

HOME (/) > ()

Sculpting Identities: Athar Jaber is making sense of violence through art

Maan Jalal
maan@khaleejtimes.com
Filed on March 25, 2017

SHARE

(http://twitter.com/share?text=Sculpting Identities: Athar Jaber is making sense of violence through art -&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com%2Fsculpting-identities-athar-jaber-is-making-sense-of-violence-through-art)

(https://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com%2Fsculpting-identities-athar-jaber-is-making-sense-of-violence-through-art)

(https://plus.google.com/share?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com%2Fsculpting-identities-athar-jaber-is-making-sense-of-violence-through-art)

(https://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com%2Fsculpting-identities-athar-jaber-is-making-sense-of-violence-through-art&title=Sculpting%20Identities%3A%20Athar%20Jaber%20is%20making%20sense%20of%20violence%20through%20art%0D%0A&summary=Sculptor%20Athar%20Jaber%2C%20whose%20work%20was%20displayed%20during%20Art%20Dubai%2C%20Dubai%2C%20UAE

(https://pinterest.com/pin/create/button/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com%2Fsculpting-identities-athar-jaber-is-making-sense-of-violence-through-art&media=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.khaleejtimes.com&description=Sculpting%20Identities%3A%20Athar%20Jaber%20is%20making%20sense%20of%20violence%20through%20art%0D%0A)

VOTE

2



(Supplied)

Did you grab any deals on the opening day of Gitex?

Yes No

POPULAR

VOTED



Nation (/nation)
This UAE restaurant is giving away pizzas for only Dh10 (/nation/this-uae-restaurant-is-giving-away-pizzas-for-just-dh10)

70650 views | 27 March 2017



General (/news/general)
Dubai to have tower dangling in the air from space? (/news/general/dubai-to-have-tower-dangling-in-the-air)

59943 views | 28 March 2017



Transport (/news/transport)
Dubai mulls reducing speed limits on two key highways (/news/transport/dubai-reduces-speed-limits-on-two-key-highways)

54981 views | 29 March 2017



Offbeat (/offbeat)
Man fails driving test 32 times, gets licence after 25 years (/offbeat/man-fails-driving-test-33-times-gets-licence-after-25-years)

35170 views | 27 March 2017



Dubai (/nation/dubai)
Indians to get visa on arrival in UAE, on this condition (/nation/dubai/indians-with-green-card-to-get-visa-on-arrival-in-uae)

34790 views | 29 March 2017



Retail (/business/retail)
Dubai Festival City says goodbye to HyperPanda (/business/retail/dubai-festival-

Sculptor Athar Jaber, whose work was displayed during Art Dubai, discusses his artistic process and why he doesn't like to be labelled an artist

Athar Jaber is a sculptor. Stone carving out of marble is the process he's been mastering. Marble has been the medium of great sculptors of the past including one of the greatest sculptors of all time, Michelangelo. Athar's work is monumental in scale, taking reference not only from the old masters of the Renaissance, which he cites as his influence, but from contemporary sources such as the figurative painter Francis Bacon.

Athar's sculptures are intriguing, visceral and seductive. Muscular hands, forearms, legs are twisted and contorted into each other, lips and ears seamlessly connect, these forms are beautifully sculpted, and yet have a grotesqueness about them that's hard to ignore. Faces are chipped, smashed and broken, using bullets and acid sometimes, creating surfaces that are in direct contrast with the smooth, shining facade of the marble.

The sharp jagged edge of broken pieces add a coarse reality to the form of his work. They look like new ruins, describing a timeless concept of beauty and decay of man-made glory and violence, of nature and erosion.

Athar, of Iraqi lineage, was born in Italy with a Dutch passport and now lives in Belgium. Call it third or fourth culture kid syndrome, the result of globalisation and diasporas, the issue of identity and empathy is a strong and complex theme in his work.

"I try to address the violence that we see and the empathy we are faced with in everyday life," Athar told us at the Art Dubai fair last week where he was exhibiting his work. "I do this through recognisable aesthetics, either human or abstract art but not with negative or pessimistic message. It's the fact about accepting those realities."

Athar's thoughts on art are as equally interesting as his finally polished works. This is no surprise given that his parents, Jaber Alwan and Afifa Aleiby are painters and his uncle is the renowned Iraqi painter Faisal Laibi Sahi. He spoke to City Times about his artistic practice, his thoughts on Art Dubai and why the exploration of violence is a recurring theme in his work.

This is your first time exhibiting in Art Dubai. What do you think of the fair?

