



*The Velvet of Your Eyes*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm

## MOHAMMAD BOZORGI AGAINST THE DARKNESS

10 November 2016 – 7 January 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, 10 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Beirut is pleased to announce *Against the Darkness*, the solo exhibition of leading Iranian calligrapher and painter Mohammad Bozorgi.

Selected from the artist's recent series, *Coloured Tears*, *Grey World*, the featured works were produced in response to regional conflicts, and describe the impact that such widespread destruction has on the global community. Bozorgi's latest body of work also serves as an exploration of colour and the high level of abstraction that can be realised when calligraphic forms are freed in complex compositions.

In an accompanying statement, Bozorgi describes the artist's role of depicting the world as he or she observes it. According to the painter, references to everyday life in art are a form of translation that materialises even in certain uses of colour. In *Coloured Tears*, *Grey World*, the concept of darkness, or the decline of living conditions into a constant state of despair, is countered with colour in protest of 'lost dreams' and 'lost lives.' At the same time, Bozorgi seeks to inspire a sense of hope in viewers by alluding to a world shaped by beauty, peace, and tranquility.

The radiant palette of *The Velvet of Your Eyes* (2015), for example, creates a shimmering effect, as abstracted text rendered in red appears to dance against a blue background. The fluid shapes of stylised letters gravitate towards the centre of the composition, orbiting around a circular mass that is composed of mirrored words, forming a sunburst. Bozorgi's rotating calligraphic text coalesces with his vivid colour scheme in order to suggest a source of energy and brilliance. *The Velvet of Your Eyes* (2015) shows the artist using the elegant gestures of calligraphy to suggest movement, as words become anthropomorphic forms.

Other works such as *The Route of Creation* (2015) engage the spiritual nature of the written word in Islamic art while incorporating the illusionistic techniques of contemporary forms abstraction. By manipulating positive and negative space with a mosaic like composition where text is broken then reconfigured in blue and red clusters (perhaps in reference to the water and blood of the human body), Bozorgi creates the optical illusion of regenerating forms, a space where creation has no beginning or end.

#### About the Artist

In keeping with the aesthetic principles of Islamic art, Mohammad Bozorgi maps his compositions according to precise mathematical structures and symmetry, and never deviates from the meaning of words despite the innovation of his script.

Born in Tehran in 1978, Bozorgi was originally educated as a biomedical engineer before entering the visual arts with a decade of training at the Society of Iranian Calligraphers, where he mastered a number of calligraphic forms, and earned 'Momtaz' degrees. This robust background has inspired Bozorgi to use the directives of geometry to create abstract illusions of depth and space while developing stylised characters based on Arabic and Persian examples.

Recognised as a leading figure among a 'New Generation' of contemporary calligraphers, Bozorgi builds on the breakthroughs of modern predecessors, as he seeks to advance the art of calligraphy through experimental formalism. Within his meticulously designed compositions, text multiplies as it is infused with energy and appears to move across the canvas or paper in unison, originating from and returning to the center like the cyclical rhythms of nature.

Bozorgi has participated in recent solo and group exhibitions at Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2015); Ayyam Gallery, Jeddah (2014); Homa Gallery, Tehran (2014); Galerie Nicolas Flamel, Paris (2013); Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, Zurich (2012); Shirin Art Gallery, Tehran (2012); and Endjavi-Barbé Art Projects, Geneva (2012). His works are housed in private and public collections, including the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.



## About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organisation that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. 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. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship programme that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also contributed to recent efforts that document underrepresented facets of global art history.

## Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Dates: 10 November 2016 – 7 January 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, 10 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Regular Hours: Mon-Fri: 10.00 am to 8.00 pm, Sat: 12.00 to 6.00 pm

Location: Beirut Tower, Ground Floor, Zeitoune Street, Across from Beirut Marina

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