



Katya Traboulsi

PERPETUAL IDENTITIES

KATYA TRABOULSI





Katya through her art talks about identity as a force that no war can eliminate and that bounces back inevitably. During the Lebanese Civil War, in 1975, she received the empty sleeve of a mortar shell for her birthday, which automatically found its place on a shelf, without further reflection on its nature or the journey which led it to her. Thus, the object, which had blindly sown death where it fell, ended up in her room, raised to the status of a trophy celebrating the courage of fighters or the defeat of enemies. In 2014, as the Arab Springs wilted into winters, the memory of this object, trinket or trophy, called on to Katya again. Reflections on the mortar shell inspired an installation project which sought to divert the weapon from its morbid destiny and make it serve Life.

The depiction of the shell dressed in a variety (46) of symbolic cultural execution, is the physical and spiritual core of the 'Perpetual Identities' project. Each one is handmade, using different materials, including ceramics, porcelain, resin, wood, and iron. These 46 shells, adorned with the arts and crafts of various countries, become body of designs, themes and skills; bearing the glory of every person and inviting them to join in the universal sentiment of Humanity. The shell becomes like a 'book', an inventory of myths, of traditions of embodied know-how, and invites the discovery of the "Other". The shell becomes an 'arrow' and sows not death, but knowledge and civilization in the territory of the "Other". Its scope becomes sociological, theological and philosophical. As part of the process, cultural identities were constantly added as a palimpsest, until the mortar became enriched with reflections and revelations. The mission of this transformed object is to celebrate the glory of Humanity. Removing its primary function permits it to carry universal and immortal messages.

The mortar as art transcends its destructive origin and it becomes a melting-pot of perpetual identities. Katya's creations are inspired by historical events. The artisans that took part in the project are the perpetual memory of that history, glorifying through their artistic talent the heritage of their identity. An object of death forgotten on a dusty shelf, found itself rehabilitated, transfigured in the sparkling whiteness of a museum, a place of beauty and life. Also endangered are the identities sacrificed on the altar of globalization which imposes an aseptic and effective language, gradually leading to the loss of ancestral know-how, language, tools and its land.



Thailand

2016
Hand carved resin
and gold leaf
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Lebanon

Hand carved
cedar wood
Brass base and
top
AP
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Japan

Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and
top
Edition 4/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Portugal

*Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and
top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm*

U.A.E

The "Mandoos" chest is still often found in Emirati homes. Young brides would usually take one with them when they moved to their husband's family home. It would contain the carefully prepared clothes and jewelry they had made and acquired before their wedding, as well as their most treasured possessions. Younger women would visit grandmothers and aunts during the Eid al-Fitr celebrations and were given small gifts for their "mandooos." At other times, they sat in a circle, while the family elder removed items from the chest and told the stories associated with them.



2016
Hand nailed and
painted wood
Brass base and
top
Edition 3/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm





Armenia

2016
Hand painted
resin
Brass base and
top
73x21x21cm



Canada

2016
Hand carved and
painted wood
Brass base and
top
Edition 1/6
76 x 21 x 21 cm



Uzbekistan

2016
Fabric and
jewelries on resin
Brass base and
top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Russia

2016
Hand painted
wood
Brass base and
top
Edition 3/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Algeria

2016
Hand painted resin
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm

BRAZIL

The pre-Columbian culture of Marajó once boasted a population of 100,000 people living in the Amazon rain forest. These Native Americans may have used black ground called terra preta to make the land suitable for the large-scale agriculture needed to support the large population and its complex chiefdom structure. In the 19th century, European travelers noticed the presence of mounds (maybe remains of temple structures), with ceramics stored inside or scattered around them. European and American museums began collecting them, in particular the large funerary urns. These elaborately decorated vessels contain the remains of deceased significant individuals after their deaths, their flesh was ritualistically cleared from their bones, which were placed in the urns, sealed with a bowl or platter.



