

*In My*  
**Element**

OPERA GALLERY

15 December 2023 - 5 January 2024

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Jose Cháfer  
Thierry Martenon  
Michel Abboud  
Mouna Rebeiz

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# Foreword

Opera Gallery Beirut is delighted to present "In my Element", a radiant exhibition unveiling the creations of four visionary artists: Jose Cháfer, Thierry Martenon, Michel Abboud and Mouna Rebeiz. Each artist wields a distinct brush of creativity, breathing vitality into their creations, inviting us to explore the profound landscapes of their minds and appreciate the exquisite finesse of their craftsmanship to transcend boundaries, connect realms, and awaken our senses.

Jose Cháfer, a visionary sculptor deeply attuned to the natural world, extends an invitation to journey through shapes and textures. Drawing inspiration from the intricate forms and colours of nature, Cháfer skilfully transforms raw materials into expressions of nature’s rhythmic cycles—growth, transformation, and renewal. He predominantly works with natural elements like stone and wood, showcasing his profound connection to these materials. Cháfer’s sculptures transcend mere artistry; they serve as bridges, infusing life with a distinct essence.

Thierry Martenon, a sculptor who masterfully manipulates raw materials, unveils a universe where tangible substances and boundless imagination blend seamlessly. Martenon shapes abstract and textured forms in wood, which serve as captivating vessels for light. His creations harmonize shape and form, orchestrating an exploration of volume and void that gracefully narrates stories. Martenon crafts sculptures that transcend the confines of physicality, inviting viewers into a realm where matter and creativity intertwine in perfect harmony.

Michel Abboud's sculptures captivate through their equilibrium and balance. Abboud's works are an artistic translation of the digital world’s impact on our society, brought to life through meticulously arranged cubes. Despite the use of digital tools in their design, Abboud’s dedication to craftsmanship shines as each piece is constructed by hand, reinforcing the artisanal essence of his creations. Every sculpture creates a captivating dance of light and colour, expertly blurring the boundaries between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional.

Mouna Rebeiz is a Lebanese-Canadian painter known for her artwork that combines figurative and abstract styles. Her pieces skilfully capture the energy of life and create a profound emotional connection with the viewer, with a particular focus on the experiences and emotions of women. Through her meticulously crafted sculptures, she deftly presents contemporary interpretations of totems, imbuing them with a sense of playfulness and an extraordinary expressiveness that resonates with the audience on a deeply personal level.

As you navigate through this exhibition, prepare to be captivated by these remarkable artists who celebrate the inherent beauty in the world around us, captured in the contours of their sculptures.

"In my Element" is an invitation to engage in a dialogue that goes beyond words, and to find solace and inspiration in the boundless realm of artistic exploration. We hope that the exhibition will evoke contemplation, inspiration and that it will allow a renewed sense of wonderment.

**Gilles Dyan**  
Founder & Chairman  
Opera Gallery Group

**Salwa Chaloub**  
Director  
Opera Gallery Beirut

Jose  
Cháfer



Jose Cháfer is a sculptor whose art is a testament to his profound connection with the natural world. Drawing inspiration from the intricate shapes, textures, and colours found in nature, he immerses himself in its cyclic essence of constant movement and transformation. This theme of evolution resonates throughout his creations, serving as a core element.

Cháfer's artistic process involves observing daily concepts and seeking patterns to achieve balance. Working primarily with natural materials like stone and wood, he values their ability to surprise and unveil hidden treasures. Through his sculptural work, Cháfer not only taps into the environment but also comprehends the underlying densities, vibrations, and textures of each material.

Guided by core values, Cháfer's art seeks to encapsulate the beauty, truth, purity, and balance he finds in both nature and life. He perceives beauty in the most profound, often overlooked aspects of existence, from harmony and balance to spontaneity and imperfections. The authenticity of natural materials aligns with his reverence for truth, allowing him to tell their life stories through his sculptures.

Purity, for Cháfer, lies in the roots and origins of things, anchoring him to his identity and the world's essence. This pursuit is embodied in the raw crackling of wood, the coolness of stones, and the aroma of coffee beans. Balance, another cornerstone, infuses his work with visual harmony, while his affinity for working with his hands and exploring space and mass contributes to his ongoing artistic evolution.

Cháfer's creations also reflect his fascination with connections, believing that all things are intricately linked. His mastery of light and shadow deepens his understanding of perception, enhancing his art's elegance and impact.

