



Othman Moussa, *The Terror Group*, 2013, Oil on Canvas, 150 x 120 cm

SUMMER COLLECTIVE

Wavering Hope

18 June | 5 September 2025

Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present this year's summer collective titled *Wavering Hope*. The exhibition will feature works by Kais Salman, Khaled Takreti, Tammam Azzam, Abdalla Al Omari, Othman Moussa, Safwan Dahoul, Thaier Helal, Elias Izoli, Abdul-Karim Majdal Al-Beik, Mohannad Orabi, Nihad Al-Turk, and Yasmine Al Awa.

About the exhibition

'Hope (noun): A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen.' — Oxford English Dictionary

Hope is a complex and often conflicting sentiment within the Syrian experience. It has served as a force of endurance and, at times, a source of sorrow, rising in fleeting moments, only to vanish in the face of renewed suffering. For over two decades of conflict, displacement, and resistance, Syrian artists have relied on their creative practices as a lifeline. Through these practices, they have fought against erasure, preserved memory, and expressed truths too heavy for language alone. When homes and institutions were shattered, art persisted, an act of quiet defiance.

Some artists found themselves in exile, scattered across unfamiliar lands. Others remained in their fractured cities and towns, suspended in uncertain landscapes. Regardless of geography, the impulse to document, reflect, and resist has remained steadfast. Through mixed media and conceptual practices, they captured the emotional terrain of conflict, pain, resilience, memory, and longing through deeply personal and often urgent visual vocabularies.

Since December 8, 2024, a new chapter began. As the sun rose over Damascus, peace unexpectedly settled over the country. The fall of the Assad regime marked a symbolic and historical turning point. The machinery of war fell silent; birdsong returned to neighborhoods that had once been drowned in bombardment. A collective exhale swept across the land. Sanctions were lifted. Exiled Syrians felt the first stirrings of return. Yet even in this long-awaited moment, a deeper question surfaced: was this truly an end, or merely the next turn in a long cycle of hope and despair?

As Ayyam Gallery approaches its 20th anniversary, this moment of transformation for Syria coincides with a significant milestone for the gallery itself. Established in 2006, during a time of cultural vibrancy and promise, Ayyam Gallery has navigated the full arc of Syria's recent history—from creative renaissance to collapse, and now to cautious renewal.

This year's Summer Collective, titled *Wavering Hope* reflects on that journey, presenting works by Kais Salman, Khaled Takreti, Tammam Azzam, Abdalla Al Omari, Othman Moussa, Safwan Dahoul, Thaier Helal, Elias Izoli, Abdul-Karim Majdal Al-Beik, Mohannad Orabi, Nihad Al-Turk, and Yasmine Al Awa. Through their individual visions, these artists map the emotional, political, and cultural aftermath of conflict, and the fragile hope that emerges in its wake.

Elias Izoli paints figures cloaked in melancholy, alluding to the kidnappings and torture that spread throughout the country. Thaier Helal, mostly known for abstraction, turned to figuration, transforming his canvases into vessels of visual resistance and political commentary. Abdul-Karim Majdal Al-Beik veers away from traditional representation, using texture, material, and unconventional media to explore anguish and displacement. Othman Moussa departed from his serene still lives to use satire to confront political realities and cultural absurdities. Nihad Al-Turk's surreal world turns dark and violent, recalling ruins and wounds—embodiments of a psyche hollowed out by conflict.

Abdalla Al Omari's practice was deeply immersed in the context of the Syrian conflict. It has been driven by his own experience of displacement and a compelling need to shed light on exile, survival, and their impact on society. Through his portraiture, he highlights both collective trauma and personal displacement. Safwan Dahoul captures death and devastation with surreal intensity in his paintings—real massacres reimagined in nightmarish compositions that straddle memory and imagination. Kais Salman turns inward, his gestural, blood-tinged brushstrokes capturing inner turmoil, psychological fragmentation, and unspoken grief.

Tammam Azzam's works, built through layering and experimentation, speak to personal loss and the collapse of physical space and memory. Mohannad Orabi's figures, often caught mid-expression, reflect deep sorrow. Their faces—marked by isolation and distortion—echo the suffering that surrounds them, both seen and felt. Meanwhile, Khaled Takreti and Yasmine Al Awa use inanimate objects to personify conflict. These objects are left behind, lost in the turmoil, or preserved as memorabilia. Everyday objects turn into witnesses to the battles that have unfolded before them over the last decade and a half.

This exhibition is not only a collective meditation on survival but also a record of artistic persistence. Each work invites us to pause and confront the complexity of healing in the aftermath of trauma. The artists' works grapple with the contrast between the "before" and "after," portraying a homeland perpetually oscillating between destruction and re-birth, mourning and hope. The show is a reminder that in Syria, hope is rarely straightforward. It is layered with doubt, shadowed by memory, and always vulnerable to being undone. Yet it endures. And in the hands of these artists, it is made visible—transformed into images, forms, and gestures that challenge us to remember, to reflect, and to imagine something beyond despair.

As Ayyam Gallery marks two decades of preserving and championing Syrian contemporary art, this exhibition stands as a testament to a generation that has not only survived history, but shaped it—one brushstroke, one canvas, one voice at a time.

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: 18 June | 5 September 2025

Regular Hours: Monday - Friday: 11 am - 7 pm

Saturday: 12 pm - 6 pm

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

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