I really love the fair. I haven't seen the really big fairs, like Basel and Frieze, but from what I've seen, honestly this is one of my favourites. Not only because of the booths but mainly because of the artists talks and the Global Forum. There are some really in-depth theoretical discussions going on.

Why did you choose sculpture as your chosen medium?

I was always attracted to marble. You know my family is a family of painters, mother, father, uncle, they are all painters. So I started drawing and painting when I was a kid. But then since I grew up in Florence, I used to draw the sculptures in the city just to train myself and to have fun. I think the love of sculpture started there. When I decided to study art, I didn't even have to think about it, I knew I wanted to do sculpture, I didn't consider painting.

Where do your aesthetic influences come from?

Mainly from Italy. The Renaissance sculptures, which focus on the human anatomy, have been a major influence on me. But again this destructive aspect. It's more of a theoretical level from what's happening in Iraq. The situation there is bad. But also the fact that I'm going more towards abstract works as well is a kind of reference to the Islamic tradition of working with abstract art.

The human anatomy is a big part of your work. Why?

I think because growing up in Florence and having my parents who were more classically inclined in painting and of course, sculptures and the Renaissance, I grew up with that idea of the beauty of the human body and the language of the human body. But I wanted to do something with it. That's why I want to deform it. I like working on the human body as a classic theme but it doesn't make sense to just make beautiful things. You need to do something with it, either deform it or destroy it with acid or bullets or whatever.

Tell us why you started this method of destroying parts of your pieces.

It's a fact of nature. Sooner or later everything will be destroyed, no? We are going to die unfortunately and we have to face that fact and not in a negative way, it's the engine that keeps us going, to create stuff, having the knowledge that all of this will end. Nature will also eventually destroy things with earthquakes and acid rains. I think we as humans are inclined toward violence somehow. Even kids when you see them playing, they make things and break them. At least I'm not destroying other people's work, I'm doing it with my own work.

Violence and identity are a common theme in your work. Can you explain why?

There is this uneasiness of not knowing where you belong. I just don't feel at home anywhere and I feel at home everywhere. And I think growing up seeing the images of the war in Iraq as a small kid had an impact. Of course I haven't lived the war but I've seen them through images on TV. As a kid, you already realise there is something horrible happening, parallel to your own life, because I was living in Italy and everything was beautiful, sculpture, art, culture - normal life and parallel to that, you saw the images on TV of Iraq and you knew that your family was there. So there is this parallel between beauty and the whole situation there. I think it's an attempt to combine those two things, those two realities when they are side to side.

Can you explain your process when creating a work?

I try not to stick too much to my original plan or ideas. The best thing that can happen are mistakes. Because they open up your mind, they face you with new kinds of problems that you may not have had and you develop yourself in searching for a new solution for that problem. It's like life.

How do you know when a piece is complete?

You know it on an instinct level. It's done when I have the feeling that there's nothing I can add to it. My efforts will not include the overall aesthetic or message of the work. But really, it's on an instinctual level.

city-says-goodbye-to-hyperpanda)

33923 views | 28 March 2017



Nation (/nation)

Gitex Shopper: Killer deals on iPhone 7, laptops, TVs... (/technology/gitex-shopper-killer-deals-on-iphone-7-laptops-tvs)

31339 views | 28 March 2017



Man found dead inside giant python

khaleejtimes

(http://khaleejtimes.com/international/rest-of-asia/man-found-dead-inside-giant-python)



'My husband doesn't want a girl child, threw me out of house'

khaleejtimes

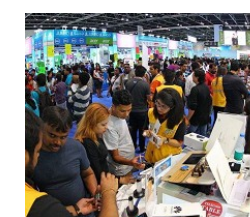
(http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/my-husband-doesnt-want-a-girl-child-threw-me-out-of-house)



This thirsty snake enters village in search of water

khaleejtimes

(http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/this-thirsty-snake-enters-village-in-search-of-water)



What to buy at Gitex shopper: Smartphones, laptops or wearables?

khaleejtimes

(http://khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/what-to-buy-at-gitex-shopper)



Police sends summons to Shah Rukh Khan

khaleejtimes

(http://khaleejtimes.com/citytimes/bollywood/court-sends-summons-sent-to-shah-rukh-khan)



6-hour-old girl buried alive with umbilical cord intact

khaleejtimes

(http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/6-hour-old-girl-buried-alive-with-umbilical-cord-intact)

Recommended By  (//www.postquare.com)

Social media is problematic for many artists. How would you describe your relationship with it?