Jose Cháfer is an artist who seamlessly fuses nature's rhythms with his artistic expressions. Guided by values that revere beauty, truth, purity, and balance, his sculptures serve as a reflection of his connection to the world's profound essence. Through his hands-on approach, exploration of materials, and study of various elements, Cháfer's art offers a unique and captivating perspective on life and nature.

**Curved Collection XL**  
2023

Black-stained ash wood with a brass rod

168 x 85 x 80 cm | 66.1 x 33.5 x 31.5 in





**Curved Collection XXXVI**  
2023

Ash wood

148 x 80 x 66 cm | 58.3 x 31.5 x 26 in

**Curved Collection XXXVII**  
**2023**

Ash wood

132 x 84 x 50 cm | 52 x 33 x 19.7 in







**Curved Collection XXXIX**  
2023

Ash wood

128 x 78 x 62 cm | 50.4 x 30.7 x 24.4 in

## Curved Collection XLI

### 2023

Ash wood

107 x 60 x 67 cm | 42.1 x 23.6 x 26.3 in



**Curved Collection XXXVIII**  
2023

Ash wood

77 x 66 x 52 cm | 30.3 x 26 x 20.5 in



**Thierry**  
**Martenon**



**B**orn in 1967, Thierry Martenon is a self-taught sculptor. He lives in the Désert d'Entremont, in the Chartreuse Mountains, away from the noise of the world and in the heart of nature. Under his hands, the venerable woods from the surrounding forests become works of art.

Thierry Martenon particularly likes to combine different techniques, shaping in wood abstract and textured forms, real receptacles to the light.

While his work is from now on greeted by the biggest institutions and the collectors and his sculptures travel beyond the oceans, Thierry pursues his immobile and vertical journey, listening to what he holds as true: nature, wood, tools, the workshop.



**Sculpture Epicea No.210423 Gris**  
2023

Spruce wood

150 x 152 x 10 cm | 59 x 59.8 x 3.9 in





**Sculpture Epicea No.210423 Noir**  
2023

Spruce wood

150 x 152 x 10 cm | 59 x 59.8 x 3.9 in



**Sculpture Epicea No.200423 Blanc**  
2023

Spruce wood

150 x 152 x 10 cm | 59 x 59.8 x 3.9 in





**Sculpture Noyer No.051021**  
2023

Walnut wood

99 x 30,5 x 8 cm | 39 x 12 x 3.1 in



**Sculpture Noyer No.071021**  
2023

Walnut wood

90 x 22 x 13,5 cm | 35.4 x 8.7 x 5.3 in





**Sculpture Noyer No.021021**  
2023

Walnut wood

75 x 30,5 x 13 cm | 29.5 x 12 x 5.1 in



**Sculpture Noyer No.041021**  
2023

Walnut wood

100 x 33,5 x 5 cm | 39.4 x 13.2 x 2 in



**Michel  
Abboud**





**M**ichel Abboud is a New York-based artist and architect known for his boundary-pushing designs and provocative projects. After earning a Masters in Advanced Architectural Design, he founded the award-winning architectural practice SOMA. Abboud has received critical acclaim and prestigious awards for his architectural work, including the World Architecture Award and the James Beard award. One of his notable projects, 45 Park Place, made him one of the youngest architects to design and execute a skyscraper in New York.

In recent years, Abboud has transitioned from architecture to art, combining the two disciplines through large-scale parametric sculptures. These sculptures are the result of 15 years of research, utilising advanced digital tools and scripting software to generate complex forms. His sculptures, such as Totem and Digital Versicolor, represent the physical embodiment of the digital world, with each three-dimensional pixel symbolising the smallest unit of a digital image. The centrality of Totem symbolises the role of technology in connecting people, while sculptures like Digital Versicolor and Pixel Tree defy traditional notions of balance and equilibrium. The sculptures, composed of meticulously arranged cubes, represent the physical embodiment of the digital world and the influence of technology on society. Despite the advanced digital tools used in their creation, Abboud's sculptures are built by hand, highlighting the artisanal nature of his work.

Abboud's artistic journey also includes painting. His debut solo show, "Unfolded," showcased paintings using high viscosity acrylic paint applied with his hands as his tools. He creates emotionally evocative works that reflect on conflict from war-torn environments, both internal and external. The folded canvas pieces explore the materiality of form and content. By manipulating the canvas through folding, Abboud challenges traditional distinctions between support and object, medium and product.

