

# H\*TEL DYSTOPIA

Room #25/55

Al Bastakiya **Art Fair, Dubai**  
March 15-21, 2010





## Dystopia |dis'tōpēə|

noun

an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.

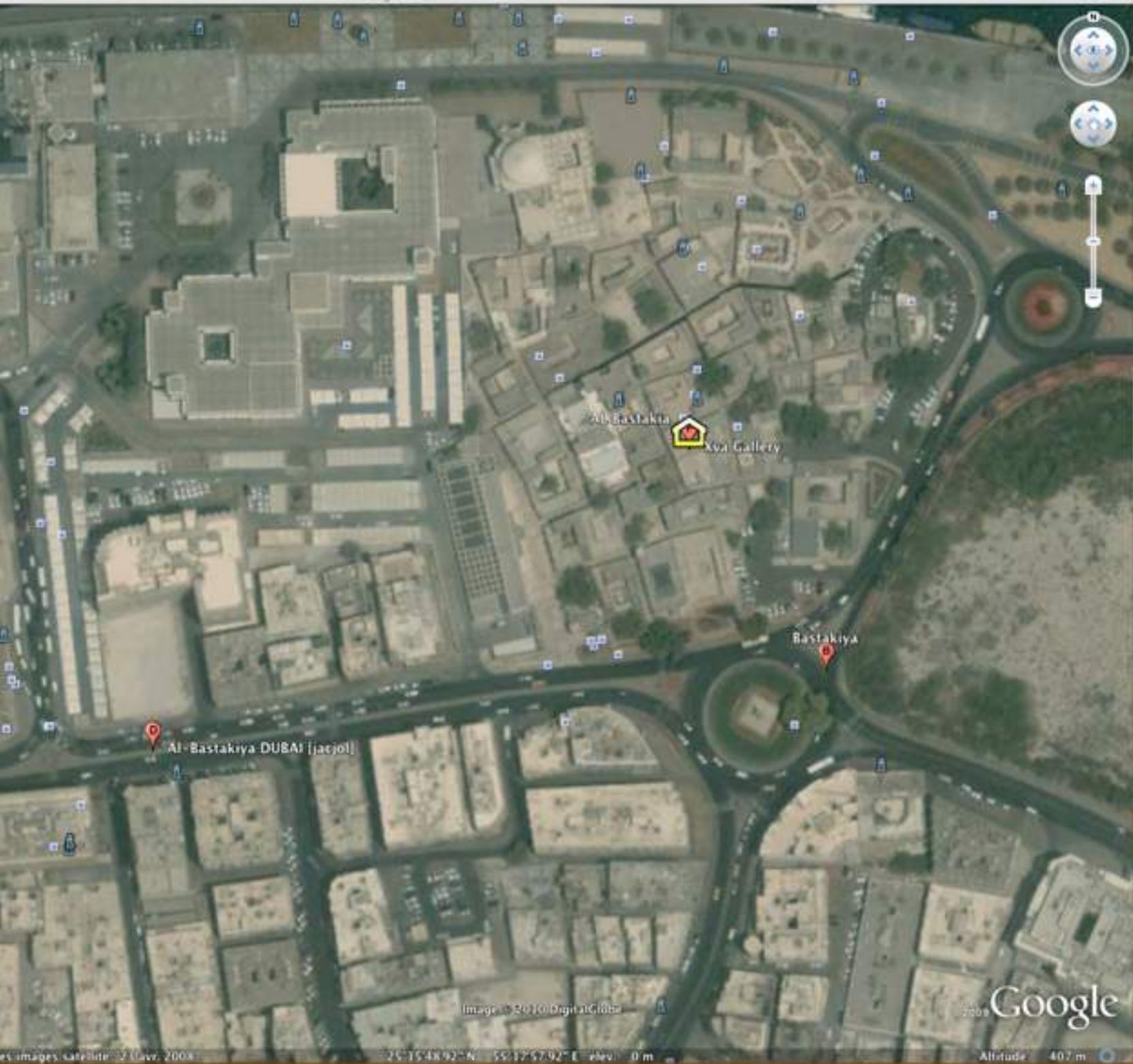
The opposite of **Utopia** .

DERIVATIVES

**dystopian** adjective & noun

ORIGIN late 18th cent.: from **dys-** [bad] + **Utopia** .





