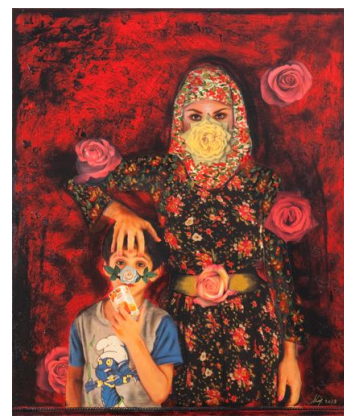


PRESS RELEASE

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

T: +971.4.4392395
F: +971.4.4392390
Sun-Thu: 10:00am-6:00pm
Sat: 12:00pm-4:00pm



Shurooq Amin We'll Build This City on Art and Love

Ayyam Gallery, Dubai (DIFC)

14 September - 23 October 2014

Opening reception: Sunday, 14 September from 7:00 - 9:00PM

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (DIFC) is pleased to announce *We'll Build This City on Art and Love*, a solo exhibition of mixed media works by Kuwaiti artist Shurooq Amin, to be held from 14 September until 24 October 2014.

In *We'll Build This City on Art and Love* the roles of women in Arab society remain central for the artist, however, moving away from the individual Amin further reflects upon a variety of social maladies, ranging from child marriage in war-affected areas to the marginalisation of the Bedoun in Kuwait, and the moral and material ramifications of stalled “dream” construction projects such as Silk City.

In the combining of various media, the use of bright pink and red, tongue-in-cheek imagery, and a sense of whimsy, Amin’s canvases are vivacious even while approaching subject matter of a serious or delicate nature. In *We'll Build This City on Art and Love* the artist employs materials as diverse as wood, reclaimed photographs, and Braille; the materials imbued with their own set of histories and tactile possibilities come together to insert new complexity into Amin’s chosen artistic themes. Authors long admired by Amin, including Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani and British author Lewis Carroll, are among several influences found in these visual motifs.

Works such as *Piece of the Pie: Who Stole the Tarts?*, for example, comment both on the mismanaged state of political affairs in the Arab world, as well as the topsy-turvy nature of modern life in general. The painting depicts a young woman clad in a dress and red heels, her face is masked as is customary for many of Amin’s heroines, she holds a finger up to her lips, and in her other hand holds a pie. While men bicker and fight over the largest piece of the pie, like Alice from *Alice in Wonderland* the young woman grows tall until finally attaining an omnipresence of sorts. In this work Amin’s protagonist functions as a coquette in addition to being the one who towers over a cast of men, this second representation is perhaps Amin’s nod to matriarchal society or a certain social soft power.

Unique to this exhibition are sombre palimpsest works that bring together significant landmarks from Kuwaiti history, photographic remnants, and charcoal drawings. The build up of layers in the collage works prompts viewers to question the past in relation to the present, to imagine the future as related to the immediate.

In covering a range of social issues, referring often to turbulent times and to dark subject matter, in *We'll Build This City on Art and Love* Amin's message is ultimately that of hope. Her central concern being how best to build sustainable relationships, societies, and systems so that the legacy we leave behind is that of strength instead of fracture or stagnation.

Notes to Editors

About the Artist

Immediately striking in artist Shurooq Amin's work is the energy exuded by warm hues and painterly realism in the depiction of elaborately attired men and women whose taste for fashion signifies power and overstated social posturing. Amin's figures, pictured against Louis Vuitton luggage or clad in embroidered abayas, are often depicted in various states of embrace, locking hands, playing cards, drinking whisky: their true identities hidden, both figuratively and literally, behind the imposition of masks or veils. The women in Amin's canvases are ultimately subservient to their male counterparts, their invisible "puppet masters." Through such imagery she explores the double standards, hypocrisy, and secret lives that exist beneath the surface of a conservative state. Her work confronts the hidden lives of the Arab patriarch: religious preacher, weekend alcoholic; political activist, well-known party-animal; conservative father, secret playboy. Amin's examination of gender roles and performativity while portrayed in the Arab context is applicable to the dynamics of gender as they play out globally.

Born in 1967 in Kuwait, Shurooq Amin is an interdisciplinary art practitioner of Kuwaiti-Syrian background. In addition to being a visual artist with thirteen solo exhibitions to date, she is a Pushcart Prize nominated poet with a doctorate in Creative Writing and Ekphrasis from Warnborough College, England. In 2013, Shurooq was awarded the title of "Artist of the Year" by the Arab Woman Awards, Kuwait chapter and was the first female Kuwaiti artist to be auctioned at Christie's in 2012. Amin's paintings are housed in public and private collections in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Selected solo and group exhibitions for the artist include: Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2013); Lahd Gallery, London (2011); CAN, New York (2010); Tilal Gallery, Kuwait (2010); 11th International Cairo Art Biennale (2008). A retrospective of her work was recently featured in the biannual art journal, *Contemporary Practices: Visual Arts from the Middle East*.

Exhibition Facts

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (DIFC)

Exhibition Dates: 14 September - 23 October 2014

Opening Reception: Sunday, 14 September from 7:00 - 9:00PM

Location: Gate Village Building 3, DIFC, Dubai

Tel: +971 4.4392393

Email: difc@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com

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