

Abdalla Omari

Né en 1986 à Damas en Syrie
Vit et travaille à Bruxelles

Born 1986, Damascus, Syria
Lives and works in Brussels

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Abdalla Omari is a painter and filmmaker. He is most recognized for his poignant, close up portraits of Syrian children, whose fraught psychological depiction suggest the struggle of life under violent conflict. Expressive of Omari's deep interest in portraiture is the painting, *Obama*. Part of a series that portrays world leaders as vulnerable, *Obama* captures Omari's technical versatility and sensitivity for conveying fragile emotional states, immediately drawing the viewer into the eyes and world of Omari's subject. In 2009, Omari graduated in from Damascus University with a degree in English Literature and from the Adham Ismail Institute for the Visual Arts. Since graduating, Omari's work has been included in exhibitions and festivals in Syria, Lebanon, UAE, France, the United States, and Germany, among other locations. Having recently received asylum in Brussels, Omari continues to work to raise awareness of the conflict in Syria, including initiating the project, Charms of War



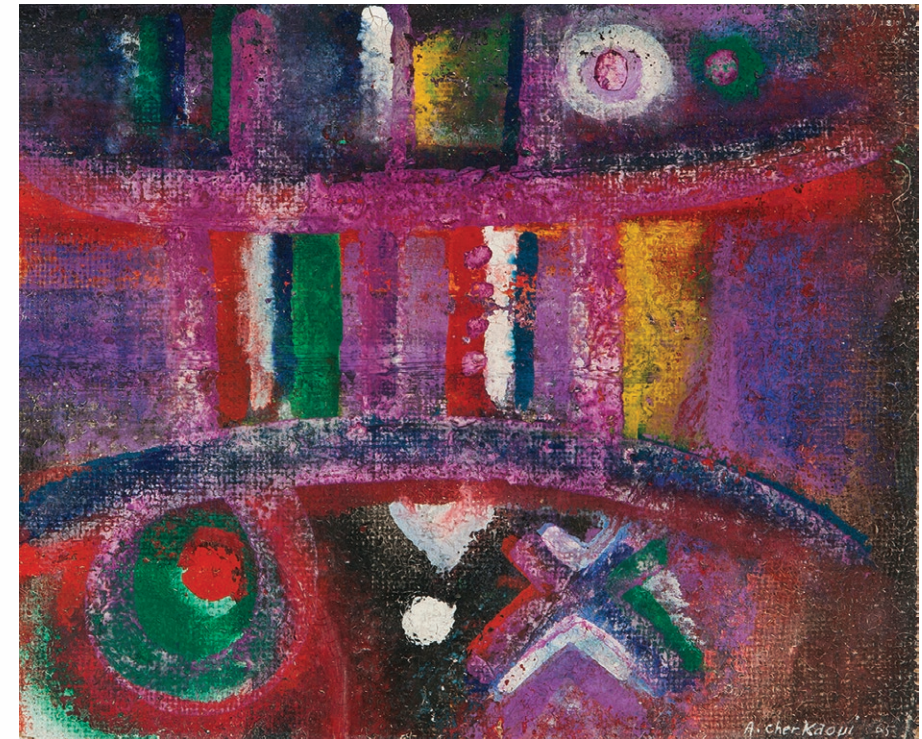
Ahmed Cherkaoui

Né en 1934 à Bejaâd au Maroc
Mort en 1967 au Maroc

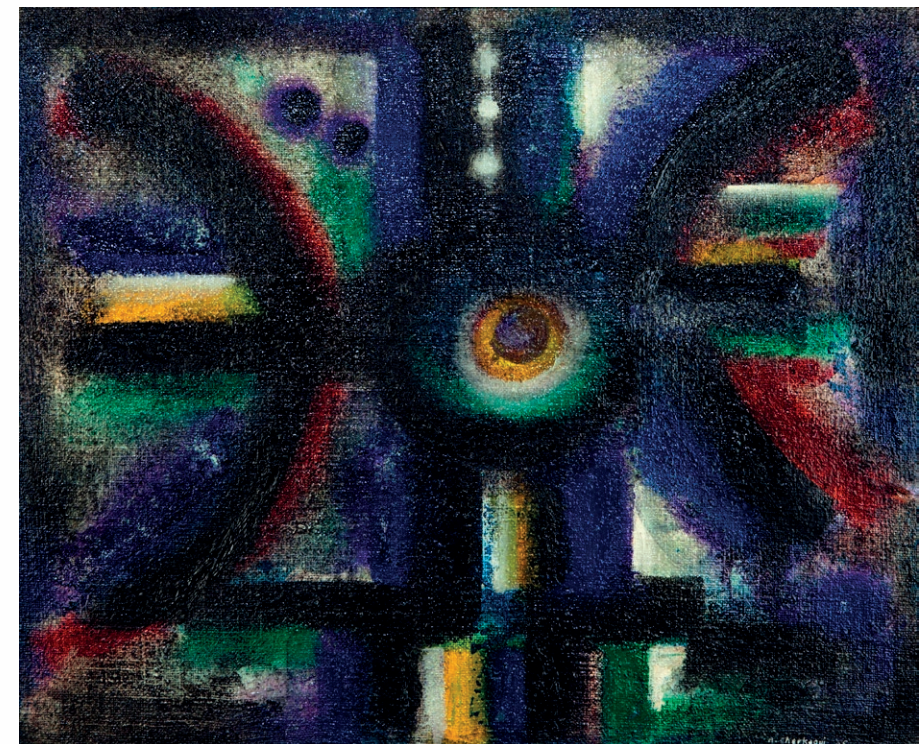
Born 1934, Boujad, Morocco
Died 1967, Casablanca, Morocco

