

2010 - 2015

**marwan chamaa**

Marwan Chamaa's art spans over three decades of thematic interpretations of the world around him. It is fundamentally his view of the world as he sees it with an ironic and sometimes sarcastic undertone.

Born in Beirut - Lebanon, raised in Munich - Germany, and having lived in the USA for more than a decade, exposed him to different cultures and formed him into the eclectic versatile artist he is today, viewing the world and interpreting it through diverse mediums.

Marwan Chamaa's art journey began in the mid eighties at the American University of Beirut and two years later at the Beirut University College (now known as the Lebanese American University) where he enrolled in the fine arts and graphic design department. In the late 80s he was enrolled in the Corcoran School of Art in Washington DC, where he focused on fine arts and computer art, which at the time was just in its infant stages.

During college Marwan focused on creating art for the sake of creating art and experimented with a select group of artists on different types of media and techniques. Marwan Chamaa was a founding member of the "X-ism" movement while in university. This movement, which included a diverse array of ideologies, fashion styles and forms of expression, as well as visual arts, music, literature and film. The subculture is largely characterized by anti-establishment views of the academic structures in art and the promotion of individual freedom of expression.

In the 80s Marwan Chamaa's art was a collection of impressionistic interpretations of his surroundings including collages, a collection of which was exhibited in 1991 as a duo, and a few months later as a solo exhibition.

His background in graphic design/ fine arts and interest in the consumer world led him in the late eighties to co-found with two college mates Art Factory, a graphic design production house that served as a vehicle for launching creative ideas in the advertising world.

In the early to mid 90s, when downtown Beirut was undergoing a massive makeover, Marwan's paintings took on old Beirut: Beirut of the 50s and 60s. His paintings marveled at the vibrancy of the old souks, the details brought out in his signature use of bold colors. Although Marwan was residing in the USA at the time, he still pursued his project and made use of old pictures and postcards, turning them into homage to the city under reconstruction.

Towards the end of the 90s and the turn of the century, so-to-speak, Marwan Chamaa painted New York City. Living in the eclectic and dynamic East Village in New York City, which was the mecca for artists, musicians, writers, and poets, exposed Marwan to Latin beats, Indian kitsch, Japanese punk, and Ukrainian flavors. The chaos of China Town and the Godfather feel of Little Italy, the lights, sounds and captivating larger than life feel of the brightly illuminated Times Square iconified as "the crossroads of the world", the yellow cabs zigzagging, honking through the streets and avenues, the business world of mid-town, and the mono-chromatic uniqueness of Wall Street, the über artistic edge of Soho, Noho, West Village, Chelsea, the former epicenter of the poor immigrant cultures of the Lower East side and the jaggedness of Harlem... all left an eternal imprint in Marwan's creative mind.

The streets of Manhattan were interpreted in a vibrant style with large expressive brushwork and primary colors, all representative of the world as seen by Marwan Chamaa.

Throughout his career, his surroundings manifested themselves in his work. His physical world is his muse. He would spend hours on end in Times Square just absorbing the electronic billboards, fascinated by their staggering overwhelming hypnotic effect on his creativity.

Marwan embodies the traits of a paparazzi, storyteller, and an epicurean.

# POP



*Bahoutik ya Hliwa (I love you beautiful), 2011, oil on canvas, 110 x 150 cm (43.31 x 59.06 inch)*

## LA DOLCE VITA

The “La Dolce Vita” weaves the components of our world with a little dash of retro nostalgia. It is a collection of 12 paintings that flow from one canvas to the next to form a 22 meters mural. The collection is an illustrated narrative of a romantic story set against the backdrop of a decadent metropolis starring characters very representative of our time.





Royal Flush, 2011, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)



In the name of love, 2012, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)



It ain't spinach, 2012, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)



La dolce overdose, 2012, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)