2016
Hand carved wood
painted
Brass top and base
73x21x21





Iran

2016
Hand painted wood
Brass base and top
Edition 5/6
73x21x21cm



PERPETUAL IDENTITY
BY
KATKA TRABOULSI

AUSTRIA

KATKA TRABOULSI



GERMANY

PERPETUAL IDENTITY
BY
KATYA TRABOUISI

NIGERIA

QAT

PERPETUAL IDENTITY
BY
KATYA TRABOUISI





Peru

2016
Hand carved wood
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Mexico

2016
Hand carved
wood
Brass base and
top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Indonesia

2016
Hand painted
wood
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Ethiopia

2016
Hand painted
wood
Brass top and base
edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21cm



Yemen

2016
Hand carved stone
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Oman

2016
Handmade silver
and brass
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm

IRAQ

The most important archaeological discoveries of the Mesopotamian city of Sumer, whose civilization dates back as far as 2,500 BCE, are a large number of tablets inscribed with cuneiform writing. Sumerian writing is a milestone in the development of the Middle Eastern and Western civilizations, since it enabled the recording of History, of financial transactions, and of poetic epics, prayers and laws. The Sumerian language continued to be the language of religion and law in Mesopotamia long after Semitic speakers became dominant. The well-preserved statue of Ebih-II, discovered in the temple of the goddess Ishtar in Mari, Syria, is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and expressive style. The eyes of the statue have retained their inlay of shell and lapis lazuli, which came from Afghanistan, a testimony to the long-distance trade already taking place in the third millennium BC.



2016
Hand carved stone
and marble
Brass base and top
Edition 4/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm





Palestine

2016
Brass
AP
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Turkey

2016
Hand painted
porcelain
Brass Base and top
73 x 21 x 21 cm



The Netherlands

2016
Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Afghanistan

2016
Hand carved and
painted resin
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Morocco

2016
Brass
Brass base and
top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Italy

Hand painted
porcelain
Brass top and base
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21cm



Philippines

2016
Mother of pearl shell
on wood, Brass base
and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm

SPAIN

The Cuir de Cordoue (Cordoban leather) is an ancient art of treating and gilding leather that was often used in lieu of tapestries as largescale wall coverings. The technique involves molding wet leather - usually calf - into shape, before gilding it with oil and applying a layer of lacquer. This technique has other names, like 'guadameci' (from the Libyan town of Ghadames), as well as 'cordobanes' (for soft goat leather). The Cuir de Cordoue went through numerous styles, sometimes drawing on silk damask and Chinese patterns. It retained its popularity from the 9th century through the 18th, but went out of fashion with the rise of printed wallpaper during the Victorian era (19th century).



2016
Hand carved
leather on wood
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm





India

2016
Hand carved
alabaster stone
Brass base and top
Edition 6/6
76 x 21 x 21 cm



Tunisia

2016
Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and
top
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Syria

2016
Mother of pearl on
wood
Brass base and top
AP
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Australia

2016
Hand painted resin
Brass top and base
73 x 21 x 21cm



China

2016
Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



United Kingdom

2016
Collage on resin
Brass top and
base
75 x 21 x 21
AP



Germany

2016
Hand painted
resin
Brass base and
top
Edition 1/6
73 x 30 x 30 cm

SIERRA LEONE

The Mende people live predominantly in West African countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. These farmer-hunters are one of the two largest ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. Their cultural and oral traditions suggest that the Mende emigrated from Western Sudan in waves before the 16th century. They are famous for their wooden masks, which they wear on ritual occasions.

Unlike in the usual sub-Saharan tradition, only males are allowed to wear them. The black helmet mask is almost exclusively worn by women. It represents an idealized version of feminine beauty, with an elaborate hairstyle, large forehead and small facial features; the wood's gleaming surfaces denoting healthy, glowing skin.



2016
Hand carved and
painted wood
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm





Vietnam

2016
Hand carved marble
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
76 x 21 x 21 cm



Korea

Hand painted
porcelain
Brass base and top
Edition 1/6
73 x 21 x 21cm



Ukraine

2016
Old hand
embroidery on resin
Brass base and top
Edition 3/6
73 x 21 x 21cm



Saudi

2016
Hand carved marble
powder
Brass base and top
Edition 5/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm



Qatar

2016
Hand painted resin
and brass sticks
Brass base and top
Edition 2/6
73 x 21 x 21 cm

Artist Statement



Born in 1960 in Lebanon, a country so absurd, so melted with Ongoing problems, so embedded with a history of war and survivals, I feel like I had lived many lives in the same time.

Art is my weapon for peace, my meditation, my armor.

Since my childhood, I knew this would be my path, but the years of war Which I grew up with, did not allow me to study my passion.

I am a self-thought artist, which took me long years of working on my artistic Expression, using various mediums to express different subjects.

