

Athar Jaber (IT, 1982)

www.atharjaber.com

Athar Jaber is a professional visual artist specialised in stone carving, but his artistic production also includes performances, video, photography and text. His work has been featured in many international venues. Recent solo exhibitions include *Where Pain Becomes Beauty* (Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence, 2015) and *Offerings* (National Museum of Fine Arts, La Habana, Cuba, 2018), while group shows include *The Curated Space* (Mall Galleries, London, 2016), *West Bank*, (2017), *Future Genealogies* (6th Lubumbashi Biennial, Congo, 2019).

Jaber's work is intense. Carving in stone is carving in time. When you use hammer and chisel the artist is using weapons. Hammering and sculpting almost seems an act of violence, taking away marble, taking away granite. And while hitting the rock seems violent, sanding is almost an act of love. Using the hands, rubbing and scouring, it is truly intimate. Sculpting is working with this duality. Jaber is creating images that are imperfect, bodies of art that have abnormalities. His sculptures are often, after the sculpting is over, surrendered to performative actions where acid, explosives or bullets are being used to alter them.

Athar Jaber's work is part of various private and public collections such as the Barjeel Art Foundation, The Palestinian Museum, the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana and the FAO Headquarters in Rome among others. Beside his artistic career, Athar has spent the last decade as an Associate Professor at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Antwerp and is PhD candidate at the University of Antwerp.

ABOUT THE WORK

'(no title)' (2018)

28,0 x 15,0 x 15,0 cm (3 x jars)

Whiter Carrara marble, honey, red wine, olive oil, glasswork

Jaber's work is packed with love and violence. Artworks are being shaped by taking away material. But what is this left over material? Is it also part of the artwork? What happens with the things that we take away?

This sculpture is an ongoing project where Athar is collecting leftover pieces of white Carrara-marble and puts them in big glass jars. Every jar is filled up with a liquid. Because marble is porous, the liquid slowly alters the stones.

One jar is filled with honey, referring to the ancient stories of the land of milk and honey, symbolising wealth and prosperity. Another jar is filled with oil, changing the stones and linking them with oiling the body, preserving, cleansing. The last jar is filled with red wine. Wine which has an acidic function is partly dissolving the stones. Wine often metaphorically used to represent blood is adding soul to the stones.

The artist's intention is not a religious one, it is a research based experiment that wants to honour the chopped off pieces of stone.