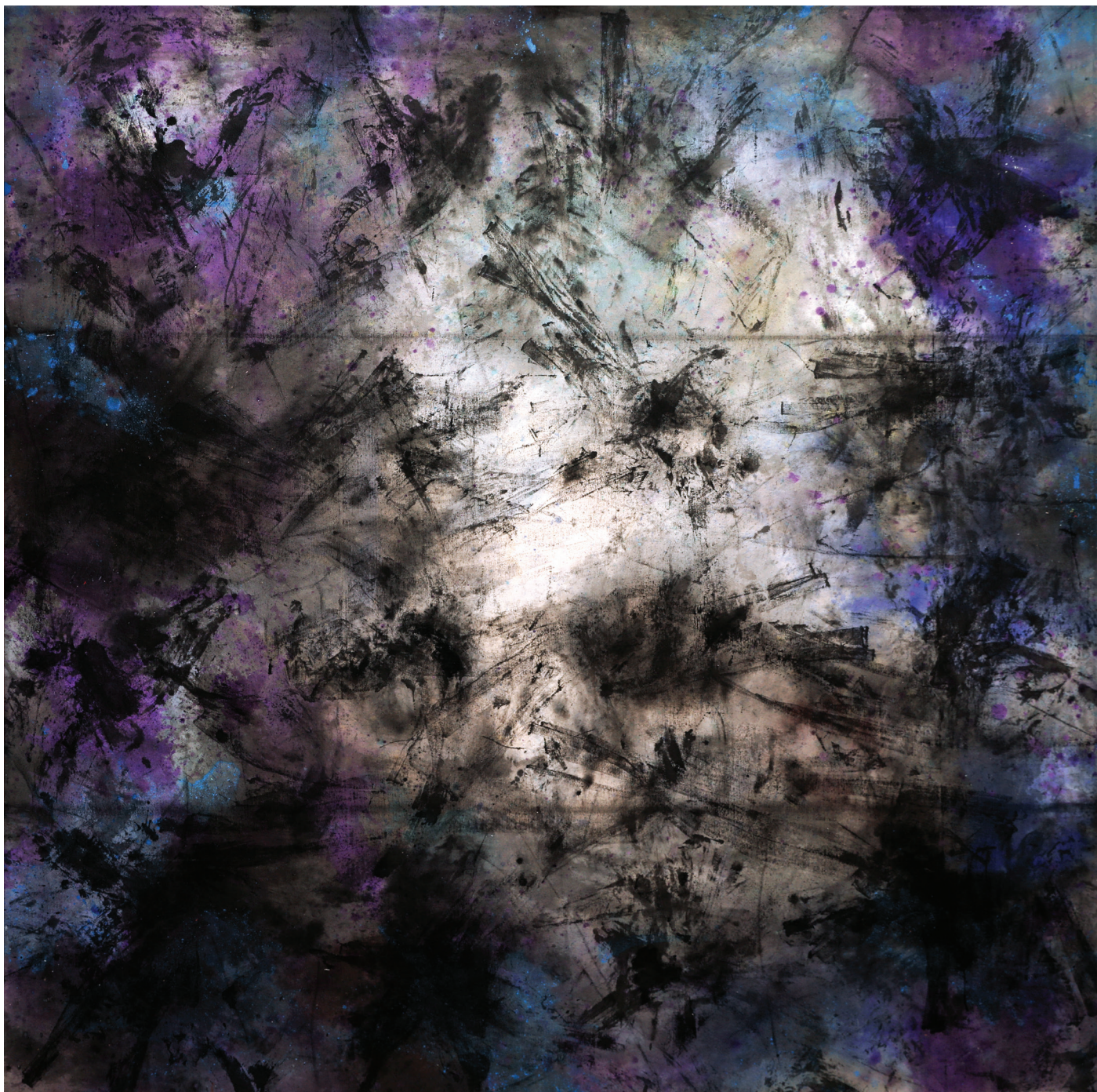


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ayyam  gallery



Sky Line, 2021, Acrylic on canvas, 165 x 165 cm

THAIER HELAL

Abyss

22 March - 10 May 2021

Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present *Abyss*, a solo exhibition featuring Thaiier Helal's most recent body of work.

Please join us in the presence of the artist on 22 March from 4 - 9 pm.

