

DRESS CODE PROJECT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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DRESS CODE PROJECT

FOREWORD

In 1996, the art critic Germano Celant committed the resources of the city of Florence in a large Biennial, whose title was Time and Fashion, which aim was not only to compare but, for the first time, to involve art and fashion in the same projectuality, treating the two dimensions in exactly the same way as creative entities capable and responsible to constantly articulate a thinking and an innovative synthesis about the world and contemporary reality. The choice, quite amazing at that time, violated a deeply rooted and consistent taboo of the idealist thought, "confirmed" by the famous and oft-cited joke of one of the best fashion designers ever, Coco Chanel: "Fashion is what you like immediately, but not tomorrow, art is what you do not like right away but you'll like tomorrow. "In other words, quoting the same Chanel, "fashion passes, style remains". Fashion and art had always been treated, so to say, as opposite entities: ephemeral, commercial and consumerist the first one, essential, universal and tend-to-be "eternal" the second one. In short, "true" values against "fake" ones.

Celant however, in full coherence with the brilliant situation that the "Made in Italy" was going through at that moment, spoke in favor of a different dimension, both for fashion and art: by making the first down from its traditional pedestal and immersing it in a virtual space for communication and exchange of forms and values far more lively and incisive than the old fashioned museum, and offering to the second unexpected and unusual opportunities of celebration and appreciation. In essence, "contaminating" museums with works by fashion designers, from Moschino to Calvin Klein, by inviting artists to produce art works-dresses (as did, for example, Rosemarie Trockel and Jan Fabre, who presented his disturbing clothes made of beetles) and, finally, engaging artists and designers to work together in pavilions designed by four hands.

This event, which has remained a one-off, made history: from that moment it was established a kind of osmosis between fashion and art, plans and prospects for joint discussion and joint actions, which could have affected the very nature of the "person" at a time when distinguish between "natural and artificial, between mind and body, between physical and a-physical" was and has become very difficult if not impossible.

Today, with Dress-Code, the challenge that, in his time, was taken up by Celant, is taken again and adapted to very different time and situation: This project, conceived by Amel Makkawi as an open invitation, to artists and professionals active in the Arab world and vicinity, to create an artwork in form of dress, raises once again the strategic alliance between art and fashion culture, setting it in an area of the world especially critical and sensitive to the communicative poignancy of these two signifiers together.

Dress, in fact, in the Arab world or, more generally, in the Islamic world, rather than fashion, choice, freedom of expression, contamination of languages, is a word that shows ties with the tradition, with the concealment, the repression of the body - especially the female body. But "dress" in the East, far more than in the West, is a word that contains also sophisticated and complex symbolic connotations and religious affiliation, reported by styles, shapes, colors and fabrics.

The East, in fact, is precisely the realm of tissue, the place - the combination of places and spaces and traditions - where tissue culture has been more and more deeply varied: among "ikat" and "suzani", among embroidery, damask work, brocade and lace works, among precious silks and satins and cottons, and endless variations of working, textures, colors, braids and knots.

The East, in short, is the realm of textile and consequently of dresses: it is also with this huge legacy that the artists who have joined this project had to confront. The realization of which has needed about a year of very careful work and accurate selection of proposals.

But we must not imagine that "art work in form of dress" has resulted in the production of wearable objects that reflect the pattern of "Dress Code". This pattern, for the participants, was simply a memory, an empty container, an elastic theme. Their works, indeed, cover all the techniques and forms of expression: from collage to multimedia, from video to photography to installation ... to "dresses", but not conceived to be wearable.

The protagonist of "Dress Code" are twelve: all together they cover a vast area of cultures and countries, extended from Algeria to Pakistan and from Turkey to Egypt to the Emirates, via Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. This is already in itself a meaningful result, and a sign that the project has aroused interest and that a variety of extraordinary pieces have been produced, which reflect, of course, first of all the individual creativity (they are indeed "art-works" in the full sense), but also the experience of each person, the difficulty of the daily existence, the experience of conflict, violence, but also the inspiration of beauty and, last but not least, the sexism, male-female relationship, an especially delicate topic which does not surprise to find regarded and treated with particular focus and dedication from the artists, especially the women-artists.

Women -artists: as it often happens, it hits here too the happy exuberance and creativity of women artists of the Arab world, who are capable of comprehensive responses and incisive, relevant, timely, and lucid interventions. Their works focuses on sensuality and sexuality, but it also proves to be a powerful tool for introspection, for narrative and even for a declared, stinging irony.

This is the case of Naiza Khan, who presented two objects, a corset and a belt full of not too hidden references to the object which was known as "chastity-belt". Objects "between love and war," as she puts it: objects made of hard metal and strong, masculine fiber leather, equipped with aggressive protrusions and attractive zippers, but in any case "dresses" that evoke an armored, defended, seemingly inaccessible body, but also a body who is provocative, ambiguous and terribly sexy.

Marya Kazoun has enriched her Baroque and fleshy dress of a number of existential elements that accompany, not without anguish, a woman's life: sex, childbirth, the sprawling and almost suffocating wrapping that can characterize the relationship between mother and daughter; and finally, death and decomposition. Her dress is impregnated with moods and reminiscent of some anti-form experience, for example by Eva Hesse. Fatma Bucak has used for her dress a heavy synthetic rubber characterized by a shiny surface that reflects the world and protects the body, placed inside as if in a kind of cocoon. The shape of this dress is typical of the one worn by the archaic Greek "Kore" (maids), covered, yes, but always provided of an individual and unique face. On the contrary, this synthetic and heavy dress denies the face – also the placement "backwards" of the dress avoids the define any connotations and even the sexual references. The dress makes us whatever, that is all, that is nobody. Nermine Hammam has used the strong emotions of the Egyptian revolution of last January, to produce a work in which references cross and multiply each other: on one hand the Iranian miniatures, a quintessential traditional artistic practice, on the other the ideal warrior, a revolutionary centaur. Camouflage overalls, tiny feet rooted to the ground, Frida Kahlo's memories, traditional Arab patterns, in other words, an efflorescence of contradictions and at the center of it all, inevitably, a self-portrait (because it is only by ourselves, from our limited and partial point of view that we get experiences and emotions). Rachida Azdaou has woven a dress, simple in appearance, with strips of white tape, synthetic and almost transparent, marked by irregular patterns of metal wire. A dress which is thin, fragile, delicate but artificial. A sensitive suit that, supposedly, heal deep wounds. A dress unpretentious, designed as therapy for a world too hard and pressing. Samt Benyahia is presenting on this occasion two dresses made of plastic material, very "feminine" and inlaid with all the precious appearance of traditions of the desert. Her work, in general, is based on the relationship between transparency and decoration, between inlay and light. The dress, transparent, has been made solid and plastic thanks to ancient decorative shapes used all over the Arab world. Blue color on emptiness, gold on blue: the decorative forms evoke ancient traditions, rituals and timeless symbols. The dress becomes a kind of virtuosity, an exercise of lights and shadows, solid and void, inlay and transparency: totally traditional and totally original. Sumayyah Suwaidi uses the pattern chosen for Dress Code as an ideal screen for projecting a problematic relationship, yet smiling, between a double idea of the self: an intimate inner-self and a decorated, even plumed with peacock feathers outer-self. Because, the dress is also this: a diaphragm, the threshold of a dialectic of existence. Zena Assi and Issam Barhouch have worked together: their intervention consists of two dresses, very different from each other, the first dedicated to the city of Beirut (My city my puppet) and the second to an original raw material made by the shining, "golden" face of hundreds of bullet - a stunning reinterpretation of the "metal" clothes designed in the eighties by Italian designer Gianni Versace. Beirut: an extraordinarily fascinating and contradictory city, as the situation of Lebanese women. Free, in fact, according to law but not in fact, free apparently but not substantially. The "City" dress is a patchwork of contradictory and spurious images, of partial images and graffiti, which seem to contradict each other, attached to the shoulders of the hypothetical model not as expected, with strips of cloth, but with chains. On the other hand, the second cloth, Bullet Points, is an elegant evening dress, for a dress all in gold. The sophisticated style and brilliant appearance speak in favor of an evening gala, a circumstance of great impact and splendor. The raw material, however, are large caliber bullets, dangerous, even deadly offensive elements, woven together by an elegant copper wire. "The Arab woman is in fact treated as an object" confirm the two authors. Their idea was to "create a dress made of shiny golden dots, conveying a glittery luxurious vision of an icon from afar, that takes a completely opposite dimension when one gets a closer look and realizes that the golden dots are in fact the heads of bullets".

Male-artists too have expressed strong narratives through works of great expressive power, and often poignant relevance. Beginning with Ahmed Al Bahrani, whose suit of steel, riddled by hits of anonymous bullet, without reasons or mandators, contains a clear reference to the tragic situation of Christian minorities in Iraq: to the essential equality of all men, the artist comments, it is superimposed a dress, a surface immediately mystified as "identity." And it is the dress that one shoots, it is the dress that one tries to kill but it is the person who dies under the dress. Fadi Yazigi emphasizes the protective function of the cloth, which protects a fragile body from insults and attacks of reality and society. His work, though softened by the beautiful painted panels that descend like a sumptuous cloak along the foot of the bust and of the large skirt, is more reminiscent of a cage that a dress: even from the collar comes out a kind of suffocating hood. An unlivable dress. Mahmoud Al Obaidi puts his person at the center of a review of the precariousness of any identity connotation conveyed by clothing. In his video, constituted through a sequence of images of himself, half-length, images very similar to those used by police to file or detainees suspected of any crime, he wears a set of clothes / costumes that tackle his identity. To be someone else, just strip and change dress. Ghassan Ali Ghaib made two dresses, significantly titled Home Industry. In both cases, they are made of recycled, recovered material, reintegrated with difficulty in the movement of commodities and of meanings of the world. In the first case, where "production" is completed, we are dealing with a suit of chain, supported by straps of old wood that evokes the unfortunate palm trees of the Iraqi desert. In the second case, the production is still in progress: from an old sewing machine is emerging the dress on which it is printed a map of Iraq, all furrowed with tears and zippers. It is not certain yet whether the stitching will proceed to the end and pleats along the edges of this devastated country, or if the parties shall stand and the skirt will be split permanently from the bodice. The work is still in progress.

