

CONVERGENCE

NEW ART FROM LEBANON

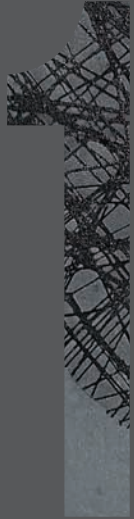


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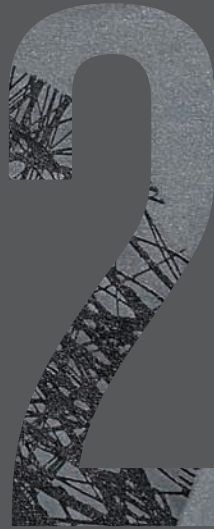
NEW ART FROM LEBANON

Date April 6th - May 16th, 2010

Venue American University Museum, Katzen Arts Center,
4400 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington D.C.



Opening dates, 15 6466 8



Art section, April 6th - May 16th, 2010



Conference by **N.Karam**
April 6th, 17h00 - 18h00



Film section, 14, 15 & 16 May 2010



In the foggy awakening from anguished dreams, superimposed images emerge from the recesses of our memory. A florid lightness and innocence casts a haze on the naked, onerous distress from all that is evil.

Lebanon's multi-tiered landscape of disaster and accomplishment, of antiquity and modernity is not unfathomable. We invite you to discover it.

In one painting, gleaming coppers and deep purple shadows juxtapose the transient glare of fire and life with the sinking certainty of death.

People everywhere can identify with exile, or the agony of fitting one's life into one piece of luggage while bearing the bitter baggage of longing beyond the voyage itself. A suitcase portrayed in this exhibit has a wistful woman looking back to what she left behind, familiarity and intimacy around multiple cups of Arabic coffee and the possibility of return.

This exhibit is a wandering museum of remembrance and of sensory selection. Though inspired by the Lebanese context and a distillation of its fusion of cultures and mysteries, it is a testament to the use of a myriad of mediums and techniques as part of a universal, global language.

This graphic and interactive narrative of the Lebanese experience could never be summarized in news dispatches or film footage. What you will discover are the unspoken stories that need to be told. We tempt you to open yourself to them and to discover what unites us in suffering: the jarring, the beautiful and the profane.

A red-splotched Madonna trapped in a spiral of concertina wire is not religion-specific. It is a provocative statement of a woman's predicament as a victim of conflict. Mother, wife, casualty or prisoner, her freedom and womanliness are shrouded, hemmed in and bleeding. If beliefs can be exploited for wicked ends, then faith can also be a source of spiritual sustenance.

Narcissus gazed in the mirror to see his reflection and was surrounded by destruction. A three part icon with compartments depicts a masked gunman, a bespectacled, helmeted war aviator, a kidnap victim with a bag on his head and a guerrilla with a checkered headdress against a delicate pink and red floral pattern. The man in the kuffiya takes center stage. Is he us? Is he all of us? Is he who we see or who we want to see?

Sifting the detritus of war into artistic expression, at times enchanting and at others disturbing, is not just an exorcism of the darkest of times but a compelling visual plea to a humanity that binds us.

Nora Boustany



Contemporary Art in Lebanon

by Amal Traboulsi, curator of the exhibit

In the seventies, American philosopher Nelson Goodman replaced the question: **“What is art?”** by another: **“Where can one find art?”**

Are there still criteria for aesthetic appreciation? So called “contemporary art” is a term so complex and vast, that it elicits incomprehension, even exasperation. Certain artists claim that painting should relinquish all emotional purpose, and that art should exist uniquely as art per se, without ever being part of anything useful such as for example decoration or amusement.

One is under the impression that art at present is setting itself up in this strange paradox of turning beauty against itself with no allusion to what is beautiful or ugly.

Lebanese art today has not escaped this need to take a new look at the world nor this ongoing debate of art versus non art. With modern communication technology linking up artists from around the world, it is no longer surprising to see Lebanese artists bring to the table all that is exceptional or specific to their experience in this field of new art.

This new generation of Lebanese artists is questioning itself, bearing witness, rebelling and judging as it deliberates the argument of concept over emotion. It invites the spectator to question the nature of the act and not the object itself and to take away nothing but the

impact of the artwork, regardless of whether it is aesthetic or not. The intent is to have the raw truth strike the observer across the face.

This generation’s reality is ubiquitous and an open wound that has left indelible marks. There is no room for fiction or imagined intensity.

It is a great challenge to offer to the American public in a museum of contemporary art an impression of Lebanese art as it is today. The question we constantly ask ourselves about art raises subjective criteria. This dilemma is invariable and difficult to settle! It is more fitting perhaps to let oneself submit to visual reflexes or to the feel that a work of art conveys.