Dubai Creek

AL BASTAKIYA  
ART FAIR  
DUBAI

15 - 21 March 2010

RULER'S COURT

MOSQUE

111

50

107

109

108

XWA  
Gallery

90

150

14

22

Heritage  
House

70/1

Basta  
Art Cafe

Mada  
Gallery

P

28

P

P

P

BAF 2010 spaces

Walking Route

Parks

AL SEEF ROAD

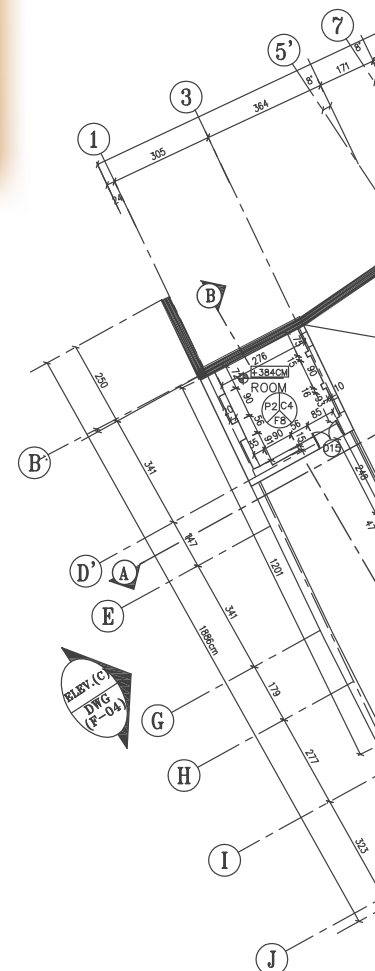
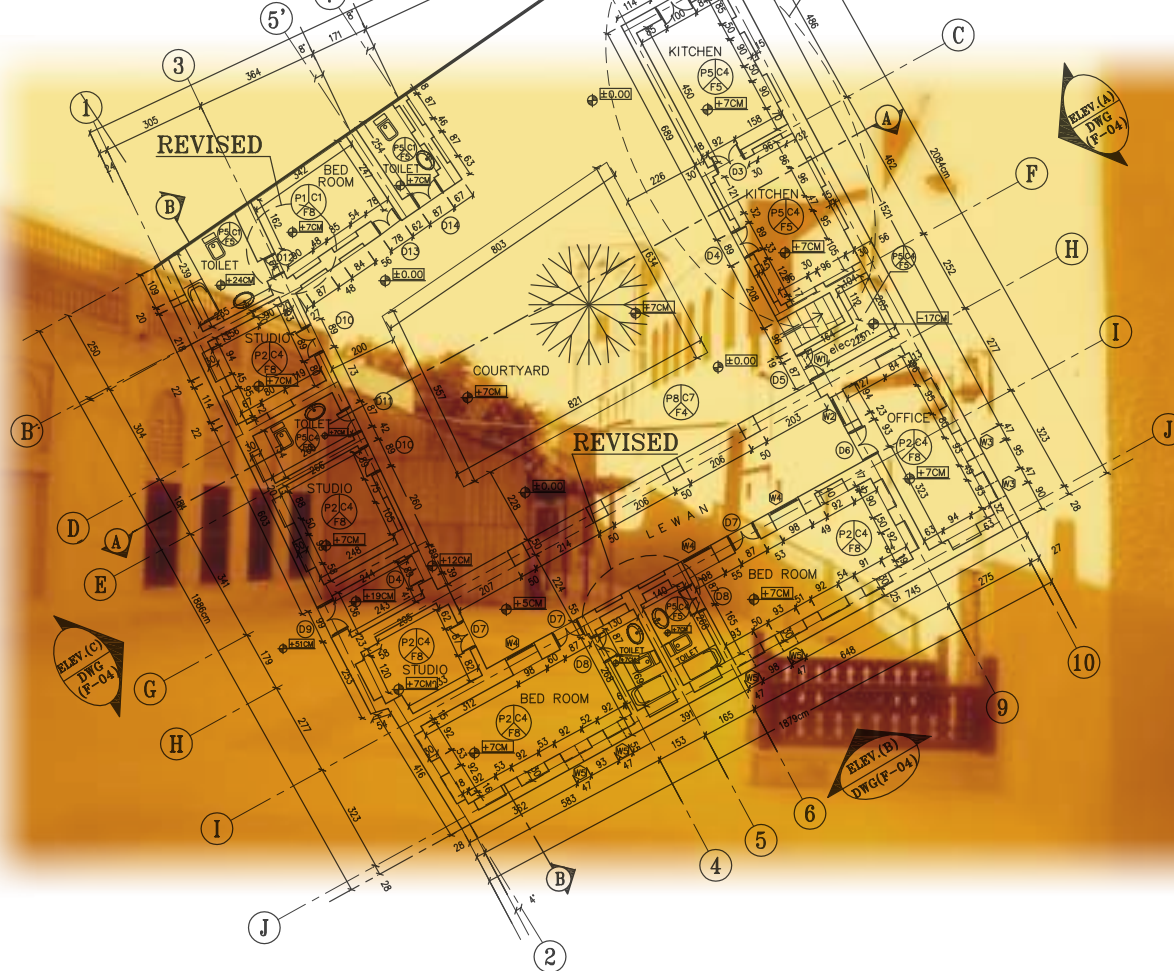
GRAVEYARD

AL FAYEDI ROAD 1957

AL FAYEDI  
ROUNDBOULT



TOTAL	9
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AL BASTAKIYA ART FAIR (BAF) took place in the Houses of Bastakiya, the historic area of Dubai, 15 - 21 March 2010. **BAF 2010** is an independent fringe art fair which focuses international attention on Dubai's art and cultural agenda and is organised by XVA Gallery in partnership with Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (DCAA). **BAF 2010** runs parallel to Art Dubai (17-20 March), and in the best tradition of all things fringe, provides a platform for young, innovative and emerging artistic talent. The fair opened up the unique environment of Bastakiya to contemporary art. Involving international, regional and local galleries, artists and curators, the program of events included a *vernissage*, daily exhibitions and lectures. Over 7,000 visitors made their way to the third edition of Dubai's first and only fringe art fair in 2009, to view work exhibited by over 40 galleries, foundations and individual participants.

With the program of lectures and talks by eminent speakers, curated pavilions, representing artists from the MENA region, exhibitions from galleries based in the UAE and abroad, art installations in public outdoor areas, national and international press coverage the **BAF 2010** achieved critical acclaim.

For more info: [www.albastakiyartfair.com](http://www.albastakiyartfair.com)

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- 1-14. RIBBA series** Mount included. Fibreboard, Foil with glass panel.

**1. Frame Dhs 75** W50xH70cm. Black 201.325.23

**2. Frame Dhs 19** W13xH18cm. Aluminium-colour 201.010.36

**3. Frame Dhs 35** W23xH23, D4.5cm. White 000.780.32

**4. Frame Dhs 39** W50xH23cm. White 400.783.32

**5. NEW Frame Dhs 35** W21xH30cm. Aluminium-colour 201.531.53

**6. NEW Frame Dhs 29** W21xH30cm. White 701.531.55

**7. Frame Dhs 59** W30xH40cm. Aluminium-colour 801.010.43

**8. Frame Dhs 75** W50xH70cm. White 300.783.37

**9. Frame Dhs 39** W50xH23cm. Black 501.325.26

**10. Frame Dhs 49** W30xH40cm. White 601.010.44

**11. Frame Dhs 39** W40xH50cm. White 200.783.33

**12. Frame Dhs 15** W13xH18cm. Black 001.325.24

**13. Frame Dhs 29** W18xH24cm. Aluminium-colour 001.010.37

**14. Frame Dhs 15** W13xH18cm. White 700.783.35
- 15. SLÄTTHULT decoration stickers Dhs 39** Self-adhesive; easy to fit on to smooth, clean and dry surfaces. Plastic, paper. Designer: S Edholm/L Ullenius. Green 501.509.97



“IKEA Catalogue”, August 2010  
Page 169



# Suitcase

noun  
a case with a handle and a hinged lid, used for carrying clothes and other personal possessions.

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# Exhibition

noun  
1 a public display of works of art or other items of interest, held in an art gallery or museum or at a trade fair.



**Emirates**

**e-Boarding Pass**

Barcode: 1762118943629

Passenger Details		Frequent Flyer	
Name	LEFORT / Léo Mr.	EK-205468023/SILVER	
Booking Reference	BRBB7J		
Flight Details		Class	
Flight	Date/Time	From	ECONOMY
EK 723	13 / 03 / 2010	Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA	
	0825	Terminal 3	
		To	Ticket
		Dubai, UAE	1762118943629
		Zone	Seq No.
		D	0041
Gate	Boarding time	Seat	
	0740	27F	

**LOUNGE INVITATION - DUBAI**

We are pleased to invite you to use the Emirates Business Class Lounge at Gate 122.

Passes? Please proceed directly to the Quick Bag Drop Counter and a member of staff.



