



## Nadim Asfar answers the silent questions

### What is your perception of photography as an art?

As an art, it's hard to define photography. It's a bit like medicine. It's researching all the time around the human body, the human mind, plants and life more generally. In the long run, photography is about asking silent questions and giving images as responses.

### Where do you position yourself in the world of photography?

I guess I am in between intimate and conceptual photography, although I try not to have such boundaries. Fashion photography for me shouldn't be so far removed from so-called art photography. If photography is an art, then you can use it however you want.

### What subjects attract you the most?

Nothing attracts me more than something else per se. It's simply that my attention falls on something that reflects my inner thoughts, at which point I zoom in and try and capture its effect on me.

### What separates you from other photographers?

I didn't really decide that I wanted to be a photographer – I just found myself slowly becoming one. I guess I felt that in the harsh era we live in, it's wiser to stare at the world and try and capture it and to think it over, rather than immerse yourself in it. Ultimately, I am one photographer with my own personal story that shapes and moulds the creative output.

### Tell us about Juin.

Juin was an exhibition I held at Galerie Fadi Mogabgab three years ago. It's based on camera-less photography using photosensitive paper, sunlight and flowers. It was a way to go back to the basics of photography – the images talk about me and my night rides in Beirut.

### What are you working on now?

Various things in parallel. I am experimenting with combining short movies and my photos. One of them was shown in France at the Festival Paris Cinema in July. In September, some of my work will be exhibited at the opening of the Museum of Modern Art in Algiers. It's a project I also exhibited in Paris, Copenhagen and Seville.

### Any thoughts on photography in the Middle East?

I think that many art forms, including photography, in our region are in trouble, just as we are in trouble. Concerning commercial photography and fashion photography, I am sad to say we are far away from art and still too close to catalogue and advertisement. Art needs different layers of freedom – from the political to the social – to expand. We still need to break free. I think only then will art really flow in our region.