

PRESS RELEASE

**Khaled Takreti "I Am a Teenager Again"
Solo Exhibition at Ayyam Gallery, Beirut
31/3 – 26/05/2010**

From March 31 till May 26, 2010 Ayyam gallery Beirut will proudly present the solo show of Syrian artist Khaled Takreti. Presenting an electrifying new body of work, the artist's bold, cutting-edge canvases are sure to rock the regional art scene.

Born in Beirut in 1964, Takreti studied architecture and design at the University of Damascus before working for the General Directorate of Antiquity and Museums in Syria. He has been a practicing architect and an exhibiting artist since the mid 1990s. With a love for drawing that began at an early age and years of formal training, he traveled to New York in 1995 where he was engaged with global art trends for two years. After returning to Syria, he moved to Paris in 2004, where he has remained ever since. His work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the US and is housed in such notable collections as the Syrian National Museum of Art and the Jordan National Gallery of Fines Arts. This will be his second one-man show with Ayyam gallery.

With an artistic background that has its roots firmly planted in a number of locales, Takreti has honed a painting style that resists purported cultural borders and speaks in international terms. As the artist confirms, "The travel and mix of cultures between East and West enrich and add something to the quality and depth of my works." Artistically fearless, he toys with the limits of contemporary art while tapping into the traditions of several significant art movements. Whether situating his subjects in a nondescript setting or one in which a narrative is formed amidst a particular environment, he often turns to his architectural training to balance a composition. The result is a play on perspective and geometry that is reminiscent of that seen in 16th century Italian Renaissance paintings. The flattening of space that is found in his work has its roots in European modernism, another period of art that he admires.

However, at the same time, Takreti is thoroughly contemporary, with an approach to painting that can only be found in our current state of globalization. An unconventional thunderous palette, an uninhibited use of popular culture, fashionable figures and a developed sense of space and design make for campy yet sophisticated works. His compositions are also frequently sparse, relying on visual markers and the psychological inferences of his subjects to draw in the viewer.

Despite the striking nature of his work, Takreti's art is deeply personal and highly introspective. "My painting is like a diary to me," says the artist. "Scenes of my life are summarized in it. The heroines and heroes are taken from my family and friends; the scenes are experienced or desired; that is the reason why the characters can be real or fictional." While previous paintings explored notions of memory and time inspired by the loving familial relationships of the artist's childhood, his recent work proceeds to his 1970s adolescence in Damascus. Bright, colourful canvases with a psychedelic feel speak of a particular carefree existence. Of this latest series the artist explains, "The general theme is my teenage years: I play, I jump, I dance, I am with my friends, and finally I am surrounded by my family. Some scenes are also warm and full of love and humour." Not only has his palette become increasingly daring, his figures now seem to leap from the canvas with an irresistible flamboyance. Takreti has become all the more ambitious. With this greater confidence has come a vibrant new body of work that is refreshingly original.

Please note that the artist will be present during the first week of the opening, so for interview with the artist, HR pictures, or for further inquiries, please contact Miss. Nadia Brahimy at: +961 1 37 44 50 / 51 or at: nb@ayyamgallery.com.