

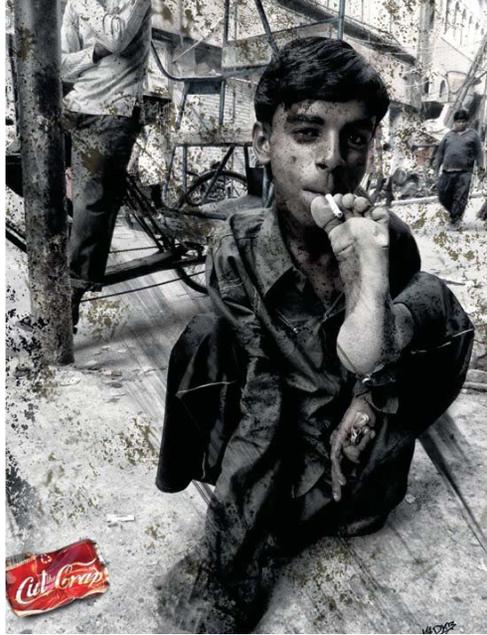
ETCHED ON THE HEART

Hady Beydoun's Latest Body
of Work Touches a Nerve

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN SLEEPING UNDER A ROCK THE SIZE OF MANHATTAN, YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD OF HADY BEYDOUN. THE CASE OF HADY BEYDOUN UNEQUIVOCALLY REFUTES THE STATEMENT THAT ALL MEN WERE CREATED EQUAL. HE'S THE KIND OF MAN YOU'D LOVE TO HATE: ONE, BECAUSE HE'S BEEN ENDOWED WITH MORE TALENTS THAN MOST OF US JACKS AND JANES, AND TWO, BECAUSE HE'S A GO-GETTER WITH A NOMADIC SPIRIT WHO SETS HIS MIND ON SOMETHING – ACTUALLY QUITE A FEW THINGS – AND JUST NABS THEM. WITH THAT IN MIND, IT TAKES NO STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION TO UNDERSTAND WHY HIS REPERTOIRE IS RIFE WITH SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS CARPE DIEM.



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because the first one I made was inspired by the picture of a relatively old man who used to work in the parking lot of the building where my studio is located. In 2003, I took a picture of him standing in the sun, and the sunlight beautifully accentuated the wrinkles on his face. Looking at his photo 10 years later, the expression on his face wrote the whole story in my mind...

The series references pop culture with a twist, as we've seen with both your sculpture and furniture portfolio. Why did you decide to tackle this on canvas?

Because a single idea can manifest itself in an infinite number of ways all at the same time. So the wood sculpture, metal barrel chair or the toilet seat can each be part of a story or an insignificant incident captured by the camera, filtered and enhanced and the result tells a story, which will be animated and shot on video as short one to two minute stories to be part of a larger motion picture I'm working on... So these pictures are like stills in a storyboard that is currently writing itself.

So it looks like this will be an ongoing series?

Looks like it will, because the subjects and themes that can be portrayed are endless. Since I'm dealing with FMCG products, which have accessed every corner of the globe, it is very easy to introduce them anywhere mixed with wordplay. The message on the sculptures helps in orienting the direction of the interpretation of the whole picture, mainly the subject's facial expressions.

There are hints of humor mixed with sarcasm in the series – a mainstay in your repertoire.

Why do these qualities keep rearing their head in your work?

It is with these two adjectives that rebellion starts; humor as the lighthearted goodness of the self, and sarcasm as an attitude of self-defense against a hostile reality. It is the attitude of the joker, the one who fits everywhere in a deck of cards all the while standing alone.

The joker stands alone with humor and sarcasm in the face of the world; he is never still, he doesn't belong to any group yet mixes with all kinds of people – the whole deck. He saves the situation in most games; he smiles despite the hardships of life, sporting red lips and a grin that holds a secret.

The greatest risk that you've ever taken, which totally paid off...

Venturing into the unknown when I first started tattooing in the '90s. Back then it was still a kind of a taboo subject; it was a feeling of rebellion which, I must admit, was so thrilling!

Singlehandedly credited with perpetuating the art form of tattooing across Lebanon, Beydoun has also inked his name across the creative world, donning several titles in the process including graphic designer, airbrush illustrator, painter and sculptor. He's recently been dabbling in digital art that mixes photography and paint, tweaked with some Photoshop. The images are intense. They pierce your calm and stir a gush of emotions in you. The messages are just as deep. And if anyone knows how to go deep – skin deep – it's Hady Beydoun.

What prompted this new series and how did it physically take off?

It was this insistent urge to portray a state of mind by showing people's harsh realities on a grimy, grey scale and contrasting it with the intense power of hope and thought. This is one of many ways through which the intensity of our times can be felt without literally illustrating violence.

Violent times trigger intense emotions that in turn fuel and inspire a kind of reaction. This reaction becomes a statement – in this case, the statement is defiance along with the stubborn will to find hope in the most desolate states of being...

Have you picked out a name for the series yet?

So far, the title of the folder where which I'm saving all this artwork is called "The Parking Man", and that's





The perks of being Hady Beydoun these days are...

Having the technical ability to execute any idea in any medium desired...

It's tough being Hady Beydoun sometimes because...

There's no rest for the wicked...

You paint canvases, design one-off pieces, spray walls, tattoo lithe bodies, create the wildest sculptures... what will be your next artistic conquest?

Hopefully, a series of short movies; the script is almost ready, and I'm looking for production in the near future.

Do you usually submerge yourself in various artistic practices all at once or do you work one series or art form at a time?

I would love to, ideally, finish a project and start another in succession, and I've always managed to do that. But that doesn't happen anymore; now I'm in the middle of doing so many things, most of it being on hold for the time being – it's too hot to paint outdoors these days.

What is your latest obsession?

That would be this digital artwork series that I've become addicted to making. I've always loved to experiment technically with photos and overlay them with random textures of paint and grime. This time, however, I wanted to relay an impactful message, contrasting them with the shiny and color-saturated wood sculptures.

Three cultural figures who inspire you...

Ayn Rand, Drew Struzan and Kai Hansen.

Two things you're currently excited about..

I'm looking forward to taking a vacation and chilling somewhere with a different kind of energy, that coupled with printing out "The Parking Man" series with high quality giclee printers on heavy watercolor acid free paper or canvas.



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