

## BIOGRAPHY

## ARTIST

## Ribal Molaeb

Ribal Molaeb (born 1992, Baissour, Lebanon) lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland. Raised in the studio of his father, the painter Jamil Molaeb, a leading figure in the Middle Eastern art scene, he left Lebanon at seventeen to study at the Mozarteum University in Salzburg, then at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, where he earned his Master's degree with distinction. Trained as a violist, he has performed at international classical music festivals and concert halls worldwide. His work has been exhibited in major galleries and institutions in New York, Tokyo, London, Paris, Dubai, Beirut, Amsterdam, Geneva, Basel and Zurich. A painting has been acquired by the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. He has held solo exhibitions at Volta Basel Art Fair 2024 and Zürich Art Fair 2024, and participates in Art Paris 2026. Ribal Molaeb is represented by Galerie Esther Woerdehoff in Paris.

SOLO  
SHOW

2026

Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris  
ZKO Haus, Zürich

2025

Saleh Barakat Gallery, Beirut  
Artifact, New York  
Mizoe Art Gallery, Fukuoka, Japan  
Mizoe Art Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
Espace D'exposition Les Arcades, Antibes, France  
Zko Hause, Zürich, Switzerland

2024

Galerie Katapult, Basel, Switzerland  
Volta, Basel Art Fair, Switzerland  
Universal Artist Club, Zug, Switzerland

2023

Orient Gallery, Amman, Jordan  
Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi UAE

2022

Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Geneva, Switzerland

2021

Galerie Claude Lemand, Paris, France  
Zko Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland  
Galerie Agénor, Zürich, Switzerland  
Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut, Lebanon

2019

Sumito Kulturverein, Switzerland

GROUP  
SHOW

2025

Galleria Sacchetti, Ascona, Switzerland  
 Volta, Basel Art Fair, Switzerland  
 Galerie Katapult, Basel, Switzerland  
 Salwa Zeidan Gallery, Dubai, Uae  
 Monat Gallery, Madrid, Spain

2024

Breath Of Summer / Saleh Barakat Gallery, Lebanon  
 Beiteddine Art Festival / Landscapes Belonging / Saleh Barakat  
 Ethan Cohen Gallery / Arthaus Basel, Switzerland  
 Agial Art Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon  
 Khawla Art Gallery, Dubai, Uae

2023

Lebanon Untitled, Cromwell Place, London, Uk  
 Italian Embassy, Lebanon  
 Beiteddine Art Festival / Abstraction Actuelle / Saleh Barakat

2022

Artscoops, Beirut, Lebanon  
 Treasures From The Middle East, Abu Dhabi, Uae  
 Galerie Agénor, Zürich, Switzerland

2021

Galerie Lalalande, Paris, France  
 Artb, Dubai, Uae

2020

Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut, Lebanon

2019

Selections Art, Dubai, Uae

2018

Me Art Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland

2017

Art & Poster Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland

## ART FAIRS

2026

Art Paris, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris

2025

Contemporary Istanbul, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris  
 Volta, Basel Art Fair, Switzerland

2024

(Solo) Volta, Basel Art Fair, Switzerland

2022

Art Paris, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris  
 Menart Paris, Galerie Esther Woerdehoff, Paris

## ARTIST TALKS

2025

Mizoe Art Gallery, Fukuoka, Japan

## COLLECTIONS

Modern Arab Art Museum, Paris (Ima)

Mizoe Collection, Japan

CCAA Collection, Switzerland

HH Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, UAE

Rania Daniel Collection, New York

The Dubai Collection

Salamoun Collection

Habbal Collection

Karabajakian Collection

Private collections: Switzerland, France, USA, Germany, UK, Japan

A WORD FROM  
THE GALLERY

Infinitesimals

*Painting Light, Composing Silence*

In a Lebanon under bombardment, Molaeb paints the sky. His canvases bathed in Mediterranean light, dawns, sunsets, open horizons, are an act of silent resistance. Repairing the soul through beauty, dreaming of a better tomorrow in what he calls the Near Future. "Molaeb's paintings are images of movement, notes on the changing sky from day to night, in a calm that stretches from one season to the next. His brushstrokes extend across the canvas, sometimes with sharpness; the colour seems swift, yet remains delicate, capturing what lies before it and transforming the amplitude of nature at the large scales he has chosen with care," explains his gallerist Esther Woerdehoff.

In the work of Ribal Molaeb, colour is not ornament but primary language, thinking matter that precedes form and frees itself from all narration. His vast canvases, traversed by spectral gradients and infinitesimal chromatic variations, reveal a rare sensitivity to light as both optical and meditative phenomenon.

Born in 1992 in Baissour, a Lebanese village suspended between mountain and Mediterranean, Ribal has spent a decade building a singular body of work in which musical rigour and pictorial freedom converge, alongside family heritage and a resolutely contemporary vocabulary.

