



# Iraqi sculpturist exhibits with Norwegian textile artist at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

**I**n April the gallery will exhibit an extraordinary nearly theatrical exhibition with marble bust sculptures exploring the fragility and visceral presence of the human body by the Belgium-based Iraqi sculptor Athar, together with carefully hand-dyed textiles and foraged natural pigments by Norwegian artist Hanne Friis.

Athar gives shape to his subjects' innermost thoughts, fears, agonies and suffering by distorting his sculptures through a variety of techniques,



including carving, sandblasting, acid erosion and shooting. The distortions of stone depict the distortions of an internally tormented spirit, vulnerable to the violence of life. For the artist, a perfect body "is an unsuitable reflection of a person's physical and psychological fragility". Creating tactile sculptures, Friis carefully hand dyes textiles with pigments she has collected from natural materials she has foraged from the Norwegian landscape and her surroundings, such as lichen, birch bark, mushrooms, pinecones and other plants. This process, while time-consuming, imbues the fabric with soft, almost otherworldly, yet fundamentally organic, colours. She then painstakingly begins to

fold and bunch the fabric by sewing with a tiny needle.

Nearing five years old, the gallery is getting a great recognition for showing international artists in the South West London Gallery. Kristin Hjellegjerde has from the beginning had a great desire to create a platform through which international artists could showcase cutting edge and innovative work to the world.

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