About the exhibition

Taking his creative observation further, Thaiier continues to pose radical questions. He addresses many subjects concerning our existence, meaning, and current state of bitterness that drains the mind and soul.

While furthering his previous body of work in ideology, Thaiier's new work differs in texture, stepping away from his structural and sculptural approach, the artist expresses himself through flatness. While developing a trial and error process, focusing on layers of light and darkness, Helal threads a thin line between figurative and abstract. Thaiier succeeds in doing so through non-conformist perspectives, the artist's technique plays with composition and vantage point. The artist's fascination with nature is pushed backwards. The artist's connection manifests itself through subdued earthy and cool tones placed deep within the darkness, symbols of elements of the unknown.

The process of trial and error creates series of similar yet unique works, allowing the viewer to see through the strokes and gestures, making meaning out of form or lack thereof. The process gives Helal the opportunity for inner-discussion, with an ongoing interaction between the work and the artist. The interactions offer the artist moments of appreciation. The aim is for each viewer to see something personal that references past experiences, to take the viewer to the extremes of imagination. This technique amounts to artworks of hope and pain that hone on uncertainty. Are we heading towards a specific direction? Will we find meaning to any of it?

The repetition in Thaiier's gestural abstraction allows him to answer questions in several ways, giving multiple ambiguous answers to open-ended issues. The artist is looking for solutions amidst the darkness, tokens of meaning and truth submerged in light and color across the canvases. The light is what remains untouched, resulting in an opportunity for color. Therefore rendering darkness as manmade, saturation of pigment becomes layers of missteps. In the series of small works on paper, the artist envisions common suffering, behind the horizontal strokes are faces masked by the same fate.

About the artist

Thaiier Helal's constant search for experimental forms has led him to include diverse media, arriving at approaches that often blur the lines between painting and assemblage. With an innovative painting style that has progressed over the course of two decades, Helal is recognised as working at the forefront of contemporary abstraction in the Middle East.

Born in 1967, Helal launched his career in his native Syria, where he studied with seminal painters at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus. After relocating to the United Arab Emirates in the 1990s, he developed a distinct method of painting that incorporates unconventional materials such as glue, sand, and coal in an attempt to recreate the physical and sensory aspects of the world around him.

Helal begins each composition with a sketched grid that serves as a compositional base then builds on the surface of the canvas by applying several layers of mixed media, providing a sense of organisation to an otherwise spontaneous picture. This laboured formalism represents the artist's conceptual rendering of the intrinsic code of nature, and extends to investigations of spatial dynamics as shaped by the fluctuation of

society and culture. Helal communicates movement and energy through expressionist explosions of colour and automatic brushwork, alluding to organic formations.

In the years following the outbreak of the Syrian conflict, Helal has explored various printmaking techniques and appropriated imagery in works that isolate the mechanisms of war and represent the growing militarisation of global society. Recent works by the artist that use found objects, such as plastic beads and miniature toys, allude to the adverse effects of globalisation, the advent of consumerist culture, and the power struggles that have triggered these phenomena.

As a longtime resident of the Gulf, Helal has contributed to the regional art scene with an extensive exhibition history that includes solo exhibitions at such venues as the Sharjah Art Museum (2000), in addition to awards from Tehran's Contemporary Painting Biennial (2005) and the Sharjah Biennial (1997). Helal has also influenced the development of local painting as a Senior Member of the Sharjah Arts Institute, and a Professor at the Fine Arts College, University of Sharjah, where he has encouraged emerging artists.

Recent solo and group exhibitions for the artist include Ayyam Gallery 11 Alserkal Avenue, Dubai (2018, 2017); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2015), Ayyam Gallery London (2015); Ayyam Gallery DIFC (2014); Samsung Blue Square, Seoul (2014); and Busan Museum of Art (2014). Helal's works are housed in private and public collections throughout the Arab world, including the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Collection, U.A.E.

A monograph on the artist was published by Ayyam Gallery in 2014.

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organization that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. Blue-chip art space in Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts program have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship program that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also contributed to recent efforts that document underrepresented facets of global art history.

Exhibition Facts

Exhibitions Dates: 22 March - 10 May 2021

Regular Hours: Sun - Thur : 10 am - 6 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery, B11, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971 4 323 62 42

Email: maya@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com