Aïda **Muluneh**  
Antonio **Fiorente**  
Behailu **Bezabih**  
Bekele **Mekonnen**  
Daniel **Tayé**  
Dawit **Abebe**  
Dereje **Demissie**  
Ermias **Mazenguia**  
Eyob **Kitaba**  
Geta **Mekonnen**  
Merid **Tafesse**  
Michael **Tsegaye**  
Nuru **Abegaz**  
Tamrat **Gezahagn**

Published in conjunction with the exhibition  
H\*TEL DYSTOPIA, ROOM 25/55  
House 79/1, March 15-21 2010  
Bastakiya Art Fair, Dubai

**Every time we check into a hotel room it becomes our biological home for a while and then we leave.**

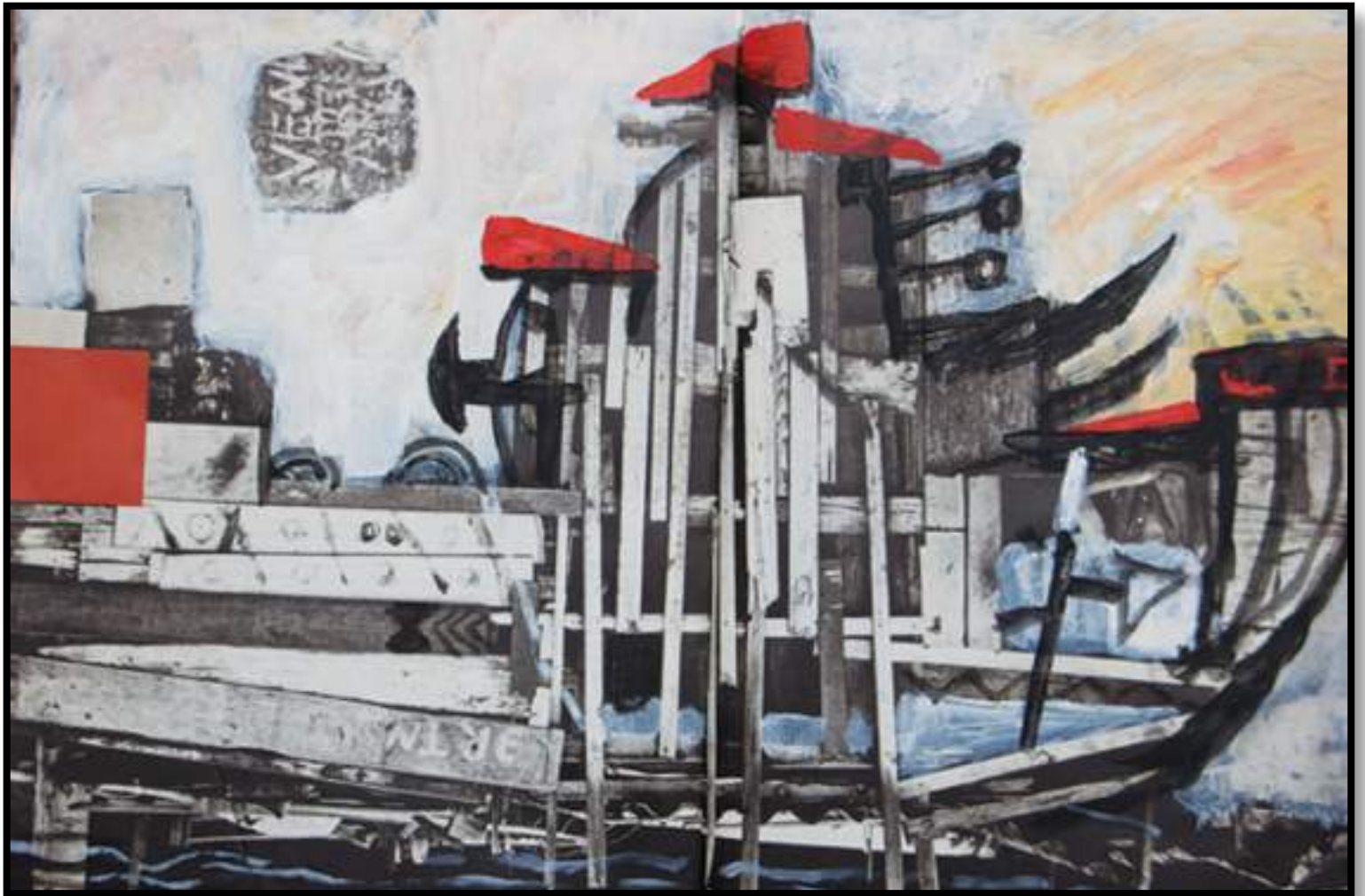
*«A prime location in Dubai puts H\*TEL DYSTOPIA, Room #25/55 right at the top of any list of Bastakiya Art Fair's best spaces. Add to that a superlative range of services, not to mention superbly displayed artworks on paper in a unique contemporary style, and the experience is guaranteed to satisfy the most discerning customer.»*

In Ethiopia, exhibiting works of art outside usual art venues is more of a necessity than a choice. One such experiment is called H\*TEL DYSTOPIA, a concept that relocates and refocuses art experiences in various venues. H\*TEL DYSTOPIA breaks from archetypal notions of what a commercial gallery could be, featuring artists who create critical projects that reflect our present circumstances, and who produce works of seminal importance to Ethiopia's contemporary art scene. With this as a base, H\*TEL DYSTOPIA strives to nurture the floor with cutting-edge strategies that will encourage the formation of collectors and active publics. The extreme flexibility of the exhibit's interlocutors addresses the problem of how the artwork relates to its context, a key to this collaborative enterprise that constitutes a premise, not an outcome.

Leo LEFORT, *Concierge*.

We deeply appreciate the support of: Dr. Elke Kaschl-Mohni, Raffi Seferian, David Garabedian, Ermyas Amelga, Ermias Eshetu, Heruy Arefe-Aine, Geta Mekonnen, Fami Ramadan, Mona Hauser, Rosie Hayes, Sara Nassouri, Suzanne Sporrer, Jacques Abrenica, Dherar Belhoul, Sophie Toh, Lea Sednaoui, Stephen Plisinski, Jim Laney, Joyce Halsey & David Terrien.





