

REBUILDING THE PAST

2020 Nasher Prize Laureate Michael Rakowitz

This spring, the Nasher will honor artist Michael Rakowitz, an Iraqi-American artist who lives and works in Chicago. Rakowitz's work celebrates his heritage and brings attention to stolen or demolished artifacts.

GIORGIA MASTROLORENZO, senior at Liberty High School, interviewed Nasher Curator **CATHERINE CRAFT** about the impact of Rakowitz's artistic practice.

Giorgia Mastrolorenzo: How do you think Michael Rakowitz's work will contribute to and enrich the Nasher Collection?

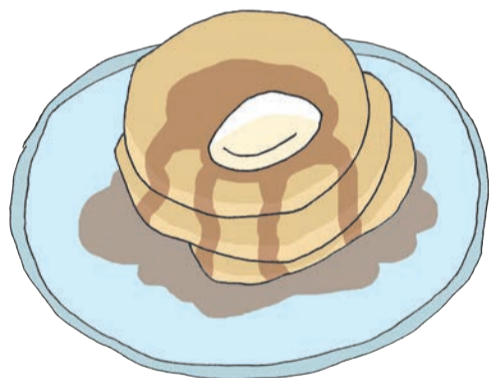
Catherine Craft: Michael Rakowitz came to sculpture through learning stone-carving, and his ongoing project *The invisible enemy should not exist* originated in response to the looting of the Iraq Museum in Baghdad following the US invasion in 2003. Some 15,000 artifacts disappeared from the museum, about 8,000 of which are still missing. These include some of the oldest objects in the history of sculpture, and Rakowitz has dedicated himself to making surrogates of each missing object. He's deeply concerned with sculpture's history and the importance of learning artistic traditions as a way of keeping cultures alive.

Continued on page 4.



TOP LEFT: Drawing of Michael Rakowitz. TOP RIGHT: Michael Rakowitz, **RETURN**, 2006 Storefront at 529 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn. Produced by Creative Time. Photo courtesy the artist. BOTTOM LEFT: Food served by Michael Rakowitz at Nasher Prize Community BBQ, February 8, 2020. Photo: Daniel Driensky. BOTTOM RIGHT: Michael Rakowitz, **The invisible enemy should not exist (Room F, section 1, panel 15, Northwest Palace of Nimrud)**, 2019. Middle Eastern food packaging and newspapers, glue, cardboard on wooden structures. Courtesy of Jane Lombard Gallery, photo by Arturo Sanchez.

In 2018, Michael Rakowitz asked international chefs to create recipes for a cookbook celebrating date syrup, a traditional Iraqi ingredient.



Pancakes with clotted cream and Basra date syrup

Philip Juma

English-Iraqi food writer, founder and head chef of JUMA Kitchen in London.

This is inspired by a classic Iraqi breakfast dish: kahi, layers of fluffy, flaky pastry, topped with qemar, a deliciously thick cream made from buffalo milk. This version uses pancakes instead. The recipe is just as amazing, and the pancakes are so light and fluffy because of the higher baking powder content. Anyone who tries them always asks for the recipe.

Mix together all the dry ingredients and sift through a sieve into a mixing bowl.

In another large bowl, whisk the eggs and milk together. Gradually add in the dry mix and keep whisking until your batter comes together. Be careful not to overmix! Mix the batter just enough to hydrate the dry ingredients, then stop.

Pour your melted butter into the batter and gently stir to incorporate.

With a dry non-stick pan, on a medium heat, spoon your pancake mix to your desired size. Do not move them once in the pan – let the heat do the work and, after a few minutes, you will see small bubbles forming on the surface. At this point, flip. Continue cooking until they are golden brown.

Pile three to five pancakes on a plate and pour the Basra date syrup all over them. Finish with a quenelle [dollop] of clotted cream and devour while warm.

- 200g / 2 cups plain flour
- 25g / 2 tbsp caster (castor) sugar
- 25g / ¼ cup milk powder
- 12g / 1 tbsp baking powder
- 5g / 1 tsp table salt
- 240ml / 1 cup milk, full fat
- 2 eggs
- 60g / ¼ cup butter, melted

- To serve
- Basra date syrup (as much as you like)
- 1 tbsp clotted cream

Serves 4

Recipe taken from *A House With A Date Palm Will Never Starve* by Michael Rakowitz and friends, published by Art / Books. Reproduced courtesy of Philip Juma and Art / Books, www.artbookspublishing.co.uk.

BARRY X BALL

Mixing Technology and Tradition

How can one artist's finished product become another artist's jumping-off point? Barry X Ball uses digital technology to reimagine historical works of art. He sees his work as an "artistic conversation" with past artists, using their end point as his beginning. Ball's work reflects on the long tradition of artists copying or referring to other artists' work as a way of honoring them and learning from their techniques.

Ball starts his process by making a 3D digital scan of an original artwork. Then, he digitally alters the scan to refine the sculpture's form or change certain details, which the artist considers "loving corrections or improvements" to the originals. He often chooses to flip his composition to make it a mirror image of the original.

