

Exhibition: Walid El-Masri:

The Seat of Perception III

Location: Ayyam Gallery Jeddah

Dates: 4 June - 10 July 2013

Opening Reception: 4 June 2013, 7pm



Ayyam Gallery Jeddah is pleased to present *The Seat of Perception III*, a solo exhibition of paintings by Lebanese artist Walid El-Masri, from 4 June - 10 July 2013.

Lebanese artist Walid El-Masri has in recent years concentrated his attention on a single material subject for his dynamic canvases: a chair. In each of his paintings, he pares down the architecture of the chair to a simple and evocative configuration of shapes and lines, and positions it so that this form is unexpectedly truncated or cropped by the edge of the canvas. Patches or swathes of bright colour punctuate the lower portions of the paintings, serving to counterbalance the decentralised position of the subject and to harmonise each composition.

Through his continuing focus on the unassuming but immediately recognisable form of a chair, El-Masri explores different configurations of colour, pattern and texture in his work. Although ostensibly treating the same subject matter, each of his paintings has a vitality and movement of its own, animated by the movement of expressively applied paint. El-Masri's paintings defy categorisation as either figurative or abstract: the suggestion of spatial perspective achieved by his elegantly delineated shapes is offset by the flatness of the picture plane and areas of two-dimensional pattern.

The sharp truncation of the top of the chairs and their lack of spatial context also lends a tension to the works, forcing the viewer to imagine its continuation into the space beyond the edges of the canvas. The inanimate chair, although the only recognisable subject of El-Masri's painting, is ultimately unknowable, and suspended in a realm of colour and space that is not our own.

Born in 1979 in Syria, Walid El-Masri lives and works in Paris. A graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus, his solo exhibitions include: Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2013); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2012); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2009); Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2008).



Notes to Editors

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded by collectors and cousins Khaled and Hisham Samawi in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery sought to nurture Syria's burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through landmark non-profit initiatives such as the Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator for emerging artists. Expansion into Beirut and Dubai enabled Ayyam Gallery to broaden its scope from the promotion of work by Syrian artists to those from the wider Middle East region. In doing so, Ayyam Gallery has established itself as one of the foremost exponents of Middle Eastern contemporary art to the international community.

Today, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Arab and Iranian artists with an international profile and museum presence, such as Nadim Karam, Safwan Dahoul, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhashemi and Khaled Takreti. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, Ayyam Editions, and The Young Collectors Auction, have further succeeded in showcasing the work of Middle Eastern artists with the aim of educating a wider audience about the art of this significant region. Ayyam Gallery Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city. In early 2013, Ayyam Gallery launched new spaces in London and Jeddah.

Exhibition Facts

Preview: 4 June 2013, 7pm

Exhibition Dates: 4 June - 10 July 2013

Location: Bougainvillea Center Jeddah, Third Floor, King's Road, Al-Shat'ta

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