Almost a conclusion: it is more clear than ever that today's social arrangements, both those from the Eastern as those from the Western world, are breaking up under the influence of ethnic, religious, industrial, cultural and economic factors. Day by day, we increasingly seem to find ourselves at the terminus of a great dream - the end of a developmental model. In this twilight, or perhaps dawn, still plays a dramatic role the great conflict between humanism and technology: a lot of humanity is left behind, on the road, losing, over and over again, its values. It is urgent, more urgent than ever, that culture and art participate in redesigning the clothes for the new humanity. The one that, in this morning not free from anxiety, is awakening.

THE ARTISTS

**AHMED AL BAHRANI
FADI YAZIGI
FATMA BUCAK
GHASSAN GHAIB
MAHMOUD AL OBAIDI
MARYA KAZOUN
NAIZA H. KHAN
NERMINE HAMMAM
RACHIDA AZDAOU
SAMTA BENYAHIA
SUMAYYAH AL SUWAIDI
ZENA ASSI AND ISSAM BARHOUC**



Ahmed Al Bahrani

BORN IN 1965 BABYLON, IRAQ. WORKS AND LIVES IN DOHA, QATAR.

"I shall pass through this world but once Any good thing I can do, let me do it now For I shall not pass this way again"
S.Grillet 1773-1855

1988 Diploma, Fine Arts Institute, Baghdad
1992-94 Taught Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad
Founder of Mimar Gallery with Architect Hazem Abu Naba'a Qatar

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

Man is born nude, not aware of the type of dress that will wrap him, in a world where dresses are related to the environments we are born in....hence, we do not choose our dresses...they choose us. It has been a while when I first started indulging in people's clothes and trying to understand how does it feel when the color of your dress is different from the color of the other's dress?

Does that mean that we have to hate one another just because our dresses are different? I am yearning for a world where people respect the dresses of the others...because we are born nude and will die nude. This is why my work was inspired by an Iraqi Christian dress where it committed no crime but being born a Christian, yet it was attacked criminally. Who gives man the right to kill his brother, where both were born nude, just because he does not wear a similar dress?

I hope that we can get rid of all the dresses that differentiate us, and wear one dress: it is the dress of LOVE...this is the only way to achieve a life of PEACE. In the end, we are who we are, and the variety of our clothes produces the colourful mixture of humans in this beautiful & colourful planet we live in. (Ahmad Al Bahrani)



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2010/LTMH Gallery/New York/Beyond the War: Contemporary Iraqi Artist of the Diaspora
2010/Miami/Sculpture Biennale
2010/Albareh Art Gallery/Bahrain/Group Exhibition
2010/Art Sawa Gallery/Dubai/"My Homeland: Contemporary Artist from Iraq"
2010/Albareh Art Gallery/Bahrain/"A Chair and a Painting"
2009/Art Sawa Gallery/Dubai/"Contemporary Artist from Iraq"
2003/Green Art/Dubai/"Contemporary Artist from Iraq"
2002/Bissan Gallery/in association with the French Cultural Centre Qatar
2001/Al- Farida Gardens/Qatar/sponsored by Al- Fardan Group
1998/Al Atif Gallery/San'a/"Contemporary Artist from Iraq' group exhibition"
1999/French Cultural Centre/San'a

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo:
2008/Albareh Art Gallery/Bahrain
2006/Dar Al Fanoun/Kuwait
2006/Dar Al Fanoun/Kuwait
2006/Al Bareh Art Gallery/Bahrain
2006/4 walls Gallery/Amman/Jordan
2004/Green Art/Dubai
2002/Al Bida Gallery/in association with the National Council for Culture, Art and Heritage/Qatar
2000/French Ambassador's residence/Qatar

A Dress From A Baghdad Church,2010,
Iron/Steel,122x96x28cm



Fadi Yazigi

BORN IN 1966 LATTAKIA, SYRIA. LIVES AND WORKS IN DAMASCUS, SYRIA.

Fadi Yazigi's canvas invite to a complex act of 'appropriating' new modes of being, modes that allude to forms of life familiar to us as they flow in monotonous, displaced, and multiplied diverse combinations. The intimacy of these forms transmutes into fantastic realms, and flows in an 'uncanny' mood of a delirium. With ascetic strokes of black on the whiteness of the raw canvas & on daily newspaper, faces & bodies are created and distorted, some framed in boxes, some yearning for a shape, and still others loosely criss-crossing disjunctions of meaning. As if one is perceiving one's own childhood, one's daily existence, desires, hopes & fears. Raw! Might be, but the overall structure is so close & intimate, vibrating the pulse of an artist with an 'explosive device in his package'.

DR Maher Jarrar

Culture studies American University of Beirut

Fadi Yazigi studied sculpture in the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus. Since his graduation in 1988, Yazigi has been working with amazing discipline as a full time artist. He enters his studio at 8:00 am and doesn't leave it before 6:00 pm for seven days a week. Yazigi uses different techniques in his works; he paints on canvas or newspapers, makes relief ... and he developed a very personal style in each of them. His talent is evidently present in all his works. As a professional sculptor, Yazigi's bronze sculptures are formed in a very exquisite way that is inspired by the creatures present in his black and white paintings; as if they decided to leave the paintings and have a walk around us. Yazigi had numerous exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe and the USA, selling to collectors all over the world. His paintings are also sold between London and Dubai, in Christie's and Sotheby's auction houses. In spite of his relatively young age, Fadi Yazigi is considered one of the most important Arab artists.

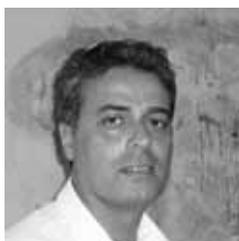
STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

Light comes everyday through the line of life, leaving some spots over the body of memory.

What is the meaning of a cover? Is peaceful life covered with security, like the cells over skin, like stitches in a dress, Can that life carry the dream?

It is growing since conscious flowered. These dreams of the future, of hope, of freedom, and of wings of ambition, dropped on the floor of reality and got framed by society.

Society married reality, rebuilding the dreams, through everything on the dress of society. Yet, the body with spirit is naked and breathing purely. Both society and Reality break the pure holly white buds of childhood, dreams, wings, freedom and hopes. The dress covers the spirit and the body during the loneliness and the fear of cold.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2009/Art Dubai Fair/Dubai
2009/Art Abu-Dhabi Fair/Abu Dhabi
2009/Palm Beach3 Art Fair/Miami/Florida USA
2008/Art & Antique Fair/New York/USA
2008 Art Paris, Paris, France
2006/2007/2008 Art Paris-Abu Dhabi Art Fair/Abu Dhabi/UAE
2006/Ishtar Gallery/Damascus/Syria
2006/French Cultural Centre/Damascus/Syria
2006/Moustafa Ali Gallery/Damascus/Syria
2003/2006/Europe Art Expo/Geneva/Swiss
2003/Gallery Amber/Leiden/Holland
2002/Art Sud/Paris/France
2001/Herbert Museum Coventry/England (Dual Exhibition)
2000/Dead Horse Gallery/Cleveland/Ohio/USA
2000/Jerusalem Fund, Washington/D.C./USA
2000/Artists Museum Gallery Washington/D.C./USA
1999/Al Sharjah Biennial/Sharjah/UAE
1999/International Red Cross Exhibition/Damascus/Syria
1999/The Holly Cross Church/Damascus/Syria
1998/Maronite Church/Damascus/Syria
1997/Latakia Biennial/Latakia/Syria

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

1995/Lebanese Embassy Exhibition, Athens, Greece
1992/2000/National Fall Exhibition, Damascus, Syria
Solo:
2011/Gallery Dar Al Funoon/Kuwait
2009/Ayyam Gallery/Damascus/Syria
2006/Gezira Art Center/Cairo/Egypt
2006/Ishtar Gallery/Damascus/Syria
2006/Albareh Gallery/Al-Manama/Bahrain
2005/Ishtar Gallery/Damascus/Syria
2005/Zara Gallery/Amman/Jordan
2004/Dar Alanda Gallery/Amman/Jordan
2002/French Cultural Centre/Damascus/Syria
2001/Dar Alanda Gallery/Amman/Jordan
1998/IFEAD/French Institute for Arabic Studies/Damascus/Syria
1996/Ishtar Gallery/Damascus/Syria
1995/Al Madina Theatre/Beirut/Lebanon
1994/Ishtar Gallery/Damascus/Syria
1994/Al Khanji Gallery, Aleppo/Syria
1993/American University of Beirut/Beirut/Lebanon



Fatma Bucak

BORN IN 1982 ISKENDERUN, TURKEY. LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON, UK.

