# ARTS & CULTURE

A cartoonist in occupied Palestine

He quickly finds parallel systems in

the city: Israeli buses go to all neigh-borhoods except the Arab ones. Arab

minibuses only go to Arab neighbor-hoods. In Beit Hanina, residents pay

taxes for water and rubbish removal but

don't get the same service as in West

Jerusalem. When Delisle goes to West

Jerusalem, he finds the cafés, parks and markets that he'd imagined. When he

returns with his family to show them,

it's Saturday and the entire city has shut

down. "It reminds me of Sundays in Pyongyang [North Korea]," he remarks.

vide a nice sketch of the cultural setting.

ian shops closed one Thursday, he has

a hilarious experience trying to shop in

Delisle's settling-in vignettes pro-

When Delisle finds all the Palestin-

like this in guidebooks.

## AGENDA LEBANON

PERFORMANCE

#### 'Al-Bustan Festival'

Al-Bustan Hotel, Beit Mery Feb. 21 to March 25 04-972-980 The 19th edition of Al-Bustan Festival will be comprised of dance and musical performances on the theme of Latin America.

## THEATER

'Le Bal D'Enfer' Monnot Theater, USJ Street, Ashrafieh Jan. 3-5, 7 p.m. sharp 01-202-422 This comic play is being organized by France's Tres-Tot Theatre company and is suitable for children and adults.

#### 'Film Cinama'

Monnot Theater, USJ Street, Ashrafieh Jan. 13-29, 8:30 p.m. 01-202-422 Lebanese actor and comedian Joe Kodeih presents his new one-man show inspired by super powerful characters.

### ART

#### 'Interdependences'

Espace Kettaneh-Lunigk, Gefinor Center Until Jan. 28 01-738-706 This exhibition features artworks of Lebanese ceramist Michele Assaf Kamel, all dealing with the notion of the Other.

#### 'Red, Yellow. Blue'

Art Circle Sub-space, Horse Shoe Building, above Costa Café, Hamra Street Until Jan. 14 03-027-776 This group show comprises paintings, drawings, prints, books and accessories by Lebanese artists.

#### 'Inspirations'

Exhibition Hall, University of Balamand, North Lebanon Jan. 18-27 06-930-250 This show features new paintings by Lebanese painter Mostapha Obeid.

#### 'Exposure 2011'

## **REVIEW**

'Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City' tells of a stay-at-home dad's schooling in occupation

#### **By Olivia Snaije** Special to The Daily Star

ARIS: Rarely does another city spark such passion, from ecsta-sy to ire to insanity. From the historical, political, religious arena to the deeply personal, contemporary Jerusalem juxtaposes physical beauty with noxious tension.

Canadian cartoonist Guy Delisle's new graphic novel, "Chroniques de Jerusalem" ("Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City") looks like the work of a gormless foreigner, yet ulti-mately this tragi-comic description of the year he recently spent in the city is impartial in all its surrealistic mania.

Trained in animation, Delisle now focuses on the successful comics that he sketches in pencil and ink. "Jerusalem" is his twelfth (and longest) effort and his fourth travelogue.

The artist said that when he moved to occupied Jerusalem he wasn't particularly interested in the Middle East, nor the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He had done most of his traveling in Asia and his first two comic-book travelogues were about China and North Korea, where he taught animation. His more recent books about Burma and now Jerusalem develop the author's autobiographical self as the partner of Nadège, who works for Doctors without Borders.

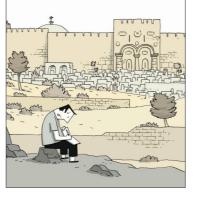
"We were supposed to go to Tokyo and only found out a month before that we were to go to Jerusalem," said Delisle in a telephone interview from his home in Montpellier, France. "I didn't mind. I thought it would be a change. I didn't know much about the conflict. I thought it would be interesting and I would learn. For me, it's always a strange experience, it's simple for [his partner]: she works."

Delisle's character is a goodnatured, stay-at-home dad, who juggles the logistics of moving to a new country, food shopping and young children while trying to get his head around the complicated situation in which he's landed, recording everything in a sketchbook.