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A prominent modernist artist, Ahmed Cherkaoui drew on a spectrum of signs and shapes derived from the folk art and national heritage of Morocco. Informing his visual language were his childhood studies at traditional Quranic School and his mother's Amazighi tattoos, while later Cherkaoui was influenced by European artists such as Roger Bissière and Paul Klee, and the Art Informel movement. *Les Miroirs Rouges* and *Alea* are both suggestive of Cherkaoui's bold style that incorporates a range of materials to express tactility, color, line and shape. After studying graphics at the École des Metiers d'Art de Paris from 1956 to 1959, Cherkaoui spent a year at Warsaw's Academy of Fine Arts in 1961 and held his first solo show in Paris at the Atelier de Lucienne Thalheimer. Numerous international retrospective exhibitions have been organized, including one in 1996 at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris



Les Miroirs Rouges, 1980, 58 x 53 cm
Huile sur toile / Oil on jute on board



Alea, 1965, 60 x 73 cm
Huile sur toile / Oil on jute on board

Walid Al Shami

Né en 1949, à Homs, en Syrie
Vit et travaille au Emirats Arabes

Born 1949, Homs, Syria
Lives and works in United Arab Emirates

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Walid Shami's paintings capture reminiscences of his hometown Homs in Syria. His renderings of the city, its inhabitants, and the local landscape range from rustic to fantastical. In mixed media works such as *Maryam*, his characters often appear totemic as Shami exaggerates the shape and form of his subjects to suggest intensity of expression and symbolic value. His earlier work, with its emphasis on portraits and landscapes, frequently considers issues of displacement through the image of the bird or fish out of water. After studying at Subhi Shoeib Center for the Plastic Arts in 1966, Shami entered the printing and etching program at Damascus University, graduating in 1975. Shami also spent time studying at the atelier of Syrian artist Ahmed Durak Al Sibai in Homs. Holding his first exhibition in Damascus in 1969, Shami has exhibited in Syria, Lebanon and the UAE. Shami's recent art has shifted further toward abstraction, focusing on symbols of Arab heritage



Maryam, 1972, 49 x 63,5 cm ; 60 x 74 x 4 cm
Médias mélangés / Mixed media on board

