

Youssef Abdelke, Abed Al Kadiri, Ziad Antar, Ayman Baalbaki, Michael Biberstein, Elger Esser, Daniele Genadry, Gilbert Hage, Herbert Hamak, Joan III, Lamia Joreige, Ian Mckeever, Nabil Nahas, Michelangelo Pistoletto, BongChull Shin, Walid Sadek, Fadi Yazigi

Towards the Sublime

Galerie Tanit

June 25-August 9

Seventeen ways to define the Sublime are presented for contemplation at this collective exhibition. Colloquially used as a synonym for 'breathtaking' or 'wonderful', each of the participating artists offers a more conceptual interpretation of the Sublime that ranges from "simple exquisite moments" to a "source of absolute bewilderment," per the curatorial text. Antar's series of untitled photographs are not comfortable or easy to look at. They transmit a discomfort caused by a blurry photograph, one that does not serve its purpose as a document of reality, and adheres instead to a color field aesthetic more often found in painting. There is a sense of dread, perhaps terror, and certainly anxiety at Baalbaki's 'Cheveux de Frise', a large glass and wood sculpture equipped with sharp spikes. The fragility of the piece evokes alarm, and concern at its potential to fall and smash. These works drift closer to Burke's opposition between beauty and the Sublime in that viewing them involves fear or pain in some form, rather than pleasure. Abdelke and AlKadiri offer a subjective experience, one that triggers and elevates the mind's capacity to reason. Their large scale artworks depict recognizable natural scenes, but distort the space and time in which they would expect to be seen. Minimally invasive installations by Sadek and Hamak connote yet another side of the same concept, as their works seem tap into the process the mind undergoes as it attempts "to rationalize the emotional or understand the unknown and justify the uncanny."



Gallery Collective VERNISSAGE



Sara Chaar, Semaan Khawam, and Fadi El Chamaa

RAW

KAF Contemporary Art Gallery

June 27-July 8

In a uniquely interactive gesture, KAF combines a traditional exhibition, and a more hands-on experience with the work in one venue. Over the course of three weeks, the three artists produced several dozen works on paper, each one in a unique abstract style. Now, their works are on display and available for purchase at reasonable prices in various formats and sizes. Chaar offers her unique hand paintings, stained with dark materials like coffee and ink to create subtle textured layers. On display are some of her lighter works featuring spindly, spider-like designs in black pigment. Although some of his signature bird designs are featured in the exhibition, Khawam also presents a diverse range of abstract figures and scenes, showcasing a wide range of his artistic practice. El Chamaa's work is softer, but retains the bold color field work and distinctive forms that categorize his work. He experiments with color, pairing neutral hues with vibrant pastels. Although painting in the same space for three weeks, these artists clearly retain their unique visions and have produced impressive bodies of work.