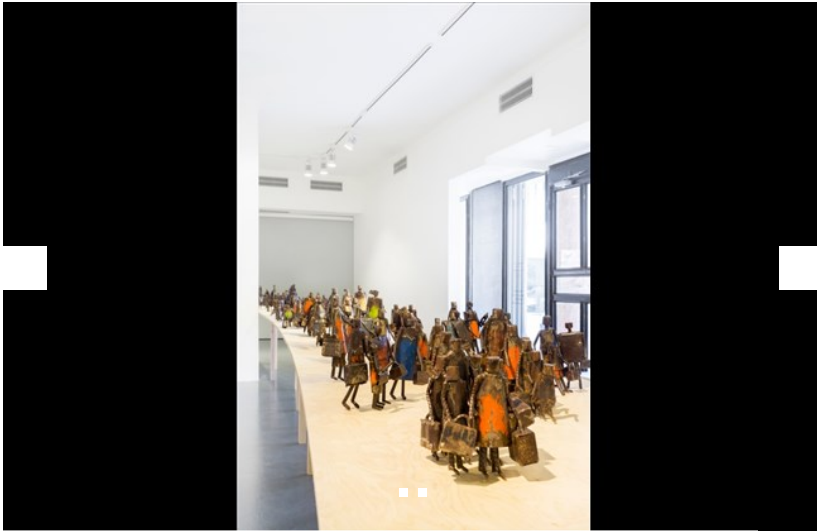


# THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

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## Scraps of society molded in metal



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Maghie Ghali | The Daily Star

BEIRUT: "Interminable Seasons of Migration," Agial Art Gallery's latest exhibition by Lebanese sculptor Ginane Makki Bacho, models the tragedy of Syrian refugees and issues of migration in general.

The project extends ideas Makki Bacho explored in her 2016 Saleh Barakat Gallery exhibition, "Civilization," where she showed her first series of figures crafted out of scrap metal and shrapnel.

Since then the artist has obsessively created hundreds of toy-sized metal figurines - depicting tattered travelers holding a few belongings in a single suitcase. Some walk alone, others form small family units. The many individual figures come together to create a winding procession, all fleeing a common threat.

"When I start working on something I can't stop," Makki Bacho told The Daily Star. "I keep going because it's my passion project. I compulsively keep adding figures. I would go to junk yards and the places you find broken cars, scrap pieces of tanks and chains to work with.

"Not only did it expedite my work but also had real meaning," she added. "We've been left with a civilization of scrap people that no one wants to look at or fix."

Most of the figurines are made out of bits of car metal, which are easily bent, painted in bright colors. Once heated and molded, only traces of burnt orange and blue remain, giving the impression of ripped and faded clothing on some figures.

Accompanying the centerpiece installation, the gallery walls are hung with bronze and wooden bas relief sculptures and depicting waves of migrants in movement.

The show also comments specifically on the Syrian conflict and Daesh (ISIS) atrocities, which have compelled millions of refugees to flee, many migrating to other countries.

"Despite us being in the 21st century, out of nowhere Daesh came and destroyed everything. We saw things we hadn't heard of since the Middle Ages," Makki Bacho said. "This show is hopefully a message for the new generation to think about what

has happened in the past and is still happening now, in order to seek a better future.”

Another installation made of bronze figurines shows flocks of sheep led by “shepherds,” satirically depicted as politicians and religious leaders driving their mindless chattel.

“This one is about how all these people are running and running, not even knowing where they going to,” Makki Bacho said. “Being Lebanese, I too know about migrating and running but now this sculpture is like the final chapter of our story.

“All these problems in Lebanon are because of our behavior, our society and those who govern it, backed by religious figures,” she added. “When I first moved back to Lebanon in 2003, I said no politics but it’s impossible.

“Everything in this country lives and breathes politics and I couldn’t ignore it. It’s like nothing has changed. The same people who were in power three generations ago are still there now.”

This installation is the final piece in Makki Bacho’s project - a final thought to conclude her five-odd years of work on migration and scrap metal.

“I’m relieved, I’m done,” she said. “Now I don’t know which direction to go in but I’m ready to explore new themes.”

“Interminable Seasons of Migration” is showing at Agial Art Gallery, Hamra, until Aug. 31.

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