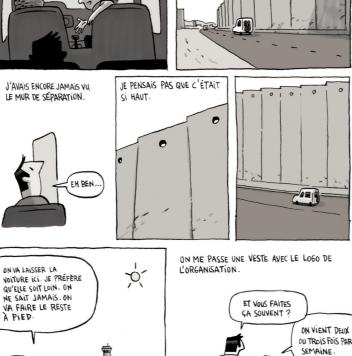
When the Delisle family arrives they are housed in Beit Hanina, in Arab East Jerusalem where most of the NGOs are based. He takes his daughter for a stroll and discovers overflow-

## CHRONIQUES **DE JÉRUSALEM**

Guy Delisle



AUJOURD'HUI, ON VA ALLER VOIR DU CÔTÉ DU CHECK-POINT DE QALANDIYA. COMME L'EST LE RAMADAN ET QUE LE VENDREDI ILY A BEAUCOUP DE MUSUL-MANS QUI VEULENT ALLER PRIER DANS LA GRANDE MOSQUÉE DE JÉRUSALEM, ÇA SE PASSE PAS TOUJOURS TRÈS BIEN



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"I didn't realize it was that high": Delisle's cartoon self encounters the Israeli wall.

ing rubbish bins and badly maintained roads without any parks for children. He notes that Jerusalem hadn't looked

the enormous supermarket in an Israeli settlement not far from Beit Hanina. NGO acquaintances have told him

#### not to shop in settlements because "it encourages them." Guilt-ridden yet drawn by the allure of a bountiful supermarket, Delisle is asked at the entrance if he has a gun. Once inside he spots his favorite cereal, Shredded Wheat, but he manages to tear himself away without buying anything. Then, on his way out he walks by three Palestinian women loaded down with shopping bags.

Delisle works to see the situation from all sides. He ventures to ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods, where he sees men drunk during a Jewish holiday, and to the West Bank but he persistently fails in his attempts to get to Gaza. He travels to the Qalandiya checkpoint with a group of Israeli peace activists who monitor Israeli military checkpoints in the West Bank. Here, he is confronted with the vision of the wall for the first time, which becomes a fixture in many

of his drawings. During his three trips to Al-Khalil (Hebron), he impartially records Israeli settlers' devastating occupation and a settler guide's ruthless propaganda.

The Delisle family is in Jerusalem for the start of Israel's December 2008 attack on Gaza. Nadège had been stuck in Gaza earlier in the year. When she calls Delisle to say she has been detained, he asks if there aren't any other ways to get out. "Ah, I see. There's only one way to get to Israel ...?

### 'When I do my books [I feel] I'm writing a ... postcard to my mom'

How do the people in Gaza get out? he then asks. "Ah, they never get out, see ...

He asks whether she's not inventing an excuse to party in Gaza. "Ah okay, they're not having much fun there ..." Delisle manages to explain the

details of the conflict and in particular the Gaza war in a clear, dispassionate manner that brings home the horror. "I go slowly, I'm a slow learner, I

like things when they are clear and visible. I thought I'd make little arrows, it's an efficient way of showing a com-plicated situation," said Delisle, referring to numerous diagrams and maps that appear in the book.

The artist juxtaposes descriptions of the attack with his daily life. "Dad, what's war?" asks his 5-year-

old son. He and his friend Nicolai, also a househusband, whose wife works at the Red Cross, take the children to the beach. "Hey, aren't those military planes, the ones that have been flying over us for a while?" "They're going towards Gaza if I'm not mistaken ...

"That's my natural way of telling a story," Delisle said. "If it was too seri-ous I don't think I would have had the courage to get through 300 pages. I need to have anecdotes and little situations. I want to add everything that is weird.

"I like to talk about small things. I'm not very attracted to politics," continued Delisle. "When I do my books I have the feeling I'm writing a really long postcard to my mom.'

Delisle also records his experiences running comic book workshops for art students in Nablus, Ramallah and Tel Aviv. In occupied Nablus he is struck by the poverty of knowledge on the subject due to his students' general state of imprisonment. In Ramallah, his students are dynamic and informed, while in Tel Aviv the general level is excellent.

The apogee of mad humor comes together when Delisle takes his car to the Palestinian mechanic.

The mechanic asks him if he would like his windshield replaced with glass or plastic. "Uhh ... glass," Delisle responds,

asking if plastic windshields are a kind of new technique.

The mechanic tells him the settlers prefer plastic windshields because they are more resistant when rocks are thrown at them.

"You mean settlers come here to get their cars repaired?" the comic-book artist asks, flabbergasted. "Yes," the mechan

the mechanic replies. "We're open on Saturdays and besides, it's cheaper [here] than [it is] in the settlements."

One of the moments in the book when Deslisle is the most frightened is when a settler picks up a rock to throw at him while he is traveling in a Doctor's Without Borders van.

In the end, said Delisle, "I'm not too crazy about the place, there's too much tension. There's the beauty of the old city but when it's packed with soldiers and rifles the magic goes away.'

He keeps watch on the news coming from the countries he's traveled to, such as North Korea or Burma. But when it comes to the Middle East, 'you're still going to hear about Israeli politics even if you don't want to hear about it," he says.

