

'Pieds d'Oeuvre', A Collective Selling Exhibition

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Design



"The bench has always been central to the iconographic imagination of each of us, from the couple lovingly hugging in a public park with her puppy lifting his paw as a hello, the homeless to the elderly. Real or imagined memories would not exist without this vital character that is the bench.

Legs are often the most beautiful part of a bench but they do not represent the primary figure in the public imagination, as they are overlooked and hidden. Yet they are on their own, carriers and supporters of our joys and sorrows. They symbolize strength, durability and the traces of time passing."



Artist: Ziad Antar

Title: 'Banc des Amoureux' or 'The Love Bench'

Materials: Cast iron bench legs, metal and barbwire

Smogallery is pleased to announce 'Pieds d'Oeuvre', a group exhibition that sets to challenge the creative imagination of some of Beirut's most prominent artists and designers including Ziad Antar, Nada Debs, Karim Chaya, Nathalie Khayat, Michel Abboud, Wyssem Nochi, Lara Khoury, Anachar Basbous, Charbel Aoun, Paula Acra, Celia about Arbid, Rania F., Majd Bazerji, Jean Marc Nahas, Ziad Abillama, Jan van Lierde and design duo Bokja.

Smogallery has presented each of them with a pair of old rusted iron bench legs found at a flea market and asked them to produce one-off pieces to be exhibited in the public garden of Karantina. The works can be used as functional lifestyle objects or simply appreciated as works of art with profound aesthetic appeal.

These artists and designers cover different fields within the creative industry, from architecture, product and furniture design, fashion and jewelry design to photography, sculpture, painting and drawing. This diversity offers a complete openness towards the found object and allows for the creation of completely unique pieces. The exhibition will allow the viewer to step into the intimate world of each of these creators and explore the different visual dialogues that each of them brings to their work.

The range of artists and designers in this exhibition represents the approach that smogallery pursues; exploring the movement of boundaries between contemporary art, design and architecture, three disciplines that nurture and shape the new territories of design.

The exhibition end on Friday November 25, 2011. All profits from the sales of this exhibition will go towards the embellishment of the public garden of Karatina situated outside Smogallery.



Artist: Karim Chaya

Title: ' Shooting from the Hips '

Materials: Cast iron bench legs, brass, metal, leather, rubber and absolutely no thought at all



Artist: Nathalie Khayat

Title: 'MOONFLEET'

Materials: Cast iron bench legs, recycled porcelain pots, concrete



Artist: Michel Abboud
Title: 'Fimicky Pegs'
Materials: Brushed stainless steel



Artist: Pasila Acra
Materials: Cast iron bench legs, polished wood and tin



Artist: Charbel Samuel Aoun
Title: ' Social Shadows '
Materials: Cast iron bench legs and steel



Artist: Jean Marc Nahas
Title: ' Seul '
Materials: Cast iron bench leg, metal, natural wood, lacquered wood, felt pen

Featured Artists' Biography

Michel Abboud, principal of SOMA Architects, completed his studies in architecture at the American University of Beirut and Columbia University, US. His firm is operating from New York (2003) and Beirut (2009), ensuring around the clock projects of all scales. SOMA is known to constantly extend the boundaries of architectural design, while also introducing the newest digital technologies. Among its most renowned projects is the ultra high-end Park51 Community Center in New York (Islamic Center), which was internationally acclaimed.

Ziad Abillama studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and the Amherst College, US. Abillama states that he was reborn in the US during the first Gulf War in 1991. After returning to Lebanon in 1992, he has been highly active in the Contemporary Art scene. His early works consist of installations and interventions that may be considered as a relentless unlearning of his privileges. Deceived by the over-politicization of Lebanese youth, he drew back from politics in art and returned to sculpture and design. His work plays a highly significant role in representing Contemporary Art from the Middle East, which led to his participation in the largest Pan-Arab show of Contemporary Art 'The Future of a Promise' at the 54th Biennale of Venice in June 2011.

Paula Acra turned her passion for flowers into a career in 1993, creating innovative floral arrangements. Her creativity and distinctive approach has demonstrated the possibilities of floristry as a form of art and design. Acra is able to translate her sense of creativity and her language as a florist through different mediums while ensuring their remains a hint at her true passion for flowers. Acra has created floral compositions for several prestigious events worldwide.

Ziad Antar has been working in photography and video since 2002. He has completed residencies at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris in 2003 as well as at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Antar's work deals with crucial issues in Lebanese society, in particular with war and human condition in conflict situation. His work has been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums worldwide including the Tate Modern in London, UK, the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, US and is represented by one of the most renowned art galleries in Paris, Almine Rech.

Charbel Samuel Aoun completed his studies in architecture in 2004 while pursuing his passion as an artist, creating sculptures and paintings. In 2009, after having worked as a conceptual designer at several architectural firms, he has devoted himself completely to his art. He has participated in several collective and solo exhibitions including his most recent show 'Prelude' held at Byblos Bank, October 2011. Whether through sculpture or painting, Aoun translates his energy and emotions and reveals his journey through lines, forms, depth, light and color.