"... And all amid them stood the Tree of Life High eminent, blooming Ambrosial Fruit Of vegetable Gold; and next to Life Our Death the Tree of Knowledge grew fast by, Knowledge of Good bought dear by knowing ill."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*

"The duality, created by Bucak's between physical experiences and internal psychological is key for the reading of Bucak's works, since they allow the viewers to experience simultaneously the social and historical in relation to the personal and meditative... These qualities along her very acute visual sensibilities give Bucak's works unique and outstanding qualities"

Ori Gersht Artist / Professor of the MA Photography University for the Creative Arts – London UK

In 2002, after graduating in Philosophy B.A. from the University of Istanbul (Turkey) moved to Italy where first studied Graphics and Visual Arts in the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts of Turin (graduated in 2007), then Photography in the European Institute of Design – IED, Turin (graduated in 2009). Participated to the Exchange Programme in Contemporary Photography in the University for the Creative Arts – UCA, Kent, United Kingdom for 6 months. Has been accepted from the Royal Collage of Art, London, for the photography M.A. where still completing her thesis

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

The pattern of the dress as well as its natural way of standing in the space can be conceived as an archetypal meditation upon the origins and shared cultures of the Mediterranean. The point of reference is a Kore ("maiden"), a type of ancient Greek statue depicting female figures of a young age characteristic of the Archaic period. While Kouros, male equivalent of Korai, were used to depict bare youthful bodies, female statues were always represented dressed in thick drapery. This very classical theme, however, is reinterpreted through a starkly modern use of materials. The texture, dark colour and the weight of the cloth, a kind of synthetic rubber commonly associated with fetishist clothing, help give an impression of heaviness and a sense of being imprisoned. At a first sight, this could be read as the burden of traditions and sexist dress codes. The work, however, is not a simple denouncement of impair conditions in the roles and rights still affecting women in many contemporary societies. As a matter of fact, the dress can also be seen as a protective element since the surface of the dress is dusty on the inside while the outside is polished and shiny – a sort of mirror to throw the external world back and cocoon an hypothetical body inside. Besides, the pattern of the dress – taking after Classical clothes but also traditional Ottoman kaftans – suits not only women but also men. Indeed, a central message the work contends is to be found in the use of synthetic rubber. This very artificial material, nowadays extremely employed in many industrial productions, was largely developed during the Second War World to be used in almost any war machine. The use of rubber creates a direct connection with the ever-rising dreamlike, anonymous non-naturalness of our modern lives. Contrarily to the ancient Greek artistic tradition where one of the most important aspects of Kore (and Kouros) was the sense of individuality emanating from each statue, the work, even if occupying a tridimensional position in the space, is left empty without a body to fill it. Besides, it is seen from the back, as to cover any evidence of gender or body expression. In this sense, the work does not represent any specific person – no matter of their origins, sex, or religion – but is "all" bodies and "no one" at the same time.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2011/Construct-Folkestone Triennial/Folkestone/UK/curated by Nadia Thondrayen and Ulrika Flink
54th Venice Biennale-The Italian Pavilion/Academies/curated by Vittorio Sgarbi
High Altitude- Photography in the Mountains/Rossinière/Switzerland/curated by Nathali Herschdorfer
Cairo Award, Museum of Permanente/Milan/curated by Luca Beatrice
In Sede – Tempi Precari/Turin/curated by Francesco Poli and Elisa Lenhard
The Road to Contemporary Art/Roma Art Fair/represented by Alberto Peola/Contemporary Art Gallery
2010 Past Present Future – Highlights from the UniCredit Collection, Yapi Kredi Art Gallery, Istanbul, curated by Walter Guadagnini
Nuovi Arrivi – Get Closer, Turin, curated by Maria Teresa Roberto
Contemporary Artists Between Italy and Turkey, Yapi Kredi Art Gallery, Istanbul, curated by Martina Corgnati
Art First/International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Bologna Art Fair, represented Artissima 16/Fiera Internazionale D'Arte Contemporanea/Torino Art Fair/represented by Alberto Peola/Contemporary Art Gallery
2009 Nuovi Arrivi/Proposte-St. art me up/Turin/curated by Maria Teresa Roberto
Piattoforma 09/Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena/curated by Filippo Maggia
2008/Young Italian Artists/Italian Cultural Institute, Warsaw

Solo:

2011/Fall of Man/Yapi Kredi Art Gallery, Istanbul (upcoming)
Daughter of Man/Alberto Peola Contemporary Art Gallery/Turin
2009 Melancholia I, The Zandra Rhodes Gallery-UCA, Rochester/UK/curated by Caroline Scott

AWARDS

2011/Official selection of the doc-film Almost Married/International Festival of Nonfiction Film and Media/MoMA/New York
2010 Official selection of the doc-film Almost Married, IDFA International Documentary Film Festival, Amsterdam
Nuovi Arrivi - UniCredit Passport Prize for the photography series Allegorie della Colpevolezza – Presente, Turin
2009 Third place for the photography series Melancholia I in the category People Self portrait, International Photography Award, Los Angeles
Special Fund for the production and the post-production for the doc-film Almost Married, Piemonte Doc Film Fund, Turin
2008 First Special Prize for the photography series Sacred or Profane, IV International Warsawian Artistic Contemporary Photography Festival, Warsaw
Best Script Prize for the doc-film Almost Married, Festival Hai Visto Mai?, Siena

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2011 Essay by Martina Corgnati, Contemporary Practices Visual Arts from the Middle East, IX Issue
2010 Exhibition Catalogue, Past Present Future – Highlights from the UniCredit Collection, Yapi Kredi Edition, Istanbul
Exhibition Catalogue, Nuovi Arrivi – Get Closer, Turin
Exhibition Catalogue, Contemporary Artists Between Italy and Turkey, Skira, Milan
2009 Exhibition Catalogue, St.Art Me Up – Nuovi Arrivi/Proposte, Turin Award Winnig Catalogue, International Photography Award, Los Angeles
2008 Festival Catalogue, IV International Warsawian Artistic Contemporary Photography Festival, Warsaw



Ghassan Ghaib

BORN IN 1964 BAGHDAD, IRAQ. LIVES AND WORKS IN AMMAN, JORDAN.

From "Ghassan Gha'ib. An Angel's Pillow" By Farouq Yousif Habits of the stranger within

If distinct separation exists between two sensitivities, the first captures images from fantasy beyond nature; the second is instigated by painful images from everyday reality. The distinction is the source of all questions pressuring the artist as he faces the dilemma of his existence: an exiled being whose homeland has been captivated. Restrained by habits that no longer correspond with his emotions, he questions the use of drawing. Beauty is no longer soft. Part of us is finite: part of our youth, spirituality, desire to live, and restlessness. It seems as if immersing oneself into the aestheticism of drawing is treason, or even consumption of an intended deception. It seems to me that the artist has reached a conviction that drawing has lost its ability to generate a language that defies reality. Moreover, if we are to admit that Arab drawing seems to dwell on standards set by the market, Gha'ib, to the contrary, has owned the right to rebel against such blind pragmatism. His unique rhythm is embodied in his works ever since he made the decision to break submissive harmony through his cry for defiance. He has opened his eyes and ours to the wound we all suffer, taking the risk to abandon his visual past before he risked facing us with his ideas. His ideas sum mystifying questions concerning the destiny of Art and the fate of humanity. In both he expresses a depth of emptiness: a price humanity pays as it suffers loss in every live moment reflecting negatively on art. Ghassan has discovered that art as entertainment is similar to a cry of the dead. At such a moment of awareness, Ghassan contradicted all the promises offered by his previous artwork, discarding his gallery to question his fate as an artist: how can I continue to be an artist? Accordingly, he seems to have freed his hands from their alienation, deeming the world a wider place.

1997 BA in Fine Arts, Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad

1986 Diploma, Fine Arts Institute, Baghdad

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

After period of time and centuries, dress had an intimate relation with the body per life changes (whether, religion, education, sex, and politics) This relation was always loaded with indications and energy that comes out from the body through the dress to the others, this communication gave life a meaning which helped by developing and progressing the human nature.

My work was inspired by the condition that my country and I am living where (chaos, separation and longing for the country, and immigration), the main feature of my project is (dress) where I tried to take advantage and recycle the daily used objects and put them back to life along with genuineness. I tried to make transit and familiar into a unique work of art full of dramatic sensation which is intimate with the roots and at the same time carries indications and symbols of intellectual that suggests a thing and represent another.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:

- 1986/The First International Iraqi Art Festival/Baghdad
- 1988/The Second International Iraqi Art Festival/Baghdad
- 1997/Environment and Surroundings in Iraqi Art Exhibition/Jordanian National Museum/Amman
- 1999/Three Iraqi Artists Exhibition/Agyal Gallery/Beirut
- 2000/Iraqi Art Exhibition/Arab World Institute/Paris
- 2001/Six Iraqi Artists Exhibition/Dar Al Bareh/Bahrain
- 2002/Asian Art Biennale/Bangladesh
- 2002/Two Artists Exhibition/Four Walls Gallery/Amman
- 2003/Before. After. Now Exhibition/Deluxe Gallery/London
- 2003/Contemporary artists from Iraq/Green-art Gallery/Dubai
- 2004/Artists Books Exhibition/Ten Iraqi Artists/Frankfort Exhibition International
- 2004/Homage to Shakir Hassan Al Said Exhibition/Al Orfaly Art Gallery
- 2005/Homage to Shakir Hassan Al Said&Ismail Fattah Exhibition/Athar Art Gallery, Baghdad
- 2005/Iraqi Art, East West Foundation/Holland
- 2005/Three Iraqi Artists Exhibition/Athar art Gallery/Baghdad
- 2005/Seven Iraqi Artists Exhibition, Besan gallery/Qatar/Alrwaq Gallery/Bahrain/4 Walls Gallery/Amman
- 2006/Word into art. Artists of Modern Middle East/British Museum/London UK
- 2006/Mondial de l'estampe et de la gravure originale/Paris
- 2006/3rd international collage exhibition Vilnius/Lithuania

- 2009/Beyond boundaries Interpretation of 9 artists/Karim Gallery/Amman
- 2010/My homeland. Seven Iraqi Artists/Exhibition/Art Sawa Gallery/Dubai
- 2010/Art in Iraq Today part II/Meem Gallery/Dubai

Solo:

- 2001/Orfali Gallery/Amman
- 2005/Alwasham/Dar Alanda Art Gallery/Amman
- 2010/Banned From paradise/Karim Gallery/Amman

AWARDS

- 1987/The 6th Al Wasiti Award
- 1996/3rd Award/Contemporary Iraqi Art Festival/Baghdad
- 2000/Creativity Award/Baghdad

ACQUISITIONS

- Art Center for Fine Arts/Baghdad
- Jordanian National Museum/Amman
- Arab Art Museum/Qatar
- The British Museum/London

Natural Dress Mixed Media 150 X 26 X 34 cm 2011
Home Industry Mixed Media 18 X 133 X 65 cm 2011



Mahmoud Al Obaidi

BORN IN 1966 BAGHDAD, IRAQ, LIVES AND WORKS IN DOHA, QATAR.