"Chroniques de Jerusalem" is published by Editions Delcourt in French. The English translation, "Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City," will be published later this year by Jonathan Cape in the U.K. and Drawn & Quarterly in the U.S. and Canada.

Austria ready to mark 150th anniversary of Klimt's birth

## U.K. art works fall victim to metal theft wave ty, but police increasingly point to

## By Mohammed Abbas

don borough of Southwark. The borough was also the site of

another metal theft earlier this month, from a public park where only two

organized crime networks using sophisticated techniques. The church in the Yorkshire village

Beirut Art Center, Street 97, Jisr al-Wati Until Jan. 21 01-397-018 The third edition of this group exhibition/competition features works by emerging Lebanese artists, as well as non-Lebanese artists living in Lebanon.

#### 'Collective Exhibition'

Alwane Gallery, Saifi Village Until Jan. 24 01-975-250 This exhibition features paintings by Lebanese artists Assadour Bezdikian, Farid Aouad, Chafic Abboud, France's George Cyr and more.

#### 'The Free Choice of an **Enlightened Reality'**

Cynthia Nouhra Art Gallery, Elias al-Hrawi Avenue, Furn al-Shubbak Jan. 5 to Feb. 16 03-186-294 A solo show of work by Antoine Mansour, this exhibition is marked by psychedelic and mystically themed work.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

#### 'Uncommon Pictures'

Palais Nawfal, Rachid Karami Municipal Cultural Center, Tripoli Jan. 7-20 06-627-848 / 03-317-130 This show marks the exhibition debut of photographers Noor Fattal and Jihad Samra.

### JUST A THOUGHT

The whole religious complexion of the modern world is due to the absence from Jerusalem of a lunatic asylum.

> **Thomas** Paine (1737-1809) English writer



Klimt's "Adele Blocher-Bauer I" at the Belvedere palace in Vienna.

By Sim Sim Wissgott Agence France Presse

VIENNA: His golden "The Kiss" adorns scarves and coffee mugs worldwide. His portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer sparked a decades-long restitution battle. Now, in 2012, Austria celebrates 150 years since Gustav Klimt's birth. Born on July 14, 1862, Klimt is one

of the best-known figures of the Jugendstil art period.

In honor of this milestone anniversary, Vienna's biggest museums – led by the Belvedere, the Albertina and the Leopold Museum – are proposing no less than nine exhibits during the course of the year, all promising new insights into the artist's life.

"More works by Gustav Klimt will be on display in Vienna in 2012 than ever before," Vienna's tourism board has already advertised. "From his decoration work in the Burgtheater and the Kunsthistorisches Museum to his largely unknown drawings and worldrenowned paintings like 'The Kiss.'" Co-founder of the turn-of-the-

century Secession movement and one of Austria's key modern artists alongside Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka, Klimt was the second of seven children born to a gold engraver and his wife in Baumgarten, near Vienna.

Already as an art student, he founded an artists' company with his brother Ernst and a friend, taking on major commissions to decorate luxurious salons and create theater sets.

Although his work adorns the walls and ceilings of prestigious Viennese institutions like the Burgtheater and Kunsthistorisches Museum (KHM), Klimt is best known for his later

"Golden Period" paintings. One of them, the 1907 "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I" briefly became the most expensive painting ever sold when it changed hands in the United States in 2006 for \$135 million.

Earlier, it had made headlines due to lengthy dispute between the Belvedere - home to the world's largest collection of Klimt paintings, including "The Kiss" - and the family of the portrait's previous owner, who said it had been stolen by the Nazis.

The "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer was eventually handed back to the family after the Austrian state refused to buy it.

To celebrate Klimt's 150th birthday, the Belvedere has planned an extraordinary exhibit, with its entire collection of Klimt paintings going on display from June 15 until January 2013.

A separate exposition on the artist's collaboration with architect Josef Hoffmann, another Secession co-founder, is already running until March 4.

The Albertina will focus on Klimt's drawings, while the Leopold museum is promising "Gustav Klimt – Up Close and Personal," exploring his private life through his letters.

Further exhibits are planned in four more museums including the Wien Museum - the city's history museum - and the KHM, which will also offer special guided tours in the grand stairwell which Klimt worked on with his artists' company. Moreover, his last workshop in a

swanky Viennese district, now recreated, will open to the public in mid-2012, although the villa has been entirely remodeled on the exterior.

Klimt died on Feb. 6, 1918 of a stroke. His paintings recall a heyday in Viennese cultural life when the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire bustled with the greatest artists and intel-

lectuals of the day. The Vienna Ballet presented the first tribute of the year to Klimt on Sunday as dancers performed live among his works at the Belvedere.

