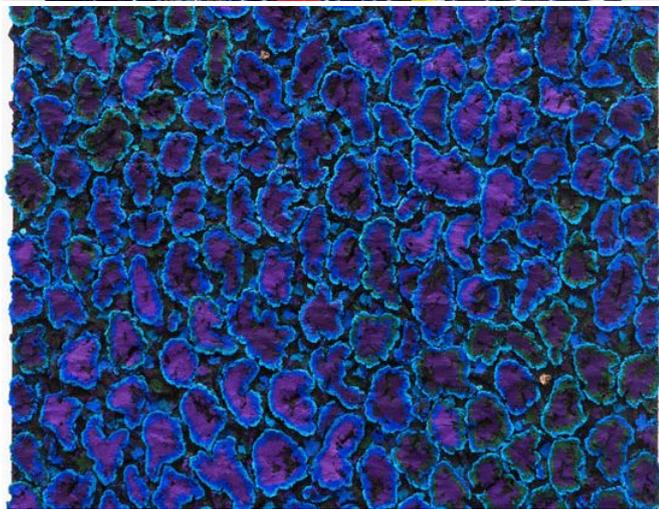


Five Facts About Nabil Nahas



Beirut-born Nabil Nahas is one of the most significant Lebanese contemporary artists. Escaping the role of a political commentator, he approaches art in the purest way, most likely to reflect upon the colours of the Mediterranean landscape, its cedars and palms. His influences are a synthesis of the East and the West, resulting in a unique combination of abstraction, realism and decorative arts. The artistic evolution of Nahas is now documented in a new monograph by Rizzoli. We decided to look through the facts and compile a capsule lesson.

He came to America in the 1970s.

Starting at the Louisiana State University in 1971, Nahas also studied at Yale. After that, he moved to New York, where his career took off, as he mixed the Middle Eastern influences with freshly-explored American abstract art of the 20th century.

His paintings resemble Islamic patterns.

Nahas envisioned his monochrome, dense pictures to recreate some of the most vivid influences on his work – the patterns of Islamic art. By adding pumice, powder and volcanic rock to the paint, he created unusual textures. Deriving from other genres such as impressionism, abstraction and pointillism, the Lebanese artist led them to the crossroads where Western and Middle-Eastern could interact. In his own words: 'Being Lebanese, we are multicultural at birth.'

Starfish has become his symbol.

Strolling down the Southampton Beach in 1991, Nahas found it littered with starfish, thrown by the tumultuous sea. He was attracted to the geometrical composition it created with the wet sand, as creature's pentagonal shape brought Islamic architecture in mind. Since then, the silhouettes has become a starting point for many of Nahas abstract works.

He believed the good painting is reflection of the times we live in.

When asked about his motivations, Nahas defined the role of a painter as a hand that can hold the mirror reflecting an era. He also debated on the role of an art critic, put in a difficult position of a judge. Eventually, it is his role to assess how much of artwork's substance will remain.

His art represented an artistic 'eco-system'.

In an interview with Bomb Magazine, Nahas described his creative process: 'There are a lot of different systems for me co-existing in the same painting, and I like to think of the different shapes I'm using.' Claiming to be an esthete, his artworks depict a certain eco-system, exposing the links between small fragments of the world.

Nabil Nahas is out now via Rizzoli. Available [here](#).