1999 Master of Fine Art, the University of Guelph, Canada
1998 Diploma in Film Directing, HIF Film Academy, Los Angeles, USA
1996 Certificate in New Media, Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada
1995-96 Diploma in Film Producing, HIF Film Academy, Los Angeles, USA
1990 Bachelor of Fine Art, University of Baghdad, Iraq

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

I have never thought it necessary to categorise my art work, nor have I found it imperative even to name each piece. I read a lot, travel a lot, and everything I encounter affects my work. It is not just when I am in my studio that I am creating art; I think about it all the time. I often work with many kinds of forms and images, but try to delve into them to discover new forms and create new meanings. I compose pieces that I hope will engage and challenge the viewer to reach new levels of understanding, though not without effort. The conceptual has always been the most important aspect of my work, regardless of the medium in which I am working. In fact, it is the concept behind the work that dictates my choice of medium—whichever I believe conveys my intended meaning best. Needless to say, I do not render concepts for a specific purpose or with the intent of conveying some clear-cut meaning. I am simply ‘doing’ things, that’s all; the concepts are there but there are other things at play as well, and there are many other ideas to seek out. Art is universal and I don’t see myself as an artist from the Middle East or from the West. That being said, I am wary of the negative aspects of globalisation. Indeed, something that makes globalisation what it is, is the lack of a critical approach towards contemporary production. This is something I am very aware of, and something that encourages me to find my inspiration not only in art history but in everyday life as well. I draw my inspiration from my readings, from my work as a filmmaker, from everything around me. I cannot feel but connected to the context around me, which is why my work is about the recurring themes of war, displacement and loss of identity. I use all artistic media to convey my vision. Since 2003, everything I do is related to the war. Everything I did up to that point was executed in the right way but I was doing it all for the wrong reasons.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2011/Art in Iraq Now/Meem Gallery, Dubai
2010/They Welcomed Us With Flowers/Curated By Asma Shabebi/
Al Bastakiya Art Fair (BAF)/Bastakiya/Dubai/Uae
2010/My Home Land Curated By Dia Azzawi/Sawa Gallery/Dubai/Uae
2010/Beyond The War Curated By Gabriele Mandel/Lthm Gallery/
New York/Usa
2005/Dafater Show/North Texas University/Usa
2005/Improvisation Show In Rowaq Gallery/Bahrain/4 Walls Gallery/
Jordan/And Bissan Gallery/Qatar
2002/Solo Exhibition 4 Walls Gallery/Amman/Jordan
2001/Joint Show Bronay Gallery /U.K
2001/The Show Of Contemporary Iraqi Art/Papayl Gallery Chicago/Usa
2001/The Show Of Contemporary Iraqi Art/Exeter University Exeter/Usk
2001/Joint Show Of Contemporary Art/Hotbath Gallery Iowa/Usa
2000/International Print Triennial Of Karawa Contemporary Arts/Poland
2000/Millennium Art Collection Show The Hague/Netherlands
2000/Joint Exhibition Khoj International Festival/Delhi/India
2000/19Th Annual Mini Print International Exhibition/Cadaques/Spain
1998/Joint Show/Eugenie Gallery/New Jersey/Usa
1997/Four Artist Show/South Gallery/Holland
1997/Baghdad Group Exhibition Medborgerhus Copenhagen/Denmark
1996/Directed Point Blank&Circle 2 Short Documentary
Constantan/Canada
1996/The Museum Of Modern Art Of Quebec/Canada
1995/Joint Exhibition Contemporary Arab Artists/Darat Al- Funun
Foundation/ Amman/Jordan
1995/One-Dimension Exhibition/Abad Art Gallery/Amman/Jordan
Solo:
2010 Sultan Gallery/Kuwait
2010/Fair Skies/Show In Art Dubai/Curated By George Rabbath/
Art Dubai With Agjal Art Gallery/Beirut
2002/4 Walls Gallery Amman/Jordan
1995/Darat Al-Funun/Amman/Jordan
1994/Abad Art Gallery/Amman/Jordan
1994/Show With Ismail Fattah Al-Turk/Rwaq Gallery/Tunisia

1991/Alya Art Gallery/Amman/Jordan
1990/The Museum Of Modern Art/Baghdad/Iraq

COLLECTION

The Museum Of Contemporary Art/Qatar
The Tunisian Museum/Tunisia
The International Museum Of Art/Amman/Jordan
Sharqa Museum/Uae
The Museum Of Modern Art/Baie-Saint-Pual/Quebec
The Museum Of Modern Art/Baghdad/Iraq

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

David d'Arcy, Airport art, post 9/11 the new york observer NY/USA april,14, 2010
Saeb Eigner, Art of Middle East, Modern & Contemporary Art of the Arab
World&Iran, London & NY, 281
Across the canvas, "Canvas" Dubai, UAE, march - april 2005, 1-28
G.H.Rabbath, Mr Obaidi & the fair skies corporation 2010
May Saloun Faraj, Strokes of genius, contemporary iraqi art, 2001, 128-129
Zainab Bahrani & Nada Shabout, Modernism and Iraq, NY,USA 2009 89
Rose Seurel & Adil Kamal, BAGHDAD-PARIS. Artistes d'Irak , 2006 42
"Canvas" dubai, UAE 18, 3, 2010, issue 3 2
Claude-Maurice Gagnon, Vie des Arts, Montral, Canada, eté 1998, 171 53
Tamara Nouri, Mahmud Obaidi, in "Skin", Dubai, UAE, 2005, 1 pp.114-120
Dia Azzawi, Improvisation, 2005 19
Dia Azzawi, My home land, Dubai, UAE, 2010
Dia Azzawi, fattah&obaidi , Tunis, 1995
James Harithas, Iraqi artists in exile, Texas, US, 2008
Asmaa al-Shabibi, They welcomed us with flowers, cat., 2010
Gayle Mandle, Beyond the war, New York, US, 2010
Adel Kamal Baghdad Iraq, 2000
Ibraheem Alawi Darat al-Founun, Amman, Jordan, 1995 17
Shakir Hassan al- Said Obaidi, Amman, Jordan 1993
Nada Shabout, A century of modern art, Sajjil, Matthaf 2010
G.H.Rabbath, Obaidi, in "Contemporary Practices" Dubai, UAE, 2011, pp.111-160

Project: Dress Code, 2010, Video Edition Of 2 Copies Plus
Artist Proof 90 " (One And A Half Minute)



Marya Kazoun

BORN IN 1976 BEIRUT, LEBANON. LIVES AND WORKS IN VENICE, ITALY AND NEW YORK, USA.

"Playing seriously (Marya Kazoun)"

Marya Kazoun lives and works in New York, USA and Venice, Italy. She 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 a its own narrative. She inhabits her works and plays a central role. Her performances are process-based and often interact with the audience. 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, the Museum of Modern Art of Klagenfurt, the Sharjah Biennial 8 in 2007, the World Economic Forum in Davos 2008, Pozna Biennial in Poland 2008. In 2009 her work was in 2 major shows in the 53rd Venice Biennale. It is currently on view with large works at the 54th Venice Biennial.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

