

**PRESS RELEASE**

Ayyam Gallery  
12, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8  
Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971.4.3236242  
F: +971.4.3236243  
Gallery Hours:  
Sun-Thu:  
10:00am-6:00pm  
Sat: 12:00pm-6:00pm



*Tomb Sonata in Three Military Movements (detail), 2010, Mixed media on canvas, 200 x 750 cm*

**Khaled Hafez**

***A Temple for Extended Days***

16 November 2015 - 14 January 2016

Opening reception: Monday, 16 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (12, Alserkal Avenue) is pleased to announce *A Temple for Extended Days*, a solo exhibition that marks the addition of Khaled Hafez to the gallery's roster of artists while inaugurating its new outpost.

Characterised by dichotomous juxtapositions of epochs, genres, and cultures, whether in its earlier, eight-year-long abstract phase or in the subsequent transition to the hieroglyphically figurative, Hafez's practice demonstrates an inclination towards the collision of worlds.

In a multimedia corpus that clearly borrows from Egyptian iconography, slender deities wander with aplomb to cross paths with emblematic modern-day heroes, military warfare, and mass media symbolism, to prove that the past is constantly recycled in order to reassure the present; and perhaps even to lift the curtain on an indiscernible porch between artificiality and reality, defined by French philosopher Jean Baudrillard as 'the third order of simulacra' in his 1981 treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*. According to Baudrillard, post-modern culture has grown so dependent on archetypes that it no longer is capable of distinguishing the natural realm from its fabricated counterpart.

Through anthropomorphic representations that confer to his work a futuristic semblance, Hafez mirrors Baudrillard's views, with a penchant for aesthetic dissidence—he breaks free from the traditional rules of composition and colour subjugation, albeit managing to conjure movement in his flat graphic surfaces, reminiscent of ancient tomb walls.

In *A Temple for Extended Days*, Hafez's syncretistic tendencies bubble up to the surface; the exhibition is entered as a place of worship, in which his *Tomb Sonata in Three Military Movements* (2010), a large-scale work originally created on canvas, is projected onto three walls that envelop the viewer to the solemn sounds of Mohammad Saleh's melancholic composition. Following an initial lapse of stillness, Hafez's heroes and foes are set in motion on a mosaic-like pastel background disrupted by controlled paint drips—a meagre, scantily clad female with a throne-shaped Pharaonic headdress boldly stares from one corner while a fusion of Anubis with a muscly bodybuilder occupies the opposite side of the projection space. With their presence, Hafez points out today's tendencies of hyper buffering physical appearance at the expense of intellectual autonomy.

The installation's central part is populated by more dual figures, adjacent to snipers, bombers, and choppers whose dark shapes establish a menacing tone. The pantheonic feel of the room

is reinforced by the presence of ten life-size busts, perfectly aligned on the floor into two rows. Each rising from a pile of sand, the robust superhero silhouettes extend into Anubis-shaped heads, echoing the video installation. By rupturing the ground, Hafez alludes to an ideological earthquake—will it serve an apocalyptic revival of the dead, or rather, the rebirth of nature?

With the plethora of playful ambiguities and ancient allegories contained in Hafez's works, the emotional register of the exhibition widens from mischievous to sarcastic, dramatic, nostalgic, and ultimately, prophetic. Amplified in its sacredness by the presumed sanctity of the gallery space, the installation acts as a snapshot of humanity's march towards a binomial outcome— self-destruction through violence and egomania, or rather, salvation with the re-tracking of society. Nodding to the idea of premonition, what Hafez concedes is an overall optimistic epilogue.

### **About the Artist**

Born in Cairo, Egypt in 1963, Khaled Hafez trained at the city's Faculty of Fine Arts in the late 1980s, and later received a Master of Fine Arts degree in new media and digital arts from the Transart Institute (New York, USA) and the Danube University (Krems, Austria). Hafez's works have been featured in recent events such as the 56th Venice Biennale (2015); Abu Dhabi Festival (2015); FotoFest International Biennial, USA (2014); the Venice Biennale, Italy (Maldives Pavilion, 2013); and the Havana Biennial, Cuba (2012). His videos and films have screened at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, Netherlands (2012); the CPH:DOX/ Copenhagen Film Festival, Denmark (2011); and the New Museum's African Film Festival, USA (2010). Recent solo exhibitions for the artist have been held at Galerie Naimah Schutter, Germany (2013); AB Gallery, Switzerland (2013); and Meem Gallery, UAE (2013). Hafez's works are housed in the State Museum of Art, Thessaloniki, Greece; The British Museum, United Kingdom; the Saatchi Collection, United Kingdom; and the Maraya Art Centre, UAE, among others.

### **About Ayyam Gallery**

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organisation, managing the careers of established and emerging artists from the Middle East. Blue-chip art spaces in Beirut and Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts programme have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art by introducing the dynamic art of the region to a global audience. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship programme that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also spearheaded recent efforts to document the region's art history.

### **Exhibition Facts**

Exhibition Dates: 16 November 2015 - 14 January 2016

Opening Reception: Monday, 16 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai (12, Alserkal Avenue), Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971 4 3236242

Email: [dubai@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:dubai@ayyamgallery.com)

Website: [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

For press information and artwork images, please contact [press@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:press@ayyamgallery.com) or +971 4 3236242.