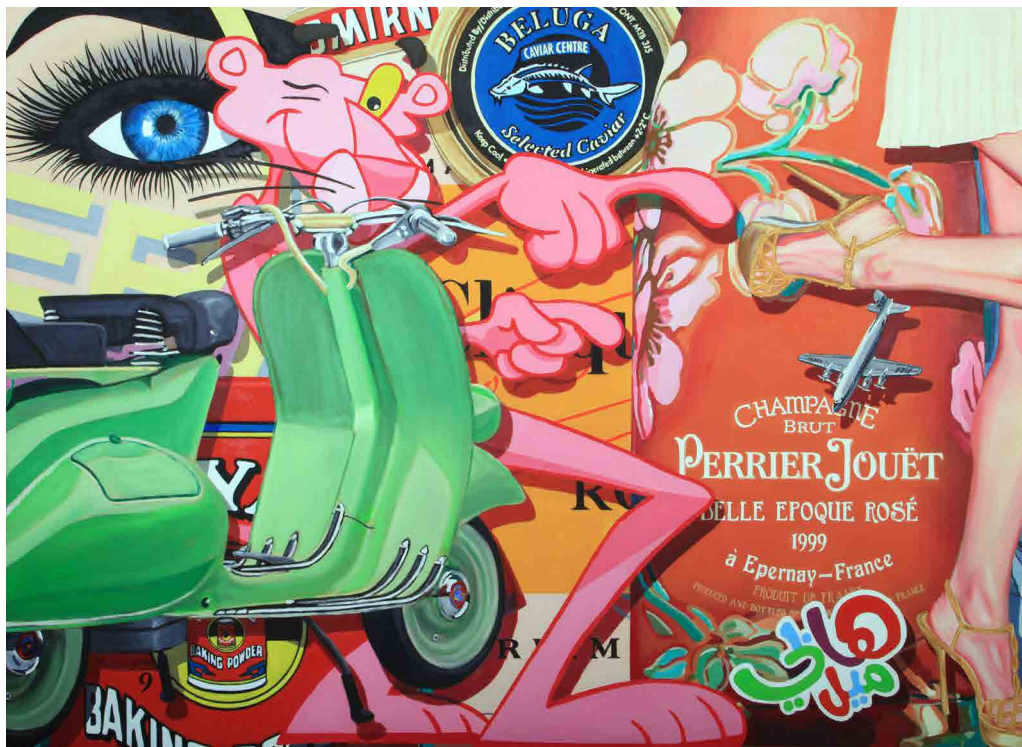
To be young again, 2012, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)



In the eye of the paparazzi, 2012, oil & acrylic on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)









Taaqah, 2013, oil & acrylic on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)

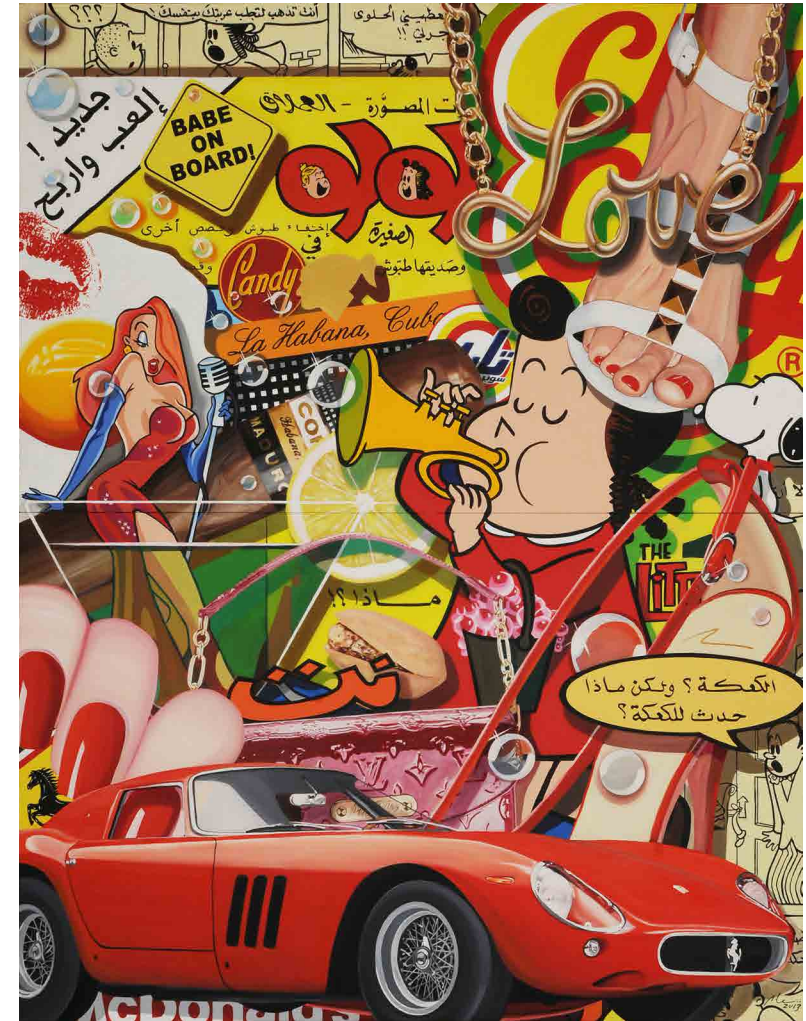


Coming clean, 2013, oil on canvas, 132 x 180 cm (51.97 x 70.87 inch)



