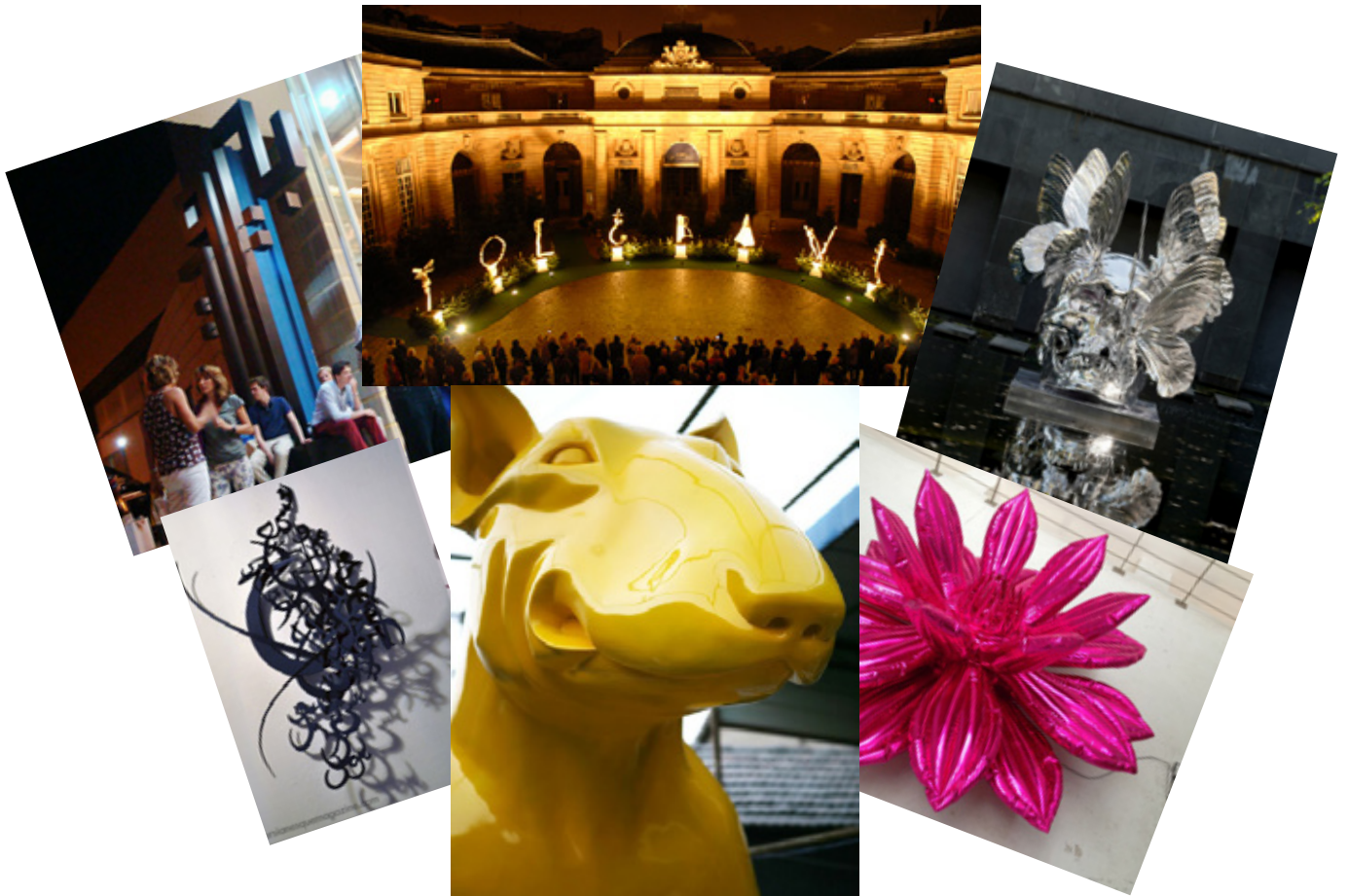


# BEIRUT ART WEEK 13



## BEIRUT ART WEEK Book

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## Mustafa Ali

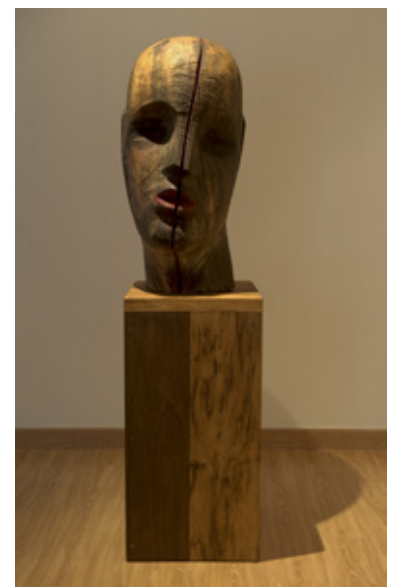
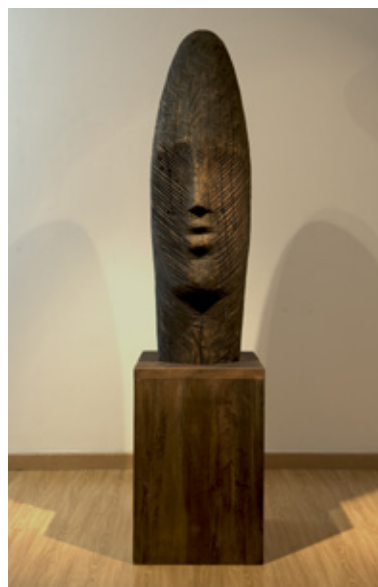
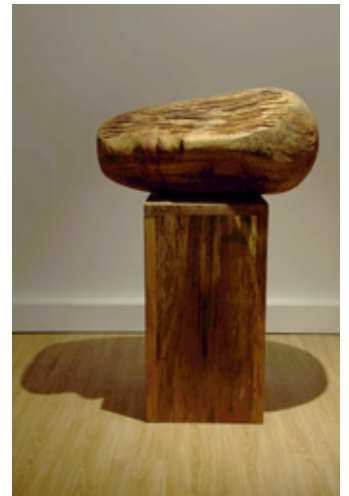
Mustafa Ali, Syria's foremost sculptor, was born in Latakia in 1956. Known for elegant, monumental sculptures that pierce the consciousness and underscore the fragility of mankind, he has been widely collected in the Arab world for nearly three decades.

