

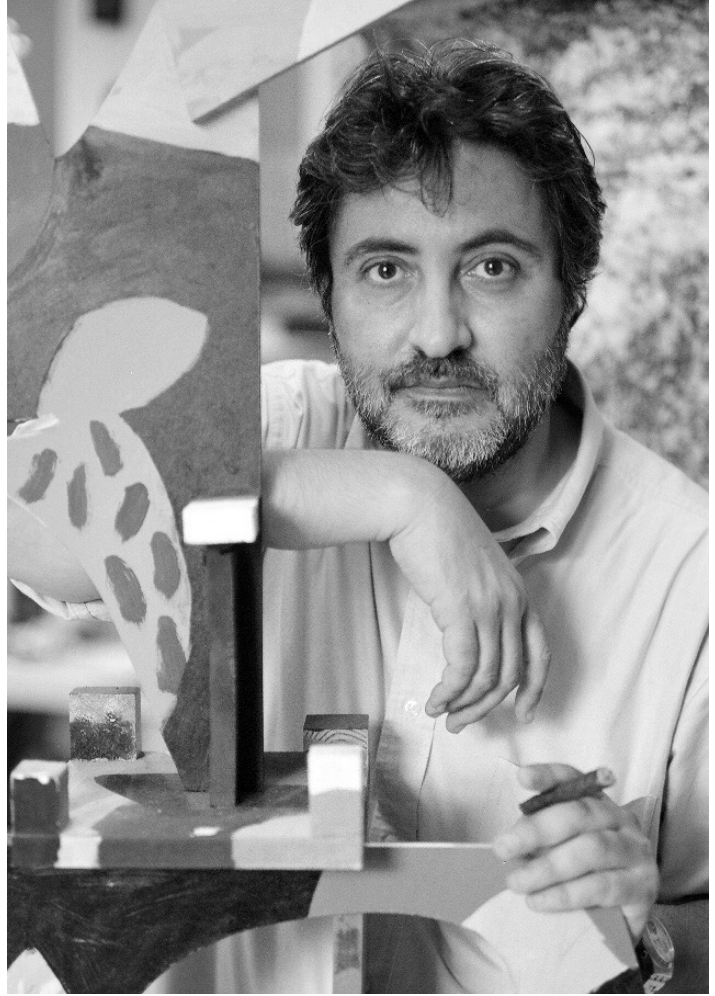
INSIDE THE ARTIST'S STUDIO

FEATURE ANAS AL HORANI. PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF CHARLES KHOURY

CHARLES KHOURY

Influenced by war, Lebanese artist Charles Khoury us more about his work and how it reflects the totality of nature.

- **Born:** Lebanon, 1966
- **Studio location:** Beirut, Lebanon.
- **Education:** Khoury has a diploma in engraving and lithography from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA). He is also a member of the International Association of Arts (IAA / AIAP).
- **Artistic beginnings:** "My initial work was abstract on paper," Khoury says. That minimalist abstraction can still be traced in his current work, adding a layer of complex depth and developing the two-dimensional surfaces into key components of their surrounding environments.
- **First exhibition:** Khoury's first exhibition was in 1991 at Chahine Gallery in Beirut. Founded in 1960 and located in one of Beirut's oldest districts, Achrafieh, Chahine Gallery is a well-renowned gallery and publishing house that is known for its curious and trendsetting exhibition choices. Khoury's paintings were show-stealers for their striking colours and abstract strokes, gaining him a great deal of publicity at the time. His works could not have been mistaken among others, and the exhibition at Chahine Gallery was one of the earliest steps in Khoury's becoming an artist to be reckoned with.
- **Artistic style:** Khoury's style has changed dramatically over the years, from abstract to figurative. "This was clear," Khoury adds "in the following exhibitions in the 1990s, whereby insects were being transformed into human shapes. This was a reaction to the way I endured in my childhood. Since then, I have been inspired by animal and botanical shapes, transforming them on to the universe of my canvas through geometric or random lines." In his work, Khoury breathes life in abstract bodies and places them in a gravitational zone where there was none before.
- **Influences:** Formally educated in the arts and endowed with a great graphic memory, Khoury has been inspired by various 20th century art movements and styles. His work blends cubist leanings with modernism and a uniquely Lebanese tradition. "My eye captures from the masters' works what is in harmony with my soul, taste and sensations."









- **Importance of music:** “Music, I cannot work without music.” The influence of music can be seen clearly in Khoury’s work. His paintings are like musical movements in miniature, and his choice of colour and spatial harmony seem to parallel a complex musical unity.
- **On art criticism:** Khoury intones a delightful weariness when he says, “Art critics should function as a bridge between the artwork and its public, but unfortunately, sometimes they create a rift between them.” Communicating with the public is the priority, it seems, and to welcome them in, to be lost in the world in the canvas, is an artist’s duty.
- **The function of art:** Art to Khoury is the last refuge for beauty in the world, after human beings have distorted it completely. This refuge is not separate from reality but a reflection of it; a reflection that can sometimes surpass it.
- **Upcoming shows:** “The Story in Shapes and Colors” exhibition will run at Orient Gallery, Amman, from 25 October to 17 November 2016, and is in collaboration with art aficionado Mrs. Rula Alami, whose attachment to Middle Eastern cultures led her to develop a rich knowledge of Middle Eastern art and organize several exhibitions throughout the region.