It's a love and hate relationship. I hate myself every time I post anything, I don't like to do it actually but I know that the world is on social media, so if you want to communicate what you're doing, we are a society of imagery, so you need to do it. If you're ambitious, if you want to be in galleries and fairs and museums and reach collectors, this is one way to do it. If it were up to me, I wouldn't do it. But it's also a way of documenting things, how I work, my studio, the progress of pieces. I can understand that's interesting for some people. Stone carving is a thing of commitment to work, so I don't think about stopping to take a photo.

Would you describe yourself as an artist?

I prefer to be addressed as sculptor, as opposed to an artist. The term artist is too vague and too many people have abused that term. There is also this issue of the philosophical definition of what is art, and I don't want to give a definition to that. What I know is I make sculptures. I'm a sculptor. It's very easy to define that. I work with a block of marble and tools so I can fairly 100% say that I'm a sculptor.

You can see Athar's work on website: www.athar.eu (<https://www.athar.eu>)

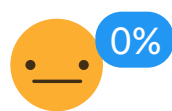
Or on Instagram: [athar_sculpture](https://www.instagram.com/athar_sculpture)

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION? 1

powered by  Vuukle



HAPPY



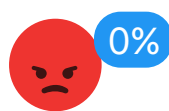
UNMOVED



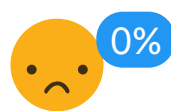
AMUSED



EXCITED



ANGRY



SAD

MORE FROM KHALEEJ TIMES



[\(/nation/dubai/video-sheikh-hamdan-rescues-lorry-stuck-in-dubai-desert\)](/nation/dubai/video-sheikh-hamdan-rescues-lorry-stuck-in-dubai-desert)

[\(/news/transport/dubai-reduces-speed-limits-on-two-key-highways\)](/news/transport/dubai-reduces-speed-limits-on-two-key-highways)

[\(/nation/dubai/dubai-policeman-hits-car-lodges-complaint-against-himself\)](/nation/dubai/dubai-policeman-hits-car-lodges-complaint-against-himself)

[\(/nation/dubai/indians-with-green-card-to-get-visa-on-arrival-in-uae\)](/nation/dubai/indians-with-green-card-to-get-visa-on-arrival-in-uae)

DUBAI (/NATION/DUBAI)

[\(/nation/dubai\)](/nation/dubai)

(/nation/dubai)Video: Sheikh Hamdan rescues lorry stuck in Dubai ... [\(/nation/dubai/video-sheikh-hamdan-rescues-lorry-stuck-in-dubai-desert\)](/nation/dubai/video-sheikh-hamdan-rescues-lorry-stuck-in-dubai-desert)

The wheels spin freely, the vehicle skids sideways, but Sheikh Hamdan ... **READ MORE** [\(/NATION/DUBAI/VIDEO-SHEIKH-HAMDAN-RESCUES-LORRY-STUCK-IN-DUBAI-DESERT\)](/NATION/DUBAI/VIDEO-SHEIKH-HAMDAN-RESCUES-LORRY-STUCK-IN-DUBAI-DESERT)

TRANSPORT (/NEWS/TRANSPORT)

[\(/news/transport\)](/news/transport)

(/news/transport)Dubai mulls reducing speed limits on two key... [\(/news/transport/dubai-reduces-speed-limits-on-two-key-highways\)](/news/transport/dubai-reduces-speed-limits-on-two-key-highways)

RTA and Dubai Police are discussing the possibility of reducing speed ... **READ MORE** [\(/NEWS/TRANSPORT/DUBAI-REDUCES-SPEED-LIMITS-ON-TWO-KEY-HIGHWAYS\)](/NEWS/TRANSPORT/DUBAI-REDUCES-SPEED-LIMITS-ON-TWO-KEY-HIGHWAYS)

DUBAI (/NATION/DUBAI)

[\(/nation/dubai\)](/nation/dubai)

(/nation/dubai)Dubai policeman hits car, lodges complaint... [\(/nation/dubai/dubai-policeman-hits-car-lodges-complaint-against-himself\)](/nation/dubai/dubai-policeman-hits-car-lodges-complaint-against-himself)

The officer even placed a copy of the accident report on the... **READ MORE** [\(/NATION/DUBAI/DUBAI-POLICEMAN-HITS-CAR-LODGES-COMPLAINT-AGAINST-HIMSELF\)](/NATION/DUBAI/DUBAI-POLICEMAN-HITS-CAR-LODGES-COMPLAINT-AGAINST-HIMSELF)

DUBAI (/NATION/DUBAI)

[\(/nation/dubai\)](/nation/dubai)