Athar Jaber

Né en 1982, à Rome
Vit et travaille à Anvers et Florence

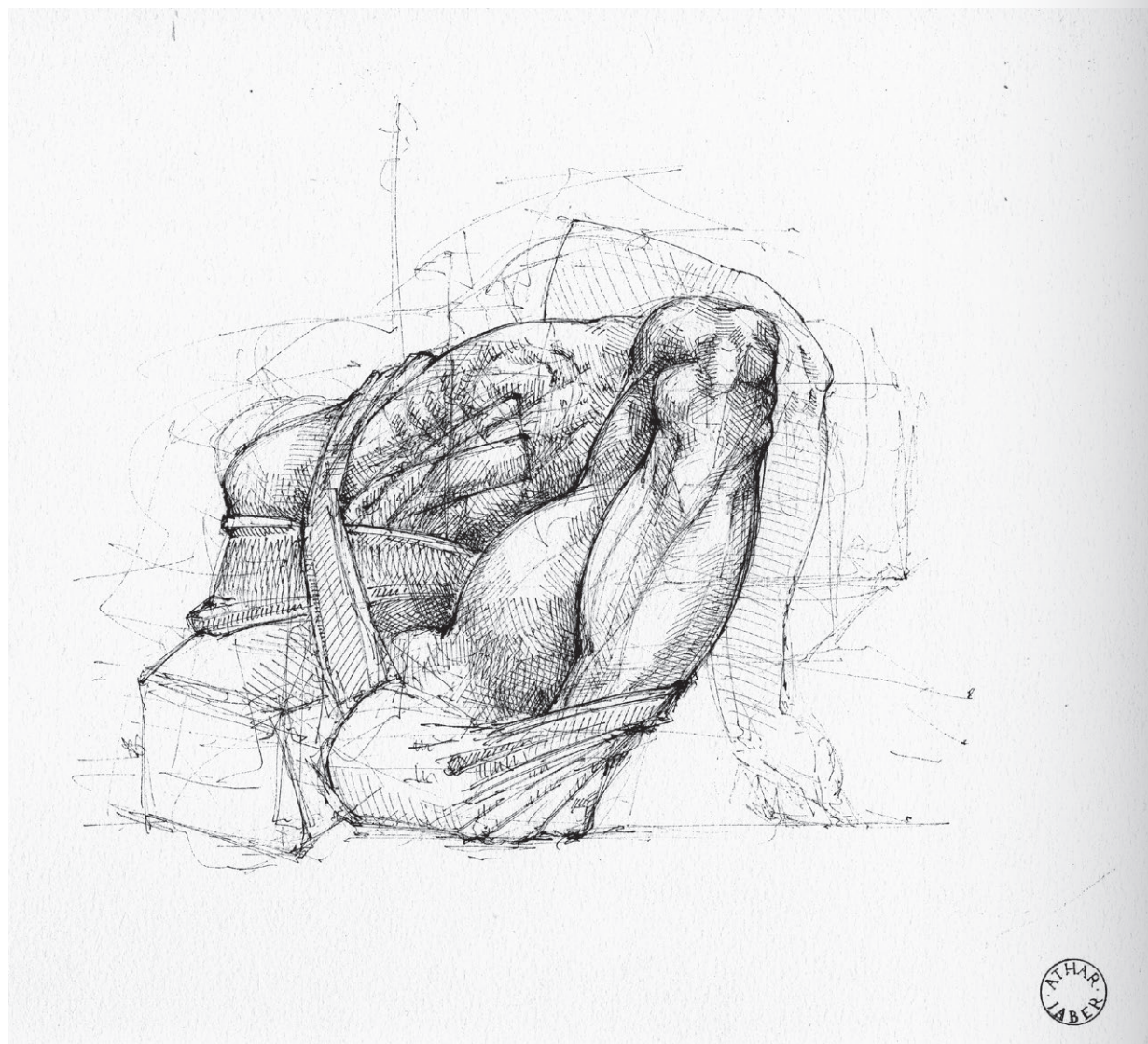
Born 1982, Rome
Lives and works in Antwerp and Florence

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Renown for his technical precision, Athar Jaber is a sculptor whose work exhibits a deep respect for yet contemporary sensibility towards classical sculpture. Born to Iraqi parents in Rome, Jaber creates formally exquisite sculptural works that despite their aesthetic tradition reflect on the violence plaguing the Middle East. These 2009-2010 drawings are the preliminary works for a series of sculptures, *Broken Bodies*. Carved in the traditional medium of Carrara marble, the sculptures—and preliminary drawings—portray the body in twisted distorted postures, suggestive at once of both beauty and violence. In 2007, Jaber earned a Bachelor of Visual Art from the Royal Academy of Antwerp and a Masters in 2008. He has exhibited in numerous shows throughout Europe and received several awards in Belgium for his work. He is a professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, Belgium



Drawing I, 2009, 22,5 x 30,5 cm
Encre sur papier / Ink on paper



Drawing II, 2009, 22,5 x 30,5 cm
Encre sur papier / Ink on paper



Drawing III, 2009, 22,5 x 30,5 cm
Encre sur papier / Ink on paper

Ali Al Abdan

Né en 1972, au Emirats Arabes
Vit et travaille au Emirats Arabes

Born 1972, United Arab Emirates
Lives and works in United Arab Emirates

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Ali Al Abdan is a prominent Emirati artist, poet, and critic. His work draws inspiration from his surrounding environment with a particular focus on the clash of values between traditional life and modernity in the Gulf. His work exhibits a range of styles and technical versatility, from more traditional landscapes to contemporary collaged portraits. *Gulf Conditions* documents Al Abdan's interest in portraiture and his use of the formal elements of color, brushstroke, and line to suggest a visual narrative. Al Abdan is also active in building an infrastructure for the visual arts in the UAE. In 2016, he was one of those who helped launch the UAE Art Archive, a definitive archive of over 10,000 historical documents on the visual arts. He serves as the Project Manager of UAE Art Archive



Gulf Conditions, 2010, 100 x 80 cm ; 107 x 86 x 2 cm
Huile et acrylique sur toile / Oil and acrylic on canvas