The work is a reflection on the roles, conditions, and aspects of women in those modern times... The piece refers to the high expectations set by modern society and the struggle to reach perfection. One can sense in this piece seduction, yearning, eroticism, difference, birth, labor, disease, sex and death. The last two being the closest to each other. The beginning and the end. My attempt was to visually charge the piece with the feelings women go through in the different stages of life. The process, fabric, colour, formal aspect of the piece try to convey crudely their personal inner struggles.- Run, run fast! Hide in me, hide! Don't worry about it. Father can't marry you. - But I love him very much.- It cannot be, it's against universal laws! Besides there are many kinds of love. Her arms were very long they could carry her. Her tentacles embraced her. She baked a cake for her and fed it to her. She told her she wasn't hungry anymore. The magic donkey was slaughtered, but it all didn't matter... She continued to clean the house and dust the glass vases then she picked up the bucket and filled it with water. She was spitting toads from her mouth when he came in. Then they went to bed.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2011 Glasstress 2011, 54. International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia Venice, Italy
2011 L'art de l'apparence, Venice, Italy
2010 Fragile art, Pergamon Museum, Berlin Germany
2010 Nouveau Grotesque, Treviso, Italy
2010 Art Paris fair, Venice Projects, Italy
2009 Truly Truthful, Art Asia, Miami, USA
2009 Glasstress, 53. International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
2009 Sant'Elena - La seduzione nel segno, 53. International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy
2009 Los Angeles Art Show, LA, USA
2009 Palm beach 3, FL, USA
2008 Glasskin, Hypo bank, Udine, Italy
2008 Layered Defenses, Mediations Biennale, Posza, Poland
2008 Peekskill Project, NY, USA
2008 Emergency, Venice, Italy
2008 Arab Artists Between Italy and the Mediterranean, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo
2008 Pittura a NordEst, Portogruaro, Italy
2008 SEAL, NYC, USA
2007 Cornice Art Fair, Venice Italy
2007 Crumbling Desert Castles, Sharjah biennale 8, United Arab Emirates
2007 SEAL Benefit, NYC, USA
2007 Art Miami, Miami, USA
2006 Space Juice, Inmo Gallery, LA, USA
2006 Facing 1200 Degrees, MMKK, Klagenfurt, Austria
2006 MFD, Casoria International Contemporary Art Museum, Napoli, Italy
2006 Self-Portrait, Bombay Sapphire Prize Group Show & nomination, England
2006 Beijing Art Fair, Beijing, China
2006 Astarojna Stiklo, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia
2006 Sei Artiste per un Territorio, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea di Monfalcone, Monfalcone, Italy
2006 Art Miami, Miami, USA
2005 Altre Lilith, Frascati, Italy
2005 In & Out, Museo Michetti, Chieti, Italy
2005 Art Palm Beach 3, West Palm Beach, FL, USA
2004 In a Bind, SVA West side Gallery, NYC, USA
2004 Heavenly Bodies, SVA Chelsea Gallery, NYC, USA
2004 Stockholm Art Fair, Stockholm, Sweden
2004 Art Miami, Miami, USA

Solo:

2009/Time after Self-Portrait, Marquis, Truly Truthful, Art Asia, Miami, USA
2009/Sightless Eons, Venice Projects, Amsterdam Art Fair, The Netherlands
2009/Steady Breath, Galleria Michela Rizzo, Treviso, Italy
2007/Mise en Abime, Marya Kazoun e Debora Vrizzi, 3G gallery, Udine, Italy
2005/Pull Christian, Pull, Pull, Roberta Lietti Gallery, Como, Italy
2005/Personal Living Space/51. International Art Exhibition/La Biennale di Venezia/Venice/Italy
2004 It s Me, It's Okay, Michela Rizzo Gallery, Venice, Italy
2004 The Intolerable Weightlessness, Tapper-Popermajer Gallery, Malmo, Sweden
2004 Tonight is The Full Moon, Trapeze Artists Crash and Break Their Necks, Xanadu Gallery, New York, USA

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2010 March, Arte, Italy
2009 October 10, Financial Times, England
2009, September, Art in America, USA
2009, August/ September, Interiors, USA
2009 July 31, Herald International Tribune, The Daily Star, Lebanon
2009, August 8, L'Orient le Jour, Lebanon
2009, July, Exibart.com, Italy
2009, June, Elle Deco, Spain
2009, June, Exibart.com, Italy
2009, May/ June, Vogue Uomo, Italy
May 2009 Espoarte, Italy
July 2007, <http://www.cnntravellermagazine.com/2007/07/01/eco-art/>
May 2007, BBC news.com.UK
May 3, 2007, Gulfnews.com, Week end review, UAE
2007, April, Universes-in-Universes.de
2007, April 6-12, Khaleej Times, Weekend, Vol.23 issue 9, UAE
2007, March/April/May, Futuro Contemporary Art, Switzerland
2006, November, Artes, Italy
2006, April, Vechernyaya Moskva, Russia
2006, January, Artes Magazine, Sweden
2005, November/ December, Espoarte, Italy
2005, November, Herald International Tribune, The Daily Star, Lebanon
2005, November 11, L'Orient Le Jour, Lebanon



Naiza H. Khan

LIVES AND WORKS IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN.

Naiza H Khan is a visual artist based in Karachi for the last 20 years. Her artistic practice centers on observations of gender and its political manifestations, expressed through a variety of media including sculpture, photography, painting and video works. A central figure in Pakistan's contemporary art scene, she is a founding member and former coordinator for the Vasl Artists' Collective, and has been part of the Fine Arts Faculty at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. Her curatorial projects include 'The Rising Tide: New directions of Art in Pakistan 1990-2010' at the Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi 2011 and 'Holding the line' at the National Art Gallery, Islamabad, 2007. Naiza has been selected for the Pakistan Lecture Series by American Institute for Pakistan Studies for 2011. She has a Bachelors Degree in Fine Arts from the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at Somerville College, Oxford. Naiza lives and works in Karachi with her husband and three children.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

Living in Karachi for the past twenty years, my work has absorbed and been impacted by the state of contemporary life around me. Traditional heritage has been transformed and previous structures have been challenged by a collusion of politics, economics and belief. This shift critically informs my work both conceptually and formally. Throughout my art practice, I have been preoccupied with the female body, in particular how representations of gender might produce disruptive interventions within the public space. Drawing has been a core activity, which has supported this aesthetic and conceptual investigation over the last two decades. The practice has also come to comprise a number of traditional and non-traditional materials, including site-specific installations with henna pigment, printmaking and steel and leather sculptures. The use of clothing began as a strategy to explore the emotional content of the body through attire. Lingerie, amour, straight jackets, and other imagined pieces create multiple identities or personae. These objects find a place between love and war, and are ambiguous in their position of aggression and seduction. They address contemporary anxieties and desires at a time when ideas of 'self' seem unstable and rapidly shifting. Alongside these works, large scale drawings link to discursive and literary influences which inform these sculptures. A primary catalyst has been the influential, early twentieth century Islamic text Behisti Zewar (Heavenly Ornaments) by Maulana Ashraf Thanawi. This text remains popular in Pakistan, often given to young women in their dowry. I began to explore this text for its rich references and for its impact on reforming and educating the Muslim community in India at the turn of the 20th Century, in particular Muslim women. It could be argued that the social norms that women must assume in contemporary Pakistani society are a hybrid of the ideas of this text. These sculptures are part of my enquiry into the nature of the personal and social body politic, as it is lived and felt within the cultural context of Pakistan.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:
2011 Shifting Ground: Faiza Butt and Naiza Khan, Amelia Johnson Contemporary, Hong Kong, in conjunction with Rossi & Rossi, London, UK
2010 Manifesta 8, Chamber of Public Secrets, Murcia, Spain
2010 Cairo Biennale Cairo, Egypt
2010 Medrar 4th Cairo Video Festival Cairo, Egypt
2010 Svelando L'utopia - Alberto Peola Torino, Italy
2010 Between Kismet and Karma Leeds Art Gallery Leeds, UK
2009 Hanging Fire Asia Society Gallery and Museum New York, USA
2009 The Emperor's New Cloths Talwar Gallery New York, USA
2008 Arte Fiera di Bologna Bologna, Italy
2008 Pulse Art Fair Miami, USA
2008 ShContemporary Shanghai, China
2008 Desperately seeking paradise, Art Dubai Dubai
2008 Crossroads Elementa Dubai
2007 Figurative Pakistan Aicon Gallery London, UK
2007 Contemporary Art from Pakistan Thomas Erben Gallery New York, USA
2007 Moving On. Inaugural show National Art Gallery Islamabad, Pakistan
2005 Layers of time and space Ifa Gallery Berlin/Stuttgart
2005 Beyond Borders - Art of Pakistan
2005 National Gallery of Modern Art Bombay, India
2005 Layers of time and space Ifa Gallery Berlin/Stuttgart
2005 Beyond Borders - Art of Pakistan
2005 National Gallery of Modern Art Bombay, India
2004 Living Masters - Young Voices Alhambra Lahore
2004 Cover Girl: the Female Body and Islam in Contemporary Art
2004 Ise Cultural Foundation New York, USA
2003 Anima e corpo. 43rd Premio Suzzara, Suzzara Italy
2002 Threads, dreams and desires: ArtSouthAsia
2002 Harris Museum Preston UK
2002 Gasworks Studios Artist's Residency London, USA
2001 The Eye Still Seeks Ivan Doughty Gallery, UNSW Sydney
2001 Vasl International Artists' Worksho Gadani, Pakistan

2000 Another Vision. Fifty years of painting and sculpture in Pakistan
2000 Brunei Gallery London Catalogued shows

Solo:

2010 Restore the Boundaries-The Manora Project Rossi & Rossi Art Dubai, Dubai
2008 The skin she wears Rossi & Rossi London, UK
2008 Iron Clouds I Rohtas II Lahore. Pakistan
2008 Iron Clouds II Rohtas Gallery Islamabad, Pakistan
2007 Heavenly Ornaments Canvas Gallery Karachi, Pakistan
2006 Bare the fact, bear the fact Chemould Gallery Mumbai, India
2004 Exhale Canvas Gallery Karachi, Pakistan
2000 Voices Merge Chawkandi Art Karachi, Pakistan
1995 La Linea Negra Gallery 7 Hong Kong

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2010 Samia Zaidi (ed.), Mazaar, Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan, Oxford University Press
2010 Iftikhar Dadi, Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia, University of North Carolina Press
2009 Comparing Cities, edited by Kamran Ali & Martina Rieker Essay: Ghostly Sufis and Ornamental Shadows: Spectral Visualities in Karachi's Public Sphere by Iftikhar Dadi. Oxford University Press, Pakistan
2007 Memory, Metaphor, Mutations: The Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan, Salima Hashmi and Yashodara Dalmia - Oxford University Press
2007 Women, Gender Representations of Sexualities and Gender in the Visual Arts, in Encyclopaedia of Women and Islamic Cultures (Volume 5)
Ed. Suad Joseph
2006 Mappings Art - SouthAsia pub. by Shisha
2005 Art and Social Change. Contemporary art in Asia and the Pacific, Edited by Caroline Turner pub. by Pandanus Books
1997 50 Years of Visual Arts in Pakistan, Salima Hashmi and Quddus Mirza

Bullet-Proof Vest, 2009,
Galvanised Steel And Suede Leather, 115x38x8cm
Belt, 2009,
Metal And Fabric Zip, 28x24x26cm



Nermine Hammam

BORN IN 1967, CAIRO. LIVES AND WORKS IN CAIRO, EGYPT.