Fortunately, the visit of Dr. Rasmussen to Lebanon contributed in large measure to putting together a good, harmonious and representative selection, though, alas, not an exhaustive one. It took Dr. Rasmussen’s view of this extremely complicated Middle East through a set of fresh eyes and our vivid testimony of a lifetime of events to bring this selection to fruition.

It is our sincere wish that this exhibit should give an idea to the American public of the most fascinating range possible of topical Lebanese art, and also to demonstrate how it has assumed a contemporary orientation in recent years, all while preserving its true identity.

Marwan SAHMARANI

10611

Marwan Sahmarani was born in Lebanon in 1970. He left Beirut in 1989 for Paris to study at the Ecole Superiuer d'Art Graphique. He now lives and works in Montreal.

His work has been exhibited in Beirut, Montreal, Dubai, New York and Ireland.

Sahmarani's artwork is wedded to his Middle Eastern origins. His oil paintings, drawings, ceramics and performed work is reflective of the mediums themselves and of sociopolitical issues. A mid-career retrospective in 2006 charting changing palettes but nagging political questions. In 2007 Dubai's The Third Line gallery showcased his series entitled "Can You Teach Me How to Fight?" The paintings and drawings of this exhibit retraced battles occurring in the Middle East between the 10th and 14th centuries. Prophetic in depicting the cyclical patterns of violent history, the pieces serve as a cautionary reminder in a region where invasion has become a self-perpetuating reality.



mixed media
150x35cm

Paul WAKIM

12613

Paul Wakim was born in 1949 (in Lebanon?) and lived in New York and Beirut from 1979 to 1988 where he held several solo exhibitions. He moved to Paris in 1989 and took courses in philosophy and aesthetics in 1993 and 1994 to find ways to add texts to his conceptual creations. Remembrance, nostalgia, meditation and great violent eruptions are at the center of most of his paintings.

He multiplies places, points and forms so as to capture time in an attempt to escape "falling." Wakim is a contemporary artist adept at blending the complexity of East and West. He is now working on what he calls his "atelier of creation" to realize something that is unique and complex, organized and composite.



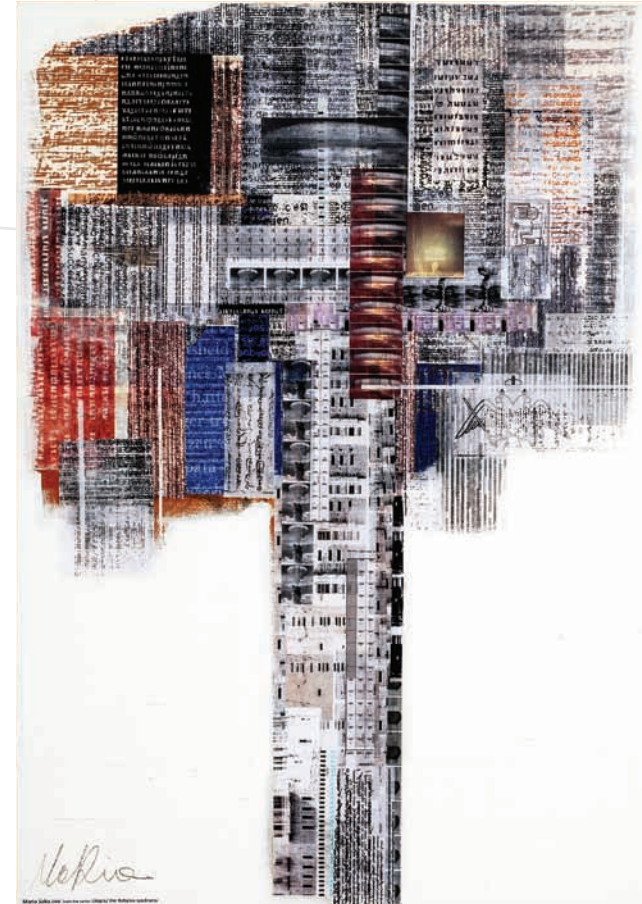
mixed media
150x35cm

Jocelyne SAAB

14&15

Lebanese-born Jocelyne Saab (when?) has directed 20 documentaries featured on French and other European channels, NBC in the United States and NHK in Japan. As journalist and cineaste she has shot film in forsaken zones of conflict such as Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, Kurdistan, the former Spanish Sahara and Vietnam. With the exception of one film entitled "Suspended Life", she has written all her scripts. "Beirut My City", "The Sahara Is Not For Sale" are among her celebrated films as is "Once Upon A Time In Beirut," an ARTE Strasbourg production which she directed.

