



MARWAN SAHMARANI

LEBANESE ARTIST WAGES WAR ON HIS CANVAS

As a child growing up in war-torn Lebanon, Marwan Sahmarani loved to draw and paint. However, he never entertained the thought of becoming a serious artist. After attending art school in Paris, he decided to take the commercial route and play safe. It wasn't until he was 31 years old that he realised it had been a big mistake and turned it all around, which has begun to pay dividends (he is one of this year's winners of Art Dubai's Abraaj Capital Art Prize). His illustrative oil paintings, narrative-filled drawings, ceramics and performance works are inspired by timeless themes and reflect many socio-political problems, and they also heavily reference art history. The result? Think Giotto painting the crusades for a 21st-century comic book and you are pretty much getting the picture. *Tom Giddins*

Dazed & Confused: What made you pursue art full-time?

Marwan Sahmarani: I decided to pursue it full-time because it's the only thing that I can do with passion and pleasure. I just don't know how to do anything else, everything I have tried before has been a failure; very disappointing and frustrating.

Were you exposed to art as a child?

I did not have the chance to be exposed to art when I was a kid, I was more exposed to war. In the beginning, I regretted that. When you are a child, everything comes so naturally, and your mind is free and light; art becomes a state of mind. That was not the case for me, and it took me a long time to gain that. I think the west is far more exposed to art than a country like Lebanon.

Do you think art should be used as a vehicle for morality?

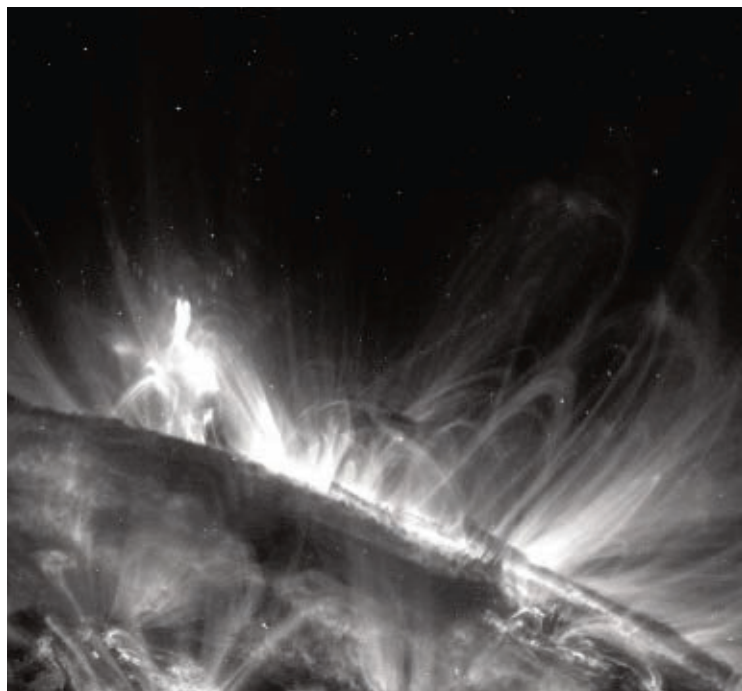
No, absolutely not. Art is not an ideology or a religion. Art is made to be shared with other people. It creates another vision of life, but it is not the only truth.

What do you try and express through your work?

Every piece is a different expression. It's like writing a journal. Sometimes it can be very intimate, and at other times it is more public. We don't speak the same words every day, and it's the same with my work. I don't express the same thing every time I am in my studio. It can fluctuate from a very existential mood to a much more social attitude.

Sahmarani's paintings will be exhibited at Art Dubai Mar 17-20
sahmarani.com / abraaj.com

Above: Houroub, 2006, Marwan Sahmarani, courtesy of the artist



SEMICONDUCTOR

SET THE CONTROLS FOR THE HEART OF THE SUN

Artists Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt test mechanisms of perception, our relationship to scientific knowledge, and our place in the physical universe under the fitting moniker of Semiconductor. For AV Festival 10 in Sunderland the duo are presenting *Heliocentric*, a staggering three-screen installation that employs time-lapse photography and astronomical tracking to plot the trajectory of the sun. "Humans once thought the Earth was the centre of our solar system," explain the artists. "When Galileo insisted that the Earth rotated around the Sun it caused an uproar and you can see similar things happening today." *Heliocentric* captures the earth orbiting the sun in spectacular fashion, pushing the human eye to the limit of its capacity in ecstatic excesses of light and lens flares. So just what is it about the sun that gets Ruth and Joe so hot? "The sun is the ultimate source of all energy and life in the galaxy. Our early work was seemingly apocalyptic but we have found subtler ways of expressing essentially the same thing – where is our place in all of this chaos? If you start to peek into science you realise there are lot of things we don't see or hear. We're interested in this extended reality." *Jack Hutchinson*

Mar 5 – May 1, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art ngca.co.uk

Left: Brilliant Noise, 2006, courtesy of the artists and NASA Space Sciences

BARE BONES

HARRY MALT INTRODUCES HIS LEFT-FIELD ART GANG

Bare Bones is a the tabloid-sized free newspaper funded and produced by its contributors – artists, illustrators, writers, photographers and the convicted. It's aim is to provide a real alternative to the remaining two free papers currently clogging the streets, bins and brains of London. Here, Harry Malt from *Bare Bones* introduces five of its regular provocateurs for your future attention.