After training in sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus, he continued his studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Carrara, Italy, graduating in 1996. He has exhibited extensively on the international art circuit since 1979 and has participated in a number of high-profile events such as Latakia Sculpture Biennial (where he was awarded the Golden Prize) (1997), the Biennial of Alexandria, Egypt (1994), the Sharjah Biennial (1995), and the International Symposium for Sculptors in Valencia, Spain (2001).



Ali's work is housed in private and public collections, including a number of official institutions in Syria such as the National Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Damascus, in addition to the Jordan National Gallery in Amman, the Sharjah Museum of Art and the Arab World Institute in Paris. Many of his bronze and wood sculptures can also be found in public spaces, such as "The Gate of Syria," which is on display in the Mediterranean Olympiad in Paris, Italy, and "The Tower of Memory," which stands in the Damascus International Fairground.

Indispensable to the Syrian art scene for years, Ali is also the director of the renowned Damascus art center The Mustafa Ali Art Foundation, which presents exhibitions, workshops, lectures and cultural events throughout the year to local artists and the public. Through his work and his nonprofit, Ali has inspired and supported generations of Syrian artists.



Ahmed al Bahrani

Born in 1965, Babylon, Iraq. Lives and works between Sweden and Qatar.

Al Bahrani's work has departed from the traditional scope of structure present in sculpture to attain a minimalistic quality that is characterised by both clarity and simplicity. His individualistic approach has resulted in creating a sense of flexibility and movement to an otherwise heavy and rigid material.

Although known as a sculptor, etching has become integral to al Bahrani's practice. His bold forms dramatically isolated against empty background achieve a startling new sense of formal abstraction.

"Babylon, with her legends and holy books, was ever my support during my exile. My ancient passion was broken when I decided to leave for exile far from the epic of Gilgamesh to continue my epic in a vast earth, a vast desert, the paths of which none but one exiled from his own land know. I bore Babylon with me in my belongings and my history but I continued to be delighted by Ashtar's weeping for Tamuz. I bore the music of my injured city and the pain of its inhabitants in my veins while searching for a new location upon which to build my ancient history. For years I travelled from one exile to another and remembered Iraq and its epic chant.

There is nowhere more beautiful than its deserts, its forbidden fruits, its sad and wearying dreams. Now, today, I am concocting a new passion purified of the past; a ferrous passion full of emotion, love and peace.

I continuously feel that there is someone waiting for me after all these decades who will understand me through my humanistic output and will understand my Babylonian concerns and the grief of Ashtar at the death of Tamuz. In some new language which resembles me, I am the Neo-Babylonian and the childhood which loved the Euphrates which inspired the «rest of my works.»



Reflection, 2012  
Stainless Steel Shiny  
160 x 115 cm

**Artwork for public spaces  
Transport at the expense of the partner**



## AHMED ASKALANY

Born in 1978, Nag Hammadi, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo.

“Simplicity is my philosophy – to convey the idea directly to the viewer without going into detail.”

Critics and art connoisseurs alike have already described Ahmed Askalany as one of the most unique and inimitable sculptors of his generation. Making already his Dubai debut at Art Sawa, Askalany will be exhibiting his latest collection of emotive sculptures entitled SELF STORIES: BIRDS & I

Askalany's subjects are simple human figures and animals inspired and representative of his native town, Nag Hammadi, in Upper Egypt.

His work mostly retains an explicit connection with traditional materials and craft methods associated with the ancient cultures of Egypt. Traditional aesthetic forms that place an emphasis on both structure and volume characterize Askalany's works, but the volumes are distorted with a minimal head on a giant body.

Askalany's works possess a sense of innocence alongside a state of isolation reflecting both frankness and candor. Nonetheless, the work retains a profound nature and sense of innocence. There is no specific formula that Askalany uses when creating his works of art, the final work often represents this by becoming humorous or naïve but always with a poetic sensitivity. This connection allows his work to become unique and unmistakable, yet, at the same time, does not stop him being thoroughly up to date.



DONKEY WITH A DRIVER, 2012 , bronze,  
85 x 117 x 120 cm