

ZOOM ON...

# ARABICITY *Such a Near East*

Following Nabil Nahas's solo exhibition, which inaugurated Beirut's stunning Exhibition Center this summer, a group show titled 'Arabicity' is showing in the Lebanese capital throughout October. Curated by Rose Issa Projects, a London based gallery, which has been devoted to the region's arts, the show focuses on issues of identity in the Arab world. As Issa wonders, "when 22 polymorphous countries share the same language, geographical and historical sphere, and a majority the same religion, is there a common cultural link?" Nine artists, judiciously selected by Issa, propose to answer the question, through a mix of painting, video and photography. Among them, Ayman Baalbaki, the Lebanese painter whose work is closely associated with the history of his country, generally in a dark and tragic way, but sometimes with humour. Nubian Hassan Fathi, whose identity comes through cultural associations, lists the 99 people and places that have inspired him in 'Rosario'. The Palestinian duo, Basel Abbas

'Arabicity' is not only a beautiful exhibition in itself; it showcases top talent from the Arab world, and demonstrates the role that art can play in cultural debate. Writers and filmmakers are always interviewed about their opinions on subjects other than literature and film: why not artists? - Rose Issa

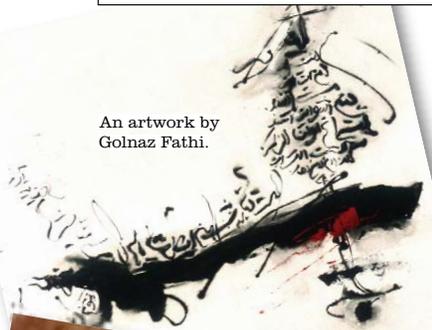
and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, introduced to a larger international audience during the Venice Biennial last year, attempt to show what it means to live in Palestine today, sometimes delving into the world of dreams. Their compatriot Raeda Saadeh explores a similar route, albeit in a different manner, through her photography series 'Vacuum' in which a woman is vacuuming the desert... Saadeh seems to be asking whether Palestinians will ever be able to lead a quiet domestic life, under occupation. But all is not sad; the Egyptian Chant Avedessian nostalgically brings us back to the golden age of Arabism with his 'Icon of the Nile' stencils.

'Arabicity' is on at the Beirut Exhibition Center (Beirut Central District, BIEL entrance) until October 13<sup>th</sup>.



ELLEmusee

An artwork by Golnaz Fathi.



## Top 3 expos

### Dubai

The Third Line opens the season with its fourth solo exhibition of the talented Golnaz Fathi. The Iranian artist will be presenting a selection of light boxes and works on paper, alternative mediums to her famed abstract canvases. Fathi continues to explore the power of the line however, with layers of intelligible text that push the boundaries of calligraphic art, a genre that enjoys a wide appreciation amongst Middle Eastern art lovers today. Fathi takes it one step further.

'Controlled Chaos' is on show until October 21 at the Third Line Gallery

### Abu Dhabi

Gallery owner Larry Gagossian puts himself in the public eye - in an unconscious nod to Warhol, perhaps - with an exhibition showcasing part of his own private collection at Saadiyat's Manara. Curated by the Chairman of the National Picasso Museum in Paris, the exhibition, which features major works from Robert Rau-

schenberg, Ed Ruscha, Richard Serra, Cy Twombly and Christopher Wool, hopes to question the very notion of a 'private collection'. It's also a good opportunity for Gagossian to introduce himself to Abu Dhabi, at a time when the museums on Saadiyat are nearing completion and curators are now thinking of filling them with works of art.

'RSTW' is on show at Manarat al Saadiyat until January 24th, 2011.

### London

One of the rare Saudi artists who has made a name for himself in his country as well as abroad, Ahmed Mater - who, as well as being an artist is a full time doctor - strips Saudi society to its core with his revealing art. Through the use of X-ray pictures, but also installations and faux advertisements, Mater questions the course his country has taken and gauges the impact of globalization on Saudi culture. Along with the exhibition, the Prognosis publishing house will be releasing the first monograph of the artist.

'Ahmed Mater' is on show from October 12th to 30th at the Vinyl Factory Gallery.

Illumination VII and VIII. Ahmed Mater, London.



Ed Ruscha, Robin, 1963.