***“Journey With Old Boat”, 2010***

Paper, paint & ink on magazine

*“At a glance, **Behailu BEZABIH**’s artwork bears the deceptive appearance of a children’s storybook with it’s vibrant and daring palette and abstract figuration. A closer examination, however, reveals kaleidoscopic associations and layerings bound together by a magical painterly technique and complex compositions which sing about life’s simplicities. The zest for life permeates Behailu’s work. He is widely travelled and yet modest about his stature as a painter in the continent.”*

David Koloane

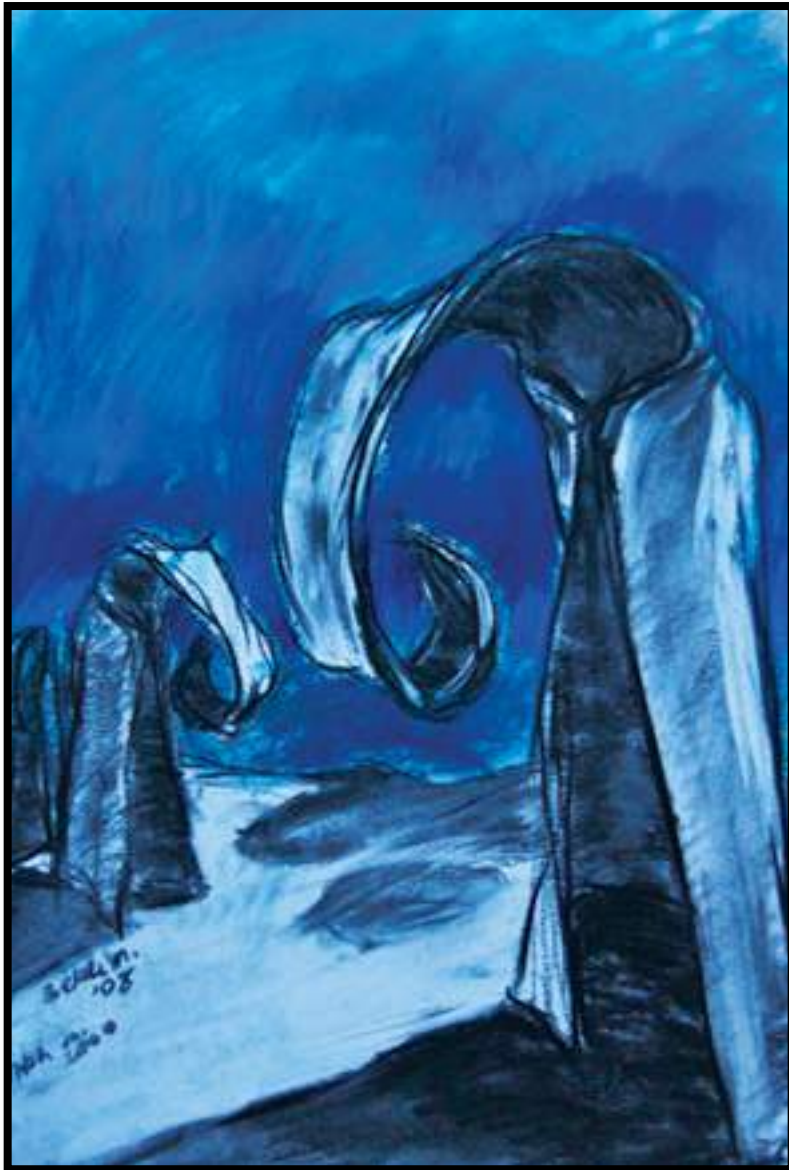


***“Déjà Vu”***, 2010

Digital Print

Born & raised in Ethiopia, **Antonio FIORENTE** has pursued his passion for photography since childhood. Trained in studios in Rome and Bologna, he then traveled the world; Greece, Turkey, Russia, Spain, Tunisia, Morocco, Germany, France, the UK and elsewhere. Currently living in Addis Ababa, working in both the commercial and artistic spheres, he is best known for his ‘life’ and documentary work, fiercely revealing the other side of this culturally rich nation, from behind the camera. He has been exhibited worldwide and achieved critical accreditation, receiving the 2003 4th African Press Photo Award.





***"Tired Plough"***, 2008  
Soft pastel on paper

*"As they delight, **Bekele MEKONNEN**'s sculptures also provoke critical reflection. Immediately, his work stands out for its conceptual facture, as it tropes on and de-forms found objects whose everyday material and figurative significance resonates deeply in Ethiopia: mortars, pestles, baking plates, bullets and syringes—to name a handful. Perhaps the most evocative among his repertoire of vernacular objects is the plow. Though simple, it enables him to cast widely a conceptual framework. Historically, in Ethiopia, the plow spans from the ancient past to our own postmodernity; and, in practice, it remains among the essential instruments for the mass cultivation of land."*