A Dual Formation: From the Mozarteum to the Paternal Studio

Ribal's path is shaped by a founding duality. At seventeen, he left Lebanon for Salzburg, enrolled at the prestigious Mozarteum University, then continued in Vienna where he earned a master's degree in the arts with distinction from the University of Music and Performing Arts. Trained as a violist, he has performed on international stages from Tokyo to New York, from Abu Dhabi to Amsterdam. This rigorous musical education profoundly shaped his vision as a colourist: his canvases function as visual scores, orchestrating silences and chromatic crescendos with the precision of a classical interpreter.

A second school shaped his eye in parallel: the studio of his father, Jamil Molaeb (born 1948), a major figure in contemporary Arab painting. From childhood, Ribal was immersed in the world of oils and pigments, observing an art attentive to the real, treated as a poem of the everyday. Adonis once spoke of the father Jamil's "poeticisation of daily life", an essential filiation for understanding the son's sensibility, who carries the echo of that inheritance into a purified visual language. Beneath the family roof in Baissour, whose walls shelter the works

of both generations, father and son embody a singular artistic continuity, celebrated each year at the Molaeb Festival of Chamber Music and Fine Arts, founded by Ribal in 2015.

#### A Contemplative Abstraction

In his large canvases - some approaching mural scale - executed exclusively in oil, the brush does not so much draw forms as prepare translucent veils, freed from the weight of figuration. These surfaces radiate an intense luminosity that evokes the research of J. M. W. Turner, nicknamed "the painter of light," for whom radiance was, ultimately, a colour in its own right.

At first glance, one might perceive an incessant repetition of the same motif. This impression quickly dissolves, giving way to a feeling of total immersion in the meanderings of light and its infinitesimal metamorphoses. The works do not proceed from repetition but from a dense presence of emptiness, a secret structure, laden with gradients that translate the interior states of the landscape.

These scenes draw from Lebanese topography: the green and white expanses of Baissour, perched among the peaks, before the horizon meets the calm blue of the sea, without ever tipping into the picturesque. Ribal's broad brush captures atmospheres rather than places: morning mists, winter lights, sunsets dissolved in water, azure, cloud, dawn. Many of these landscapes might be called vertiginous, not for their size, but for the amplitude of sea they contain, or for the intensity of reds and greens that do not merely occupy space: they become space itself.

#### Between Presence and Erasure

In these compositions at the threshold of the figurative and the abstract, the empty sky or the water's surface plays no role of neutral background: they become fields of energy, spaces charged with potentiality. Colours diffuse like a fine mist, even when the broad gesture of the brush remains perceptible. The canvases seem to say: seek neither story nor narration. Meaning resides in what has not been painted.

One will find neither boats nor human figures, but sometimes rectangular forms evoking porous cement blocks, rare anchor points at the base of the paintings. Translucent summits, rocky fragments or quays suggest the idea of a shoreline without ever representing it. These are paintings to inhabit rather than to read. Serenity reigns sovereign, mingled with colour as with its own body, with light as with its own breath.

Even the scenes of winter seas at the approach of evening, despite their climatic rigour, produce neither tension nor conflict. Nature is not a force to be tamed but a presence to be listened to. This sensibility echoes certain meditations of Zen in Japanese art, where emptiness and colour are conceived as spaces of contemplation rather than representation.

#### Music and Painting: A Temporal Conception of the Work

"When I paint, I think like a musician. And when I play the viola, I have a particular way of producing sound - specific 'colours,' linked to a precise bowing technique on the string," Ribal confides. His landscapes become classical scores slowed until they become visible. His colours - aerial, serene - might be called colours of decline, so poetically do they embody the idea of disappearance, like a note allowing silence to arise.

If painting is for him a victory over time, music, by contrast, celebrates the instant in its fugacity. This tension recalls the philosophy of Bergson: time is not a succession of isolated moments, but a continuous duration in which past and present intermingle. Ribal's canvases thus resemble music more than fixed image, an immersive flow in which nature ceases to be object and becomes field of experience.

The landscapes overflow every limit: neither beginning nor end, but gradual rhythms, dissolved into one another, where brushstrokes layer and answer each other. Certain works unfold nuanced whites in dialogue with blues softened by grey, the grey of fine rain at the rising or setting of a winter day. The artist seems drawn to half-tones as to silence itself.

#### A Dialogue with Art History

Ribal's aesthetic choices place his work in quiet dialogue with earlier practices: the purified watercolours of Cézanne in his views of the Sainte-Victoire, the chromatic research of Rothko, the lyrical abstraction of Frankenthaler. He nonetheless reformulates the question of colour and light from a contemporary perspective, more fluid, more mobile. His canvases avoid direct forms, contenting themselves with colour in its primary substance, before it fixes itself into image or landscape.