

Art on 56th Naim Doumit

Naim Doumit, Lebanon's leading sculptor was born in Mount Lebanon in 1941. He studied painting and sculpture at the Lebanese Academy for Fine Arts. He obtained a diploma in Sculpture from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma and a diploma in Wood sculpture from the Scuola Arti Ornamentali in Rome in 1965.

Widely known for his abstract work and fluid style, he has exhibited his artworks at solo and collective exhibitions in Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Algeria, Greece, France, Italy, Germany, UK, Turkey and USA. Doumit has also been the professor of sculpture in the National Institute of Fine Arts in Lebanon since 1966, in addition to being the artist behind several monuments all around his native country. In the words of Joseph Abou Rizk: "If the sculptor Naim Doumit goes far into his explorations, it is only because he does not content himself with fathoming all what is new in the depth of his being. This is because he realizes that the human conditions which he incarnates in his sculptures, could alone bring about aesthetic bliss."

Timeless and unprecedented, Doumit's sculptures are achievements, creating a world of idealistic perfection. Whether using marble, wood, stone, bronze or metal, the artist transforms rigid material into warm expressions wrapped in a veil of mystery, their beauty lying in their simplicity.

Exhibitions

2015	'Art on paper', Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
2014	Summer Collective Exhibition with Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
2014	Art 14 London, London, England
2013	Beirut Art Fair, 4th Edition, Beirut, Lebanon
2013	Contemporary Istanbul, Art on 56th, Istanbul, Turkey
2013	Solo Exhibition, Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
2009	Solo Exhibition in his Studio, Adonis, Lebanon
2009	Participation in "Biennale Internazionale D'Arte Contemporanea", Florence, Italy
2005	Participation in "Biennale Internazionale D'Arte Contemporanea", Florence, Italy
2000	Exhibition of sculpture at the S.D. Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
1998-2013	Professor in Sculpture at the Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon
1997	First Arab Sculpture exhibition in Jordan
1992	Personal exhibition of sculptures and China ink drawings at "Epreuve d'Artiste" art gallery, Kaslik, Lebanon
1988	Personal exhibition of sculptures and pastels at "La Toile" art gallery at Rimal Zouk Mosbeh, Zouk, Lebanon
1980	Personal exhibition of Pastel and China ink drawings at the Faculty of Fine Arts USEK, Kaslik, Lebanon
1974	Participation in the Tenth Biennial in Alexandria, Egypt
1974-2013	Professor in Drawing and Sculpture at The University Saint-Espirit, Kaslik, Lebanon
1974	Participation in the First Arab Biennial in Baghdad, Iraq
1973	Personal Exhibition of sculptures and drawings at "Arslan Raad"art gallery Tripoli, Lebaon
1973	Personal Exhibition of sculptures and drawings at "Modulart"art gallery Beirut, Lebaon
1970	Exhibition for the Lebanese Artists who have studied in Italy, organized by the Italian Cultural Institute at the Ministry of Tourism, Beirut, Lebanon
1970	Exhibition organized by Lebanese artists, painters and sculptors, Beirut, Lebanon
1968	Participation in the Seventh Biennial in Alexandria, Egypt
1966-2005	Professor in fundamentals of design and sculpture at the National Institute of Fine Arts of the Lebanese University, Beirut, Lebanon
1965	Exhibition at "Salon d'automne" art gallery, Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon
1975-1961	Exhibition organized yearly by the Ministry of Education at "Salon du printemps" art gallery, Beirut, Lebanon

Art on 56th

From pleasure to reality

Naim Doumit is the discreet type of artist who works in the silence of his atelier, like a monk in solitude. To work on stone and wood is to work on oneself. To polish and carve the stone of the spirit and timber of the heart, to refine one's sensibility, to penetrate oneself, to explore one's inner side through these materials, such is the spiritual purpose - hidden or declared - of every sculptural endeavor.

A goal clearly manifested in the latest mature artworks, choosing the noble wood of Africa and Asia, teak, iroco, ebony, maple, walnut, carob and chinaberry, for aesthetic reasons as well as practical. Doumit's subject of choice has always been the human body, with the female figure at the forefront. Formerly, he attempted to translate integrity and intangible identity through reclusive forms and volumes, polished till they recalled pebbles.

Today, rather than the ideal (and illusion) of an untouchable perfect envelope; it is the vulnerability, duality and contradictions of all human beings that he seeks to depict through the stretching of the body and its legs, the cleavage that splits the figures in half from head to toe, and the sharp edges that henceforth substitute curves. The dichotomy of the being is found and amplified in the "heads", structured as a series of shifts in vertical planes, gradients or sometimes direct splits between the right and left halves of the face, a common line separating the smooth and shining aspect from the coarse and somber, several contrasting statements disputing within each living soul. This is why the faces lie in melancholic mediation, inner contemplation, mute prayer or deep reflection...external signs of ontological distress. Separated from their bodies, the heads intensify the implications of the longitudinal disjunction of bodies amputated of their arms, and thus of all the possibility of action.

To better render the antinomies of man, Doumit utilizes a series of "endless columns" constituted of geometrical modules that can, by adding globes, suggest the human body. The basic model is a right angle with sides connected by a concave curve. Combined two by two, the models form figures whose vertical rotating articulation is constantly shifting, to finally form a chain or spiral. The figures can be seen under different aspects, raising still higher, through physical elevation, the inconsequence of being, and definitely questioning the principles of identity, closure, and pleasure, to foster the principles of contradiction, opening, and reality.

Joseph Tarrab
Lebanon
2013