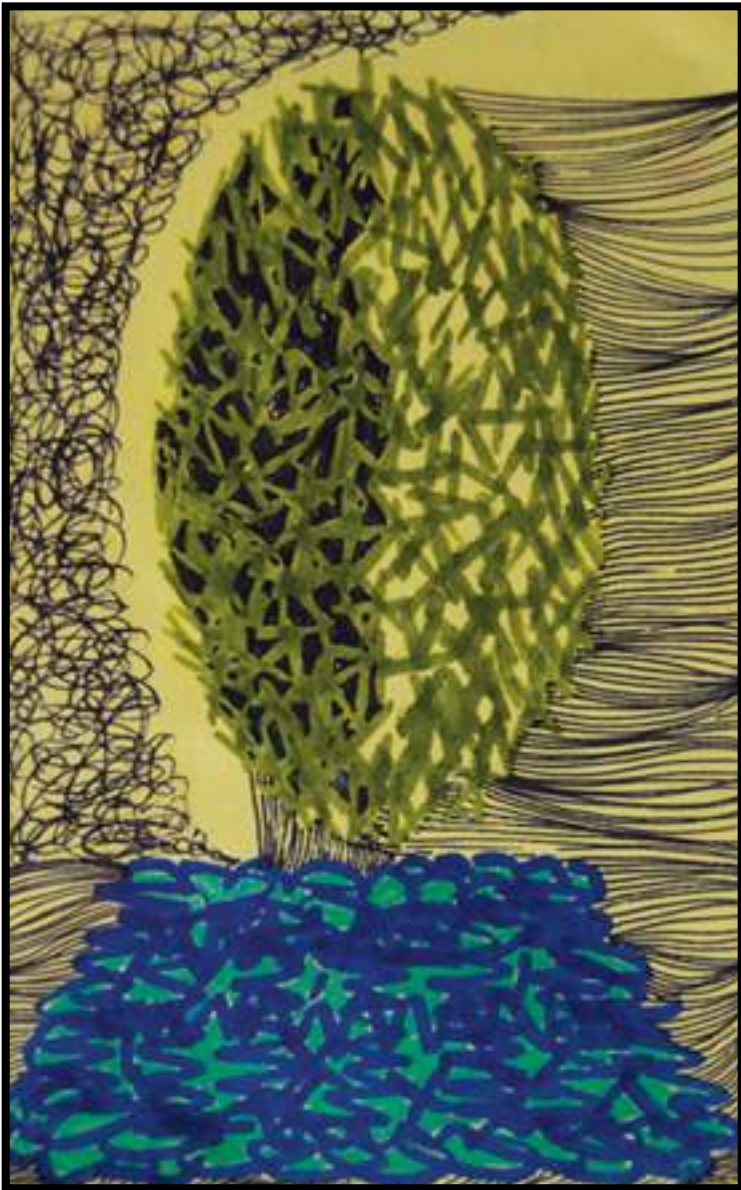
Dagmawi Wubishet





***"Untitled"***, 2010  
Oil on paper

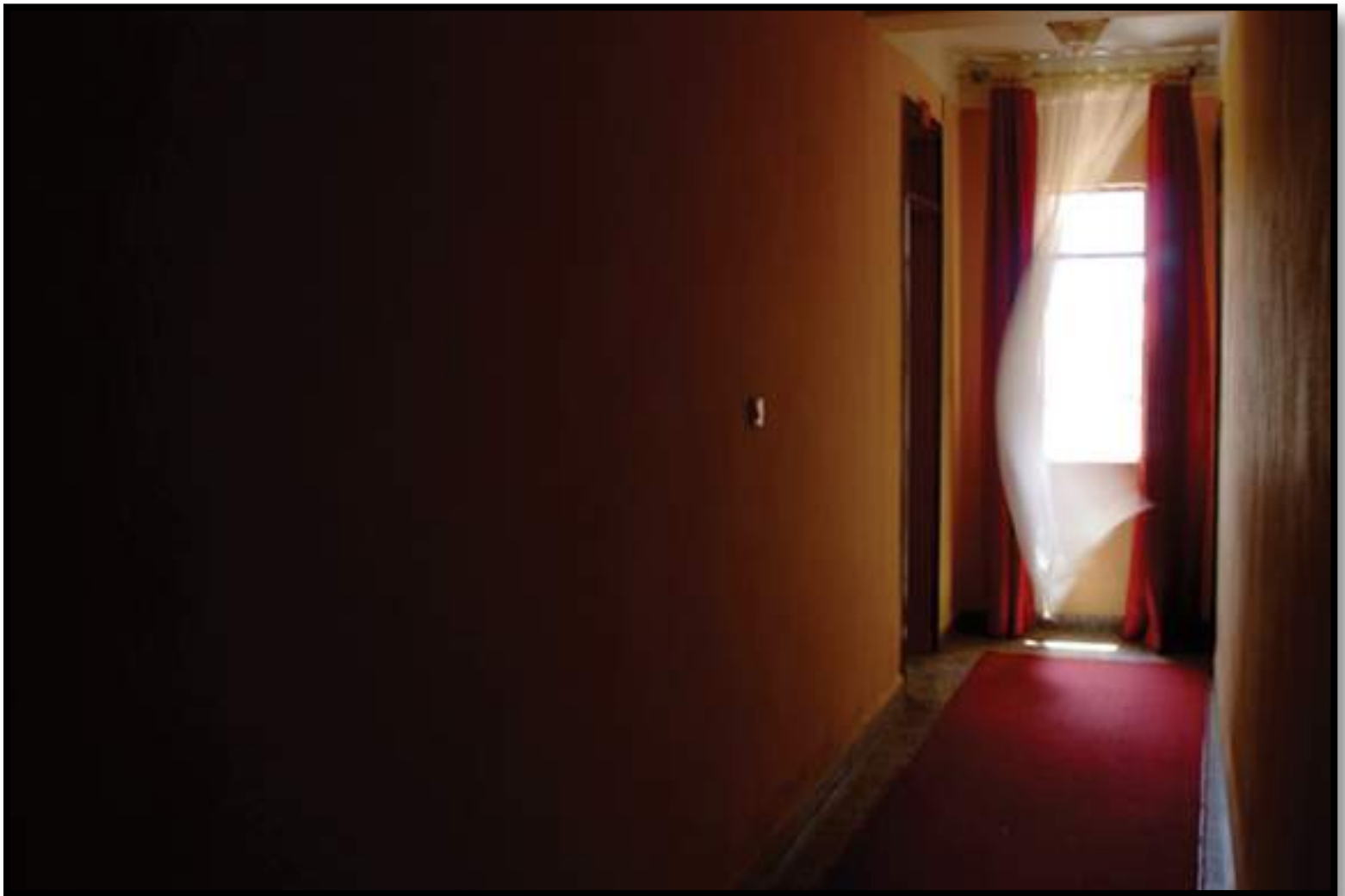
Opening up new horizons, **Ermias MAZENGUIA**'s iconoclastic work makes him a key player in the contemporary Ethiopian art scene. His canvases are both deeply constructed and consciously deconstructed. While there is no given narrative in his painted surfaces, there is instead a genuine meditation on the pace of existence that invites an intense and profound contemplation. By being clearly visible while remaining out of sight, he thereby places the relationship between his work and spectator under the greatest possible amount of pressure. Ermias relentlessly attempts to transcend the physical, while studying the impact of action and objects.



***"The Face Of God"***, 2010

Bic™ pen and marker on Post-It™

**Eyob KITABA** is the kind of man that hears voices. He wants to shout, but can only paint, draw or sculpt. Eyob is an artist interested in relationships: between people, between ideas, between states of mind and emotions, and from that fitting together jigsaw puzzles preferably from pieces from other puzzles. The series "Face Of God" includes works on Post-its™, each born out of nothing. Made with Bic™ pens, felt-tips and markers, they are only accumulations, adaptations, mutations and mutilations until they become Image. Eyob works the way some people frenetically collect stones or stamps -- catching an impulse from the air, like catching a fly.



***“Ethiopia: Past/Forward”***, 2009

Digital print

*“**Aida MULUNEH**’s main fear is to lose her memory. She is afraid of losing the glances, hands, landscapes and everything that fate has presented to her. She wants to record them for the future, as testimony and confirmation that she has not made anything up; like evidence in a trial that is continually changing. What else could this trial represent but identity ? Not identity in the legal sense, but the kind of identity that makes us into who we are. There are days when we wake up entirely deserted in a hotel room. For a few - nearly endless - seconds, our distraught gaze tries to grab on to something that will tell us where we are.”*

