

Lebanese landscapes, a venture of belonging

What does the painting say about our landscapes? The spatial element seems to include an affective, emotional, and patriotic appropriation. While the landscape appears sometimes as a stable observation, it can at other moments convey a dynamic element of evolving thought. The multiplicity of works presented here stands out against the homogenization of our lifestyles and raises questions about its role in contemporary production. Why do we transition from the classic panorama of the past to a single tree and, more recently, to a detail of botanical anatomy? What is the profile of the author of this artwork? The first impressionists are the pioneers of an expression that their successors developed during and after the civil war leading to the contemporary creation that we know.

The eternal dimension is carried by the brush of Georges Daoud Corm and Khalil Saleeby while the intensity of light in the watercolors of Omar Onsi, Philippe Mourani, César Gemayel, Mustafa Farroukh, and Maroun Tomb irradiates us. The landscape as a mental force line in Saliba Douaihy's work is intriguing, whereas the works of Youssef Howayek, Georges Cyr, Boris Novikoff, Jean Kober, Rachid Wehbe, Khalil Zoughaib, Sophie Yeramian, Farid Mansour, Elias Abou Rizk contribute to the awakening of a national sentiment. The absence of human presence in the vastness of the plain in Rafic Charaf and Jamil Molaeb's works distinguishes itself from the dazzling lights of Shafiq Abboud, Stelio Scamanga, Vera Yeramian, Michel El Mir, Amine El Bacha, Stephan Lokos, Farid Haddad, Samir Khaddaj, Abdel Hamid Baalbaki, or Theo Mansour. A sense of belonging marks the production of Etel Adnan, Samia Osseiran, Aref El Rayess, and Mohammad El Rawas.

In abstraction, the deconstructed approach to traditional landscape notions, experimentation with form, color, and texture convey conceptual ideas. Danièle Genadry focuses on the fragility of landscapes, Hala Ezzeddine explores chaos, Paul Wakim adds color, Hala Choucair captures the minimalist graphic dimension, and Mazen Rifai and Ribal Molaeb emphasize softness. Sometimes, the landscape expresses environmental concerns. Tamara Haddad crystallizes the changes affecting the earth, and Jack Dabaghian measures technological advances. In the works of Sibylle Tarazi and Oussama Baalbaki, emotion prevails over realistic representation while retaining a figurative spirit; it's all a matter of balance!

Artistic preferences evolve, new artistic movements emerge. Does the landscape remain a timeless subject for the emotion it evokes, its beauty, and its connection to humanity? The popularity of this theme raises questions about its links to cultural, social, and artistic factors. -Randa Sadaka