## CARAMELS, SUPERHEROES, FRIED EGGS ET CHOCOLATS

“Caramels, superheroes, fried eggs et chocolats”, is about the struggle between good and evil and the replacement of moral ethical standards with the decadence found in our everyday life. The “It” girl makes an appearance in this series as well, and both triptych and diptych portray her struggle with her choices and her loss of innocence.



Sunny Side Up, 2013, diptych, oil and acrylic on canvas, 240 x 185 cm (94.49 x 72.83 inch)





I Need a Hero, 2013, Triptych, oil and acrylic on canvas, 191 x 405 cm (75.2 x 159.45 inch)





Shaken Not Stirred, 2013, triptych, oil and acrylic on canvas, 191 x 405 cm (75.2 x 159.45 inch)

## UNPLUGGED

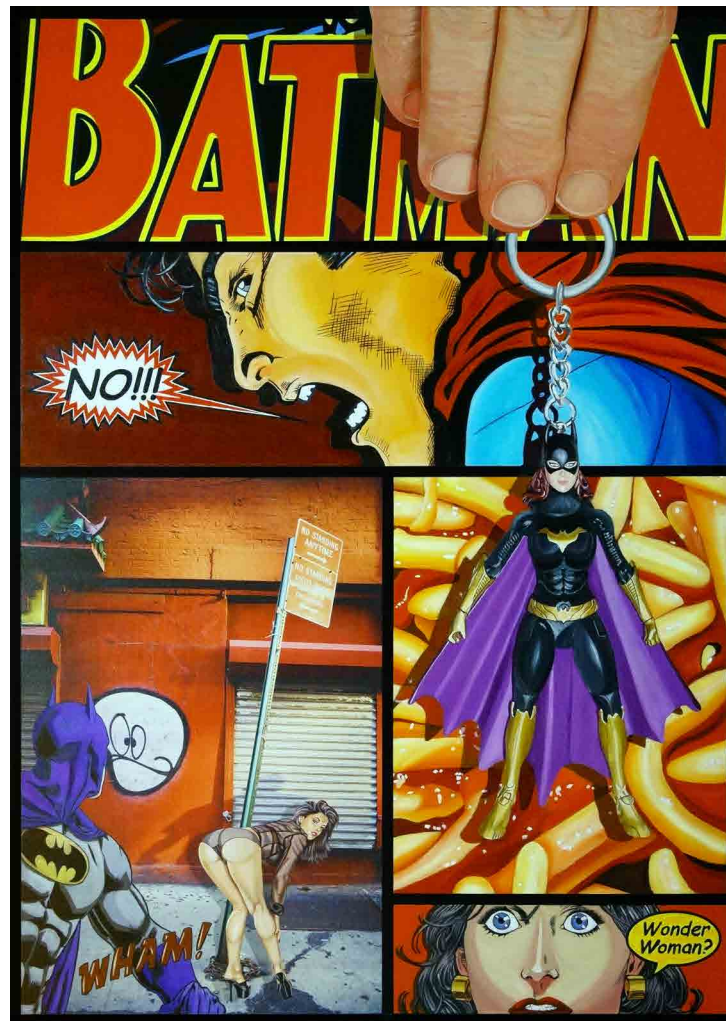
Marwan's New York is devoid of veneer and more flawed than any outsider could ever imagine. The series, "unplugged", is partly based on photographs that Carlos René Pérez took of New York City. René an accomplished photographer was Marwan's neighbor in the East Village of New York City where he spent many years of his adult life. The images chosen for this series from René's collection speak intimately to Marwan. They represent a snapshot of his old neighborhood and are a vignette of spots in and around the city he used to frequent.