Nermine Hammam is a Cairo-based visual artist making densely composed figurative prints existing between painting and photography. Born in Cairo (1967), Nermine obtained her BFA in filmmaking from New York University's Tisch School of Arts, going on to work with Simon & Goodman and renowned film director Youssef Chahine. She also served as production assistant in the movie Malcolm X.

Hammam's work has been widely exhibited, and is included in public and private collections around the world. With human gesture as a central subject, it seeks out individuals in states of abandonment or altered consciousness, whether through transcendental spiritual ceremonies in different parts of the Middle East or a visit to the beach near Alexandria. She is known for the distinct technique with which she reworks photography, addressing the influence of mass media and market stylization.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

The following work is a statement on the paradoxes inherent in 'the game of war'; an exploration of the female self and the symbols of masculinity through which armed conflict is articulated.

The image is dominated by the figure of woman as warrior, a gun strapped over her shoulders and her combat gear tattered, with gaping holes of text. Her attire is militant, echoing the symbolism of war, yet her pose is one of surrender, and she wears a halo for spirituality and a branch of peace.

Her face is that of a child, but it is heavily colored and reworked, and has an unreal quality. Yet, she stands, self-assured, in the centre of the canvas, staring directly into the eye of the viewer, with an intensity of gaze well beyond her years.

Based on Iranian miniatures, her outstretched hands clasp two identical sets of toy soldiers. Diminished in size and painted pink, this stereotype of war is drained of virility and deprived of substance. Like the girl, these soldiers are children. Or they are the toys of children directed by an unseen hand. We set great store by this garment of war, but, as you see, it is tattered and torn.

The child-woman is flying, propelled by the representations of male energy that radiate below her booted feet. Yet her legs are childlike, and androgynous, incongruous with her heavy army boots appearing beneath her dress. She is suspended in mid-canvas against a background of pink, decorated with dainty floral design. In this fluid amalgam of gender signifiers, uniting in one amorphous and androgynous whole, all that is real, and tangible, is the gun.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:

2011 Iman fares gallery Paris, France
2011 arabchangingroom Turin, Italy
2011 artabsolumentparis, Paris, France
2011 Mois de l'Image, Deippe, France
2009 IL Corpus Humanus, Almasar Gallery, Cairo Egypt
2009 X Biennial, Cuenca, Ecuador
2009 Photoquai, Museum de Quai Branly, Paris, France
2009 Casa Arabe, Madrid, Spain
2009 The Blow Out, The Empty Quarter Gallery, Dubai UAE
2008 Athens Photo Festival, Athens, Greece
2008 Joburg Art Fair, South Africa
2008 Places and Manners of Worship, The Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, Greece
2007 Act of Faith, Deraa-kerk, Groningen, Holland
2002 Photo Cairo, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
2001 Mitigation, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt

Solo:

2011 art basel solo
2011 anachrony, IF gallery, Paris solo
2009 Parco Horcynus Orca, Messina, Italy solo
2009 Escaton, Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo solo
2007 palimpsest, town house, Cairo solo
2007 a retrospective 2001-2007, the sultan gallery, Kuwait solo
2006 Ashoura, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo solo
2005 Apotheosis, Karim Francis Gallery, Cairo solo
2004 Metamorphosis, Espace SD, Beirut solo
2003 Cairo Modern Art, Fortis Circus Theater, Netherlands (Group Exhibition) solo
2001 Portrait, Hanager Art Center, Cairo solo



Rachida Azdaou

BORN IN 1973 TIZI OUZO, LIVES AND WORKS IN ALGIERS, ALGERIA

1999 : Diplôme des études supérieures artistiques, à l'école supérieure des beaux arts d'Alger

Prix, bourses, subventions

Mars 1997 : Prix d'honneur Rabah Asselah, Gravure

Juin 1997 : 1er prix de la grande ville d'Alger pour la jeune peinture, Théâtre de verdure, Alger.

Mai 2001 : Bourse du gouvernement français pour une résidence d'artiste à Marseille de 6 semaines

Octobre 2004 : Bourse de l'UNESCO pour une résidence d'artiste de deux mois en collaboration avec le centre d'art i natura (Espagne) dans le programme des bourses pour artistes « UNESCO Ascheberg »

Juillet 2007 : 1er prix du président de la république algérienne pour les jeunes créateurs dans les arts plastiques

Postes occupés

1999-2001 : Enseignante de dessin à l'école polytechnique d'architecture et d'urbanisme, El- Harrach .Alger

2002-2004 : Enseignante d'arts plastiques, école privée le Fennec, Alger

Depuis 2001 : Illustratrice de livre pour enfant, ENAG, DALIMEN, AFAK ...

Depuis février 2007 : Enseignante d'arts plastiques, Ecole Artissimo, Alger

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

My dress is made of strips of tape at gas and black wire.

It is sutured with simple nodes and sometimes to strengthen all with a double knot.

I made it fragile, quiet, without any pomp. It is silent as all his wounds that life deals and that we must heal.

It is an image of the woman who created the cover from that.

We expect that the sutures are resorbed, the flaps fall the wounds heal.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Collective:

Novembre 2010 : « Ville en mutation » avec l'association rivage Marseille, Alger - Marseille

Mars 2010 : « Trio déprimé » Biennale internationale de la vidéo artistique à Dubai avec VIDEO'APPART, Dubai, UAE

Décembre 2009 : « Un cœur simple », Bruxelles, Belgique

Novembre 2009 : « Subjectif- objectif » Marseille, France

Mars 2009 : Expressionisme, espace Le POLARIS Corbas, Lyon, France

Mars 2009 : « Regards reconstruits » au Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain le MAMA, Alger

Août 2008: 10 Mediterranean symposium of environmental art, Crete, Greece

Juillet 2008 : Biennale de Pontevedra, Espagne

Mai 2008 : Semaine culturelle algérienne à Téhéran, IRAN

Février 2008 : « L'art au féminin », Musée d'Art moderne et contemporain le MAMA, Alger

Juin 2007 : « Suite d'interrogations électriques » Alliance française Sabadell, Espagne

Mars 2007 : « Résistance » collage vidéo avec FEMLINK, France

Février 2007 : « Image fixe image mobile » l'espace Polaris Corbas, Lyon

Mai 2006 : «4eme biennale méditerranéenne des arts de la ville de Tunis», Tunisie

Avril 2006 : « Refuge » projet vidéo avec FEMLINK, France

Novembre 2005 : « ART TOUR », Sophia Antipolice, Nice, France

Octobre 2005 : « Rives » exposition itinérante, L'espace POLARIS, la maison des écritures, la MAPRA, Regard sud, Lyon, France

Septembre 2005 : « Rives », au centre culturel français d'Alger, Alger

Décembre 2003 : «Emissaires» Bastion 23, Alger

Octobre 2003 : « Biennale d'Alexandrie des pays de la méditerranée », Égypte

Mars 2003 : «Création», Cité international des arts à Paris, France

Février 2003 : «Les émissaires» à l'UNESCO, Paris, France

Juin 2001 : «Aller - Retour», Galerie Esma, Alger

Juin 2001 : «Aller - Retour», Galerie la Digue, Marseille

Mars 2001 : Salon des femmes peintres, Théâtre de verdure, Alger

Novembre 2000 : Salon des arts graphiques, Théâtre de verdure, Alger

Mai 1999 : «Biennale des jeunes – créateurs d'Europe et de la méditerranée», Rome, Italie

Juillet 1998 : « Caravane des associations démocratiques pour un autre visage de l'Algérie » avec la Fondation Asselah, France. « Hommage à Boubah », au siège de l'Association Ahmed et Rabah Asselah

Mai 1998 : « Tous solidaires d'une rive à une autre » Festival de Cannes, avec l'Association Ahmed et Rabah Asselah, France.

Mars 1998 : « Paravents collectifs » en hommage à Ahmed et Rabah Asselah, au siège de l'Association, Alger.

Mars 1998 «Mémoire de femme», au Palais de la Culture, Alger.

Mars 1998 Salon de la femme peintre, Théâtre de Verdure, Alger.

Janvier 1998 :1ère Biennale méditerranéenne des arts de ville de Tunis, Tunisie

Mai 1997 : «Peintres algériens», avec l'Association C.I.D.J., Galerie du Cinéma «Parc» Liège, Bruxelles.

Mars 1997 : XVIIème Salon de la femme peintre, Théâtre de verdure, Alger

Mars 1996 : XVIème Salon de la femme peintre, Théâtre de verdure, Alger

Solo:

Juin 2007 "Suite d'interrogations électriques", Sabadell, Espagne

Août 2005 "Mémoire2", Galerie de Vall de Boi, Espagne

Décembre 2004 "Mémoire2" Farrera, Espagne

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Livres illustrés

Avec les éditions DALIMEN :

La série, des aventures de Nour

Le petit lapin bleu

Les aventures de Rélgise

Géode la tortue

Princesse jardin

Les aventures de Malek et de Malik

Le prix de la réussite

Avec les éditions INES :

Je pardonnerai de Mohamed Benchicou



Samta Benyahia

BORN IN CONSTANTINE, ALGÉRIE, LIVES WORKS IN PARIS, FRANCE

We are born wet, naked and hungry. Then things get worse.

