

**PRESS RELEASE**

Ayyam Gallery  
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Gallery Hours:

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Sun-Wed: 10:00am-10:00pm  
Thur - Sat: 2:00pm-10:00pm



***Khaled Takreti: LOL***

14 January – 12 March 2015

Opening reception and book launch: Wednesday, 14 January from 7:00 to 9:00 pm  
Ayyam Gallery Dubai (DIFC)

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (DIFC) is pleased to announce *LOL*, the solo show of influential Syrian artist Khaled Takreti. Highlighting Takreti’s latest body of work, the exhibition travels to Dubai after a highly successful debut at Ayyam Gallery’s Beirut outpost in September 2014, where a new monograph on the artist was simultaneously launched.

*LOL* demonstrates Takreti’s recent innovations in painting through a methodical process that involves multiple stages of executing his compositions. In each work, the artist begins with appropriated or photographic imagery then creates a stencil that serves as the outline of his subjects as he renders an ‘etching’ on the sparse background of untreated canvas. Resembling facsimiles of advertisements or print media, Takreti isolates his figures with inanimate objects or minimally described settings as he emphasises the flattening of space that one associates with mass-produced imagery. Select areas of colour guide the viewer across the composition, amplifying the symbolism of a certain figure or object. In *220 Volts* (2014), for example, a woman’s head has been transformed into a red and black speaker, her body covered in thin lines that give the appearance of a transmitted image as its signal is adjusted. Taken by surprise, the figure stands to the side of outdated communication devices and stereo equipment as Takreti playfully satirises the high level of dependency on electronic goods and media that defines the modern experience.

*LOL* continues the artist’s exploration of socio-political themes that is found in his previous series *Complete Freedom* (2013). Comprising subtle references to the ongoing conflict in Takreti’s native Syria, the preceding paintings are devoid of colour and dominated by tragic, bombastic, or menacing characters. *LOL* shifts the focus of this thematic thread to the intricacies of daily life and social interactions, allowing the subjective dimensions of his works to appear in vivid detail. Several new self-portraits indicate the artist’s return to an introspective approach to painting as he resumes the chronicling of his biography. In *My Heritage* (2014), Takreti is shown in the clothes of his late grandmother as he repairs a child-size puppet: an unconventional portrait that captures the psychological undertones of all his paintings.

The new, bilingual monograph on the artist will be available at the DIFC installment of the exhibition. Featuring a catalogue of reproductions spanning two decades of Takreti’s oeuvre, the publication also includes essays by critic, editor, and novelist Pascal Amel and Ayyam Gallery artistic director and chief writer Maymanah Farhat.

## About the Artist

Born in Beirut in 1964, Khaled Takreti is a leading Syrian artist whose Pop painting style has influenced a subsequent generation of contemporary Arab painters. Originally trained as an architect at the University of Damascus, he began exhibiting his work in the mid 1990s. Recognised for his innovative approach to portraiture, which merges a personal narrative in the form of a visual diary with explorations of the modern social image, he introduced a painting style that was without precedent in Syria.

Based in Paris since 2004, Takreti has exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions and has been featured in biennials and art fairs such as the Alexandria Biennale and Art Hong Kong. His works are housed in the Syrian National Museum, the Jordanian National Gallery of Fines Arts, and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, among other private and public collections.

His recent exhibitions include solo shows at Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2014, 2010); Ayyam Gallery London (2013); Ayyam Gallery Dubai DIFC (2012, 2010); and Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2009); and group surveys at the Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea (2014); Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris (2014); Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2011); and Villa Emerige, Paris (2011). In 2012, Takreti was named among the 101 greatest living artists in France by *Art Absolutement*.

## About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Middle Eastern artists with an international profile and museum presence. Spaces in Beirut, Dubai, Jeddah, and London have further succeeded in showcasing the work of Middle Eastern artists with the aim of educating a wider audience about the art of this significant region.

## Exhibition Facts

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Opening Reception and Book Launch: Wednesday, 14 January from 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery, Gate Village 3, DIFC, Dubai

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