

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Kais Salman 'Inner-Self'
Location: Ayyam Gallery, Beirut
Opening: 20 September 2012, 7 PM
Dates: 20 September - 30 October



From September 20 until October 30, Ayyam Gallery, Beirut is pleased to present 'Inner-Self', a solo exhibition of Kais Salman, a prominent member of a young generation of artists that is currently transforming Syrian painting. Ever evolving, this new body of work presents a departure from his previous 'Fashion Series'.

Salman depicts his subjects with large, tapered oval faces with accentuated nose bridges, prominent almond-shaped eyes and full lips, carried atop undersized voluptuous bodies. Viewed from a frontal perspective, his subjects lack their upper extremities, thereby accentuating their bare, curvaceous forms. Evocative of ancient alabaster sculptures which have lost their arms and heads over time and even more redolent of the rotundness of fertility statues, Salman's paintings deliberately suggest the fecundity of his feminine subjects.

Nearly monochromatic with crimson accents, Salman's subjects are portrayed in a much more humane manner and the vacuousness of the fashion-motivated figures is replaced with the multifacetedness of women. The Bride depicts a disrobed woman with a wedding veil falling behind her. Though she appears nude and vulnerable to our gaze and objectified by it, the revealed musculature of one of her legs reinforces that she is more than an object to gaze and desire. Heavy Fuel is a work composed of five canvases that outlines the diversity of character in women with references to religion, awareness of objectification, self-protection of their modesty, and their live-giving character. Yet these women also appear as dangerous creatures as their corporeal vulnerability is countered by a holstered dagger or gun in a lace garter, an accoutrement popularly worn during a wedding ceremony. Continuing the line of investigation into the many facets of his subject, Salman has also created a large composite painting of thirty to forty small drawings revolving around a central portrait as well as paintings composed of a multitude of smaller figural sketches.

Born in Tartous, Syria in 1976, Kais Salman graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts Damascus in 2002. Featured in group exhibitions in Syria and the Arab world, including the 4th Annual Youth Exhibition in Damascus, where he took first prize, and the inaugural exhibition of the Damascus Museum of Modern Art, Salman has been a regular fixture of the local art scene ever since. In addition to several solo exhibitions with Ayyam Gallery, he has recently participated in such shows as 'Shabab Uprising' and 'Damascus Calling', which was held at The Park Avenue Armory in New York City in 2008. In 2010, Salman was profiled in the Wall Street Journal Europe's Weekend Edition as a must-watch figure of the contemporary Middle Eastern art scene. One of Salman's large critically acclaimed 'Fashion Series' canvases graced the cover of the magazine's May 2010 issue, a first for an Arab artist. His paintings are currently housed in collections throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

Since opening in 2006, Ayyam Gallery has become one of the most prominent galleries in the Middle East with four exhibition spaces throughout the region, notably in Damascus, Beirut, Dubai, and two upcoming spaces in London and Jeddah. Ayyam Gallery proudly represents some of today's most recognized emerging and established Arab and Iranian artists. For interviews with the artist, or any further details, please contact us at +961 | 374450 or email beirut@ayyammgallery.com