

Ayyam Gallery  
11, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8  
Al Quoz 1, Dubai  
Tel: +971.4.3236242  
Fax: +971.4.3236243

Gallery Hours:  
Sun-Thu: 10.00am-6.00pm  
Sat: 12.00pm-6.00pm

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



*Untitled* from Storeys series, 2015, Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 250 cm

## Tammam Azzam

### *The Road*

18 January – 3 March 2016

Opening reception: Monday, 18 January from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (11, Alserkal Avenue) is pleased to announce *The Road*, a solo show by Tammam Azzam. Comprising of a brand new body of work, *The Road* centers around Azzam's first series of paintings executed since leaving Damascus over four years ago.

Established as a leading voice for his native Syria, the artist has become internationally celebrated for his powerful digital media artworks that have chronicled the tragic events of the uprising in the spring of 2011 and consequent humanitarian crisis that followed. No longer limited to the constraints of working digitally, Dubai based Azzam has now settled back into studio-life, returning to the painting practice he left behind in Damascus.

Working on a large scale, the artist's dense, painterly canvases place the viewer at the beginning of a still and empty road, a road that has no set direction or destination, a road with endless trajectories and countless unseen obstacles along the way. Made up of cropped compositions, the series *Storeys* depicts the physical wreckage of war for as far as the eye can see. The banality of everyday life is entirely absent from the deserted settings contributing to the heavy atmosphere of loneliness and retreat. The viewer can only speculate how or even if life goes on behind the ravaged walls of multi-storey buildings. Two ambitious, site-specific installations add an immersive, three-dimensional element to the series.

New digital media prints will accompany Azzam's latest body of work lending a more abstract, universal interpretation of the notion of an unspecified journey or *Road*.

Navigating his way through the labyrinth of physical and emotional consequences for those who have escaped their war-torn homeland, Tammam Azzam rejects any attempt to over-sentimentalise what has been left behind or what lies ahead, instead he leaves us with difficult and confronting questions.

### **About the Artist**

Well known for his 'hybrid form' of painting through the application of various media, Tammam Azzam arrives at interactions between surface and form that borrow and multiply as compositions evolve. The artist's unconventional use of materials such as rope, clothespins, and other found objects are employed to create depth, texture, and space, achieving a striking balance between ordinary objects and the expanse of the picture plane despite a visible tension.

Following the start of the uprising in Syria, Azzam turned to digital media to create visual composites of the conflict that have resonated with viewers. These widely-distributed works are informed by his interest in the interventionist potential of digital photography and street art as powerful and direct forms of protest that are difficult to suppress. In early 2013, Azzam made worldwide headlines when his work *Freedom Graffiti* went viral on social media. Enlisting one of the most iconic works of art, Gustav Klimt's *The Kiss*, to protest the country's suffering, he superimposed a recognisable image of love over the walls of war-torn Damascus.

Born in Damascus in 1980, Tammam Azzam lives and works in Dubai. He received his formal training from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus with a concentration in oil painting. Recently, he has participated in solo and group exhibitions at such venues as FUU - Street Art Festival, Sarajevo (2015); *Dismaland* by Banksy, Weston-super-Mare (2015); Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice (2015); Abu Dhabi Festival (2015); *Framer Framed* in de Tolhuistuin, Amsterdam (2015); Rush Arts, New York (2014); FotoFest Biennial, Houston (2014); Ayyam Gallery London (2013); the 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts, Slovenia (2013); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2012, 2009); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2011).

### **Exhibition Facts**

Exhibition Dates: 18 January - 3 March 2016

Opening Reception: Monday, 18 January from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai (11, Alserkal Avenue), Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971 4 3236242

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

Website: [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

For press information and artwork images, please contact [press@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:press@ayyamgallery.com) or +971 4 3236242.