

## Artists Against Hunger

A non-profit initiative by Christie's in collaboration with Contemporary Practices Art Journal in support of the UN World Food Programme

CHRISTIE'S

Contemporary Practices  
VISUAL ARTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST



Wael Darwesh, *Trying to convince but I refuse*, 2008, Acrylic on canvas, 70x100cm - Courtesy of Art Sawa.

Hunger, the world's number one health risk, kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Around one billion people are affected by hunger; every night one in seven people in the world goes to bed hungry. The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) targets people who are most vulnerable to hunger especially women and children.

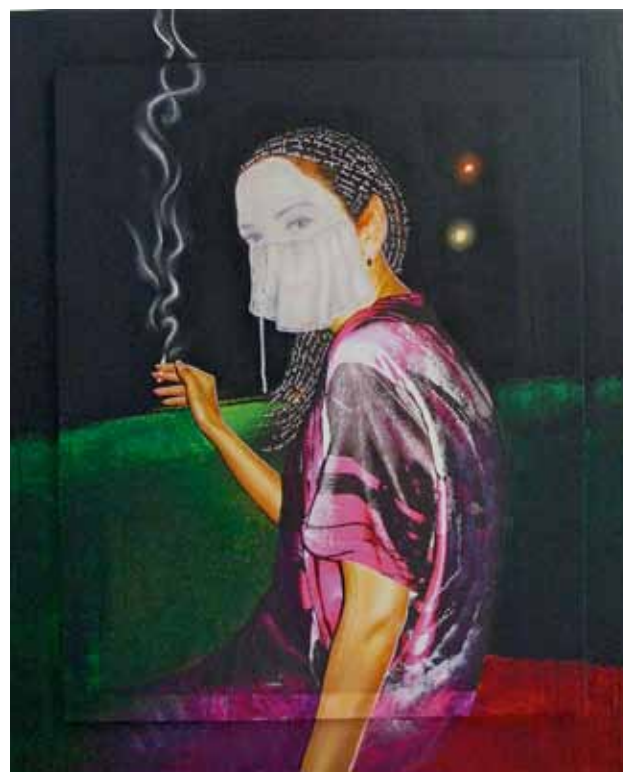
Undernutrition causes a third of all deaths in children under five each year in developing countries, where one in four children under the age of five is underweight. As a result of inadequate nutrition before and during pregnancy, up to 17 million children are born

underweight annually. Studies show that malnutrition at an early age leads to reduced physical and mental development during childhood, affecting school performance and often leading to a lower income as an adult. Because the first 1000 days of a child's life – from the womb to two years of age – are crucial to preventing early childhood undernutrition that causes largely irreversible damage, World Food Programme focuses on pregnant and nursing mothers and children by providing them with the required food enriched with essential nutrients including vitamins and minerals needed for the human body.

Women are the world's primary food producers, often designated to labour in the fields in many countries. Traditions and social structures often mean that women have less decision-making power and unequal access to resources, education and income, which makes them much more vulnerable to hunger and affected by poverty than men. A mother who is stunted or underweight due to an inadequate diet often gives birth to low birth weight children. Because providing food assistance to a family through the mother generally guarantees a sound redistribution, women are considered by WFP as the 'secret weapon to fight hunger'.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency, feeding 90 million people in more than 70 countries on average each year. Founded fifty years ago, WFP pursues a vision of the world where every man, woman and child has access to the food they need for an active and healthy life. Around 10,000 people work for the organization, 90 percent of whom work in the field delivering food and making sure it reaches the right people at the right time. In emergencies, WFP delivers food to people who need it the most, saving the lives of mothers and children as well as victims of conflict and natural disasters. As the lead UN agency for logistics and telecommunications, WFP helps the broader humanitarian community respond to emergencies quickly, efficiently and effectively. After the initial emergency period passes in a crisis, WFP uses food to help communities rebuild their lives.

WFP aims to prevent hunger through programmes that use food as a tool to build stronger, more food-secure communities. Through its school meals programme for instance, which benefits over 20 million children around the world each year, WFP provides students with daily meals that encourage them to attend school regularly and help them to better focus on their studies. WFP is also committed to advancing local employment, especially among women, by providing food in exchange for professional training and community work. The UN agency assists local farmers by offering them technical assistance and training to increase their opportunities to access markets and also uses its purchasing power to boost their businesses through buying locally when and where it can. By providing food in conjunction with medical treatments, WFP supports health programmes



**Shurook Amin**, Hala Feb Baby, 2010, Mixed media on canvas, 120x100cm  
- Courtesy of the artist.

that treat illnesses such as HIV and tuberculosis.

