

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Safwan Dahoul: Still Dreaming

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai DIFC

Dates: January 17 – February 28, 2011

Opening: January 17 at 7pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai DIFC is pleased to announce the forthcoming solo show of prominent Syrian artist Safwan Dahoul. A leading regional painter, Dahoul's ongoing "Dream" series has become one of the most recognized bodies of work in contemporary Arab art. Honoring a selection of recent canvases from this seminal collection, the exhibition "Still Dreaming" will feature paintings that continue to advance nearly three decades of this incomparable aesthetic.

Dahoul's oversized acrylic-on-canvas works possess a complex visual language that subtly incorporates (and renews) a number of artistic traditions. From ancient art to modernist approaches, the Syrian painter dismantles then rebuilds certain techniques, adopting them as quiet nuances of his own formalism. In his latest work, among the intricate details of Dahoul's labyrinthian compositions and his reoccurring iconic heroine, one can locate the cadence of lines that defines the art of Arabic calligraphy. Whether his figure is suspended in midair, accentuated by the flatten spatial plane of a table or standing silhouetted before the viewer, the curvatures of her body and the intersection of muted colors is reminiscent of the elaborate forms that can be found in some of the greatest examples of this centuries-old tradition. The ingenuity of Dahoul's interpretation of these aspects however lies in the ways in which they become part of a larger juxtaposition of the literal and the symbolic. Amidst the visible concaves of his subject and the negative and positive spaces that surround her, reside the weighty inferences of loss and isolation.

After graduating from the Faculty of Fines Arts in Damascus at the top of his class in 1983, Safwan Dahoul (who was born in Hama, Syria in 1961) went on to receive a scholarship to study abroad from the Ministry of Higher Education in 1987, obtaining a doctorate from the Higher Institute of Plastic Arts in Mons in 1997. Since then he has participated in international art fairs, and solo and group exhibitions throughout the Middle East, Europe and the US. Among the highest grossing Middle Eastern artists to date, his outstanding auction sales and blockbuster shows with Ayyam Gallery have made him widely popular with regional and international collectors alike.

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