KAMEEL HAWA **TYPOGRAPHIC** SCULPTURES



The Shape of the Word

The passion for letterforms, calligraphy and typography has been a personal interest and a legacy of our design house for over three decades. It took on various forms, from freehand calligraphy to logotypes to award-winning Arabic typefaces. A natural next step was to give this passion its fourth dimension by converting the flat, yet vibrant words into free-standing typographic sculptural works that punctuate the cityscapes as artistic landmarks.

Turning a word into a three-dimensional object is not difficult, but the challenge lies in imbibing this object an artistic quality.

As for art pieces, it is of essence that the word form is born in a moment of passion. A moment when the artist is 'uttering' the word with the right emotion, only this utterance is visual rather than vocal. The core of the effort is beyond a mere composition of the letterforms. It lies into shaping, combining and orchestrating these forms into a compelling whole that beholds the word's meaning and significance. Evidently the letterforms do have a role to play, but more as tools or construction blocks towards the end result.

Voicing 'Beirut' as a hometown and a skyline, "Art" as a multiplicity of compositions that reflect the infinity of artistic expression; that is how they earn their legitimacy to be converted into typographic sculptures, be it large for public display, or even smaller statuettes or trophies for a more personal and individual experience.

The following pages are an invitation for you to explore the process and end result of our most prominent typographic sculptures, with the hope that it will be a doorway to many more.

-Kameel Hawa



Beirut

2015 | Zaitounah Bay, Beirut 6m high. Zinc Alloy Sponsored by CCC contractors

Designed in 2000, and initially presented in 2012 as part of Beirut Art Week, this Neo-Kufic typographic interpretation stands tall as an imposing monument in downtown Beirut.

Words from the Designer: "I see Beirut in this sculpture; I only see Beirut itself and no other city. As a design, it belongs to what is now referred to as word art."

Beirut Variations (From left to right) Pendant, wrist bracelet, earrings and trophy











AUB

2016 | American University of Beirut 3.6m high. Carved from Red Cedar Wood Sponsored by AUB on the occasion of its 150th Anniversary

Designed for the American University of Beirut by Kameel Hawa, this monument reads 'A.U.B'—the University acronym as pronounced in Arabic, popular and intimate pronunciation which the designer intended to retain and convert into a modern typographic sculpture. Through this art piece, Hawa proclaims—on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the university—that this much-revered institute of education has grown to become a full native of the land. This belonging is further accentuated by the material—cedar wood, as the cedar tree is known to be a national symbol.



FANN

(Arabic for 'Art') September 2014 | Samir Kassir Square, Downtown Beirut Steel and Wood On the occasion of Beirut Art Week 2018.











