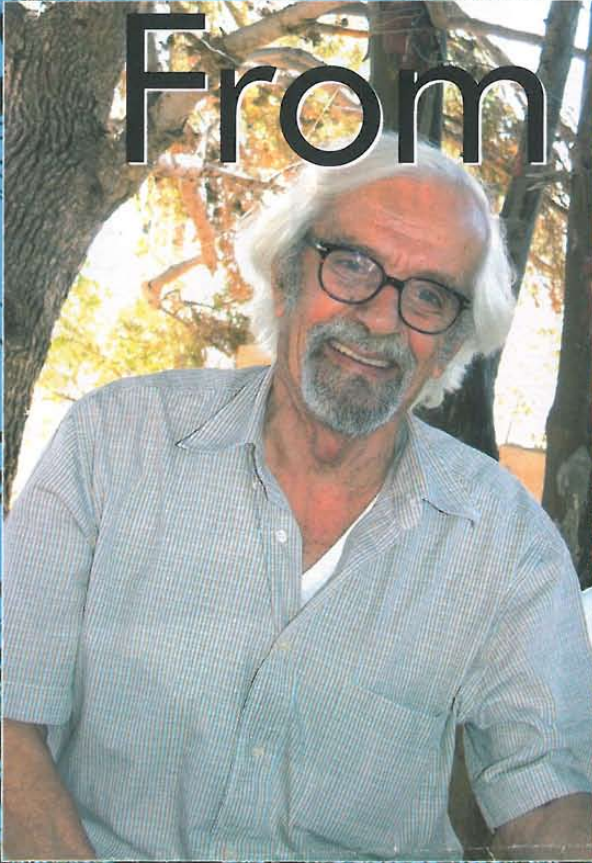


From

Rachana
with love

Sculptor Alfred Basbous and his brothers have carved out a name for their village as a showcase for their work and that of other artists

He was described as the second Rodin after his first exhibition and has managed to achieve a dream of turning his birth village into an international showcase for exhibiting sculptors and a meeting place for artists from around the world. A far cry, fortunately, from the warning Alfred Basbous was given by his older brother, fellow sculptor Michel, that his chosen path could leave him discouraged and penniless. But it was never to be an issue for Basbous. At his first exhibition in 1958 at the Alecco Saab gallery, all the pieces sold on the first day and several newspapers gave him the 'second Rodin' nickname. Elation for the young man who had begun by watching his father, a priest and calligrapher, carving in bamboo

wood, and had then been taught the art of sculpting with stone, together with his younger brother Joseph, by Michel.

Encouraged, Basbous enrolled at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA), where he was awarded a scholarship to Paris and trained at the Collamarini sculpting atelier. "After Rachana that was a big culture shock," he says. "I felt like I was discovering not just a city of art, but centuries of civilization. I just tried to take in as much as I could." Paris brought rewards for Basbous in the form of exhibitions – one at the