Simon Njami





***“Sound Of Atmosphere”***, 2010

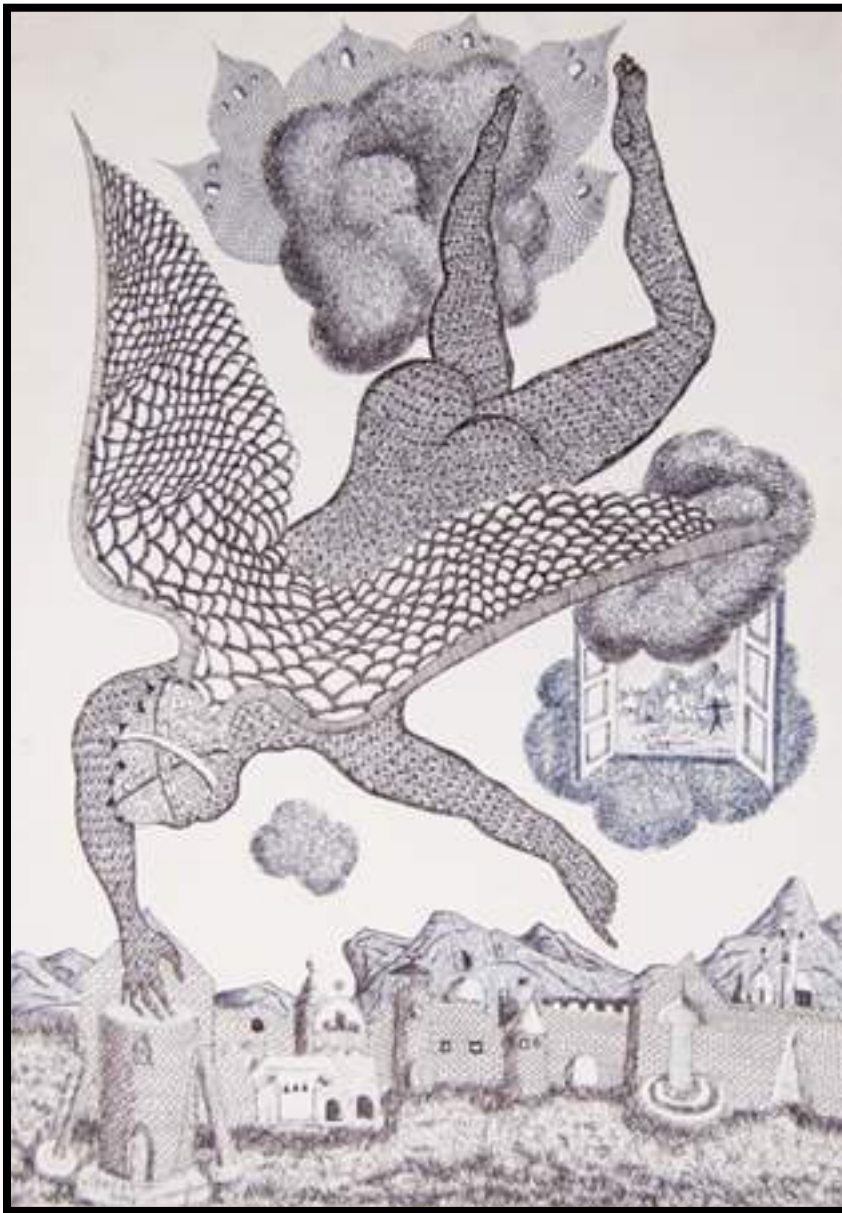
Acrylic on paper

**Dereje DEMISSIE** has made great efforts to achieve his goal of depicting beauty in a contemporary urban landscape, creating a fabric woven from the buildings of so-called modern culture and their antithesis -- aged constructions of corrugated iron sheets encrusted with rust and decay. Dereje stands in the middle of this dull mass with an inextinguishable faith and assembles with his colors the pieces of a complex patchwork constituting a new land where heaven is the only muse.



***"Where Do I Know You From ?"***, 2010  
Charcoal on paper

What is the mystery behind **Merid TAFESSE**'s charcoaled world? With radical simplicity, Merid's intricate and efficient web of lines dusts off our perceptions of reality. Moving away from privileged styles like oil paintings, we are pulled toward a direct contact with the soft pulp of the paper, representing a porous and amorphous universe where circadian rhythms meet the puzzled infinity of his visions. In the warm grey dawn, close to the frozen borderline, the numberless reflections featured in the "Where Do I Know You From?" series rise like ghosts and cannot be brushed off. We are drawn as if by a magnet, and Merid knows.