(/nation/dubai)Indians to get visa on arrival in UAE, on this... [\(/nation/dubai/indians-with-green-card-to-get-visa-on-arrival-in-uae\)](/nation/dubai/indians-with-green-card-to-get-visa-on-arrival-in-uae)

Passport holders with US visa or green card can enter UAE for a... **READ MORE** [\(/NATION/DUBAI/INDIANS-WITH-GREEN-CARD-TO-GET-VISA-ON-ARRIVAL-IN-UAE\)](/NATION/DUBAI/INDIANS-WITH-GREEN-CARD-TO-GET-VISA-ON-ARRIVAL-IN-UAE)



Man found dead inside giant python

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

<http://khaleejtimes.com/international/rest-of-asia/man-found-dead-inside-giant-python>



This thirsty snake enters village in search of water

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

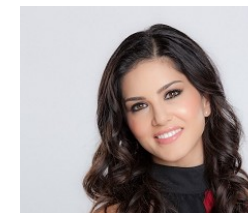
<http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/this-thirsty-snake-enters-village-in-search-of-water>



Dubai Festival City says goodbye to HyperPanda

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

<http://khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/dubai-festival-city-says-goodbye-to-hyperpanda>



Want to meet Sunny Leone in Dubai? This is where you should go

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

<http://khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/sunny-leone-is-in-dubai-here-how-you-can-meet-her>



Police sends summons to Shah Rukh Khan

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

<http://khaleejtimes.com/citytimes/bollywood/court-sends-summons-sent-to-shah-rukh-khan>



'My husband doesn't want a girl child, threw me out of house'

[khaleejtimes](http://khaleejtimes.com)

<http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/my-husband-doesnt-want-a-girl-child-threw-me-out-of-house>

Recommended By  [\(/www.postsquare.com\)](http://www.postsquare.com)

KT APP DOWNLOAD



All new KT app is available for download:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.khaleejtimes&hl=en>

<https://itunes.apple.com/ae/app/khaleej-times/id909275381?mt=8>

<https://itunes.apple.com/ae/app/khaleej-times/id909275381?mt=8>

NEWSLETTER

Get the latest news around the world in your inbox, so you dont miss out on the action.

Accept Terms & Conditions [\(/privacy-policy\)](/privacy-policy)

Subscribe



'My husband doesn't want a girl child, threw me out of house'
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/india/husband-doesnt-want-a-girl-child-threw-me-out-of-house>



Want to meet Sunny Leone in Dubai? This is where you should go
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/want-to-meet-sunny-leone-is-in-dubai-heres-how-you-can-meet-her>



Dubai gold priced at Dh142.75. Would you invest?
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/gold-forex/dubai-gold-priced-at-dh14275-would-you-invest>



Gold price edges down, will it drop further?
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/gold-forex/gold-price-edges-down-will-it-drop-further>



6-hour-old girl buried alive with umbilical cord intact
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/india/6-hour-old-girl-buried-alive-with-umbilical-cord-intact>



This thirsty snake enters village in search of water
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/india/this-thirsty-snake-enters-village-in-search-of-water>



What to buy at Gitex shopper: Smartphones, laptops or wearables?
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/what-to-buy-at-gitex-shopper-1>



Man found dead inside giant python
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/international/rest-of-asia/man-found-dead-inside-giant-python>

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



Can this upcoming skyscraper beat the Burj Khalifa?
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/can-this-upcoming-skyscraper-beat-the-burj-khalifa>



Dubai Festival City says goodbye to HyperPanda
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/dubai-festival-city-says-goodbye-to-hyperpanda>



Indian wins \$1million at Dubai Duty Free
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/indian-wins-1million-at-dubai-duty-free>



141 shawarma outlets in Dubai closed
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/141-shawarma-outlets-in-dubai-closed>



Emirates plane collides with another aircraft in Singapore
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/emirates-plane-collides-with-another-aircraft-in-singapore>



Couple tries to sell baby online for Dh11,000
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/couple-accused-of-trying-to-sell-a-baby-online-for-3k>



Police sends summons to Shah Rukh Khan
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/bollywood/court-sends-summons-to-shah-rukh-khan>



Cook kidnaps 6-year-old girl, sexually abuses her on stairs in Dubai
khaleejtimes
<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/crime/cook-kidnaps-6-year-old-girl-sexually-abuses-at-stairs-in-dubai>



'My husband doesn't want a girl child, threw me out of house'
khaleejtimes
s.com/international/india/146-)
husband-doesnt-want-a-girl-child-threw-me-out-of-house