The primary targets of WFP's food assistance programmes also include refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), who have been hit by poverty and hunger and had to leave their homes, lifelong belongings and land to escape conflicts or natural disasters.

Moving food assistance thousands of miles at a moment's notice, often into some of the world's most inhospitable places, is a skill which WFP has turned into a fine art. This explains why WFP also acts as the 'logistician of the humanitarian sector', moving goods on behalf of other UN agencies and international NGOs. Ocean transport forms the backbone of WFP's transportation system, with some 90 percent of its food moved by ship. As complex as shipping arrangements can be, getting the food from the ships to the people who need it is the real challenge. WFP's transport officers stretch a logistical lifeline across deserts, mountains and rivers deep into the heart of the world's poorest countries. If there are no roads or bridges, WFP builds them. Where there is no landing space for aircrafts, WFP airdrops



**Sara Shama**, *Fighting hunger*, 2011, oil on canvas, 150x200cm - Courtesy of WFP.

assistance and sometimes even rehabilitates entire ports and railways. Once supply lines are secured, WFP brings its emergency food supplies via wing, wheel and wagon. It uses whatever means available: ships, barges, dug-out canoes; trucks and trains; planes, helicopters and airdrops; even the backs of donkeys, yaks and elephants. WFP relies entirely on voluntary contributions to run its programmes. Contributions are made either as cash, food or basic items necessary to grow, store and cook food. Cash contributions are always preferred to enable WFP to purchase food locally and in bulk; WFP purchases 78 percent of the food it distributes from developing countries.

In the United Arab Emirates, WFP manages the world's largest UN logistical hub, with warehouses and procurement services in Dubai and an aviation unit in Sharjah. It serves as a base for the Fast Information Technology Intervention Team (FITTEST), in charge of

setting up IT and telecom infrastructure in crisis zones. Dubai is also home to the regional team of the WFP Private Partnership division. WFP runs programmes all across the Middle East and North Africa through its country offices in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, the occupied Palestinian territories, Egypt, Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia.

World Food Programme provides school meals to more than two million children in need throughout the region. While Hunger is the 'world's greatest solvable problem', WFP cannot end it alone. This is why the organization is leading the way in the UN to create innovative and flexible partnerships with the private sector to support humanitarian work and save lives. With a nutritious meal served to a schoolchild for only US\$0.25 a day, every individual donor and company has the capacity to make a real difference in the lives of children in need.

### **World Food Programme and Arts**

The WFP's relationship with the Middle East's art community began one year ago when Syrian Painter and the agency's celebrity partner created a special painting inspired by WFP's work in Syria.

The painting will be part of the Christie's auctions dedicated to WFP causes.

On the other hand, WFP also collaborates with a number of galleries in Iran and has forged partnerships with selected art institutions, galleries and consultants in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

As a key beneficiary of the Tomorrow/Bokra charity album co-produced by legendary music producer Quincy Jones and Emirati social entrepreneur Badr Jaffar, WFP acts as a facilitator for setting-up innovative art programmes for vulnerable children across the Middle East in schools benefiting from its school meals scheme that they distribute everyday.

WFP has also joined forces recently with renowned recording artist Sami Yusuf through the 'LiveFeed' fundraising campaign that benefits drought-hit populations in the Horn of Africa.

### **Christie's joins forces with Contemporary Practices Art Journal to support WFP**

Since early 2011, as part of its mandate to support humanitarian efforts and an expression of its Corporate Social Responsibility, Contemporary Practices Art Journal (CP ART), has been working hand in hand with WFP to bring out a set of lots to be auctioned by Christie's Dubai, with all proceeds going to support the organization's aid programmes around the world.

There has been a very positive response from almost all of the artists that CP ART approached, hence the decision made by Christie's to include one artist per country to acknowledge the positive feel of all artists across the region to such a cause.

We remain grateful to a large number of artists had accepted to donate their artworks for the cause, Khaled Hafez (Egypt), Gita Meh (Iran) and Amr Fekri (Egypt) to name just a few.

Christie's, to show its support to WFP and the honorable cause, has waived its commission fees, ensuring that all of the money raised through that special auction would go to WFP.