Since 2000 my observations and inspirations shifted towards memory, identities, and socio-political subjects that concerns us all, ongoing present life.

Projects, 'Of others' 2011, 'Generation war' 2013, "Perpetual Identities' 2018 and 'Mother I'll be back' 2023, reflects our identity and my quest around the importance of this subject.

Life so far has been an inspiring journey through artistic expression.

Katya Traboulsi.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 "Rejaa Ya mama' Saleh Barakat Gallery
2019 Anima Mundi at Palazzo Ca'Zanardi - Venice, Italy
2018" Perpetual Identities " - Saleh Barakat - Beirut, Lebanon
2015 Art Space - Dubai, UAE
2014 Art Space - London, UK
2011 "Des Autres" Marc Hachem Gallery - Paris, France
2011 "Des Autres" The Venue, Solidere - Beirut, Lebanon
2009 Basement Gallery - Dubai, UAE
2007 Vivendy Gallery - Paris, France
2004 Green Art Gallery - Dubai, UAE
2003 Green Art Gallery - Dubai, UAE
1997 Epreuve d'Artiste - Beirut, Lebanon
1995 Epreuve d'Artiste - Beirut, Lebanon
1994 Majlis Gallery - Dubai, UAE
1993 Epreuve d'Artiste - Beirut, Lebanon
1991 Majlis Gallery - Dubai, UAE
1986 Société Générale bank - Beirut, Lebanon

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019 Middle East Institute Washington - Washington, D.C, USA
2019 Anima Mundi at Palazzo Ca'Zanardi - Venice, Italy
2018 Perpetual Identities - Beirut Art Fair with Galerie Dominique Fiat - Paris, France and Saleh Barakat Gallery - Beirut, Lebanon
2018 Art Dubai - Saleh Barakat - Dubai, UAE
2018 Art Paris - Dominique Fiat - Paris, France
2018 Institut du Monde Arabe - Paris, France
2016 Beirut Art Fair, Rose Issa Projects - Beirut, Lebanon
2016 Beirut Design Fair, Namika Atelier - Beirut, Lebanon
2015 Beirut Art Fair, Jennifer Norback Gallery - Chicago, USA
2014 Beirut Art Fair, Jennifer Norback Gallery - Chicago, USA
2014 Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Salwa Zeidan Gallery - Abu Dhabi, UAE
2014 Roger Castang Galerie - Perpignan, France
2013 Jamm Art - Kuwait
2013 'Generation War" Curated by Katya Traboulsi at Beirut Art Fair -
2013 X Bienal Internacional de la Acuarela, Museo Nacional de la Acuarela – Mexico
2012 This is not Wonderland, Beirut Art Fair – Beirut, Lebanon
2011 Jamm Art - Kuwait
2010 KATZEN Art Center, American University Museum - Washington DC, USA
2009 Art DUBAI with Running Horse – Dubai, UAE
2009 Desires, nightmares and dreams Running Horse - Beirut, Lebanon
2008 L'art au Feminin Algiers Modern Art Museum - Algeria
2008 The U.A.E through arab eyes, D.I.F.C - Dubai, UAE
2007 Art from the Middle East, San Pedro Museo de Arte - Puebla, Mexico
2006 Women in Art, Courtyard Gallery - Dubai, UAE
2005 Art and Design, Mark Hachem Gallery - New York, USA
2004 Les peintres a l'étranger, Galerie Jeanine Rubeiz - Beirut, Lebanon
2004 Art & Development, La Rochefoucault - Paris, France
2001 Contemporary Eye on Dubai - Dubai International Airport, UAE
2000 Lebanese painters Green Art Gallery -Dubai, UAE
1998 Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE Artuel – Beirut, Lebanon
1997 Green Art Gallery - Dubai, UAE
1996 Green Art Gallery - Dubai, UAE

Published on the occasion of the exhibition
'*Perpetual Identities*' by Katya Traboulsi.
April 26th, 2023

Images courtesy of the artist
Catalogue design by Salma Dib

Cover Image: *Turkey*

LEILA HELLER GALLERY
I-87, Alserkal Avenue, PO Box 413991, Al Quoz 1
Dubai, UAE
www.leilahellergallery.com
Publication © 2023 LEILA HELLER GALLERY, Dubai





LEILA HELLER GALLER.