



## PRESS RELEASE

**Lawrie Shabibi at Art Basel Qatar: Solo Exhibition and Representation of Amir Nour**

**Booth M312**

**February 3 – 7, 2026**

**M7 and Doha Design District, Downtown Doha, Qatar**

Lawrie Shabibi is pleased to announce representation of the Estate of Sudanese-American sculptor **Amir Nour** in the Middle East and North Africa.

Occupying a singular place in 20th-century art, Amir Nour (b. Shendi, Sudan 1939, d. Chicago, IL, 2023) articulated a visual language that bridges Arab, Islamic and African art, Western Modernism, and American Minimalism. While many of his sculptures share Minimalism's clarity and distillation, they remain inseparable from the landscapes, architectures, and cultural memory of Sudan. As he stated, "My minimalism is rooted in my experience and vision of my culture and history."

Our first showing of Amir Nour's work will be a solo presentation at the inaugural edition of **Art Basel Qatar** (3–7 February, M7, Qatar). Art Basel Qatar is Art Basel's fifth premier event and its newest show, curated by Wael Shawky around the theme *Becoming*. For the event, we present a focused selection of Nour's key works, each with significant exhibition history.

At the core of the presentation is **Serpent** (1970), an early masterpiece composed of thirty-four quarter-circular steel pipes—industrial in material yet refined in finish—embodying the poetic concision central to Nour's practice. **Serpent** is accompanied by two unique bronzes, **Doll** (1974) and **One and One** (1976), as well as a group of rare early lithographs from the 1960s, offering a succinct view into the foundations of his sculptural vocabulary.

**Serpent** demonstrates Nour's profound ability to balance minimalist austerity with symbolic weight. Its undulating geometry echoes the rhythmic lines of desert dunes, animal horns, and coiled vernacular patterns—abstraction that carries both physical dynamism and metaphorical resonance. As an embodiment of Nour's

pursuit of essential form, the work has been featured in major exhibitions including *Amir Nour: A Retrospective (1965–Present): Brevity is the Soul of Wit* at the Sharjah Art Foundation (2016–17); the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution (1994–95); and was illustrated in *African Arts* (Summer 1971).

Cast in bronze, **Doll** transforms the suggestion of a figurative object into a serene, abstract form composed of rounded, vessel-like volumes. Rooted in the shapes of calabashes and organic forms that marked Nour's early environment, the sculpture's gentle balance and interplay of interior and exterior space give it a contemplative calm. *Doll* has been exhibited at the Sharjah Art Foundation (2016–17, illustrated) and at the Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh (1976).

The monumental bronze **One and One** draws from the Sudanese *jabannah*—an everyday coffee or water dispenser—reimagining its elements as two interlocking bronze forms held in a poised relationship of tension and harmony. Through this work, Nour encapsulates his exploration of duality, rhythm, and the transformation of utilitarian shapes into a refined modernist language. The sculpture has been shown at the Sharjah Art Foundation (2016–17, illustrated), the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art (1994–95), and the Carnegie Institute (1976).

Created during Nour's formative period at the Slade School of Fine Art, his lithographs reflect his fascination with the stone matrix not only as a sculptural material but as a surface for elusive communication. In one of these, **Confessions**, delicate passages of Diwani script appear as traces of text—suggestive, rhythmic, yet intentionally unreadable—aligning Nour with early calligraphic experiments by Sudanese contemporaries such as Ibrahim El-Salahi and Ahmed Shibrain. *Confessions* was exhibited at MoMA P.S.1 in Okuwi Enwezor's *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994* (2002), and related works reside in private and institutional collections, including Chase Manhattan Bank and Fisk University. *Confessions* and other lithographs by Nour were exhibited at the African-American Institute, 1974, and at his retrospective at the Sharjah Art Foundation (2016–17).

Today, Amir Nour's works are held in major collections including the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution; The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University; Asilah Municipality, Morocco; the City of Chicago; and the Sharjah Art Foundation.

Bringing together sculpture and works on paper from across Nour's career, this presentation at Art Basel Qatar situates his practice within broader histories of modernism while reaffirming its deep cultural specificity. In doing so, the exhibition underscores Nour's enduring relevance and affirms his position as a pivotal figure whose work expands and redefines the narratives of 20th-century sculpture.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Amir Nour was a Sudanese – American sculptor, born in Shendi, Sudan. His work is a bridge between Western minimalism, Arab and African art. Known to curators and museum directors, his work has been shown in some of the most significant, epoch-making museum exhibitions of the past 30 years, including *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994*, 2001–2002, curated by Okwui Enwezor, shown at various institutions in the US and Germany, including MoMA PS1, and Museum Villa Stuck, Munich – “The show singlehandedly thrust Africa back into the culture of global contemporary art.” ( Kobena Mercer in *Fan Letter*, *Frieze*, 24 Jan 2019); and *Other Primary Structures*, curated by Jens Hoffman and Joanna Montaya, at the Jewish Museum, NYC (2014), a sequel to the seminal exhibition *Primary Structures*, the exhibition that introduced Minimalism to a broad public at the same museum in 1966.

From the late 1960s, Nour created a new a visual language, combining African-derived forms and a minimalist aesthetic. His early sculptures were produced contemporaneously with those of the major names of Minimalist art, such as Donald Judd, Sol Lewitt and Carl Andre.

However, Nour maintained that his work is quite separate from theirs: “I grew up in an entirely divergent environment, culture and religion...Yet my work and Western minimalism share the simplicity and purity of forms. My minimalism is rooted in my experience and vision of my culture and history”. The title of Nour’s 2016 retrospective “*Brevity is the Soul of Wit*” (from an Arabic proverb) explains his divergence from Western Minimalism– for inspiration his work looks to African sculpture, adobe architecture, Sudanese landscapes (deserts and plains), cattle horns, calabashes. Using arches, geometric and hemispheric shapes, he worked in bronze, stainless steel, moulded plastic, cement and fibreglass.

Amir Nour received diplomas from the Slade School of Art and the RCA in London, and a BFA and MFA from Yale University. This education introduced him to the vocabulary of the Western modernist tradition, and on the other hand, gave him the opportunity to mix with other non-Western artists and students, a major impetus for the discussion and dissemination of decolonisation. From 1969 Nour was based in Chicago, where he later taught at the City Colleges. Here he encountered the Civil Rights Movement and had friendships with members of the AfriCobra group and other Chicago-based collectives, and Black sculptors such as Richard Hunt and Melvin Edwards.

His works have been acquired by significant international collections, including National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution; The Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University; Asilah Municipality, Morocco; the City of Chicago; and the Sharjah Art Foundation.

## **ABOUT THE GALLERY**

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organises art historical exhibitions, working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors, the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presenting Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary art community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: [www.lawrieshabibi.com](http://www.lawrieshabibi.com)

## **PRESS INQUIRIES**

For press inquiries please contact:

Zarha Zammi

E. [zarha@lawrieshabibi.com](mailto:zarha@lawrieshabibi.com)

T. +971 4 346 9906