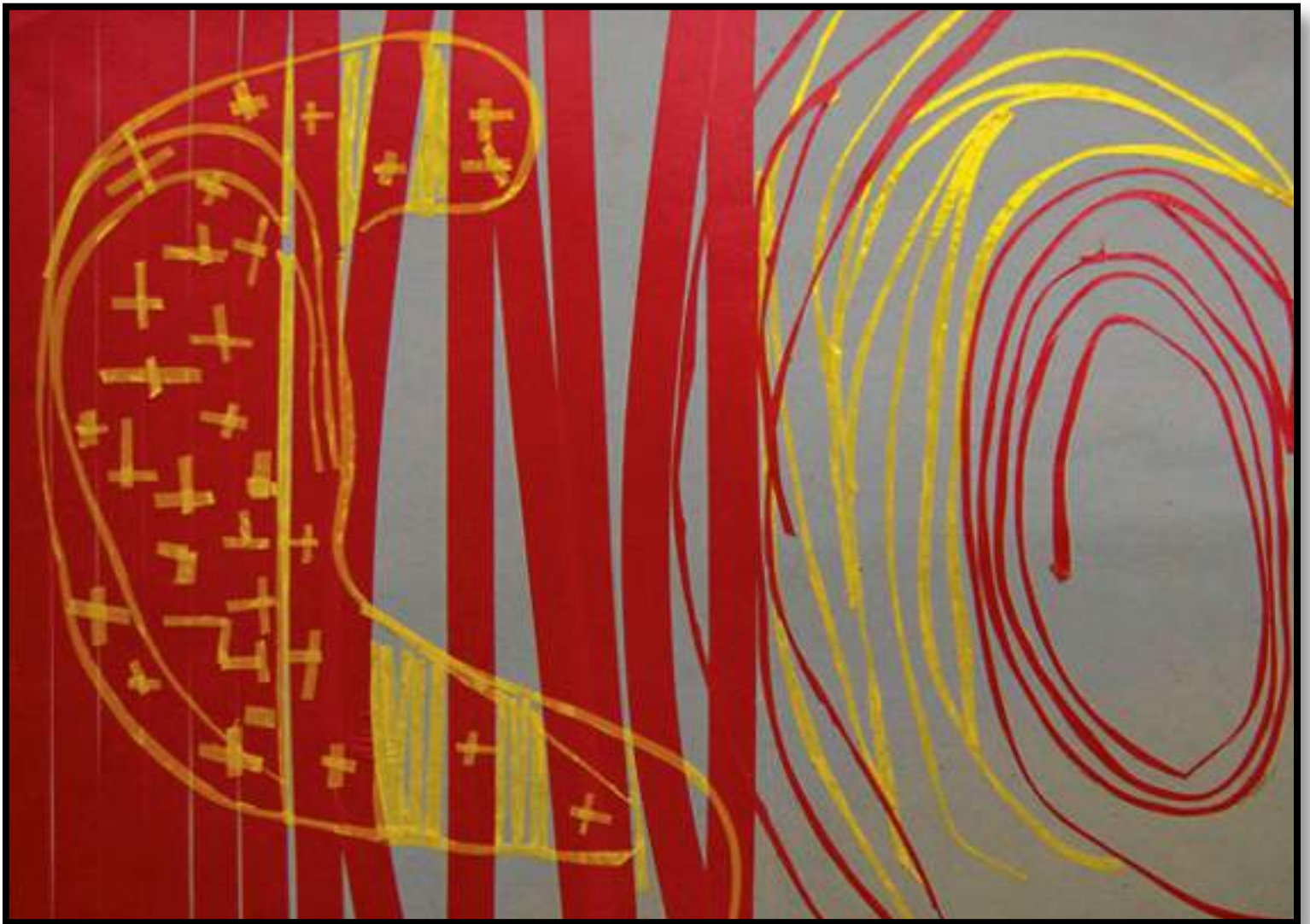


***"Falling Angel"***, 2009

Indian ink on paper

Scrutinizing everyday life while creating his delirious mythology, **Tamrat GEZAHAGN** creates moments of forceful irony by constantly reinventing the language of Ethiopian contemporary fine art, introducing a straightforward style that deliberately rejects sophisticated artistic techniques preferring the bold directness of bright colors, or minimalist ink pen and the meticulous repetition of motifs. Tamrat blinks, momentarily we are left completely blind -- the Angel falls in a unidentified fortress. A new wide world is under construction under the genuine intervention of this artist with exceptional skills.





***“Waving Line”***, 2008

Tape on cardboard

Having abandoned his abrasive white, grey and black watercolors, depicting isolated human figures and semi-abstract empty architectural spaces, **Nuru ABEGAZ** embarked on a series of colorful multi-layered collages using ‘nastro’ (electrical tape). Tracing his own universe with “Waving Lines” of cheap electrical tape, Nuru Nastro reconstructs the basis of multiple palimpsests through the sharpness of a blade, the strength of his teeth and the authenticity of his experience of life and death.



***“Kējēt -Nightmare-”***, 2006

Oil pastel on paper

Painter & poet **Daniel TAYE** recasts everyday imagery to present the viewer with imaginary and evocative landscapes and figures. Daniel’s mind and body work at a very rapid pace. Intense emotions dwell in his eyes as can be seen in these sketches drawn a few years back on pages of his Amharic novel “Nightmares”. Documenting his days and nights, moods and objects, visions and colors, space and emptiness he chisels layers of images onto these already dense stories.



***"Fragment"***, 2007  
Acrylic on paper

*"Geta MEKONNEN's art attempts to capture moments of clarity and of re-vision. "Fragments" is an appropriate title for his work because he tries to find the stories, or perhaps more accurately the possibility of stories, that can be told in a single moment. This belief that it is possible to capture a macrocosm of meaning in a single moment is part of what shapes Geta's art and is a significant influence on his approach to painting. His paintings are attempts to capture these singular moments; they do not attempt to tell a full story but instead leave the moment preceding, and following, to the imagination of the viewer. They are not final statements, but instead provocative questions."*