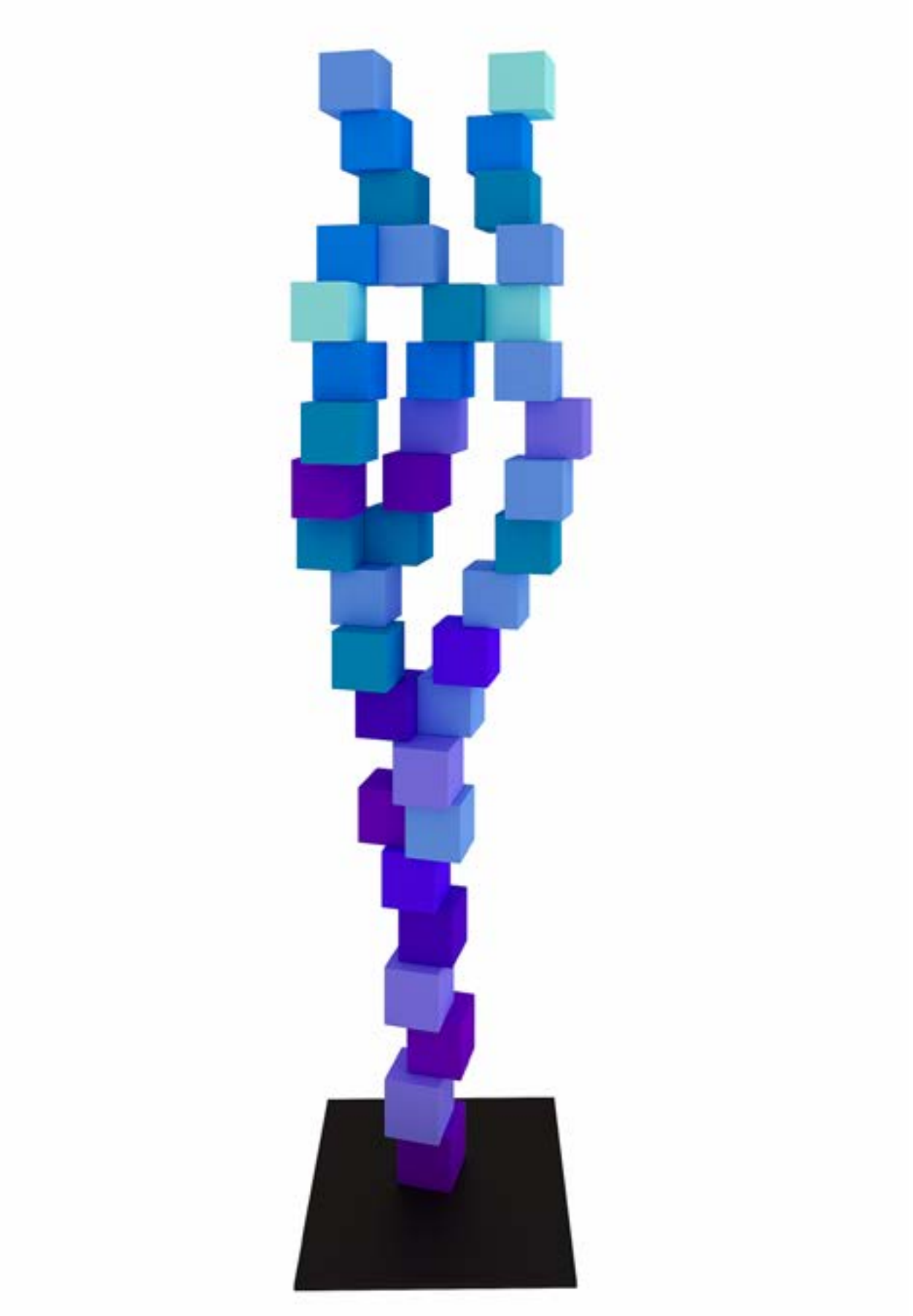
Each piece is unique, with folds that create a dynamic interplay of light and colour, further blurring the line between two-dimensional and three-dimensional art.

