

AGENDA

LEBANON

MUSIC

'Irtijal '15'
Beirut Art Center,
Jisr al-Wati
April 2, 8:30 p.m.
76-952-387
The International Festival of Experimental Music in Lebanon continues with a two-set concert, starting with a trio show featuring Christian Kobi, sax, Hans Koch, clarinet and sax, and Paed Conca, clarinet. The evening wraps with a quartet performance with Jonas Kocher, accordion, Gaudenz Badrutt, electronics, Mazen Kerbaj, trumpet, and Raed Yassin, double bass.

ART

'L'Abecedaire'
Janine Rubeiz Art Gallery,
Raouche
Through April 10
01-868-290
Laure Ghorayeb and Mazen Kerbaj's collaborative exhibition explores the possibilities of a double autobiography, featuring 26 new drawings on themes from the intensely personal to the universal.

'Strade Avvitate'
Jewelry Souks Gallery,
Beirut Souks
April 1-12, 6-10 p.m.
01-989-041
Vahram Najjar Aghazarian will present his interpretation of the notion of travel through a series of tridimensional mosaic pieces comprised of tiny screws.

THEATER

'Venus'
Theatre Monnot, Yessouiyeh
Street, Monnot
Through April 19, 8:30 p.m.
01-999-666
A mysterious, funny, erotic drama based on David Ives' "Venus in Fur," is adapted by Lina Khoury and Gabriel Yammine and directed by Jacques Maroun.

FILM

'Bab al-Hadid'
Metropolis Cinema-Sofil,
Ashrafieh
April 5-8
01-204-080
Youssef Shaheen's 1958 classic is a love triangle involving Kinawi (Youssef Shaheen), a disabled peddler working at Cairo's central train station, Hannouma (Hind Rostom), the attractive young barmaid who obsesses him, and her lover Abu Sri, a porter struggling to unionize his fellow workers. Presented with Sfeir-Semler Gallery as part of the Arab Cinema Classics cycle.

DANCE

'Product of Circumstances'
Beirut Art Center,
Jisr al-Wati
April 5, 5-6:30 p.m.
01-397-018
In this autobiographical conference-cum-performance, biologist and dancer/choreographer Xavier Le Roy will present theory and praxis of his performance.

Narmada Devi Groupe
Instanbouli Theater, Tyre
April 3, 7 p.m.
70-903-846
The Narmada Devi Groupe will perform traditional Indian-themed dance.

JUST A THOUGHT

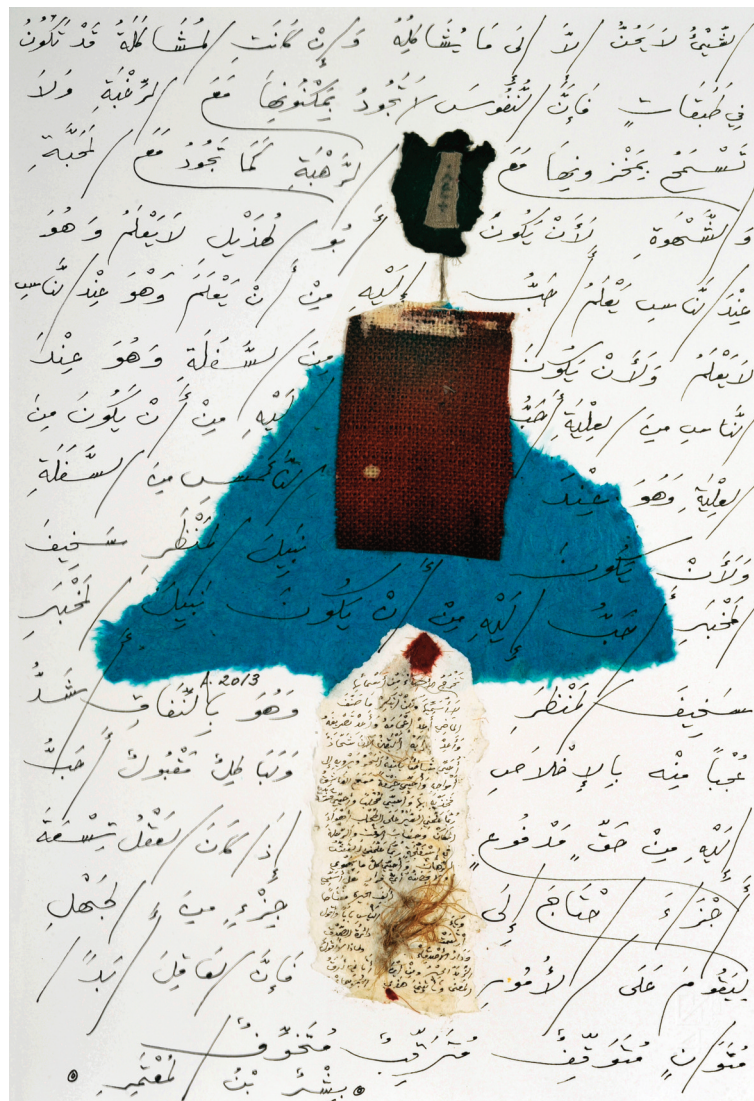
Your childhood is a village. You will never cross its boundaries no matter how far you go.