*Astor Place, between Lafayette Street & Cooper Square, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 140 cm (39.37 x 55.12 inch)*



Grand Street between Crosby & Broadway, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm (39.37 x 55.12 inch)



Pell Street between Mott & Doyers Street, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm (39.37 x 55.12 inch)





Little India, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 110 x 140 cm (43.31 x 55.12 inch) unframed, 127 x 157 cm framed

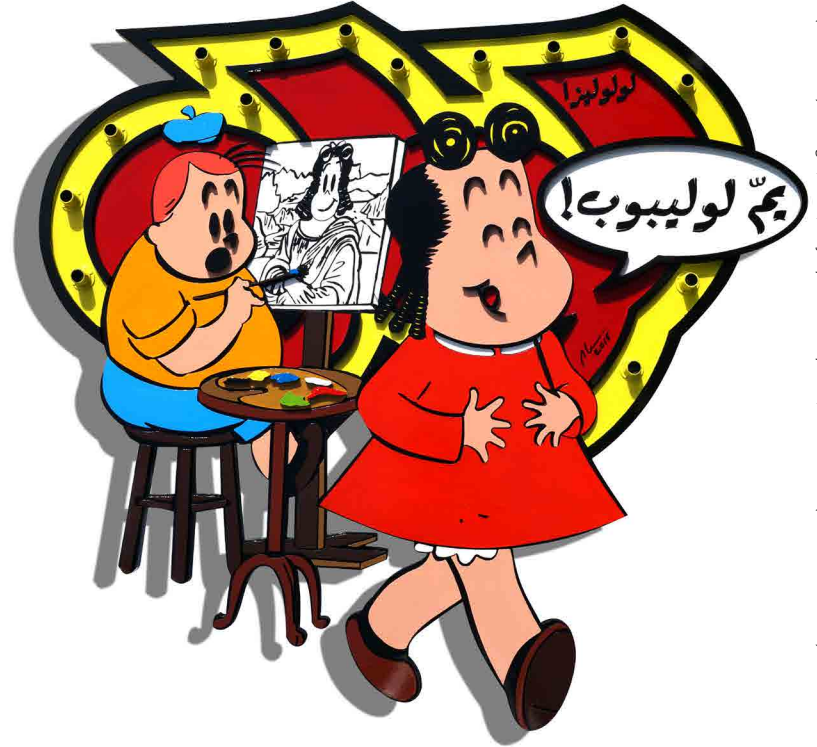
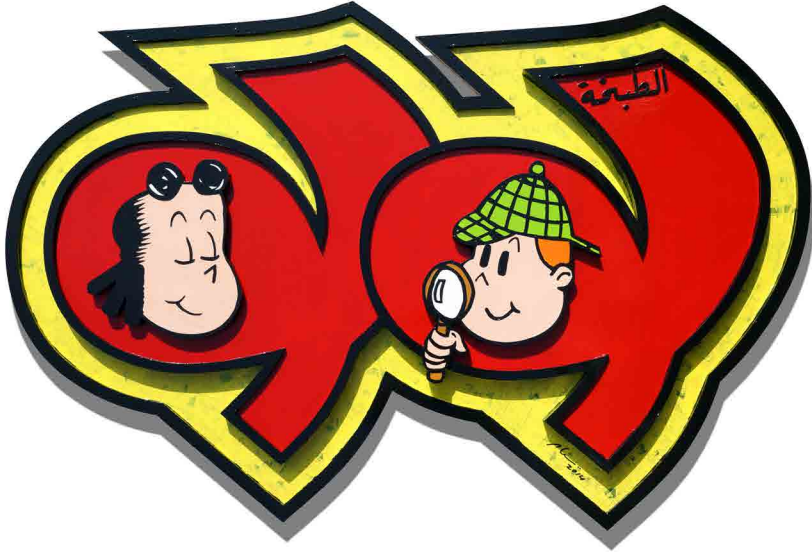


Corner 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue & East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, 2014, mixed media on canvas, 140 x 100 cm (39.37 x 55.12 inch)

## MASHROU3 LULU/ THE LULU PROJECT

Mashrou3 Lulu is about the adventures of Lulu Moppet, nicknamed Little Lulu, and her friend Thomas Tompkins, nicknamed Tubby. The series is painted in the style reminiscent to the original The Little Lulu comic strip book covers. It depicts a playful and innocent adventure of Little Lulu and Tubby, incorporating other characters like Hergé's character Captain Archibald Haddock and other hidden surprises.

