

Exhibition: Rezvan Sadeghzadeh, *Passing the Crisis*

Location: Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai

Preview: 10 September 2013, 7pm

Dates: 10 September – 15 October 2013



Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai, is pleased to announce *Passing the Crisis*, an exhibition of new oil paintings by Iranian painter Rezvan Sadeghzadeh.

Sadeghzadeh's new works directly address apprehension, hope and fear. Anonymous female figures stand alongside oversized rocks and boulders, often dwarfed by these monolithic forms. Stones appear repeatedly throughout his paintings; they are not used merely as peripheral elements in a formal still life, or as background props in a landscape, but rather as organisms with a life and energy of their own, sometimes appearing centre stage to be studied at close range.

Alongside these stones are other repeated objects: bayonets, candles, doors, and more occasionally, trees, are all recurring motifs in Sadeghzadeh's painterly vocabulary. The artist has commented, "*I came across these elements on streets of the town in which I live, and they have gradually found their way into my work... They are valuable to me as they carry paradoxical concepts within them.*"

This element of double meaning is important to Sadeghzadeh in giving audiences freedom of interpretation. A stone can be both a hard, rigid and unforgiving object, yet one that also symbolises patience and stoicism. Similarly a candle can represent both presence and absence; it might be lit to mourn the loss of a loved on, or alternatively in celebration of a birthday. The artist points to Hafiz poetry, with its subtle layers of meaning and shifting borders of interpretation, as a source of inspiration to his approach.

The women populating Sadeghzadeh's compositions keep their backs to the audience, assuming the role of spectator alongside the viewer. By never showing individual faces and often grouping these women together as a mass of watching figures, the artist presents them as a collective rather than as individual. These vibrantly dressed figures often have the appearance of waiting for something - or someone - just out of the frame, imbuing the works with a tense stillness and a palpable sense of narrative about to unfold.

Notes to Editors

About The Artist

Born in Iran in 1964, Rezvan Sadeghzadeh currently lives and works in Tehran. Selected solo exhibitions include: Mah Gallery, Tehran (2007); Golestan Gallery, Tehran (2004); Asar Gallery, Tehran (2001); Arian Gallery, Tehran (2000); Arian Gallery, Tehran (1997); 7 Samar Gallery, Tehran (1996); Golestan Gallery, Tehran (1996); and Kandloos Gallery, Tehran (1994).

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, such as Abdunnasser Gharem, Khaled Jarrar, Nadim Karam, Safwan Dahoul, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhashemi and Khaled Takreti. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of initiatives like 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.

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

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