

Powerful scrap sculptures depict life in Beirut's Shatila refugee camp

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The nearly 10,000 Palestinian [refugees](#) packed into southern Beirut's Shatila camp live in makeshift homes of corrugated tin, and many long to return to their homeland. In order to depict life in the camp, artist Abdulrahman Katanani used the only materials he had available to him – scraps.

Originally displaced from villages near [Amka](#), [Majd al-Krum](#) and [Yajur](#) in northern Palestine in 1948, the Palestinian refugees settled in the Shatila refugee camp around 1949.



Since then they have raised families and tried to eke out some kind of dignified existence in an area of just one square kilometer. It's not easy to get by with very little money, but life does go on.



For those of us who live in warm cozy homes that are cooled in the summer time, it's hard to envision what it must be like to live this



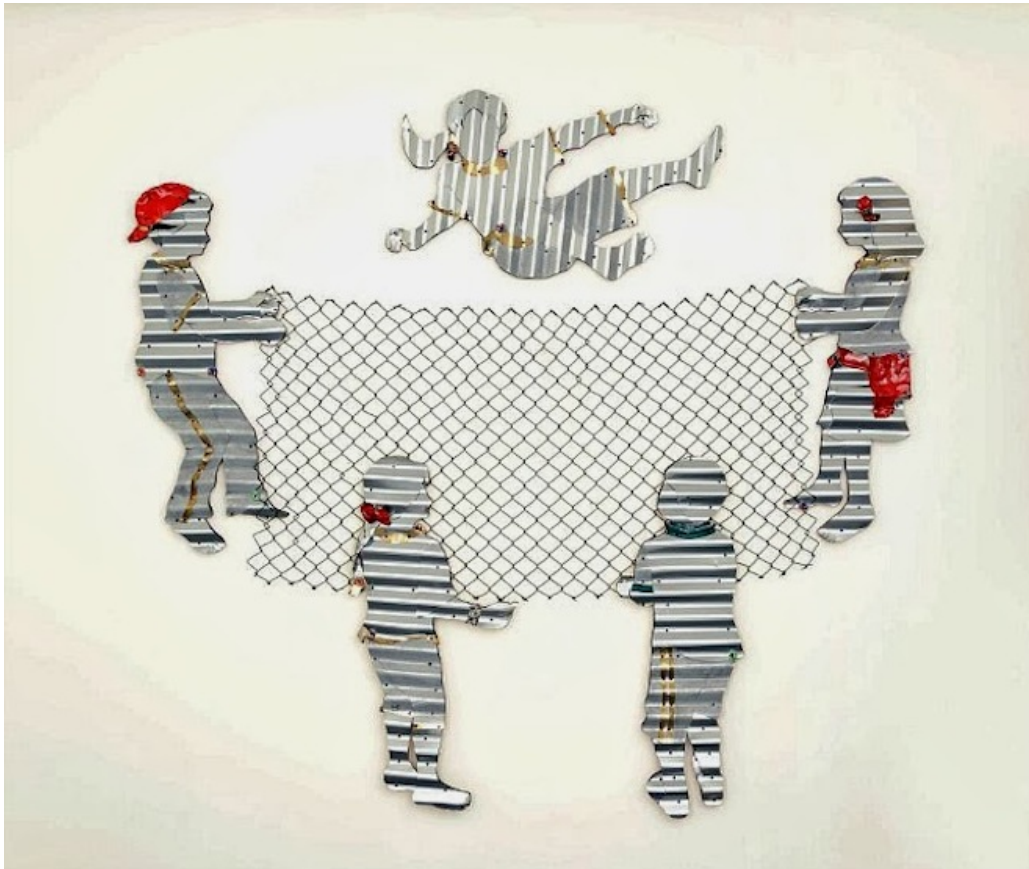
way. Which is what makes Katanani's sculptures so powerful.

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Using the materials of their existence – corrugated tin roofing, barbed wire and chain link fence – the artist frames nostalgic scenes – children flying patchy kites or playing soccer, men playing traditional music instruments, and families carrying goods on their heads.





Considering the medium, the pieces are incredibly detailed. They are borne not only from Katanani's own experiences but from the rest of his community as well.

"When I started to use sheets of tin, people remembered that they live with this material," Junk-Culture quotes him as saying.



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Katanani works with Gallery

Agial: <http://www.agialart.com/index.htm> and Gallery al markheyya in Qatar. <http://www.almarkhiyagallery>.

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