

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Sadik Alfraji, 'Godot to Come Yesterday'
Location: Ayyam Gallery Jeddah
Dates: 26 November 2013 - 9 January 2014
Opening: Tuesday, 26 November at 7-9pm



Ayyam Gallery Jeddah is pleased to present 'Godot to Come Yesterday', an exhibition of works by Iraqi artist Sadik Alfraji from 26 November 2013 - 9 January 2014.

Sadik Kwaish Alfraji's works – regardless of the medium – have a unique way of blending art and philosophy. Through his strikingly dark works including paintings, prints and video, Alfraji explores a variety of themes such as issues of existence and identity, feeling of loss and perpetual state of longing. Moreover, he tackles anxiety, emotions and thoughts related to these themes, which are much prevalent in his life as an exile artist. In this respect, his memories of social and political events, especially the Iran-Iraq war, and personal experiences such as the loss of his father add to the intensity and depth in his work. Having shown his work internationally in the Middle East, Europe and the US, Alfraji's engaging exhibitions encourage viewers to tackle questions of existence that are relevant to all our lives.

According to Alfraji, the show will draw from the aesthetic and conceptual framework of his earlier practice: "These works go along in the same stream as my earlier work. They treat the issue of our existence through themes, concepts and ideas related to its daily experiences and situations, which we encounter as individuals or groups/ societies. This takes the form of a constant questioning of life and purpose in most of my works."

Alfraji's exhibition brings together seven Lambda prints from his *Waiting for Godot* series and two videos, *The House that my Father Built (Once Upon a Time)*, 2010 and *Got to Come Yesterday*, 2013. Inspired by Samuel Beckett's existentialist play *Waiting for Godot*, Alfraji explores the idea of futile waiting that is, according to the artist, incredibly relevant to all our lives. The recurring faceless shadowy figure with hands in pockets appear bruised and vulnerable in this series. Black as a color is powerful element in creating this impression. Questioning the problem of existence through this figure, Alfraji describes this figure or in other words Godot as one of his masters: "He is the impossible. He is an existentialist symbol that you wait for, but who never comes."

Alfraji's video *The House that my Father Built*, on the other hand, draws on the artist's personal memory and family background. The visual imagery of this intimate work is thus heavily influenced by emotional elements, especially nostalgia, triggered by his father's loss. The video refers to 'house' as a metaphor of identity, not in its physical meaning. Moreover, this metaphor elaborates on Iraq's role in the formation of Alfraji's identity.

Notes to the Editors

About the Artist

Born 1960 in Baghdad, Sadik Alfraji lives and works in Amersfoort, The Netherlands. His work is housed in numerous private and public collections including The National Museum of Modern Art, Baghdad; The Art Center, Baghdad; Royal Association of Fine Arts Amman; Shoman Foundation Amman; French Cultural Center, Amman; Novosibirsk State Art Museum, Russia; and the Cluj-Napoca Art Museum, Romania.

Solo shows include Ayyam Gallery London (2013); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2011); Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2011); Stads Gallery, Amersfoort, Netherlands (2010); Station Museum, Houston (2008-9); Stedelijk Museum, Den Bosch (2007-8). Selected group exhibitions include Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012); Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar (2010-11); CBKU & Centeaal Museum, New Salon, Utrecht (2008).

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded by collectors and cousins Khaled and Hisham Samawi in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery sought to nurture Syria's burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through landmark non-profit initiatives such as the Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator for emerging artists. Expansion into Beirut and Dubai enabled Ayyam Gallery to broaden its scope from the promotion of work by Syrian artists to those from the wider Middle East region. In doing so, Ayyam Gallery has established itself as one of the foremost exponents of Middle Eastern contemporary art to the international community.

Today, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Arab and Iranian artists with an international profile and museum presence. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, Ayyam Editions, and The Young Collectors Auction, 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. Ayyam Gallery Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city. In early 2013, Ayyam Gallery launched new spaces in London and Jeddah.

Exhibition Facts

Date: 26 November 2013 - 9 January 2014

Private View: Tuesday, 26 November, 7-9pm

Location: Bougainvillea Center Jeddah, Third Floor, King Abdulaziz Road, next to Stars Avenue, Al Zahra District, Jeddah.

Tel: +966 12 613 4111 / +966 12 613 2011

Email: jeddah@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com

For press information and images, please email press@ayyamgallery.com or call +971 4 323 6242.