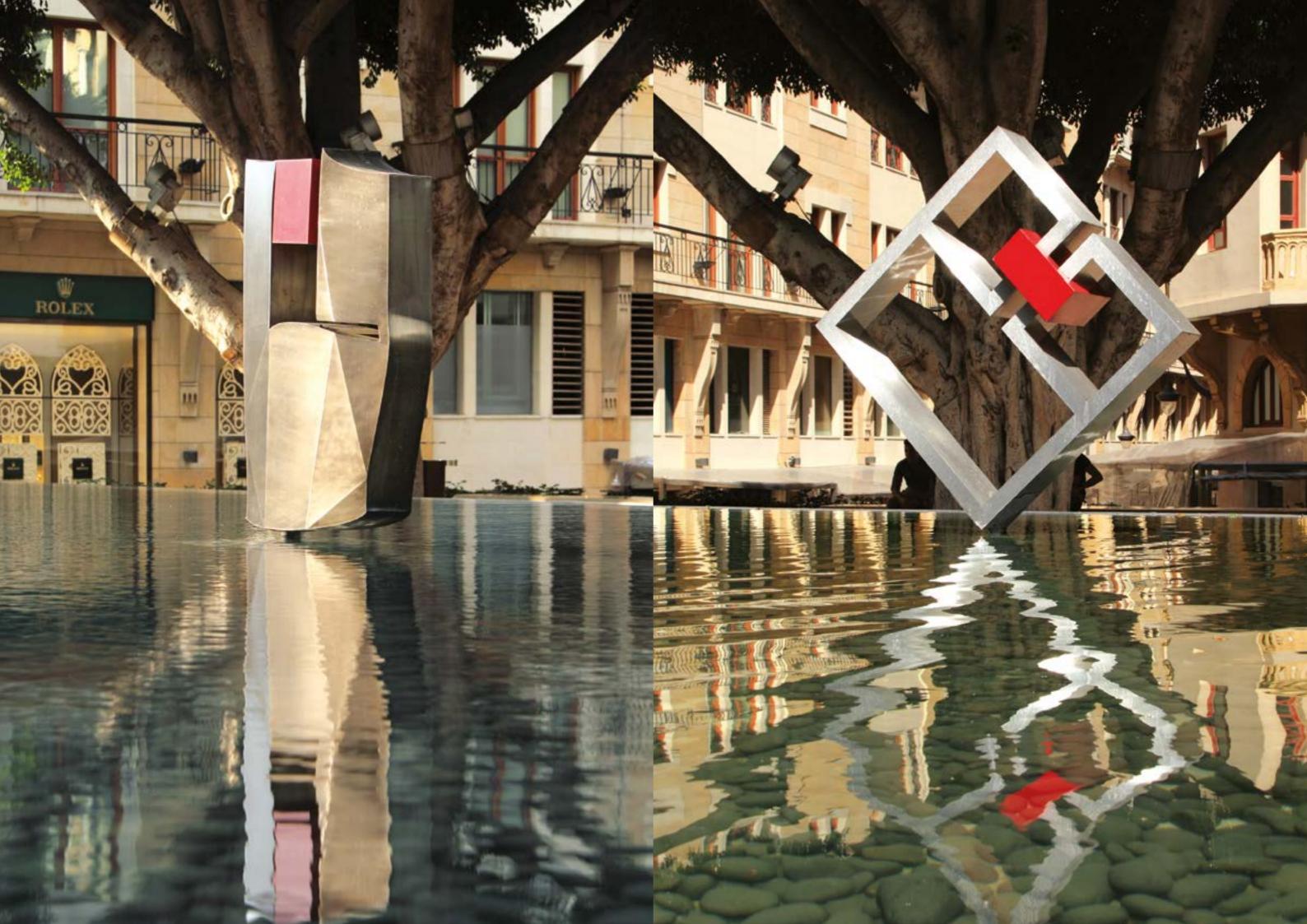




The Arabic word 'Fann' is composed of two letters, of which the forms present some affinity, repetition and rhythm: both rounded and punctuated by a dot, giving plenty of room for visual playfulness.

The result: a showcase of the immense flexibility of word forms, more specifically in the Arabic alphabet. The resulting shapes were turned into large sculptures and offered for public display on the Samir Kassir pool in Downtown Beirut.

This series of typographic sculptures started more as an experiment, an exercise, an exploration of the infinite variations that can be created with a single word. By definition, art for art's sake. Or 'fann lil fann', as stated in Arabic.









Fann Sculptures, Interaction





OKAZ

2008 | Saudi Arabia 30cm high. Engraved Steel on Wooden Base

Celebrated as both a commercial and poetic event, the Sooq Okaz yearly festival's main feature is the 'Poet of the Year' award for which this trophy is designed—one of the most praised trophies designs from Hawa's collection. Sooq Okaz is believed to have culminated with the hanging of the winning poem—also called "Mu'allaqua" meaning "hanging"—on the Qa'aba, which is the main inspiration behind the cubic shape from which emanates the volatile, poetic scroll. The logo engraved on the cube is also one of Hawa's word arts.



ADABI

2010 | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia 35cm high. Steel

The Literary Club of Riyadh city is widely known as Adabi Arriyadh—Adabi meaning 'Literary'. 'Adabi' was designed in a modern art style to reflect the avant-garde trend of literary circles. When the gift was produced, it was intended to be nothing less than a cubic art sculpture.



FIKR

(Arabic for 'Thought') 2010 | Beirut 20-30cm high. Mixed Materials

Trophy of the annual conference of the Arab Thought Foundation since 2010 to date.

The shape is an artistic, semi-abstract interpretation of 'Thought'—a head leaning on a fist in a thoughtful pose—dare we compare it to a post-modern Rodin's 'Thinker'. The dot of the letter 'fa' is heavy, embodying the burden of thought. The overall shape is that of a question mark, with the explanatory tag line: "What is thought but a question?"



ALEPH

(Arabic for 'A')
2016 | Beirut Art Week
2m high. Steel
Beirut Souks, Downtown Beirut

This sculpture is an artistic depiction of Aleph, the first letter of not only the Phoenician alphabet, but also of all alphabets. As Hawa's contribution to the Beirut Art Week (September 13-20 2016), the sculpture was coincidentally, yet quite ideally erected amidst the Beirut Souks area in downtown Beirut facing Antoine Bookstore, one of the most iconic and historic bookstores of the country.

Aleph is the first of a set of 22 such interpretations, a Hawa's dream-project in the making for the last two years, that of a sculptural typographic park in homage to the Phoenician Alphabet, considered by most scholars to be the mother of all modern alphabets, including Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic.