Adonis (1930-)
Syrian-born poet, translator, theorist

INTERVIEW



"Sans titre" 1998, 18.5 x 23.5cm.



"Sans titre" 1998, 18.5 x 23.5cm.

Adonis on giving freedom to his hands

Renowned Syrian poet and critic reflects on writing, visual art and place

By Olivia Snaije
The Daily Star

PARIS: "Everything is poetry," Adonis said. "The difference between a poem and a painting is simply the material that has been used."

Often called the Arab world's greatest living poet, but also well-known for his essays and a seminal book of literary criticism, Adonis spoke to The Daily Star on the eve of the opening of "A," an exhibition of his visual art.

"The relationship between a piece of paper and a stain of ink," Adonis continued, "there's composition, there's musicality, vertical dimensions. It just depends who the artist is."

Born Ali Ahmad Saidi Esbar, in 1930, Adonis has expressed himself on canvas since the late 1980s.

"In the Arab world there is not enough appreciation for all that is produced by hand," he said. "You only need to look at the extraordinary handicrafts, the creativity in this handiwork. I began somewhat spontaneously to give freedom to my hands."

Adonis' friendship with such artists as Shafic Abboud, Paul Guiragossian, Marwan Kassab-Bachi, Dia Azzawi, Kamal Boullata and others influenced and then encouraged him.

Adonis' visual art is a lyrical blend of calligraphy, collage and ink. Sometimes compared to collage, he's coined the term "raqima" for this work – from "raqama," which he says means to write and color simultaneously.

Little by little, after tearing up what he first produced, he gained confidence in his work, and found he was creating relationships with his raqima. "It's good to change and try other forms of expression," he recalled. "And luckily people liked the work." Nowadays Adonis writes or makes art according to his mood. "When my head is tired, it's a release to draw."

Paris' Galerie Azzedine Alaïa is exhibiting over 70 of Adonis' works, most of which have never been displayed before.

His work harmoniously interweaves words with muted colors and



Adonis is seen by many as the Arab world's greatest living poet.

evokes a certain freshness and joy. Most often working upon a background of calligraphy, he uses ink and discarded objects – fabric, yarn, parchment and rags – that combine classical and contemporary elements.

The calligraphy is not traditional but his own "invented" handwriting. Of course calligraphy is tiring, he says, "like everything that is beautiful is tiring. It's not easy. Taking the easy way out is the great illness of art as well as of our modern life."

Adonis' experiments with visual art began by taking verses by such great Arab poets as Bashar ibn Burd, or the pre-Islamic poet Abu Zuaib al-Huzal.

His goal, he said, was "to pay them homage. When there is a specific theme to my picture, such as wanderings, dreams or love, I prefer to use my own poetry, to use my own references." Later Adonis plans to use verses from "foreign poets, perhaps Rimbaud and Baudelaire to ... arrive at something more contemporary. But first I have to translate the poems. Writing in French is not for me. Arabic letters have such a physical dimension."

When the so-called Arab Spring uprisings began in 2011, Adonis was alternately attacked or defended for having expressed his reservations.

"I am against political or ideological engagement," he commented. "In principle I don't agree with the fact that art is a way of expressing events."

"Poetry should not reproduce an event, or praise or criticize an event – on the contrary, it should pierce it, pass through it ... I can't link art and incidents. But a painter can still contribute to a revolution. Creation in itself is a revolution."