A mixed media installation about war titled "Strange Games and Bridges" was featured at the National Museum of Singapore. "Suspended Life" written by Gerard Brach was selected at The Directors Fortnight Cannes.



mixed media
150x35cm

Chawki CHAMOUN

16&17

Chawki Chamoun, born in Lebanon in 1942 attended art and design night courses before entering the Fine Arts Institute at the Lebanese University in 1968.

Graduating at the top of his class in 1972, he was awarded a full six year scholarship to pursue graduate studies in the United States. Majoring in Painting as well as Sculpture and Ceramics Studies, he obtained his graduate degree from Syracuse University in Fine Arts in 1975.

Concentrating on Aesthetics and Studio Art at New York University, NY, as a fulltime doctoral student at its Art Education Department he was given a Meritorious Commendation for High Scholastic Achievement. He has given over thirty solo shows since 1975 in Lebanon and around the world. He has taken part in art shows at the Rochester Memorial Museum, Lowe Art Center, the renowned historical Sursock Museum in Beirut and his art work is part of a number of public and private art collections worldwide.



mixed media
150x35cm

Mansour EL HABRE

18619

Mansour El Habre was born in Lebanon in 1970. He obtained a Higher Studies Diploma in Plastic Arts from the Lebanese University in 1994 and a Masters in Plastic Arts from Balamand University in northern Lebanon. He has participated in several exhibitions in Lebanon, Switzerland and London.

The Lebanese Ministry of Culture has selected him to take part in an International Triennially of Engraving and Rodeos. His work can be found in various private collections in Lebanon and France.



mixed media
150x35cm

Mario SABA

20&21

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Nabil NAHAS

22&23

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mixed media
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participating artists

| | Media | Title | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|------------------------|---|---|
| AOUN Youssef | mixed media/canvas | "Braises Ardentes" | | | |
| ASSOUAD Traboulsi Katya | acrylic/canvas | "it's a game" | NAHAS Jean Marc | big panel/mixed media canvas | Graffiti's 6 |
| BAALBACKI Ayman | installation, mixed media wood | "Icon" | NAHAS Nabil | acrylic/canvas acrylic/canvas | "Cedar 1" (2008) "Cedar 2" (2009) |
| BAALBAKI Oussama | acrylic & collage/canvas | "Thunder in the room", 2009 | NAHLE Marwan | sculptures mixed media mixed media mixed media mixed media | "Electric lady birth", 2002 "Lady of the lake", 2006 "Lady trumpet", 2002 "The heart of Soul", 2001 Lady Antenna", 2001 |
| BAASSIRI Lulu | painting | "Magic woman" | | | |
| CALAND Huguette | mixed media/canvas | "La Mer II" (2007) | | | |
| CHAHFE Joseph | mixed media/canvas | "No title" | | | |
| CHAMOUN Chaouki | acrylic/canvas acrylic/canvas acrylic/canvas acrylic/canvas | "Sculpting the desert" (2008) "Waiting for the hero" (2008) "On a Spring Day 1975" (1999) "The Golden gate" | Rawas Mohammad | installation | "Sit down, please" |
| | | Art grandeur nature - Self Portrait (2007) | SAAB Jocelyne | photos Photography C-Print (installation) | "Duel Look" (2008) C-Print "Zeus bringing back red Europa" (2008) C-Print "The Temple" |
| DABAHI Hala (2) | photos | "Woods" | SABA Mario | oil/canvas | "Night Hunters" |
| Dagher Amal (3) | photo on acetate+light photo on acetate+light video | "Corridor" "Temps mort" | SAMHARANI Marwan | painting part of installation installation | "Baad Shahreen" (Empty luggage) "The Widows" |
| EL JUNDI Rim | mixed media/canvas | "Beirut Sky" | SEHNAOUI Mouna Bassili | installation photos | photos to be glued on the wall. No real support |
| FRENN Chawki | | Lebanese artist from Washington | SEHNAOUI Nada | photo dyptich C-Print photo dyptich C-Print photo dyptich C-Print | "In Dream" (on aluminium) "In Dream" (on aluminium) "Utopia" (on aluminium) |
| GEITANI Bassam (2) | acrylic & collage/canvas | No Title (2008) | SERAPHIN Kris | mixed media/canvas | "Fire IV" (1997) (Dyptich) |
| HABRE Mansour | mixed media/canvas | "Wild thoughts" | | | |
| HARB Joseph | acrylic/canvas | "Aquarium" (2008) | SROUJI Hannibal | installation | "Horizontal & Vertical Time" 25 Mirrors |
| JAMHOURI Joumana | photos photos | "March 14" | TARAZI Gebran | acrylic/canvas | "The five elements of Bachelard" |
| KARAM Nadim | installation/sculpture | "The Fisherman & the Cloud" | Wakim Paul | Projection from Computer | "Bucifleurs" |

A P E A L

Association for the Promotion
& Exhibition of the Arts in Lebanon



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