

**Pierre KOUKJIAN's Solo Show
At Q Contemporary Art Gallery
31/03 – 17/04/2010**

From March 31 through April 17, Q Contemporary gallery will proudly present the solo exhibition of Lebanese designer and artist Pierre Koukjian, who is represented by Ayyam gallery (Beirut/Damascus/Dubai). Although celebrated in the world of fashion for his innovative jewelry, which includes an award-winning watch brand, he has been working in painting and sculptor for years. A natural link between the high-profile lifestyle he leads as an internationally-recognized designer, his painting is heavily influenced by Pop art and the boundless approach it maintains in interpreting the world. His most recent canvases, which comprise a captivating new series titled "Impressive People," will be presented as a significant milestone in his career as a visual artist.

Born in Beirut in 1962, Koukjian fled Lebanon with the outbreak of civil war in the mid 1970s, spending several years living in Germany, France and later the Far East. With political exile providing slim opportunity for a formal education, Koukjian immediately dove into the field of jewelry making. As an apprentice in workshops throughout Europe, he perfected his craft and used painting in the planning stages of his designs, working passionately in the medium. Often taken by his ability as a painter, clients would ask to keep these works, framing them and placing them in their homes. His early paintings are thus housed in the collections of countless global celebrities and public figures. With his successful deLaCour atelier, which he launched in 2002, he has sought to expand the horizons of his art.

Although the decorative, fine and applied arts are understood as individual forms, in Koukjian's long history as a creative being they have all been interconnected. He thus paints his designs and designs his paintings and is capable of switching between these different fields with ease. This gives his work a refreshing appeal and a great advantage in the sense that he has immense experience and an artistic vision that is open (and eager) to embrace other forms of representation. In essence his paintings demonstrate one of the primary tenets of contemporary art—to remain undeterred by supposed boundaries as a means of expanding one's work and searching for greater meaning.

"Impressive People," is a collection of oil paintings that iconifies artists, politicians and world leaders into intrepid oil on canvas works that possess an evident monumentality. This grandness can be found in the calculated ways in which he depicts his subjects, extracting the fundamental nature of what has made them so famous. Be it the staunch defiance of politicians like Lebanon's Hassan Nasrallah and Walid Jumblatt or the divadom of such larger-than-life figures as Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid and celebrated Lebanese songstress Fairouz, Koukjian is able to strike the perfect balance between the physicality of his subject and the legend behind their fame. This is perhaps most true in his portraits of pop-stars such as Haifa Wehbe and Elissa, which exude an overt sexuality and are thoroughly tongue in cheek.

In each composition the artist gives painstaking attention to their features with a limited palette and heavy brushwork, using color and contrast to accentuate their forms. In this regard his canvases have the tactile quality of a photograph, yet they emanate with a distinct expressiveness that can only be achieved through painting. Each figure has its own color scheme, as the artist prescribes their personalities with tones that will trigger particular associations in the viewer's mind. Thus he relies on the sensations produced by the medium, understanding the intricate ways in which it can be used as an effective type of communication. Not unlike the commanding trend setters he portrays, Koukjian is well aware of the many ways in which the public is watching.