



NEW YORK

Diana Al-Hadid

Priska C. Juschka Fine Art

Composed of diverse iconographic references, Diana Al-Hadid's sculptural installation, *The Gradual Approach of My Disintegration* (2006), embodies her personal experience of "otherness" as an immigrant in an adopted homeland. Al-Hadid created this monumental two-part sculpture by combining fiberglass, foam, and polystyrene, while maintaining and exploiting their distinct textures and attributes. A classical column carries the work's defining element—a model of Aleppo Citadel, the 10th- to 13th-century fortress/palace that still defines the form of the surrounding city. Al-Hadid's miniature version of the elliptical complex balances somewhat precariously above segments of fiberglass that surround and extend far beyond the column. The column itself does not rest on a traditional base, but stands on a pair of human feet that hover slightly above ground. The second part of the work is an overturned Corinthian capital, placed some distance away, its distinctive acanthus leaves blown off in disarray. Atop the capital, Al-Hadid includes a cast of sandals that she purchased in her native Syria, thereby inserting herself into the contin-

uum of this elaborate and dense narrative. The final element is a divided aqueduct that reaches out from both components of the installation. Each portion concludes with a hand, mimicking Michelangelo's famous symbolic gesture in the *Creation of Adam* at the Sistine Chapel.

Wide-ranging cultural references give form to Al-Hadid's self-professed hybrid identity. She includes various stylistic influences, namely the dramatic and emotive gestures of the Baroque, as well as classical and medieval architectural motifs. Quotations from both Western and Eastern iconography also contribute to the overall sense of ambiguity and volatility.

Al-Hadid singles out two key elements through their positioning—the Citadel of Aleppo and her sandals. Situated above architectural components (column and capital) that appear in a state of flux, these two elements represent the main facets of the artist's selfhood: as the central symbol of her Syrian birth city, the Aleppo Citadel stands for

Above: Diana Al-Hadid, *The Gradual Approach of My Disintegration*, 2006. Mixed media, installation view.
Right: David Byrne, *Molecule*, 2005. Painted steel, 454 x 34 x 32 in.

her collective identity, whereas the sandals embody her personal identity. Frozen within chaotic circumstances, they appear to reflect a struggle between the national and individual aspects of Al-Hadid's character. The tenuous form of the bridge demonstrates her attempts to merge these two worlds.

The dynamism and instability of the monumental elements—the leaves blowing off the upended capital and the column's hovering feet—function as pertinent manifestations of the state of disorientation and unrest that immigrants like Al-Hadid experience in their new country. This installation is an apt representation of complex connections across histo-

ry, place, and self, demonstrating the manner in which they are interrelated and equally significant. Torn between a world of self-fabricated myth and everyday reality, home appears as a challenging realm, as well as a place that carries the potential for pluralism and growth.

—Yaelle Amir

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David Byrne

Pace/MacGill Gallery

Multi-talented David Byrne is known for using photographs, drawings, mixed media, art books, music, and video to tease open the viewer's mind. Chairs are his latest visual obsession. He sees them as anthropomorphic portraits of his own and other personalities. After creating many drawings of chairs as clouds, brains, doggy chew toys, and more, he decided to try his hand at sculpture. In his studio, a fallen chair, shaped from untwisted white metal hangers, slinks against the hardwood floor like a collapsing saint. A macaroni chair sways delicately on its strung-together skinny white legs. A sturdy telephone book chair is constructed from bundled stacks of Manhattan phone books. These chairs didn't make it to the exhibition.

Those that made the cut include a sleek file cabinet chair standing