Heruy Arefe-Aine

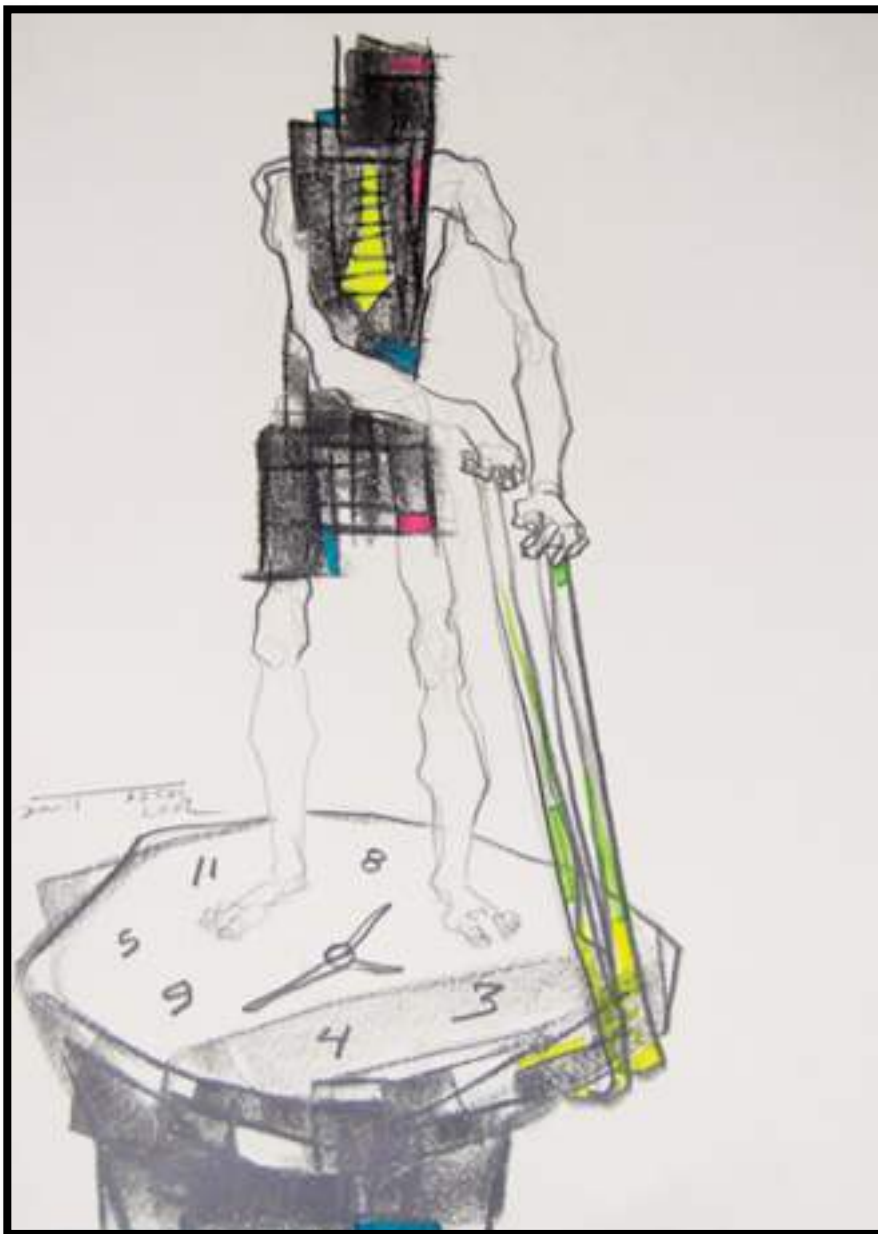




***“Asphalt Workers”***, 2008

Digital print

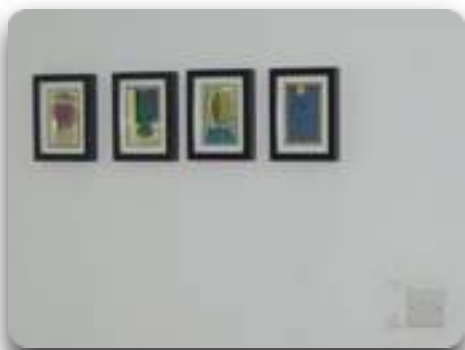
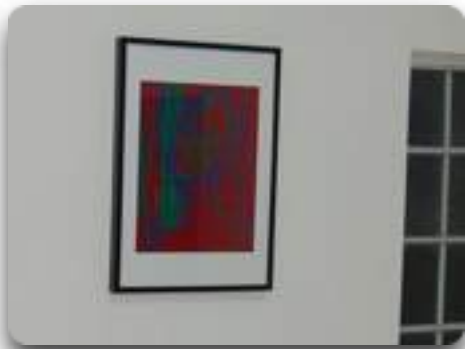
**Michael TSEGAYE** gave up painting when he developed an allergy to oil paints. However, he found a real new passion in photography and has since made of it a profession, and a means of expressing his particular voice. “As a photographer I try as much as possible to escape being pigeonholed. This is especially relevant as an African – and Ethiopian – photographer. I place myself among my peers (may they be photographers and painters) across the world. As an Ethiopian I do not have a duty to focus my lens on suffering alone.”



***"Pin Code"***, 2010

Graphite and marker on paper

**Dawit ABEBE** considers drawing as a medium, a gesture, but also as his break from painting. Over the last few years, Dawit's work has focused on a dream-like series, depicting heroes grounded in a world of latent violence and painted with a range of fluorescent colors that radically contrasts with the uncovered newspaper collage that constitutes the background. Entitled "The Pin Codes Series," Dawit states: *"These codes are almost everywhere - on the telephone, the internet and all communications. In everyday life, in the bank, in the society, even in intimate love stories..."*



***"Show Views"***, H\*TEL DYSTOPIA, Room, 25/55, 2010





***“360° Show View”***, H\*TEL DYSTOPIA, Room, 25/55, 2010



William Georges from Lebanon measures a piece of cloth to be used at the exhibition of his paintings at the Bastakiya on Saturday. — KT photo by Sharique Barisue



An art work on display at the Bastakiya on Saturday. The Bastakiya Art Fair is to begin on March 15, for which 12 traditional houses will showcase art and culture from various regions

## Ethiopian Artists Take to Global Art Scene

Happy Ann Moneer

16344) —When Frenchman Les Lefort first heard he was being assigned to be a curator in Ethiopia, he was horrified at the very thought. Despite his reservations about the place, he went on to Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia — and was relieved to find it a "very beautiful city" and "everything less what people know of it."

It's been roughly 11 years since he made the move, and Lefort believes he has no regrets. On the contrary, he is overwhelmed by the strong artworks that the country is now producing.

In Addis for the Bastakiya Art Fair 2010, Lefort is one of the curators participating for the first time this year.

He will be showcasing the works of 14 Ethiopian artists, whose themes vary from refugees to land disputes — even falling angels. The projects he works on are striking and powerful in their own right. Currently, he is working on one called *Abinet Outopia*, *Rock* *2009*. There, he says, are the conditions of the world as it is. People have to understand it, change it, or move on to another place. "I'm trying to do the same project in other places too, such as New York and France."

Speaking of the development of the arts in Ethiopia, he says the art market there is only "just starting." It's a description he shares when in conversation with Addis's own busy and expanding scene for international arts and culture scene. But Lefort maintains that the two markets will differ greatly. "It's much easier to hold an exhibition in

Dubai," he says. "You have the infrastructure needed to make exhibitions happen, from international artists to gallery spaces."

Moreover, he was impressed by the way organizers of the Bastakiya Art Fair took care of everything, making sure he got what he needed seamlessly. On the other hand, he says, in Ethiopia, it would have taken three weeks to get things he — and even then, they wouldn't meet requirements.

"Two years ago, I was working on a documentary on Ethiopian fine art — but I couldn't find a producer. I suppose if you say 'Ethiopia' and the 'Red Cross', they'd go together, but 'Ethiopia' and 'peace' don't seem to match," he reflects, with a laugh. Nonetheless, he cautions they are not to be taken lightly. In the school of fine arts in Addis Ababa, where Lefort is teaching art history and aesthetics, some students compete every year for the 12 seats available. "Despite the obvious limitations, everyone here takes their work seriously."

As a Frenchman in Ethiopia, he has never considered moving his work back home. Lefort still plans for a moment before agreeing, "I went back to France at one point and began looking for a job. But I realised that it was in Ethiopia that I wasn't restricted to a box. This is the capacity of third world countries," he says. "When you have to survive, you'll do anything and everything. People used to ask me, 'Why Ethiopia?' But for me, it's not identity, that matters, or place — but it's what you do that counts."

ken2009@thea.com



Curator Les Lefort from Addis Ababa, unrolls an art work at Bastakiya on Saturday.

### Links.

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?section=theuae&xfile=data/theuae/2010/march/theuae\\_march372.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?section=theuae&xfile=data/theuae/2010/march/theuae_march372.xml)

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?section=theuae&xfile=data/theuae/2010/march/theuae\\_march411.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?section=theuae&xfile=data/theuae/2010/march/theuae_march411.xml)

<http://www.bastakiyaartfair.com/participants/cataloguefinal.pdf>



Founder & director of ATELIER art gallery, Leo Lefort has an extensive curatorial background in Ethiopia having worked for reputable galleries, public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations, and government from 1999 up to the future.

In 2000 he was a recipient of the prestigious “*AFAA Prize*”, awarded annually by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to five cultural entrepreneurs living abroad, for the creation of the Taitu International Art Center. He taught Art Theory & Aesthetics at the School of Fine Arts & Design, Addis Ababa University for three years and was then affiliated for another two years with the Institute of Ethiopian Studies as an independent researcher documenting the development of Ethiopian contemporary arts. In 2006, he co-founded the LeLa Art Gallery where he curated 13 acclaimed solo and group shows featuring local and international artists. He was recently appointed Head of the Visual Art Department at ICS where he has been teaching visual arts courses for the past three years.

Mentored by art historian, theorist & curator Denys Zacharopoulos, Leo Lefort holds a Master Degree in Fine Arts from the Université de Haute Bretagne, Rennes, France.



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