When choosing the materials for his finished product, Ball considers types of stone that would not have been traditionally used for sculpture because they have natural veins, pits or other irregularities. A CNC (computer numerical control) milling machine reads the digital scan and carves the form into the stone, layer by layer.

Finally, Ball and his studio assistants carve in details and polish the sculptures by hand to finish them. This process can take up to 10,000 hours. The end result is an artwork that is familiar and entirely new at the same time.

BARRY X BALL:
REMAKING SCULPTURE
JANUARY 25 - SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

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TOP LEFT: Antonio Corradini (1668 - 1752), *La Purità (Dama Velata)*, 1720 - 1725. Ca' Rezzonico, Venice, Italy. TOP RIGHT: A technician scans *La Purità* in the museum gallery in Venice. BOTTOM LEFT: Fabrication process using CNC milling machine. BOTTOM RIGHT: Barry X Ball, *Purity*, 2008-2009. Golden Honeycomb Calcite, stainless steel, Macedonian Marble, wood, acrylic lacquer, steel, nylon, plastic. 69 x 16-1/2 x 12 in. (175.3 x 41.9 x 30.5 cm.). *Barry X Ball: Remaking Sculpture* is made possible by major support from Elizabeth Redleaf and the TurningPoint Foundation, with additional support provided by The Hartland & Mackie Family Foundation and Betty Regard.



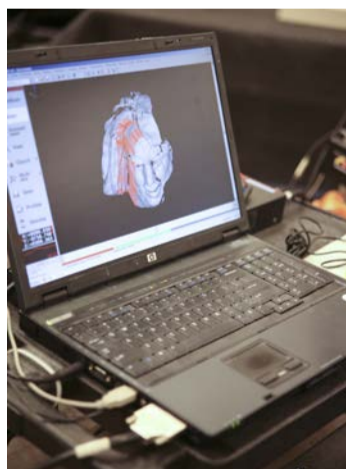
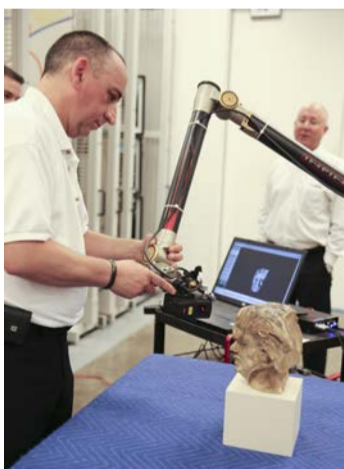
SCANNING FOR A CAUSE

What can an art museum offer to people who cannot see the art? One option is to create copies of artworks that visitors can touch. The Nasher Sculpture Center recently partnered with NVision, Inc. to 3D-print four sculptures from our permanent collection, creating the opportunity for hands-on experiences for people with visual impairment.

The first step was to choose which sculptures would be good candidates for scanning. Education staff worked with Chief Curator Jed Morse to identify artworks in our collection that were in the public domain, meaning that the artist or artist's estate no longer held the rights to the artwork's likeness. From those artworks, we narrowed it down to sculptures that would be more likely to produce a good scan. Some objects were too large to be scanned easily, others were too complex to capture an accurate image, and some were too reflective to work well with the technology. Finally, staff selected four sculptures to undergo the process.

An NVision technician scanned the sculptures in the museum's conservation lab using a handheld scanner with a mechanical arm that moved around the sculpture. This collected millions of data points that created a virtual image of the sculpture. NVision staff converted this image into a polygon model that could be read by a 3D printer. The final models of the sculpture were printed using a bioplastic material made partially from renewable resources like cornstarch and sugarcane. In this type of printing, the printer lays down layer after layer of material until a three-dimensional form is produced.

Now, Education staff can use the 3D models in workshops for visually impaired visitors, at family days, and for off-site events.



TOP: A person with visual impairment feels a 3D-printed sculpture at the Nasher. CENTER LEFT: An NVision technician scans *Head of Balzac*. CENTER RIGHT: Digital image created during scanning. BOTTOM LEFT: Auguste Rodin, *Head of Balzac (Tête de Balzac)*, 1897. Plaster, 7 1/2 x 8 x 6 1/2 in. (19.1 x 20.3 x 16.5 cm.). Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas. BOTTOM RIGHT: 3D-printed replica of *Head of Balzac*.

Accessibility resources and initiatives are made possible, in part, by The Rosewood Foundation, the Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation, and through the generous support provided by donations made in memory of Michael Jensen. Special thanks to NVision, Inc. for their support in the creation of 3D-printed resources.

Meet Our New Conservator Claire Taggart Joins the Nasher Team

A museum conservator is responsible for the preservation and repair of works of art. Claire Taggart became the Nasher's conservator this August. We asked her about the field of conservation and her advice for students.

What sparked your interest in conservation?

Even though I studied fine art during undergrad, it wasn't until my mid-20s that I discovered the field of conservation! Once I started looking into it, I realized that this career combines much of what I was already passionate or curious about: art, art history, cultural heritage, and material science.

What did you study? Where did you go to school?

I received my Bachelor of Fine Arts in drawing and painting from the California College of the Arts, and earned a Master's of Science in Art Conservation from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation.

