

Yasmina **Heidar**  
(Egypt)

### Falling Leaf

Materials:  
Glass & Portoro marble  
Dimensions:  
2 x 0.30 x 1.85 metres



*Falling Leaf*, a composite sculpture of glass and marble, was added to the international collection of the Chianti Sculpture Park in 2008. It comprises two distinct parts, an upper glass semi-abstract form resting at an angle on a base made of marble. With the aid of the title the glass is gradually perceived as a stylised leaf gently and silently gliding to a marble 'ground.' Heidar's work shares the motif of a leaf with another sculpture found near the entrance to the Chianti Sculpture Park, Nakamura's *House in the Wood*. The semi-transparency of the glass that circumscribes a central void, when contrasted with the density of the underlying marble, gives a sense of lightness to the upper part of the work that conforms well to the idea underpinning it. This perception of lightness is all the more remarkable given that the artist used 550 kilograms of glass to make the leaf form.

Heidar, a young Egyptian artist currently working in Carrara, joins the growing cohort of international female sculptors at the Chianti Sculpture Park who now represent over one-third of the total collection in an area of practice historically dominated by the male artist. Born in Alessandria, Heidar initially pursued a career in music, teaching piano in the Conservatory of Alessandria before receiving a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Alessandria in 2000. This was followed by a Diploma in Sculpture in 2002 and a Masters in Glass Sculptural Techniques in 2005, which led to a scholarship to pursue a doctorate in Visual Arts and Performance at the Fine Art Academy, Carrara, Italy in 2006-2007.

The influence of the artist's recent arrival in an area of Italy long associated with marble is apparent in her use of materials, which when combined with her expertise in contemporary glass techniques, enables her to create a range of visually rich, dynamic sculptures. Her skill with glass can also be seen in the entrance gate to the nearby "La Fornace" Gallery, a collaborative work with Roberto Giordani. Heidar's contribution to this gate once again utilises to great effect pieces of glass that appear to 'float' within discrete panels of iron made by Giordani.

This application of new techniques in the art of glass, a material used for functional purposes for millennia, reappears in *Falling Leaf* in the Sculpture Park. For this sculpture the artist has chosen to contrast green coloured glass with a unique Italian polychromatic marble, Portoro. Found only in the caves of Portovenere, La Spezia in Liguria, Portoro

owes its beautiful black colour with gold striations to the destruction of organic substances through processes of oxidation over millions of years. Although mined in Roman times, the caves were rediscovered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by Genoese sculptor, Domenico Casella. The specific location of the Portovenere caves however, makes extraction of the marble particularly difficult. This is because many of the



FALLING LEAF... 2008  
The Chianti Sculpture Park in Italy  
Laminated glass sculpture on portoro marble  
235 x 140 x 60 cm

caves are situated underground, so that sea water that entered during the night has to be removed before any mining can begin. The contrast of materials and colours in *Falling Leaf* with its solid polychromatic Portoro marble base of black and gold bearing the green 'floating' leaf-form makes this a visually striking and dynamic sculpture with an implied sense of movement. Sensitive to its specific location, the seasonal rhythms of the surrounding wood become conceptually and formally echoed in Heidar's sculpture to create a harmonious dialogue between art and nature and the theme of the Chianti Sculpture Park as a whole.

