

Alfred Basbous
Modernist Pioneer - Selected works

17 February – 28 April 2017



Alfred Basbous in his studio in Rachana, Lebanon in the 1970s

Sophia Contemporary Gallery is delighted to present a survey of sculpture by artist Alfred Basbous (1924 – 2006). A major pioneer of Modernist sculpture in the Middle East, Basbous drew on the influence of Jean Arp, Constantin Brâncuși and Henry Moore to create stone and bronze sculptures of often monumental proportions. The exhibition brings together a series of sculptures from the 1970s to the 2000s, which demonstrate Basbous' exploration of the relationship between form and material. A selection of Basbous' preparatory drawings which reveal his approach to sculpture are also exhibited.

Basbous was born in Rachana, 55km from Beirut and was a key contributor towards the development of Modernism in the Middle East during the second part of the twentieth century. During this period, he sought to express form in its purest, most unadulterated conception. He developed a sculptural language, experimenting with figurative and abstracted elements of the human figure, in particular the female body, in combination with organic lines. This exhibition features predominantly abstract works in bronze, marble and testa, a local Lebanese stone. Key to the exhibition are a selection of Basbous' original drawings which offer insight into the creative process he employed. Although the drawings were never preparatory drawings for his sculptures, they demonstrate the artists' deeper understanding of sculptural form.

At the start of his artistic career, Basbous took inspiration from elements in Greek mythology and ancient Phoenician sculpture. In 1961 Basbous received a scholarship from the French government to become a pupil at L'École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris. This period was to have a lasting influence on his work.

Having lived and studied in France in his early years, he returned to his hometown of Rachana near Beirut. In 1994, Basbous opened a sculpture park which was designated a UNESCO site in 1997. The open-air gallery and the rolling, dipping character of the Rachana landscape was

hugely influential to Basbous' creative output. He held annual sculpture symposiums until 2004, whereby he invited sculptors from around the world to create site-specific work thus creating a centre for sculpture.

Sophia Contemporary Gallery will exhibit twenty selected sculptures and ten drawings from the 1970s to the 2000s.

The gallery will also showcase 8 key sculptures and 10 drawings executed by the artist in the 1970s and 1980s in the REDISCOVERY section of Art Brussels from 21 - 23 April 2017.



Left: Alfred Basbous, *Seated Woman*, 1997, Bronze 50 x 26 x 15 cm, courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery
 Centre: Alfred Basbous, *Woman Nude*, 2001, Marble, 40 x 27 x 21 cm, courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery
 Right: Alfred Basbous, *Femme Acroupie*, 1972, Bronze, 44 x 20 x 15 cm, Edition 1/8, courtesy of the artist and Sophia Contemporary Gallery

Notes to Editors

About Alfred Basbous

Sculptor Alfred Basbous (1924 - 2006) was born in Rachana, Lebanon. His works express a lifelong exploration of the human form and its abstract properties. Throughout his life, Basbous won many awards including the Prix de l'Orient in Beirut in 1963 and the prize for the Alexandria Biennale in 1974. Upon his death, the President of the Lebanese Republic awarded him the Medal of the Lebanese Order of Merit in Gold. A national stamp of Alfred Basbous and his two brothers Michel and Youssef, also sculptors, was released in 2011 by the Lebanese State as a tribute to their contribution to Lebanese culture. The works of Alfred Basbous are part of the permanent collection of the Alfred Basbous Foundation in Rachana, Lebanon and are featured in many private and public collections, including the Musée Rodin, Paris, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, the Hakone Open-Air Museum in Japan and the Modern and Contemporary Art Museum (MACAM) in Lebanon, among others. His monumental works are present in the public areas of Beirut and many other Lebanese cities.

About Sophia Contemporary Gallery

Sophia Contemporary Gallery is a contemporary art gallery located in a 3,000 square foot space in the heart of Mayfair, London. The gallery exhibits, represents and champions a diverse roster of emerging and established artists from the USA, Europe, the Middle East and Asia working in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, video and photography. The gallery is committed to nurturing the careers of artists from both East and West with a view to promote a creative global dialogue in contemporary art beyond cultural boundaries. In addition to its dynamic exhibition schedule, Sophia Contemporary Gallery publishes catalogues and books with essays by world-renowned scholars, hosts regular educational panels and is working with museums and institutions worldwide in order to place the gallery's artists in major public and private collections.

Title: Alfred Basbous: *Modernist Pioneer - Selected Works*
Address: Sophia Contemporary Gallery, 11 Grosvenor Street, London, W1K 4QB, UK
Website: www.sophiacontemporary.com
Dates: 17 February – 28 April 2017
Private View: 6 – 9 pm, 16 February 2017
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm, Saturday 11am to 5pm
Admission: Free
Travel: Green Park, Bond Street or Oxford Circus Tube Station
Twitter: [@SophiaCGallery](https://twitter.com/SophiaCGallery)
Facebook: [SophiaContemporaryGallery](https://www.facebook.com/SophiaContemporaryGallery)
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