Celia Abou Arbid completed her studies in architecture at the University of Montreal, Canada in 1993. Celia has shaped her professional activities in design around the visual and critical inquiry of shape, form, space and materials. She is practicing in various fields of design such as, furniture, interior, fashion, graphics and architecture. Her current research activities involve extensive visual explorations of e-polymers to create naturally artificial mediated geological materials for use in building and objects.

Anchar Basbous was born into a family of artists: his father, Michel Basbous, a pioneer of modern sculpture and his mother, a writer and a poet. After completing his studies at the ENSAAMA in Paris, A. Basbous opened his own sculpture workshop in Rachana, where he has been creating works of art in stone, wood and metal. Each of his works is created specifically to the study of the site, the character, the personality and the history of its locations. His sculptures are found in many private collections as well as in public places in Lebanon, France, United States, Canada, and United Arab Emirates.

Majd Bazerji completed his studies in Fine Art at the Ecole Kienz in Lille, north of France. He lives and works in Paris as an independent designer and founded his own design studio 'mb-designlab' in 2004. Bazerji produces works in limited edition series characterized by their simplicity, their use of geometric forms and a subtle element of surprise adding a playful side to his modern designs.

Bokja was established in the year 2000 by design duo **Hoda Baroudi** and **Maria Hibri**. Founded by their common love for antiques and vintage furniture as well as their passion for textiles and tapestries. The Bokja concept aims to blur the line between art and design through their genuinely human approach making use of color, available materials and emphasizing craftsmanship. The growing success of Bokja has led to their pieces being acquired by collectors, celebrities and interior designers worldwide.

Karim Chaya completed his studies in industrial design in 1995 at the Rhode Island School of Design, US. In 1997 he co-founded the design and manufacturing company (A.C.I.D) with architect Raed Abillama, specializing in architectural detailing as well as industrial and interior design. Chaya's work is characterized by his ability to manipulate the finest and most technological materials in the industry such as steel, glass, aluminum, wood, and concrete.

Nada Debs studied Interior Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, US and started her own design company in the UK designing and producing custom furniture. Following her return to Beirut, Debs established the design company 'East and East' in the year 2000 with the aim of creating modern designs for Middle Eastern furniture. Her growing success has earned her status within the international design scene using contemporary materials such as concrete and acrylic. Inspired by her multicultural background, having been born in Beirut and brought up in Japan, Debs has created her own identity blending the rich Middle-Eastern craft with the Far-Eastern ideals of purity of line.

Rania F. completed her studies in interior design at the Beirut University College followed by a degree in Fine Arts at the Lebanese University. She has since then established herself as a jewelry designer creating organic, sleek and trendy pieces of jewelry. Rania's work is found in numerous high-end boutiques worldwide including the US, Morocco and Dubai.

Nathalie Khayat studied ceramics in Montréal. In 1999 she opened her studio in Beirut where she currently works and teaches. Khayat is continuously developing her own language as an artist and has gained worldwide recognition for her unique free approach to clay. Her work has been exhibited in Canada, Lebanon, South Korea and Syria.

Lara Khoury completed her studies at the ESMOD (Paris) in 2006 after which she joined renowned fashion designer Elie

Saab. In 2008/2009 she created her own fashion line under the name 'ilk' showcased at the Starch boutique of Rabih Kayrouz whereby she experimented with her vision as a designer. In 2010 Lara launched her first collection under the brand name 'Lara Khoury' and has since then been creating numerous collections. Her work embodies a contemporary and experimental trend continuously concerned with detail, innovation and freedom. Her success led to her being selected to represent Lebanon at 'La Maison Mediterranee des Metiers de la Mode' in Marseille, France in May 2011.

Jean Marc Nahas studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Through his paintings and drawings, Nahas expresses his own character and personal journey, while denouncing contemporary society and the atrocities of the civil war. Drawing, for Nahas, is a cathartic practice that exorcises his inner turmoil and his life-long personal experience of violence. Nahas's work is rooted in his study of the human body, its power and dynamism. His comic-strip-like compositions, just like his larger works, represent a myriad of characters in all kinds of positions, some strangely improbable while others explicitly sexual. Since 1989, Nahas has held solo shows in Lebanon, France and Dubai as well as numerous collective exhibitions worldwide.

Wyssem Nochi completed his studies in architecture and design at the Architectural Association in London and the New School of Social Research - Parsons School of Design in New York. He currently works in Beirut as an independent designer and has recently founded his own design studio 'ON/OFF' in Downtown, Beirut. He produces works in architecture and urban design and continuously develops products in limited edition series and one-offs. Nochi's work is characterized by his interesting use of materials and new techniques continuously pushing the boundaries within contemporary design.

Jan Van Lierde completed his studies in architecture at the Municipal Higher Institute for Architecture and Urban Planning, Ghent in 1978. Until 1983, he completed numerous architectural projects with more than 100 buildings for various industries in Belgium. He currently lives and works in Istanbul whereby he creates a large number of concepts in lighting, furniture, objects and architecture under his design studio 'The Studio'. Van Lierde has been commissioned by some of the most established brands in lighting such as Xreon and Artemide and his designs have been used in some of the most prestigious spaces such as the Paramount Hotel in New York by Philippe Starck and the Tokyo Design Centre by Mario Bellini.