

ATHAR JABER (IRAQ / NETHERLANDS B. 1982)

Born in 1982 in Rome to a family of artists, Athar Jaber grew up across Europe, particularly in Florence, Italy, which profoundly shaped his artistic vision.

Building on the classical notion of the mind trapped within the body, as put forward by Michelangelo in his series of Slaves or Prisoners, Athar expands this concept, using the body as a metaphor for socio-political dynamics that entrap both individuals and entire societies. The body becomes a means to address power dynamics, social structures, and the human condition.

The sculptures and drawings present the body as distorted, fragmented, and broken, simultaneously evoking both beauty and brutality. The body stands as a testament to structural and systemic violence; the central focus of the artist's PhD research, which provides a strong theoretical foundation for his practice.

Known for his technical skills, Athar is a sculptor who honors the tradition of classical sculpture while infusing it with a contemporary perspective through experimental approaches. In contrast to the traditional sculpting method—where detailed clay models are created first and then transposed into stone by a team of specialized assistants—these figures are carved directly by the artist himself into the prestigious Statuario marble from Carrara, using a technique known as Taille Direct. This approach reflects an inherent dialogue between artist and material, with the stone — its history, texture, and form — and the artist's conceptual framework guiding Athar's hand and mind to shape figures that transcend the purely visual.

While Athar's primary focus is on stone sculpture, his artistic practice also spans performance, video, photography, and text. He has exhibited his work extensively across Europe. Solo exhibitions include the National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana, Cuba (2018) and Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, Florence, Italy (2015). His work has also been featured in major international group exhibitions and public programs, including the Abu Dhabi Public Art Biennale (2024), the Bruges Triennale, Belgium (2021), the 6th Lubumbashi Biennial, DRC (2019), Rudolfinum Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic (2019), and The Palestinian Museum, Birzeit, Occupied West Bank (2017).

Athar's sculptures are part of numerous private and public collections, including SMAK Ghent, the Barjeel Art Foundation, The Palestinian Museum, the National Museum of Fine Arts in Havana, the National Museum of Lubumbashi, and the FAO Headquarters in Rome, among others.

The artist currently lives and works in the U.A.E

