

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Mohannad Orabi “It’s All About Sama”

Location: Ayyam Gallery Beirut

Dates: March 10 – April 30

Opening: March 10, 2011 at 7pm



From March 10 until April 30, Ayyam Gallery Beirut will present “It’s All About Sama,” the solo show of Syrian artist Mohannad Orabi. Highlighting a new body of work by the rising painter, the forthcoming exhibition will reflect a shift in the artist’s ubiquitous subject matter. Known for offbeat “self portraits” that depict the artist as a lighthearted, whimsical character, Orabi has continued to channel his inner vivacity and experiences through the image of a small child. This rounded figure, with its exaggerated head, cherub lips, and blackened, almond shaped eyes toys with androgynous representations, as the artist refutes the existence of gendered psychological spaces.

A female protagonist who is shown in various settings and scenarios establishes the narrative of Orabi’s latest series. This time she appears in both childhood and adulthood. As though shown through the many stages of life, she is depicted as a daughter, an adolescent, a seductress, a lover and a demure woman. Giving each canvas the title of “self portrait,” Orabi emphasizes his paintings as reflections of the symbolic self.

Utilizing solid backgrounds and varying patterns in a minimal palette of mostly primary colors, the artist alters the mood of each portrait with the subtlety of ornamentation, making for compositions that have a strong sense of formalism despite being driven by poignant introspection.

Born in Damascus in 1977, Orabi graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in 2000. Noteworthy among a dynamic generation of young Syrian artists, he has exhibited frequently at home and abroad in venues across the region, and has participated in collective shows and festivals in North America, Europe and Asia, most notably at Art Hong Kong in 2009, where his oversized canvases wowed international viewers. Through widely acclaimed solo exhibitions at Ayyam Gallery’s Damascus and Dubai outposts and several successful sales with Ayyam Auctions, Orabi has quickly become a favorite among Middle Eastern collectors.

Since its founding in 2006, Ayyam Gallery has become one of the Middle East’s leading contemporary art spaces. With a selection of cutting-edge painting, sculpture and photography that represents some of the Arab world’s most exciting talent, the gallery has sought to promote the region’s dynamic cultural scene at home and abroad.

Mohannad Orabi will be present on the opening day and during the first week of the exhibition; for interview with the artist or any further info, please contact us at: +961 70 535301 or at: beirut@ayyamgallery.com, or visit www.ayyamgallery.com.