What advice do you have for students?

If you have an interest in working in the arts, ask a lot of questions! Challenge yourself, and be prepared to be a lifelong student (I am always researching and learning new things).

How did you get started?

The first step I took to get into conservation, was to reach out to the graduate programs that offer degrees in this subject in the United States. Once I knew the prerequisites for admission, I started taking classes in chemistry and art history. The graduate programs in conservation require general and organic chemistry, courses in art history and studio art, and many hours of pre-program internship experience.

How did you choose sculpture as your specialty?

Initially I was interested in painting conservation, but after an internship at the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, I became interested in the bizarre challenges of modern and contemporary sculpture.

What is the best part of the job? What is the weirdest part?

The best AND weirdest part of the job is experiencing the ways artists create – they are frequently challenging traditional art materials, or using non-traditional materials in innovative ways. This gives me the opportunity to research how to care for these artworks once they get to the Nasher. Whether it's a sculpture made of foam, stainless steel, ceramic, stone, fabric, or bronze (or a combination of many materials!) each piece has its own set of needs.

Tell us about the tools of the trade.

In addition to using science lab equipment like glassware and pipettes, conservation borrows tools from a variety of fields. These fields include medical and dentistry, cosmetics, and the restaurant industry. Looking around the lab at this moment, I can see a scalpel, tongue depressors, a dental mirror, cosmetic sponges, and a hot plate to name just a few things! I even use a porcupine quill when I need something sharp, but not too sharp.

What is your favorite artwork in the Nasher collection?

One of my favorites is *Linear Construction in Space No. 1 (Variation)*, 1968, by Naum Gabo. I love how luminous it looks in the gallery light.

Learn more about careers in the arts on the Nasher website:
www.nashersculpturecenter.org/read-watch/learning-resources



TOP: Claire Taggart in the Nasher conservation lab. SECOND: Some of Claire's "tools of the trade," including dental tools, brushes, a porcupine quill, and a bone folder. THIRD: Paints and dyes kept on hand in the conservation lab. BOTTOM: Claire treats an artwork by Magdalena Abakanowicz, preparing it to be hung in the Nasher galleries.

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

Photographed by Allison V. Smith



Many thanks to our advisory boards! Student Advisory Board: Naomi A., Maya B., Taya B., Chloe C., Cooper C., Zak G., Charlotte J., Leah K., Lucy L., Matthew M., Giorgia M., Ocean M., Isabella O.B., Logan P., Chloé S., Evan S., Ethan T., Paul Y. **Teacher Advisory Board:** Stacy Cianciulli, Becky Becker Daniels, Suzuko Davis, Martin Delabano, Annie Foster, Paige Furr, Sherry Houpt, Jovenne Kybett, Paige Lane, Kellie Lawson, Dee Mayes, Brad Ray, Karin Thomas, Sam Thomas.

Students entering 9th - 12th grades in fall 2020 are invited to apply for our Student Advisory Board. Applications will be accepted starting August 1 at nashersculpturecenter.org.

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER Allison V. Smith is an editorial and fine art photographer based in Dallas, Texas. We asked her to share a bit about herself. **Favorite road trip destination:** Marfa, TX. **Favorite follows on Instagram:** @keithcarter.art @tea_journals @LIFE. **Favorite artwork at the Nasher:** Giacometti's busts and anything by Roy Lichtenstein. **You can follow Allison V. Smith @avose or @allisonvsmith**

Michael Rakowitz Continued from page 1

GM: What gets you excited about Rakowitz's work and its assertions on the capacity to traverse different human experiences?

CC: What I love in Rakowitz's work is the way he can draw unexpected connections between events, objects, and people that seem very remote from one another. For example, date syrup, a key ingredient of Iraqi cooking, plays a really important role in his work – the syrup comes in cans, which he has used in his art, but he also uses date syrup in the communal meals he cooks and encourages others to make and share. He did a project called *RETURN*, in a Brooklyn storefront, whose main purpose was to import Iraqi dates. The project was inspired by the fact that date syrup that was produced in Iraq was being driven into Syria to be canned and labeled as a product of Lebanon, in order to circumvent the difficulties that remained for Iraqi exporters even after the lifting of sanctions. Rakowitz saw, and was able to convey, connections between the complicated international voyages made by date syrup that couldn't state where it was from, and the travels of refugees fleeing from the

same region, and the trafficking in cultural property looted during the same conflict.

GM: Why do you believe Michael Rakowitz's work is a necessary and vital connective source in this time of history, and how does this pave the way for future innovation in sculpture?

CC: Rakowitz brings an important historical awareness to our present by conveying the urgency of our current moment alongside the importance of histories that stretch back through centuries. In an era dominated by the reactive world of social media and the 24-hour news cycle, he insists on slowing down, with such activities as storytelling and cooking used to weave complex narratives. While very much a part of the contemporary world of eBay and podcasts (both of which he has used in his art), he nonetheless insists on the political and social importance of craft traditions as shared, communal activities with deep histories, describing, in his words, the "maintenance of tradition as a form of resistance to cultural erasure."

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