HERETIC PRINTMAKERS
Offering a highly creative and original approach to the screen print medium. These are an honest and unaffected bunch and, like all the BB contributors, plough their own unique furrow.

KATE MERRY
A force of nature with a contagious curiosity to kill all the cats in Battersea. Kate's a certified sparky, a drummer, and has canoed the length of the Thames with her sister. She can also draw faster than Billy The Kid.

FRANK LAWS
Frank is the Joe Coleman of structural imagery, His process is painstakingly laborious and he paints with a single

hair micro-brush. He regularly vanishes for months, only to re-emerge with work that stops you in your tracks, and leaves you slack-jawed.

NIALL O'BRIEN
Driven by healthy Catholic curiosity, husky blue-eyed energy and a fiercely independent outlook on photography. Niall had his first solo show in February 2010 at London's Art Work Space gallery.

STEPH VON REISWITZ
Reiswitz's work, while blackly humorous and slightly menacing, is stylistically unsurpassed and technically incomparable. She is a sorceress and a sage, and the BB artist that all the others wish they could draw like.

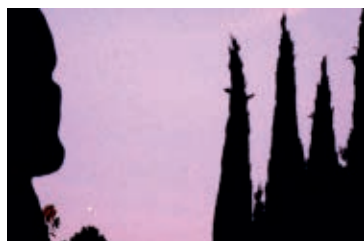
Bare Bones is available in limited numbers but is stocked at Colette Paris, Cinders Gallery Brooklyn and Neu Gallery London. quarterlybarebones.blogspot.com

Clockwise from top right: Frank Laws; Heretic Printmakers; Kate Merry
All images courtesy of *Bare Bones*



ART NEWS

ART PREVIEWS



Moving image artist (and *Skins* credits creator) **Tal Rosner** puts up a family tree installation in London this month (Feb 11-Mar 13 tenderpixel.com). Continuing the strong heritage theme, **Irving Penn's** awesome portraiture is brought together for the first time at the National Portrait Gallery (Feb 18-June 6 npg.org.uk), while those with a penchant for lithe young bodies should really check out **Collier Schorr** (Feb 19-Mar 20, modernart.net). **Zabludowicz's** 176 collection puts on its largest ever Borges-inspired show, *The Library Of Babel* (Feb 25-May 9 projectspace.176.com). For an equally labyrinthine experience, check butdoesitfloat.com for endless streams of inspiring images.

Above: *Family Tree*, Tal Rosner, 2009



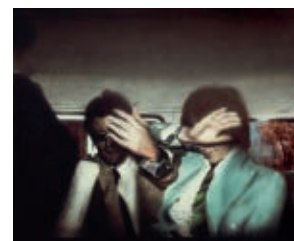
HENRY MOORE
Henry Moore was at the forefront of progressive 20th-century sculpture, but what do you know about his dark and erotically charged side? This exhibition explores how psychoanalysis and new ideas of sexuality infiltrated Moore's work in the wake of WWI. Included in the show are his defining subjects, including the reclining figure and the iconic mother and child, plus abstract compositions and seminal drawings of London during the Blitz. Forget preconceptions and immerse yourself in Moore's obsession – maternal relationships. *Jack Hutchinson*

Feb 24 – Aug 8, Tate Britain, Millbank, London SW1 tate.org.uk
Above: *Reclining Figure*, 1938, courtesy of The Henry Moore Foundation



MAT COLLISHAW
To coincide with the BFI's celebration of the late director and artist Sergei Paradjanov, Mat Collishaw has created a mesmerizing exhibition in response to the Armenian's influential work. Using a combination of antique objects and contemporary moving image devices – from traditional photographic stills to digital imaging techniques, Collishaw excellently conveys the spirit of Paradjanov's artistic endeavour. Here, a fairytale-like world has been created, where love, violence, the sacred and the profane merge together. *Tom Giddins*

Feb 27 – May 9, BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 bfi.org.uk/gallery
Above: *Shrine*, courtesy of the artist



RICHARD HAMILTON
Reports from the gutters of the art world this year talked about how the innovative British artist Richard Hamilton got on stage at a formal event and slagged off how crap Anthony Gormley was – while the “public favourite” was standing in front of him. Reason enough alone to see this solo show celebrating the Serpentine's 40th anniversary. The paintings, prints and installations examine politics, the media, riots, war and terrorism. He may be in his 80s but he's still fresh. *Francesca Gavin*

Mar 3 – Apr 25, Serpentine, Kensington Gardens, London W2 serpentinegallery.org
Above: *Swinging London 67*, 1968, courtesy of the artist