LONDON: For years a bronze statue of Alfred Salter sat on a bench looking out on a quiet bend of the River Thames, a memorial to a doctor who dedicated his life to a London district once infamous for Dickensian levels of poverty and disease.

Now the bench is empty after his statue fell victim to a wave of metal thefts sweeping Britain, threatening artworks and ravaging infrastructure as thieves seek to capitalize on rising metal prices and a cash-in-hand scrap industry.

Memorial plaques and artworks are unsentimentally lumped together with electrical cables and drain covers in the hunt for illegal metal, which police say costs Britain hundreds of millions of pounds each year and kills two thieves a month.

"He was an inspiration to many people and a tireless campaigner against social injustice and so it's a great shame that thieves have now taken his memorial," said Salter's last remaining relative Johanna Crawshaw, who has pledged to double a council reward for information leading to the statue's return.

Reward posters are plastered all over Bermondsey, once home to a riverside slum depicted by Charles Dickens in "Oliver Twist," in the Lon-

stumps remain of a valuable artwork by renowned British sculptor Barbara Hepworth. The local government called the theft part of a "sickening epidemic."

Churches have reported the theft of metal war memorials, while in Wales, University Hospital Llandough was forced to postpone more than 80 operations this month, including on cancer patients, after metal thieves targeted one of its generators.

The theft of rail network copper cables has caused thousands of hours of transport delays across the country, and the theft of power cables has plunged thousands of homes into darkness. Some hapless thieves have been killed trying to steal live electrical cables.

Since January 2009, the price of the type of copper popular with thieves has more than doubled on the London Metal Exchange. Meanwhile, many more Britons' finances are being squeezed by the harshest public spending cuts for a generation, part of government plans to tackle a big budget deficit.

Scrapyards contacted by Reuters said they pay about 3.50 pounds (\$5.50) for a kilo of copper, depending on qual-

ity and the market price on the day. Some media outlets have labeled metal theft an opportunistic "austerity crime" at a time of economic difficul-

of Haworth where the authors ( lotte and Emily Bronte are buried has launched an appeal for cash to fix its

roof, whose repeated targeting by lead thieves has hastened its disrepair. "It's a problem in rural England," said John Huxley, chairman of Hawath Parish Council Haworth Parish Council.

"These people have free rein to go pretty much undetected. We have a very small police presence. Our neighborhood policing team are great but there's only so much they can do ... We're easy pickings." Parliament is considering a bill that

would toughen scrap dealing laws, including ending trade for cash and giving greater police and judicial powers to close rogue yards.

In the meantime, Southwark Council is carrying out a risk assessment of 165 pieces of public art in the borough, and may use closed circuit cameras to monitor more valuable pieces or put them in storage until such time as they can be made safe.

Two statues already in storage are of Salter's daughter and her cat. Salter's seated statue, placed within sight of London's Tower Bridge, depicted him waving at his daughter in happier times, before she died of scarlet fever at the age of nine.

## Hockney takes a swipe at Hirst over work ethic

LONDON: British painter David Hockney has criticized controversial fellow artist Damien Hirst for employing other people to help create his works of art, saying it was "insulting."

A poster for a major exhibition of landscapes by the 74-year-old Hock-ney opening in London this month reads: "All the works here were made by the artist himself, personally."

Hockney was asked in a magazine interview whether he was having a dig at Hirst - who uses assistants for his prolific output, which includes a lifesized platinum cast of an 18th-century skull encrusted with 8,601 diamonds. He nodded.

Times. "I used to point out at art school, you can teach the craft. It's the poetry you can't teach. But now they try to teach the poetry and not the craft."

You need the eye, the hand and the heart," Hockney said, quoting a Chinese proverb on painting. "Two won't do." A major exhibition of Hockney's

paintings inspired by his native York-shire, entitled "David Hockney: A Bigger Picture," goes on display at the Royal Academy of Arts in London on Jan. 21



Hirst sits before his "The Incredible Journey."

It is the result of three years of work and Hockney admitted it had been hard work, saying: "It took me three days to say, 'Yes, OK ...' There was quite a lot of work, but I'm an opportunist ... We rose to the occasion.

The artist was appointed to the Order of Merit, a special honor granted by Queen Elizabeth II for achievement in the arts, learning, literature or science, Sunday. He turned down a knighthood in 1990.

Hirst was a leading member of the 1990s "Young British artists" movement alongside Tracey Emin, and won fame with works featuring animals suspended in formaldehyde in glass cases, including a shark and a cow. – AFP

"It's a little insulting to craftsmen, skilful craftsmen," he told the Radio