### **Artists in Christie's auction on April 18th, 2012 sale**

**Shamma, Sara:** Born in Damascus, Syria in 1975 in an intellectual family that appreciates art and music, thing that allowed her to start practicing her hobby of painting since she was four. Ten years later, she decided that painting was her life path, graduating in 1998 from Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus. Upon her graduation, Sara taught at Adham Ismail Fine Arts Institute in Damascus and was a member in different Art Jury Committees and participated in numerous collective exhibitions. An independent full time artist for almost two decades now, Sara's art works are acquired by museums, organizations and private collections worldwide. For Sara, art is one, global, independent and very personal. She rejects classifications in contemporary art based on movements or geographies, instead she emphasizes and advocates the importance for each artist to develop his/her own tools, be more sensitive, and independent personality in order to produce unique art works. Sara paints with oil colors on canvas as they are adaptable with her brush to create each touch and vigor she wants. One should not expect her to explain her painting, her story. She would, instead, ask you to create your own story of her painting. Feeling a painting, according to her, is like feeling music or a perfume or flavor. Most importantly, she believes in art for all concepts; for her, it is not true that regular person, viewer, does not understand art or does not appreciate big part of it. "I believe that any person can communicate with any art work; looking to the clouds, smelling the aroma of the rain or traveling in the music of the nature does not need high education, every human being is touched by the beauty and the real creativity."

**Al Suwaidi, Sumayyah :** Born in 1980 in United Arab Emirates where she currently works and lives. Sumayyah is a digital artist whose passion drives her to manipulating seemingly normal and boring photographs into masterpieces of emotions and sensuality. A giant in a small body, Sumayyah moves the skies, stretches the oceans and elevates humans to the clouds, and in it all brings out beauty in whatever painting she decides to bring to life. She is the first female digital



**Lina Ogaily**, Untitled, 2010, acrylic on canvas, 90x90cm - Courtesy of the artist.

artist from the UAE. Her first series of paintings were in 2001 for his highness the late sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Exhibited her paintings across the UAE, and internationally at Emirati Visions in Berlin. She has done workshops and gave lectures to many art students. Moreover, she is the curator of Ramadan Art Bazaar an annual art exhibition at Ghaf Gallery to help common people in buying original art works at very reasonable prices. She was also the project manager and curator of Lights in Harmony the Emirati Photography Competition and a judge in the Al Muthahida art competition for university students on a national scale. Sumayyah is also writer and contributor in various magazines and newspapers locally and internationally.

**Amin, Shurook:** considered one of Kuwait's Foremost artists and poet, she started painting at the age of 11 and illustrated a self-made storybooks. From an ideology of distinct resolution and convergence, She Creates art that is thought-provoking, pushing the boundaries of

her society, the polarity between east and west is the backbone of her images as she struggle as an artist in her homeland. She uses photographic documents within her acrylic painting, sometimes incorporating collage to emphasize the gravity of the issue she resent. Her interdisciplinary technique reflects a culture interspersed and immersed in socio-political ritualism. In 2011, along with another 2 Kuwaiti artist, she founded "the Art Salon", an art involvement aiming at giving back to the community by using art to help people in need as well as creating opportunities for Kuwait-resident artists from all nationalities. Shurook Hold a Ph.D in litriture from UK, and currently she is a professor in Kuwait University.

**Athier:** British-Iraqi Athier (1982) has lived between London and Paris, after having left Iraq before the first Gulf War. He graduated with a MA in Communication Design with Illustration from Central Saint Martins. From 2007-9 Athier was the British Museum's Artist



**Athier- Wounded King**, 2011, Color on Paper, 50x60cm - Courtesy of the artist and Cuadro gallery.

in Residence, in association with the Karim Rida Said Foundation, teaching Arab world cultural awareness at selected UK schools. This was centered around engaging British students with the Arab world by breaking down aesthetic elements and creating new associations and references. He also collaborated on mural workshops for the Victoria & Albert Museum, focusing much of this work on similar Arab world constructs. In 2010, Athier was given an artist residency by the Chargé de Collection et d'Exposition at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris as part of Al Mansouria Foundation's Arab Artist Program. The UK's National Portrait Gallery selected Athier for the 2011 "Changing Mirrors" initiative.

He worked with children from underprivileged communities and his abstract portrait of the children went on display on October 14, 2011. Athier's work was part of the 2011 Tashkent International Biennale in Uzbekistan.