Want to meet Sunny Leone in Dubai? This is where you should go
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/sunny-leone-is-in-dubai-heres-how-you-can-meet-her



This thirsty snake enters village in search of water
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/146-)
thirsty-snake-enters-village-in-search-of-water



Police sends summons to Shah Rukh Khan
khaleejtimes
citytimes/bollywood/court-)
sends-summons-sent-to-shah-rukh-khan



Man found dead inside giant python
khaleejtimes
times.com/international/asia/146-)
of-asia/man-found-dead-inside-giant-python



141 shawarma outlets in Dubai closed
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/141-shawarma-outlets-in-dubai-closed



6-hour-old girl buried alive with umbilical cord intact
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/6-hour-old-girl-buried-alive-with-umbilical-cord-intact



What to buy at Gitex shopper: Smartphones, laptops or wearables?
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/what-to-buy-at-gitex-shopper-1

RECOMMENDED FOR YOU



Sheikh Mohammed is the most followed Arab leader on Twitter
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/region/mena/sheikh-mohammed-is-the-most-followed-arab-leader-on-twitter



Gold price edges down, will it drop further?
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/business/forex/gold-price-edges-down-will-it-drop-further



Dubai Festival City says goodbye to HyperPanda
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/business/retail/festival-city-says-goodbye-to-hyperpanda



Indian wins \$1million at Dubai Duty Free
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/indian-wins-1million-at-dubai-duty-free



Cook kidnaps 6-year-old girl, sexually abuses her on stairs in Dubai
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/146-)
kidnaps-6-year-old-girl-sexually-abuses-at-stairs-in-dubai



Human waste found in Coca-Cola cans, probe launched
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/146-)
waste-found-in-coca-cola-cans-probe-launched



Video: Indian man's gym accident a lesson in taking it easy
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/international/india/146-)
indian-mans-gym-accident-a-lesson-in-taking-it-easy



Video: Sheikh Hamdan rescues lorry stuck in Dubai desert
khaleejtimes
http://khaleejtimes.com/nation/dubai/video-sheikh-hamdan-rescues-lorry-stuck-in-dubai-desert

Recommended By (<http://www.postquare.com>)



©2017 Khaleej Times. All rights reserved.

(<http://www.facebook.com/khaleejtimes>) (<http://twitter.com/khaleejtimes>) (<https://plus.google.com/+khaleejtimes>) (<http://instagram.com/khaleejtimes>)

International (/international)	Economy (/business/economy)	Cricket (/sport/cricket)	Beauty (/lifestyle/beauty)	city)	fitness)	Prayer Timings (/prayer-	(/advertise)	(https://itunes
Technology (/technology)	Auto (/business/auto)	Football	Health & Fitness	(/citytimes/newsmake	Legal View (/legalview)	Cinema Listings (/uae-	Contact Us (/contact-us)	times/id9092
	Finance	(/sport/football)	(/lifestyle/health-	Indian Cinema	Opinion & Editorials	cinema-listing)	Privacy Policy (/privacy-	mt=8)
	(/business/banking-	Tennis	fitness)	(/citytimes/bollywood	Editorials-columns)	Weather (/weather)	policy)	Android
	finance)	(/sport/tennis)	Art & Culture	Movie Reviews	Letters (/letters-to-the-	E-Paper (/epaper)		(https://play.g
	Energy	Horse Racing	(/lifestyle/art-culture)	(/citytimes/movie-	editor)	KT buzzon (/buzzon)		id=com.khalee
	(/business/energy)	(/sport/horse-racing)	Food (/lifestyle/food)	reviews)	Photos (/photos)	Inspired Living		
	Infrastructure	F 1 (/sport/formula-1)	Home	Music		(http://e.ktinspiredliving.com/)		
	(/business/infrastructure)	Golf (/sport/golf)	(/lifestyle/homes)	(/citytimes/music)				
	Real Estate	Global Sports						
	(/business/real-estate)	(/sport/other)						
	Telecom							
	(/business/telecom)							
	Aviation							
	(/business/aviation)							
	Gold/Forex							
	(/business/gold-forex)							

KTMobile (http://m.khaleejtimes.com)	INSPIRED (http://e.ktinspiredliving.com/)	buzzon (/buzzon)	CLASSIFIEDS (/buzzon)	ePaper (/epaper)	wknd. (/wknd)
STYLE (/style)	Jobs (/jobs)	SUBSCRIBE (http://subscribe.khaleejtimes.ae/subscription/subscription_page.asp)	COMPETITIONS (/competitions)		