Adonis is not enthusiastic about exhibiting his work in the Middle East, though a smaller show of his

work opened in Abu Dhabi last year. "The heart of the matter," he said, is "there isn't a cultural milieu that is vital and pure, neither for reflection, nor for poetry. Everything is politicized. Arab societies are not yet civil societies. Everything is linked to an ideology or to a group."

Perhaps the best description of Adonis' sentiments about the Arab world have come from Khaled Mattawa, his English-language translator, as quoted in a 2012 article in the Guardian. "He's been unsparing against the deeply rooted forces of intolerance in Arab thought," Mattawa is quoted as saying, "but also celebratory of regenerative streaks in Arab culture."

Having grown up within a village farming family, Adonis still draws inspiration from his childhood memories. The exhibition catalogue quotes him as saying that, "unconsciously, there must be traces of childhood in these images. Mostly in the playfulness and the concept of letting my hands do the work. When I was 12 I didn't know what school was. I plowed, harvested, I sowed, I planted trees."

"Our encounter could simply trigger a memory of being a child next to an olive tree in the shade," he continued. "The specificity of art is that it is undefinable. It is a perpetual and spontaneous impetus."

"It reminds me of what Heraclitus said – that no man ever steps in the same river twice. Art is like a child who is evolving each day. It is perpetually living in infancy. A picture or a poem that becomes old means it isn't good. A work of art must be inhabited by a childhood of sorts."

"A" an exhibition of Adonis' visual art is on show until May 10, 2015 at the Galerie Azzedine Alaïa, 18, Rue de la Verrerie 75004 Paris Tel. +33-1-4233-9318.

Gaza artist gobbles up Banksy mural on war debris

By Fares Akram
Associated Press

GAZA CITY: A 33-year-old Gaza man says he has been duped into selling a valuable work by British graffiti artist Banksy for less than \$200 to a local artist.

The popular street artist is believed to have snuck into Gaza earlier this year, leaving behind four murals.

One, drawn on a metal door, depicts the Greek goddess Niobe cowering against the rubble of a destroyed house.

Titled "Bomb Damage," the painting was drawn on a door, the last remaining part of a two-story house belonging to the Dardouna family in northern Gaza.

Unaware of the work's value, Rabie Dardouna said Tuesday he was tricked into selling the door to an eager local artist for just 700 shekels, or about \$175. Some of Banksy's works have been valued at hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"I did not know that it was this valuable. I heard it can be sold for millions," Dardouna said. "Now I want the door back."

Dardouna said he didn't even know who the British artist was and initially didn't pronounce Banksy's name correctly.

Belal Khaled, the Gaza artist who bought the door, said he did not mean to trick anyone. He said he just wanted to protect the painting and had no intention of profiting.

"I bought the painting to protect its artistic value and preserve it from damage," Khaled told AP. "Another reason is to display it in other places as well. I don't have any monetary interest in this."

He said he has been in touch with Banksy's representatives, hoping to get a clearance to showcase the mural in Gaza art exhibitions.

The debate over the issue has heated up on Facebook, with Palestinian

activists and journalists accusing the buyer of tricking the Dardounas while others have defended him for buying it legally.

Khaled agreed to show reporters the mural on condition that its location not be revealed.

The Dardouna home was one of 18,000 destroyed in the 50-day war between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers last summer. A critic of Israel, Banksy has created works in Gaza and the West Bank meant to draw attention to the plight of Palestinians.

Other Banksy works spotted in Gaza after the artist's mystery visit includes a mural of a playful kitten and of children swinging from a military watchtower.

Banksy publicist Jo Brooks said at the time that the artist entered Gaza

through a tunnel from Egypt, though such a route is extremely difficult and dangerous.

On a previous visit to the region he drew a painting of a girl pulled upward by balloons on Israel's West Bank separation barrier.

Passage to Italy Paintings by Italian artist Paola Vincenti on display at Villa Audi



BEIRUT: This piece is representative of the sort of work on show during "Paesaggi d'Italia," an exhibition of paintings by Italian artist Paola Vincenti. Staged at the Villa Audi, the show is comprised of 36 oils, all inspired by Italian cities, all marked by notable nostalgia. It runs until April 17.