**Ice**

2023

Solid wood

180 x 45 x 28 cm | 70.9 x 17.7 x 11 in





**Earth**  
2023

Solid wood

180 x 34,2 x 28,7 cm | 70.9 x 13.5 x 11.3 in



**Force**  
2023

Solid wood

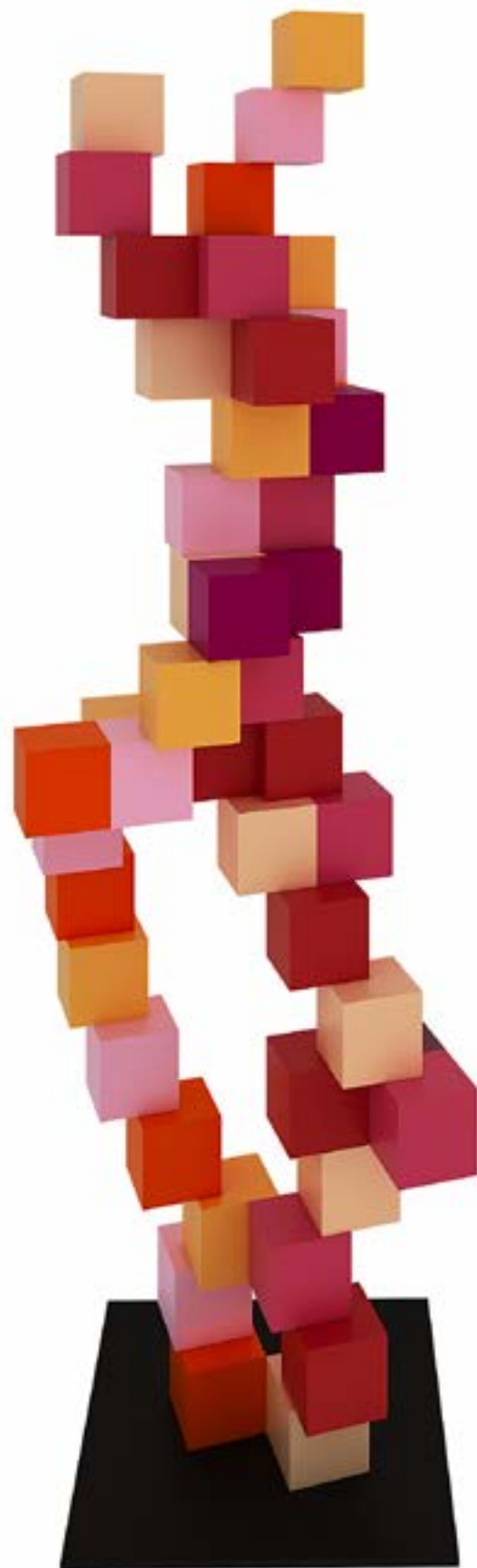
180 x 29,4 x 33,8 cm | 70.9 x 11.6 x 13.3 in



**Fire**  
2023

Solid wood

180 x 35 x 41,4 cm | 70.9 x 13.8 x 16.3 in



Wind  
2023

Solid wood

180 x 45,9 x 22,3 cm | 70.9 x 18 x 8.8 in





**Water**  
2023

Solid wood

180 x 32,9 x 28,8 cm | 70.9 x 13 x 11.3 in

**Mouna**  
**Rebeiz**



**M**ouna Rebeiz is a Lebanese-Canadian painter based in London. She grew up surrounded by musicians, painters and poets, who influenced her painting.

Fascinated by the multiple facets of the human being and the human psyche, she studied psychology at the Sorbonne and at Saint Joseph University in Beirut.

She travelled extensively, and then in 1995 met Alix de la Source, a lecturer at the Louvre specialising in 18th-century painting, who taught her about the techniques of the great masters. She perfected her mastery of patinas in the Renaissance courses, and studied with Abraham Pincas, a painter and teacher at ENSBA Paris, and with Mohamed El Rawas, a Lebanese painter and engraver teaching at the fine arts school in Beirut.

In her works, both figurative and abstract, Mouna Rebeiz captures the energy of life itself, as well as the life of women, expressed at its simplest, as a universal crucible of emotions. Her great sculptures, like revisited totems, are set to the rhythms of present time in the playfulness of space.

**Rise Six**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood

214 x 102 x 55 cm | 84.3 x 40.2 x 21.7 in





**Rise One**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood  
108 x 45 x 45 cm | 42.5 x 17.7 x 17.7 in



**Rise Four**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood

242 x 55 x 55 cm | 95.3 x 21.7 x 21.7 in





**Rise Three**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood

176 x 50 x 50 cm | 69.3 x 19.7 x 19.7 in

**Rise Five**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood

242 x 116 x 55 cm | 95.3 x 45.7 x 21.7 in





**Rise Two**  
2023

Eco-friendly wood

148 x 45 x 45 cm | 58.3 x 17.7 x 17.7 in

"In my Element" is presented by Opera Gallery Beirut  
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Foch 94, Foch Avenue  
Beirut Central District, Lebanon  
T + 961 1 971 471  
M + 961 76 792 424  
beirut@operagallery.com

Opening hours  
Mon - Sat: 10 am - 7 pm

OPERA GALLERY

Foch 94, Foch Avenue, Beirut Central District, Lebanon | T + 961 1 971 471 | beirut@operagallery.com | operagallery.com

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