|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **About you** | **[Salutation]** | Tina | [Middle name] | Sherwell |
| [Enter your biography] | | | |
| The International Academy of Art Palestine | | | |

|  |
| --- |
| **Your article** |
| **Hallaj, Mustafa (1938-2002)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| [Enter an **abstract** for your article] |
| Mustafa Hallaj is considered a pioneer of Palestinian graphic arts, as well as an important figure in the country’s resistant art movement. He was born in 1938 in Salame village in the Jaffa district. His early childhood memories of exodus and exile from the homeland in 1948 were to be a recurring theme that haunted his artistic works. In 1958, he went to study sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. In 1968, he completed his postgraduate studies of higher education in the Luxor Atelier, where he focused on the history of ancient Egyptian, Canaanite, and Phoenician art, which had a significant influence on his entire oeuvre. After 1968, his interest changed increasingly from sculpture to etching, engraving and printing, which he found to be a more accessible medium that could reach large audiences. Hallaj spent eight years in Beirut, and left following the Israeli invasion of the city in 1982. He lost a significant amount of his studio when leaving Beirut due to severe bombing. He went to Damascus, and after recovering from the devastating events in Beirut, he established The Naji al-Ali gallery in 1987. Linear forms, outlines, and silhouettes dominate his work, which is structured mostly as murals. Hallaj is most known for his etchings and woodcuts, and his distinctive style of representation, characterised by a bold linear style, which draws on ancient traditions.  In an interview in 1979, when asked about the relationship between art and Palestinian revolution, Hallaj stated: ‘The artist is a continuous revolutionary power, revolting against the reality and criticizing it in an image that is more beautiful and supreme than reality itself. The artist is the dream cell in the body of the nation.’  His work is infused with references to mythology and symbolism, inherent from his readings of historical texts. Recurring images in his work include the bull, the cow, birds, heroic male figures, nude females with flowing long hair, forests, and half-human, half-animal forms. His figures assume a modest and fearful relationship to the elements of the natural world and the vast terrain of the earth, in which the relationship between animals, humans, and the landscape are intertwined, undetermined, and continually fluid and permeable.  His major work was *River of Life*, which was incomplete at his death. It is a monumental work, 104 metres in length, and begins with the creation of man and primitive life on earth, but includes also the visual memories, myths, and references related to the Palestinian struggle. (Al Hoash 43) Hallaj remained in Damascus until 2002, when he died tragically in a fire in The Naji Ali Gallery while trying to save sections *River of Life* from the flames.  During his career, Hallaj was recipient of several awards, including: A silver medal for the Palestinian Exhibition, Cairo, 1961; First Prize for Sculpture, Alexandria Biennale 1986; International Honorary Award, Sharjah Biennale 1995; Gold Prize for Etching Mahras Festival Tunis, 1997; and First Prize for Etching Laodicea Biennale, 1999. |
| Further reading:  ( Al Hoash Art Court)  (Hadidi)  (Halaby) |