Athier has created an instantly recognizable style through an innovative combination of geometric Islamic shapes

and Arabic calligraphy. Each canvas can be potentially seen as one block, phrase, sentence, or idea, as well as an assembly of these parts. Only once the viewer has experienced the work as whole, does the eye begin to discern details and individual elements. The presence of words in Athier's paintings is not immediately apparent; the embedded script becomes pronounced to the viewer only after the context is taken in. This use of visual language as subtext adds dimension to his work, and allows the preconception of imagery and meaning that Arabic language conveys to become at once distinct from, yet an integral part of, the work. The viewer is thus drawn into the work in a non-traditional manner in which the significance of the letter-forms is made apparent only by the context, as if reading a text. Athier's letters are truncated by line, color and aesthetic distortion. The result is neither stylized script of traditional scribes nor the graffiti-like productions of contemporary masters, rather a technique that is novel in its visual appeal.



**Sumayyah Al Suwaidi**, *Eternal Love*, 2009 , Digital painting, edition of 2, 150x100cm - Courtesy of the artist and Art Sawa gallery .

**Darwish, Wael:** Born in Cairo in 1975, started his Journey in art since young age. Currently living and working in Cairo (professional of visual art) his art can be termed as “Political” and descriptive of the pulse of the common man in the street. “Art is my profession and this establishes a strong connection with the political situation, with political dialogue and its discourse. My Art provides a visual drama often including glimpses of the real world through photographs, as eye-witness to actual events” says Wael. The emphasis on “Political art” describing his paintings after January 2011, appeared

long before that date, though it was cautious to curb wild feelings, even marginalizing that condition and it happened actually.

A question haunted him; How would a bystander express his or her thoughts? As they do not have a means to steam off thoughts, he has made himself a non-stop transmitter and receiver, when his only signal or message was his paintings portraying arguments gripping the Egyptian street depicting visual and rare dramas of common men, women and children.

Nobody could predict how future will evolve, no readymade scenario was ready to apply, it is simply a dream that come true all of a sudden, and the thirst for freedom within himself, it eventually came out against his will prior the recent event in his homeland. Prior to the recent event in Egypt Wael never revealed that for fear of being held accountable. Today, the answers are crystal clear, it becomes the real barometer of Revolution and he simply depicts what he witnessed. History will seek to understand the ensuing events and he felt that many things have changed.

**Ogaily, Lina:** Ogaily is an Iraqi/British expressionist artist, currently living and working in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Born and Raised in Kuwait, she had an early influence in art due to family ties with prominent Iraqi artists. Lina moved with her family to London, United Kingdom at the age of 15.

As soon as she was exposed to proper art education and training at high school she realized her artistic ambitions. She joined Chelsea College of Art where she obtained a BTECH in Art and Design and later graduated with a Bachelor of Arts of Interior Design from Kingston University.

Her early influences were more design related, but as the political situation in Iraq ended in turmoil, her painting style evolved radically & became a lot more personal. Painting became a statement & a voice to express her thoughts, fears & dreams.

Her subject focused on Middle Eastern women’s plight in withstanding social pressures in their day-to-day life. She has always been fascinated with different painting techniques. She works mainly with acrylics, but also uses inks, oils & mixed media. Her artwork is known to be rich with colors & texture.



**Steve Sabella**, Cécile Elise Sabella, matt print 50x100cm hand stitched on canvas size 60x100x3cm, edition of 5 + 1 AP, Courtesy of the artist.

**Sabella, Steve:** Sabella was born in Jerusalem in 1975 and currently he is based in Berlin, Germany.

He is the holder by nomination of the Ellen Auerbach Award granted by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and was one of the commissioned artists for the inauguration of MATHAF: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar.

Sabella's artworks have been collected by the British Museum in London, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha as well as a number of leading collectors in Europe and the Middle East.

Sabella studied art photography at the Jerusalem School of Photography and New Media starting from 1994, and holds a BA in Visual Arts from the State University of New York (2007) and received his first MA with a Caparo Award of Distinction in Photographic Studies (2008) from the University of Westminster and his second MA in Art Business (2009) at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. Sabella gave art talks/presentations in

several places including the University of Cambridge, Turin University, SOAS, University of East London, Accademia Albertina Delle Belle Arti in Turin, CAP Kuwait, Rostock University, Akademie der Künste in Berlin & and the British Museum in London. He is also "Artist of the month" of May 2011 with three featured episodes on IkonoTV.

A monograph is currently being prepared in collaboration with Akademie der Künste in Berlin that will review his life and artistic career from the early 1990s to date.

It is worth mentioning that the artist had worked in several projects for the United Nations photographing and documenting the political situation in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas.