

**PRESS RELEASE**

Ayyam Gallery  
 143 New Bond Street  
 1st Floor, W1S 2TP, London  
 Gallery Hours:

T: +44(0)2074093568  
 F: +44(0)2074093162  
 Mon-Sat: 10:00am-6:00pm



***Athier: Improbable Possibilities***

18 September – 31 October 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, 18 September from 6:00 to 8:00PM

Ayyam Gallery London is pleased to announce *Improbable Possibilities*, a forthcoming solo show of British-Iraqi artist Athier. Applying theoretical physics as part of its conceptual basis, the exhibition will feature a recent series of paintings that offer visual interpretations of parallel dimensions and their access points while exploring the notion of absolutes and the potential of imagined realities.

Initially inspired by readings in string theory, Athier has created three distinct but related bodies of work, dividing his aesthetic investigation into a succession of visualised phenomena: *Push and Pull*; *The Cut*; and *Eternal Balance*. Collectively, the artist's new paintings present a point of departure for a broader envisioning of solutions for the present and futuristic passageways to the unknown.

The painterly journey through space-time begins with canvases dominated by dynamic architectural elements and fluid tubular forms. These intersecting facets are bookended by entry and exit points: wormholes that the artist describes as, 'an attempt to imagine the unimaginable as pure energy moving from one space through to another.' In each painting, overlapping planes support a suspended transfer of energy, as the composition becomes the site of unconstrained forces.

*The Cut* depicts the movement of an organism through such portals. Deconstructed or 'spaggetified' in the interchange from one dimension to the next, forms collide as though implosion is inevitable; and yet approaching the final stage of this process signals the start of reconstruction—reaching a new dimension means a return to a complete state.

In *Eternal Balance* equilibrium is achieved. Chaos is contained and shapes fall into place. Floating masses appear anchored by the pull of centralised sources of energy. As the artist emphasises, the concept of balance is found in the essential functioning of the universe, at the atomic level, and resonates on a larger scale, as extremes are inevitably met with counteracting forces. Although abstracted and grounded in scientific theory, Athier's works propose weighty philosophical inferences for today's world, prompting viewers to contemplate new possibilities.

## About the Artist

Athier Mousawi is a British-Iraqi visual artist whose work over recent years has centered on posing unanswerable questions against undefined answers and forming a visual narrative between the two. Since graduating from Central St. Martins, London in 2007, the subject of much of his work has been Iraq and his diasporic relationship to his intrinsic yet foreign homeland, as well as the idea of nostalgic referencing to how we idolise and remember our past, present, and future.

Of the main constructs used within Athier's painting the initial response is that of scale and colour which guide the viewer through his compositions. The various ways of absorbing with his works are dependent on viewer positioning and distance from the canvases and ergonomic interaction. Symbolism in these large-scale paintings is weaved through layers of organic figurative and geometric forms.

Separate to his artistic practice, Athier has worked extensively as an educator within the UK and on the field. For three consecutive years from 2007 Athier worked as a British Museum Arab artist in residence, working in schools throughout the UK. He was selected as the *Chasing Mirrors* artist in residence by The National Portrait Gallery for 2011, leading workshops in community centres through London. As well as a major collaborative exhibition, *Chasing Mirrors* was a platform for educational projects with the gallery, which ran parallel to the three months of the exhibition. In 2012, Athier worked in a number of refugee camps as a workshop leader in Beirut, Istanbul, Amman, and Jarash. Athier lives and works between Paris, London, and Istanbul.

## About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Middle Eastern artists with an international profile and museum presence. Spaces in Beirut, Dubai, Jeddah, and London 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.

## Exhibition Facts

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Opening Reception: Thursday, 18 September from 6:00 to 8:00PM

Location: 143 New Bond Street

1st Floor

W1S 2TP, London

T: +44(0)2074093568

Email: [london@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:london@ayyamgallery.com)

For press information and artwork images, please contact [press@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:press@ayyamgallery.com) or +44 (0) 207 409 3568