

Marwan Chamaa – Artist Statement

I work with what's already in front of us. Images we've seen too many times. Words we barely notice anymore. Symbols that used to mean something and still pretend they do. Pop culture is where all of that lives, so it's where I feel most comfortable working.

My practice comes from paying attention, watching how images behave once they leave their original context. Advertising, comics, political icons, slogans, logos. They circulate, repeat, lose their edge, then gain new power somewhere else. I'm interested in that moment when something familiar starts to feel strange again. That's where the work begins.

I paint, collage, and build surfaces quickly. Materials matter because they decide how much weight an image carries. My background in graphic design never really left me. I still think about balance, rhythm, typography, and how an image hits before you've had time to think about it. Text enters the work the same way it enters life, sometimes loud, sometimes broken, sometimes just being there.

Humor is part of how I survive the work. If something can't laugh at itself, I don't trust it. Color, exaggeration, and visual overload pull you in, then start misbehaving. What feels playful usually isn't empty. It carries weight, pressure, and contradiction.

Across my work I keep circling the same questions. How do images flatten belief. How does ideology turn decorative. Why do we trust symbols more than people. Faces become surfaces. Icons become products. Everything shares the same visual space because that's how the world actually looks.

Living between Beirut, Munich, and the United States sharpened my sense of how images travel faster than meaning. Context slips. Symbols survive. Identity blurs. I don't try to resolve it. I work inside it.