Diplomated at The Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris 1979. DEA Arts Plastiques à l'Université de Paris VIII 1989.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

"The peasants of the North of Africa wear a burnous woven into seven parts which symbolize the seven pieces of the human being. [...] From one end of space and time to the other, man, by using fibres, thrashed bark or skins to make his clothes, finds again, owing to symbols, the place he believes he belongs to, in a coat of light." In my memories you are the one who walks away dressed of seven festive dresses.

On one another you put the floral gowns embroidered with geometrical patterns.

You only leave the big farm wide open on the fields to visit the tribe: births, weddings or funerals.

Wrapped in a white shroud, your body was reunited under the earth with the antique Venus.

Walk away into Time clad in eternity.

Dearest shadow, turn back.

I pushed the wooden screens of the room where laughing women weave.

I captured the gleaming of the sun through the wheat waved restlessly, like the sea, by the wind coming from the Aures.

I collected golden mosaic shards from the dust of Djemila.

I opened rose-windows into the blue of sky.

Nanna, I come to you on the path lined with wild grass.

I am your grand-daughter, Samta.

With transparent threads, I sew up again a dress of life that dances in the light.

(Paris, 25th May 2011 CATHERINE CHEVALLIER)



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo:

2010 Chambre bleue»réalisation d'une chambre d'artiste, Hotel Windsor, Nice, France.

2008 A la Lumière des Matins... Albert Camus, Galerie, Martine et Thibault de la Châtre /Paris, France.

2007 Architecture of the Veil, Fowler Museum. Los Angeles, U.S. Publication

2003 Made in Africa" Exposition personnelle IniVA, Londres, UK

2001 Patterns, Spaceix Gallery & Exeter Cathedral, Exeter, UK.

2000 Un regard pour une histoire, La Corte Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italie. Publication.

1997 De Maison Blanche à Maison Blanche, Institut Français de Casablanca, Maroc. Publication.

1996 L'emprunte du Désir », Résidence Exposition Art In General New York, US. Publication.

1994 Femme d'Alger dans son appartement" Centres Culturels Alger et Tetouan. Algérie Maroc. Publication

Collective:

2007 Mahrem, Santralistanbul, Turquie. Publication.

2003 Laboratoire pour un avenir incertain », La force de l'Art, Grand Palais, Paris, France.

2006 Fever variations » -Gwangju Biennale 2006, Corée du Sud

2006 5th International Ink painting Biennial of Shenzhen, China

2006 About Beauty, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin, Germany Publication.

2003 Fault Lines, Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes Dream and

Conflicts, 50ème Biennale de Venise. Publication.

2003 Rites sacrés/Rites profanes »5ème Rencontres de la photographie Contemporaine Africaine, Biennale

de Bamako, 2003, Mali. Publication.

2003 Vieil, vieillissement Representation and contemporary Art,

Walsall Musuem and Art Gallery, Walsall.

2003 Le 20ème siècle dans l'art Algérien, Chateau Borely, Marseille, France

2003 Voyages d'Artistes, Algérie 03, Espace EDF Electra, Paris, France. Publication.

2002 Paris pour Escal, Musée d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris, France. Publication.

2002 Un nouveau Paysage Humain, Cultes Intimes, 29 èmes Rencontres Internationales de la

Photographie, Arles, France. Publication.

1995 Art Contemporain Algérie, L'IMA Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, France.

1992 Force Sight", Prestneck, Brigitte March Galerie, Stuttgart, Germany. Publication.

1992 Force Sight", Prestneck, Brigitte March Galerie, Stuttgart, Germany. Publication.

1986 Biennale de La Havane, Cuba. Publication.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

« Les signes et symboles dans l'art traditionnel ». Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts décoratifs, Paris 1979.

« Résurgences des Traditions Ancestrales dans la Peinture Abstraite Contemporaine Algérienne ». DEA Arts Plastiques, Université Paris VIII, 1989.

2010 Vauvrecy Véronique, Merc'hed Bleund ba jardin Maivon

2009 Malika Bouabdellah, <<La rosace dans tous ses états>>.

2008 Philippe Piguet, Frac Alsace, Acquisitions 1996/2002

2007 Polly Roberts, Architecture of the veil, Fowler Museum Ucla, Los Angeles 2007

Nilüfer Göle Mahrem, Santralistanbul

2006 Ho Hanru La Force de l'Art, Grand Palais, Paris 2006

Wo hung Fever Variations, Gwangju Biennale 2006

Martina Yang, 5th Shenzhen International Ink painting Biennial 2006

Chen Tong, Litterature française contemporaine

Joceline Dakhli, Créations Artistiques Contemporaines en Pays d'Islam

2005 Wo Hung « Negotiating Beauty », Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin D

Martina Corgnati, « Rencontres Méditerranéennes », Messine, Italie

2004 Sara Diamond, Forms, Dak'Art 2004

2003 Simon Njami, Rites sacrés/Rites profanes

Fatima Mernissi, "Les fantaisies de l'Harem"

Ramon Tio Bellido, Le XXe Siècle dans l'Art Algérien

Patricia Solini, « Regarder les étoiles », Beautés/ Afriques, Le Lieu Unique, Nantes

Frédérique Emprou « Entre le Bleu » Beautés/Afriques, Le Lieu Unique, Nantes

2002 Estelle Pagès « Visages de Rencontres »

Pierre Giquel, << Que mon conte soit beau et se déroule comme un long fil >>, ville de Meyzieu.

2000 Christian Gattinoni, << Les contes de ma mère l'image >>, Grenoble.

Mansour Abrous, Les artistes algériens, dictionnaire biographique

2003 Gilaine Tawadros and Sarah Campbel, « Fault Lines », 50 ème Biennale de Venise, 2003

Sylvie Couderc Le Polygone et le Dédale, brochure 50è Biennale de Venise 2003

Jean Louis Pradel « Voayages d'Artistes-Algérie03 »

Fatima Mernissi, Rose Issa, Fantaisies de l'harem - « Les nouvelles Shérazade » CCC, Barcelone,

Ramon Tio Bellido « La traversée des moucharabiehs et autres jalousies... », 50ème Biennale de Venise,

XXè siècle dans l'art Algérien

Une robe de vie qui danse dans la lumière, 2011,

Sérogaphie sur film électrostatique transparent, papier, motifs autocollants dorés, scotch adhésif 40x53x110cm

Une robe de vie qui danse dans la lumière, 2011,

Feuilles d'or, sérogaphie sur film électrostatique transparent, dispositif avec buste thermoformé transparent, scotch adhésif,

30x48x107x144cm



Sumayyah Al Suwaidi

BORN IN DUBAI, UAE. LIVES AND WORKS IN ABU DHABI, UAE.

Hailed as the first female Emirati digital artist, Sumayyah Al Suwaidi started her journey back in 2001 with a series of digital artworks inspired by the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Her first exhibition was in 2003 and she never looked back. Since then she has been part of numerous exhibitions around the UAE and abroad, she was also commissioned by many entities such as Burj Khalifa and UAE's Embassy in Washington DC. In 2007 Sumayyah established a career for herself as an art curator and went on to curate many art shows like her annual "Ramadan Art Bazaar". She also was a judge and a panelist for art competitions and exhibitions such as Watani's art competition for UAE's national day 2009 and Tashkeel's Biladi exhibition part of Shanghai Expo's UAE pavilion 2010. Sumayyah Al Suwaidi is also a successful business woman, as she owns one of the most famous multi brand stores in Abu Dhabi "Grafika". She uses her boutique to support established and emerging fashion designers by providing space for them to showcase and sell their creations to the UAE market and the world through Grafika's online page. She was invited to judge the Emirati designer of the year competition by Fashion Expo Arabia in 2009 and Preston University's fashion designer of the year 2009. In addition, Sumayyah established herself as a fashion designer and launched SEEN a Limited edition clothing line of abayas and dresses, one of a pieces, no dress is made twice because she believes every woman deserves to be unique. Sumayyah Al Suwaidi is a multi talented soul with passion for creativity and life. Her dedication and motivation are contagious as she seamlessly combines her multifaceted personality with drive and a magical smile.

Sumayyah Al Suwaidi is a digital artist whose passion drives her to manipulating seemingly normal and boring photographs into masterpieces of emotions and sensuality. A giant in a small body, Sumayyah moves the skies, stretches the oceans and elevates humans to the clouds, and in it all brings out beauty in whatever painting she decides to bring to life. Her paintings have been exhibited across the UAE, and internationally in Germany, Hong Kong, USA, and Morocco. She has conducted workshops and gave lectures to many art students.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

