



## 3 questions for Sid Chidiac

Oil and chocolate painter

### 1 Why do you paint in chocolate?

**I wanted to find something different to paint with and about ten years ago I happened to try out white chocolate on a canvas. It gives a very unique effect and it's quite easy to use once you've got the mix of chocolate and food dye right. But I also paint in oils. I have a series of paintings on the history of Lebanon some of which are based on myths like the abduction of Europa by Zeus from the shores of Tyre and the killing of Adonis.**

### 2 Since chocolate is a substitute for sex, do you think that people get turned on by your paintings?

**Well, I find chocolate irresistible so I often find myself licking my brush after a day's work. All my chocolate paintings are 100 per cent edible. But do people get turned on? That's a more difficult question. What viewers will often do is try and get up close to one of my chocolate paintings and lick them just to see if it tastes like chocolate or maybe because they are attracted by it. Sometimes, I can't get them away from it.**

### 3 Which Lebanese personality would you most like to paint in chocolate?

**Fairuz. She's sort of my muse. I've painted several canvases based on her songs which include 'Khidneh Zaameh Bi Loubnan', 'Behebak ya Loubnan' and famously 'Ahadeer El Boust'a'. She's been an inspiration to my art ever since. *Rana Ballout***

## Statue of the month

### President Bechara al-Khoury



*Larger than life.*

In our city there are not that many statues of Lebanon's founding fathers to be found standing. Perhaps that's because there are not that many founding fathers worthy of such recognition, but one who is however was the first President of the republic, Bechara Al-Khoury.

A new statue of him was reinstalled last November at the intersection in Sodeco that bares his name, after the original one was decimated during the Civil War. During the conflict the statue lay on the former 'Green Line', which divided the city into East and West Beirut and was the scene of some of the most brutal clashes of artillery crossfire.

The new monument (it is more triumphant portrait than moving memorial) is both compelling and expressive of the man it portrays.

The massive bronze statue (3.6 metres in height and weighing almost 3,200 kilograms) is the work of Lebanese sculptor Tony

Birbari, who was commissioned by murdered premier Rafik Hariri to create the work way back in 1998. Though it was completed in 2000 the new statue was not inaugurated until Independence Day 2005 reportedly because al-Khoury's son Michel wanted to wait until Syria had left the country.

But it was a statue worth waiting five more years for. Birbari captures the distinctive features of the former President and one of the foremost architects of Lebanon's independence. The rather large presence that was Al-Khoury carries a copy of newspaper Ad-Dastour in his left hand and his right arm reaches out as if to call an audience of supporters towards him. It is celebratory of both the man and the nation he worked to create, alongside his partner Riad Al-Solh.

Of course, the only audience Sheikh Bechara is greeting today is traffic jams.

## Free Beirut

### 1. Sang Poetry

**Spanish singer-songwriter Javier Ruibal will be performing his unique poetry sung to a blend of North African sounds with Flamenco influences. He's playing two different venues. Original and not to be missed! See Books p44**

### 2. I love you

**The themes of war, love, family and religion painted in warm colours with plastic flowers and beads added. Could it get any stranger? Artist Zeina El-Khalil's vision of the world is unconventional. Check out her works. See Art p35**

### 3. Fafa Monteco

**World famous DJ Fafa Montego who has worked with the likes of Depeche Mode and Moby spins some of his best known tracks at Basement. If you're into dazzling mixes of funk, disco, hip hop and dance, then this is the club night to head down to. See Nightlife p68**

### 4. Grbavica

**Winner of the 2006 Golden Bear award, this film examines the power of love and reconciliation in postwar Sarajevo. It's dark and will pull at your heartstrings but it's realistic and topical. See Films p56**

## Public eye

### Stephanie Sotiry, 21

#### Taken in Gouraud Street, Gemayzeh

**Do you design your own clothes?**  
No

**How do you pick them?**

When I see something I like I buy it. I don't like common things, I also love black clothes.

**Why black?**

It's my favourite colour, well you know or white. I'm an extremist in everything, colours as well.

**Do you have a real provocative outfit?**

Yes, actually it's this pair of stockings which are really sexy; I wear them on with a really short skirt and high heels all in black. I put them on when I'm in the mood... you know.

**What's your favourite item?**

I have a lot of favourites, mainly rings, and tops.

**Where do you buy the rings?**

House on Mars in Hamra.

**Do you feel like you get weird looks from people because of your clothes?**

No, I like to be watched.

**Do you have a favourite store in Lebanon where you can buy things?**

In Lebanon? No! I mean not for my style, it's hard to find. But, I can find something from here occasionally. Mainly I buy my clothes from abroad.