Al-Tabkhra (installation), 2015, acrylic paint on PVC panels, 160 x 100 cm (62.99 x 39.37 inch)



Lulu-Liza (installation) with light, 2015, acrylic paint on PVC panels, 142 x 137 cm (55.91 x 53.94 inch)





Shu Tabkha Lulu?, triptych, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 180 x 360 cm (70.87 x 141.73 inch)





## ECSTATIC

Beirut, it is the summer of 2015, the summer of discontent...

Marwan Chamaa currently living in Beirut, Lebanon is witnessing what is being baptized as a revolution. The use of the word “revolution” may be used too leisurely and too loosely according to Marwan Chamaa. True, the voices of the people are loud, the social media pages all full with slogans, satire, critique, poems, songs, velfies, and selfies in the midst of the demonstrators, all in support of change and accountability. This is a reality TV revolution, every minute, angle, viewpoint, and aspect is being broadcasted live on most local TV channels. Even eager TV reporters are throwing themselves amidst of the action, sometimes losing their objectivity and credibility. This is bold, brave, innocent, chaotic, and naive. “All of this is very inspiring” says Chamaa, “it brings out the creativity of many” but is this enough to make it a true revolution, are we really ready to pay the price, do we have the endurance? A “revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another” - Mao Zedong.

In his latest series, Ecstatic, Marwan again uses his surroundings as his muse as he sets forth two large paintings. Inspired by the likes of Vitaly Komar, Alex Melamid, Wang Guangyi, and Alexander Kosolapov who use communist propaganda symbols as a base to convey a message. However, unlike those great artists Marwan is not criticizing the communist drives but rather using the original propaganda posters of Chairman Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People’s Republic of China, as a backdrop to Lebanize his message. The success of the massive revolution in China has many similarities to the success of McDonald’s mass branding according to Marwan.

The Chinese revolution started in the 40s, McDonald’s was founded around the same time - China has the world’s largest population, McDonald’s is the world’s largest fast food restaurants chain - the Chinese revolution affected in one way or another millions around the globe; McDonald’s serves around 68 million customers daily in 119 countries - they both lead and reorganize their operations using production line principles. The main recipe for success of McDonald’s and the People’s Republic of China is the well greased organization and purposeful leadership. Therefore, it is fitting to use slogans from McDonald’s that seem at first glance to convey a straight forward message of love towards its products/ leader and to question the secret ingredient of its/ his success. Maybe things are not what they seem, maybe a simple message associated to a household name like McDonald’s points out that a revolution can be easily high-jacked by giant conglomerates, moguls, and tycoons by hiding their agendas using the people’s just demands, subliminal brainwashing perhaps? Or can a revolution only succeed if it is organized and operated like a business? Or could it be the combination of the colors red and yellow that make it successful?





## THE TARBOUSH CHRONICLES

"The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself."

Friedrich Nietzsche

Are you a real blonde? A brunette? Is that your natural eye color? Do you follow the Dalai Lama? Are you a vegetarian? Is that your real accent? Do you dress the way you want to dress or are you following someone else's ideals? In this mass-produced era, it is harder than ever to be yourself. Nothing beats the original and nothing really fits better than being you.

"There is no one alive who is you-er than you!"\*, because no matter what you do, you'll always be a tarboush.\*\*

\* Dr. Suess

\*\* Fez



No. 2, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 20 cm (7.87 x 7.87 in)



No. 5/ 6, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 40 cm (7.87 x 15.75 inch)



No. 3/ 4, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 40 cm (7.87 x 15.75 inch)





No. 10, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 20 cm (7.87 x 7.87 inch)



No. 7, 8, 9, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 60 cm (7.87 x 23.61 inch)

## CHAGRIN D'AMOUR - THE MUSICAL

This series exudes of Marwan Chamaa's signature sarcastic and tongue in cheek tone. Chagrin d'amour – the musical's theme is Love with all of its heartaches, revenge, and passion.

The mélange of the Occident and Orient, as is typical in Chamaa's works is evident in "Chagrin d'amour – the musical". Vintage Western comic book covers as well vignettes from famous pieces of Pop-Artists are wittingly woven with 1940's - 60's Arabic love song lyrics.



When?, Version 1, 2015, oil paint and acrylic paint on canvas, 120 x 167.5 cm (47.24 x 65.94 inch)













Not before a year, acrylic on canvas, 99.5 x 219 cm (39.17 x 86.22 inch)



Please visit my website to reveiw my work preceeding 2010

**[www.MarwanChamaa.com](http://www.MarwanChamaa.com)**

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