

Alfred Basbous
Sensible expression "Relief and Sculpture"

October 25 till November 20, 2018



Alfred Basbous working in his workshop - Paris 1961
Courtesy of Alfred Basbous Foundation archive

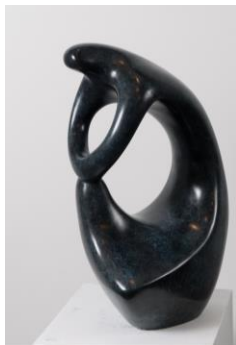
Mark Hachem Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of relief and sculpture by artist Alfred Basbous (1924 – 2006). A major pioneer of Modernist sculpture in the Middle East, Basbous drew on the influence of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși and Henry Moore to create stone and bronze sculptures of often monumental proportions. The exhibition brings together a series of sculptures from the 1960's to the 2000's, which demonstrate Basbous' exploration of the relationship between form and material. A selection of Basbous' preparatory drawings which reveal his approach to relief and sculpture are also exhibited.

Basbous was born in Rachana, 55km from Beirut and was a key contributor towards the development of Modernism in the Middle East during the second part of the twentieth century. During this period, he sought to express form in its purest, most unadulterated conception. He developed a sculptural language, experimenting with figurative and abstracted elements of the human figure, in particular the female body, in combination with organic lines. This exhibition features predominantly abstract works in bronze, marble and wood. Key to the exhibition are a selection of Basbous' original drawings and three dimensional mold and maquet which offer insight into the creative process he employed. Although the drawings were never preparatory drawings for his sculptures, they demonstrate the artists' deeper understanding of sculptural form.

At the start of his artistic career, Basbous took inspiration from elements in Greek mythology and ancient Phoenician sculpture. In 1961 Basbous received a scholarship from the French government to become a pupil at L'École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris. This period was to have a lasting influence on his work.

Having lived and studied in France in his early years, he returned to his hometown of Rachana near Beirut. In 1994, Basbous opened a sculpture park which was designated a UNESCO site in 1997. The open-air gallery and the rolling, dipping character of the Rachana landscape was hugely influential to Basbous' creative output. He held annual sculpture symposiums until 2004, whereby he invited sculptors from around the world to create site-specific work thus creating a center for sculpture.

Mark Hachem will exhibit 40 selected sculptures and ten drawings from the 1960s to the 2000s.



Left: Alfred Basbous, *Caring*, 1982, Bronze, (Black and Green Patina), Edition of 8, 64 x 37 x 5 cm, courtesy of the artist and Mark Hachem Gallery
Centre: Alfred Basbous, *Untitled*, 1980-1989, Charcoal on paper, 37 x 14 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Mark Hachem Gallery
Right: Alfred Basbous, *Walking Figure*, 1981, Marble (with black base), 59x 34 x 16 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Mark Hachem Gallery

Curated by Mark Hachem

Over the past decade, Middle Eastern art has gained increasing recognition on the international stage and has begun to capture the attention of international collectors. After Sotheby's first exhibition of Middle Eastern art in Asia (November 2-20 2017) represented works by iconic artist: Lebanese-born modern sculptor Alfred Basbous (1924 - 2006), Mark Hachem will provide Middle Eastern and Asian collectors a unique opportunity to discover the work of an outstanding artist, whilst introducing Middle Eastern art to an even wider global audience.

The exhibition is curated by Mark Hachem himself in association with the Alfred Basbous Foundation, and will show forty five sculptures by Alfred Basbous and ten drawings and one major relief piece by the master.

The exhibition title "sensible expression" explores the artist's very first work phase in which he passed and revealed his very exceptional style. He outlined his milestones without neglecting realistic representations, in relief, sculpture, drawing (charcoal), and market. Alfred's oeuvre ranges from figurative to minimal abstraction to total

abstraction.

This exhibition looks at the various phases of the artist's career and explores in details his search for himself as a pioneer bearing the torch to the freedom of formation. He refuses the restraints of nature, and objects to the limitations of the subject matter. For that reason, his work is not confined within one subject. Basbous' work expresses a dialogue between drawings, relief and sculpture.

"The issue of the debate between me and the medium is old; it dated back to the year 1958. This case interacts day after day; it is the constant search for the truth. I always try to be a friend with the medium I work with, we convince each other, that's the reason why we are on ongoing dialogue. I speak with the stone, the wood, and the bronze as I do with another human being. It is the fact of searching for the most beautiful line or form, whether abstract or classical representing a woman or an animal"

– A.Basbous

About Alfred Basbous

Sculptor Alfred Basbous (1924 - 2006) was born in Rachana, Lebanon. His works express a lifelong exploration of the human form and its abstract properties. Throughout his life, Basbous won many awards including the Prix de l'Orient in Beirut in 1963 and the prize for the Alexandria Biennale in 1974. Upon his death, the President of the Lebanese Republic awarded him the Medal of the Lebanese Order of Merit in Gold. A national stamp of Alfred Basbous and his two brothers Michel and Youssef, also sculptors, was released in 2011 by the Lebanese State as a tribute to their contribution to Lebanese culture. The works of Alfred Basbous are part of the permanent collection of the Alfred Basbous Foundation in Rachana, Lebanon and are featured in many private and public collections, including the Musée Rodin, Paris, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the Hakone Open-Air Museum in Japan and the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM) in Lebanon, among others. His monumental works are present in the public areas of Beirut and many other Lebanese cities.

About Mark Hachem

Mark Hachem opened his first gallery in 1996 in Paris. He opened a gallery in New York in 2007 and in Beirut in 2010. Mark Hachem is a collector of kinetic art who has long been committed to supporting this major 20th century art movement by continuously showcasing artists like Vasarely, Soto, Cruz Diez, Perez Flores to name a few.

In Beirut, the gallery has been focusing on Middle East artistic scene, representing artists of note including Chaouki CHamoun, Alfred Basbous, Hussein Madi, Charbel Samuel Aoun, Laila Shawa, Leila Nseir, and Nasser Soumi amongst others.

The gallery's vocation is to showcase cutting edge artists from the 20th and 21st centuries with the following objectives in mind: Focus on Kinetic art, rediscover certain artists whose notoriety is greatly inferior to their considerable artistic contribution such as Hamed

Abdalla, Di Teana amongst others, support the career of contemporary artists whose unique and significant work deserves to be exposed and measured next to the greatest of their generation (Nasr-eddine Ben-nacer, Wolfgang Stiller, Stephen Pierce, Mathias Schmied...) The gallery's drive to promote its artists on the international scene takes them across the world to Art Paris, Art Miami, Zona Maco, Beirut Art Fair, Art Dubai and many more.

Title: Alfred Basbous – *Sensible Expression “Relief and Sculpture”*
Address: Mark Hachem Gallery, Capital Gardens Building, Downtown Beirut-Lebanon
Dates: October 25-2018 till November 20-2018
Private View: 7 – 9 pm
Opening Hours: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 8pm
Website: www.markhachem.com
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MarkHachemBEY>
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