The artwork describes the side of a person's personality which is not seen often, the side which tries to find the truth and honesty in what others say or do, the side which always questions the intentions of the other person and tries to calculate and balance all facts.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo/Collective:
2001 Abu Dhabi, a collection of 6 digital paintings of the late Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE
2003 Dubai, for the children with special needs, UAE
2004 Abu Dhabi Beach Rotana Hotel, Lebanese and Emirati Artists, UAE
2005 Dubai, Burjuman's Art & Fashion Festival, UAE
2006 Abu Dhabi, The EMC Art Auction for Charity, UAE
2006 Abu Dhabi, The 3rd National Exhibition for Contemporary Art (AFOC)
2007 Abu Dhabi, The Kindness Continues, Cultural Foundation, UAE
2007 Sharjah, Qanat Al Qasba (Emirati Dimensions), UAE
2007 Abu Dhabi, Ghaf Art Gallery (beyond the horizon, solo exhibition)
2007 Abu Dhabi, The 4th National Exhibition for Contemporary Art (AFOC)
2007 Al Wahda Mall Art for Charity, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2007 Colours for Good (Dubai Cares) Dubai Women Association, UAE
2007 Desert whispers, Ghaf Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2008 Art Avenue Dubai, Dubai shopping festival, UAE
2008 Interior Design Show at ADNEC Abu Dhabi UAE
2008 Curated Digital Harmony Ghaf Gallery, Abu Dhabi - 2008 Suhour Emirati Art Exhibition Dubai UAE
2008 Curated Silent Bidding Auction, Ghaf Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2008 Women In Art, CourtYard Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2009 Emirati Expressions, TDIC, Emirates Palace, UAE
2009 Silent conversations Tashkeel, Dubai UAE
2009 Curated Lights In Harmony, Emirati Photography Competition by Sorouh, Ghaf, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2009 Made In Tashkeel, Tashkeel, Dubai, UAE
2009 Emirati Visions, Tashkeel, Berlin, Germany
2009 Curated Ramadan Art Bazaar, Ghaf Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2009 Curated Ghaf Art Gallery's Booth at Bounjor La France, ADNEC
2009 Art Abu Dhabi, Emirati Expressions, Emirates Palace, UAE
2010 Take Art/Leave Art, AVA Landis Gallery, Chattanooga, US
2010 Portrait Of A Generation, Tashkeel Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2010 ArtSawa Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2010 Interiors 2010, ADNEC, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2010 Never Think Small, Climate Gallery, New York, US
2010 Still Point II, Still Point Art Gallery, Brunswick, US
2010 Curated 30"x30" group art exhibition, Ghaf Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2010 4x6 International Postcard Art Exhibition, That Gallery, Hong Kong
2010 Assilah Festival, Morocco
2010 Curated Sumayyah Al Suwaidi's Ramadan Art Bazaar, Ghaf Gallery, Abu Dhabi UAE

2010 Art Auction for charity, Dar Al Funoon - Kuwait
2010 The Art of Sumayyah Al Suwaidi, solo exhibition at Ghaf Gallery, Abu Dhabi UAE
2010 Curated Express Yourself in 30x30, Marsam Mattar Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2010 UAE Heritage Through Modern Artist's Eye, UAE Embassy, Washington DC, US
2010 39th UAE's National Day Celebration, Ministry of Culture, Youth & Community Development, Abu Dhabi UAE
2010 Curated Worlds Together a group exhibition at Marsam Mattar Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2011 Curated and Participated in Guess the Artist open call art exhibition, Ghaf Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2011 Participated in Art Dubai's Sikka Art Fair, Al Bastakiya Dubai UAE
2011 Curated "4 Decades" group Emirati exhibition, Al Qattara Arts Center, Al Ain UAE
2011 Curated & participated in "Unconventional" group Emirati exhibition, Mubadala - Al Mamoura, Abu Dhabi UAE

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Brigitte, October 2011, Berlin, Germany
Etihadinfight, January 2010, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Still Point Art Gallery, Selections from 2010 exhibitions, November 2010, Brunswick, Maine, US
2009 finalist at IBDAA Awards (Radio Documentary)
2001 first established Emirati female digital artist.
2008 curated the first ever art bazaar in the UAE.
2009 commissioned 4 artworks for Burj Khalifa's 50th floor.
2009 first Emirati to be published in ImagineFX ci-fi & digital art international magazine.
2009 part of the judging committee in Mutahida art competition, initiative by Watani for the UAE's National Day.
2010 Best New Talent in Fashion, Arab Women Awards by L'OFFICIEL Middle East.
2010 Member of the Elite Group of Artists of Universka (An Art Design Life Performance Company, Strassen, Luxembourg)
2011 Chosen as a Hot 100 by Ahlan! Magazine, as an entrepreneur.
2011 Judge at the L'Officiel Arab Woman Awards - Abu Dhabi



Zena Assi and Issam Barhouch

ZENA ASSI BORN IN 1974, LEBANON. LIVES, WORKS IN LEBANON, BEIRUT.

ISSAM BARHOUCHE BORN IN 1972, LEBANON. LIVES, WORKS IN LEBANON, BEIRUT.

Assi graduated with honours from l'Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) in advertising, worked in the field for two years and taught in different universities. Her contemporary work on canvas, that draws inspiration from the relations and conflicts between the individual and his environment, has been part of numerous collective and solo exhibitions in Beirut, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Miami and London. Her work was recently auctioned in Christie's Dubai and Sotheby's London and has been present in the Salon d'Automne of the Sursock museum since 2005. She received two awards in 2009, and took part in the Cairo biennale in 2011.

Barhouch graduated with honors from l'Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts, has worked in various local and international architectural projects, won many prizes, and is a faculty member in the architecture school of the Lebanese American University, LAU.

STYLISTIC WORK DESCRIPTION

Throughout history, the woman in the Arab world is considered to be a symbol of perfection, flawless values and moral principles; But parallel to that 'adoration' movement, the Arab woman has been completely deprived of her legal and social rights, her freedom of thought and behaviour. In Lebanon, the contradiction goes even further. Seen from afar, nowadays, the Lebanese woman seems to be enjoying full freedom of speech, access to education, right to work, divorce, have a full active social life, and benefit from complete autonomy, independence, and equality with man. But in fact, when one lives inside the borders, another truth unveils itself: the Lebanese women are still suffering from the effect of years of war, years of stagnation of the system, didn't permit any amelioration in her social or cultural rights, she is still considered by law as inferior to man. As such, religion (either Christian or Muslim) as well as society limit her freedom of behavior, prohibit her sexual liberty and sanction or exclude her otherwise. Being used as an image, an icon, an inspiration... the Arab woman is in fact treated as an object.

The project:

The idea is an alliance between a painter, Zena Assi, and an architect, Issam Barhouch, to create a dress made of shiny golden dots, conveying a glittery luxurious vision of an icon from afar, that takes a completely opposite dimension when one gets a closer look and realizes that the golden dots are in fact the heads of bullets. The bullet by itself, as a multi-dimensional object, a beautiful item made of golden material in order to serve a dark purpose.

The dress will convey the double message of a glamorous attractive facade, hiding a treacherous, deceitful truth.



SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Solo: (ZENA ASSI)
Jan-Febr-2011 Al Barih Gallery, 'Cityphilia' Bahrain, Kingdom Of Bahrain
May-Jun-2010 Art Sawa Gallery, 'Mass Movement' Dubai, Uae
Nov-Dec-2009, Alwane Gallery, 'Un Peu De Beyrouth' Beirut, Lebanon
Jan-Febr-2009 Art Sawa Gallery, 'Public Space' Dubai, Uae
Jun-July-2008 Alwane Gallery, 'Cite Et Citadins' Beirut, Lebanon
Collective: (ZENA ASSI)
July- 2011 Shubbak, London, UK
July- 2011 Menasart Fair, Biel, Beirut, Lebanon
June- 2011 Rebirth, Beirut Exhibition Center, Lebanon
April- 2011 Christie's Auction, Dubai, Uae
Dec-Febr-2011 Biennale Of Cairo, Cairo, Egypt
December 2010 Zoom, Miami
Oct- 2010 Sotheby's Auction, London, England
2010 Contemporabilia, Dome, Beirut, Lebanon
2010-9-8 Art Sawa Gallery, Dubai, Uae
2010-9-8-7 Alwane Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
2009 Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Abu Dhabi
2010-9-8-6-5 Salon D'automne, Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon
Nov-2008 Paris- Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Abu Dhabi

Selected Publications (ZENA ASSI)

'Banipal' Cover & Article - Summer 2008 - London - UK
'The National' By Kaelen Wilson - Goldie - August 2008 - Abu Dhabi
'Daily Tribune' Article By Roberto Carillo- January 2011- Bahrain
'Gulf News'- January 2011- Gulf



'Time Out' By Muhammad Yusuf - February 2009 - Dubai
'La Revue Du Liban' By Nicole Malhame Harfouche - July 2008 - Beirut
'Agenda Culturel' Cover - May-June 2008 - Beirut
'Min Wa Ila' Cover & Article By Nawal El Ali - August 2008 - Jerusalem
'Arab Forum' Article By Barbara Schumacher - 2009- Germany
'Jamalouki' By May Menassa - January 2009 - Middle East
'Annaha' By Laure Ghoraiieb - July 2008 - Beirut
'L'orient Le Jour' By Colette Khalaf - November 2009, January 2007 - Beirut
'Al Akhbar' By Nawal Al Ali - July 2008 - July 2010- Beirut

SELECTED PROJECTS: (ISSAM BARHOUCHE)

- 1- Faqra Club Architect Amenageur
- 2- Finalist in BLC Headquarter bank, Landmark competition 2,2011
- 3- Top 10 shortlisted in "Namibia Water Embassy" competition 2007/Wallpaper magazine 2006 -
- 4- Top 10 shortlisted in "Thames Opera house" competition 2007
- 5- 2nd Prize for Swarovski crystal , "tile with crystal" competition on Desingboom.com 2006
- 6- Selection of "Element Restaurant" in the top 4 best restaurant in the world
- 7- UIA, union international des architectes, Honorable mention, "Architecture and water" 2001
- 8- UNDP environmental competition, "Second Hand" 1st prize 2000

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS: (ISSAM BARHOUCHE)

Publication of Element,Fly,Kitchen, Metis,Mandaloun sur mer/café/club,Rosé, in different DECO magazines
publication in www.worldviewcities.org/beirut

Bullet Points, 2011, Bullets, Velvet, Mannequin, Copper, 143X90x90cm
My City, My Puppet, 2011, Wood, Chains, Iron, Collage And Mixed Media,
161X30x70cm (With Hanger & Chains)

CREDITS

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