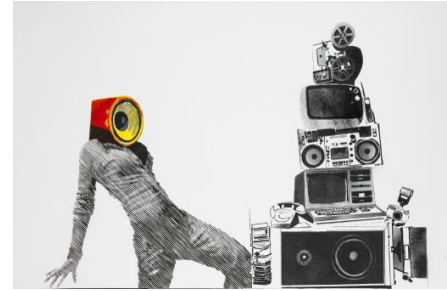


PRESS RELEASE

Ayyam Gallery
Beirut Tower, Ground Floor
Zeitoune Street, Solidere
Gallery Hours:

T: +961.1.374450/51
F: +961.1.374449
Mon-Fri: 10:00am-8:00PM
Sat: 12:00pm-6:00PM



Khaled Takreti: *LOL*

11 September – 24 October 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, 11 September from 7-9PM

Ayyam Gallery Beirut is pleased to announce *LOL*, the solo show of leading Syrian artist Khaled Takreti, opening on 11 September. Featuring a new series of works, the exhibition will highlight a recent development in Takreti’s painting style as he enters the second phase of his twenty-year oeuvre. Expanding his focus on sociocultural themes, which emerged in his previous body of work, *Complete Freedom* (2013), his latest paintings employ a new postmodern aesthetic, one that evokes the desensitised, image-saturated age of today.

Deconstructing the formal properties of painting, Takreti sources imagery from a variety of media then creates collaged stencils as outlines for his compositions. Figures and objects are paired with minimal reference to tangible spaces and painted with photographic precision, a breakdown of illusionism that is visible in his earlier works but further reduced in order to allude to the artifice of advertising, social media, and popular culture. Through such formalism, Takreti blurs the line between fine art and mass media and depicts modern life as a tableau of the absurd riddled with anxiety.

In *Mis en Plis* (2014), for example, what appears to be a magazine spread of a beauty salon is subverted by the placement of a hollow figure whose identity remains invisible. The title of the painting references the process of undergoing a ‘makeover’ yet visibly absent is the body of the lone figure, as clothes stand in for the actual person. Similarly, in *220 Volts* (2014) a female protagonist appears taken aback by a stack of outdated electronics, her head depicted as a single stereo speaker.

The satirical nature of the exhibition’s included paintings is alluded to by its title, and culminates with the self-portrait *A l’aise* (2014), which shows the artist at ease in a retro armchair. Takreti’s own image is rendered in the black and white aesthetic of newspaper prints, matching the sense of temporal distance that is communicated in additional works, as a reflection of what art historian Brendan Prendeville describes as the ‘reality as paper thin’ basis for realism in the postmodern era. Although these recent paintings mark a notable departure from the self-reflective portraits of his family and friends for which Takreti is known, he retains an interest in the buried psychology of the everyday.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the launch of *Takreti*, a bilingual monograph, featuring a survey of the artist’s work from 2002 until 2014. Complementing this comprehensive catalogue are essays by novelist, art critic, and editor Pascal Amel and Ayyam Gallery Artistic Director Maymanah Farhat.

About the Artist

Born in Beirut in 1964, Khaled Takreti is a leading Syrian artist. Recognised for his innovative approach to painting, which merges the personal with explorations of the modern 'social image,' his 'Pop-stance' aesthetic has been influential to a subsequent generation of artists in the Arab world. Originally trained as an architect at the University of Damascus, Takreti held a position with the General Directorate of Antiquity and Museums in Syria between 1992 and 1995, prior to relocating to New York, where he lived for two years. A period of several years in Damascus after returning from the United States established the artist's reputation in the Syrian art scene, as he gradually introduced a painting style that was without precedent in the country.

Residing in Paris since 2004, Takreti has exhibited internationally in solo and group exhibitions and has been featured in art fairs and biennials such as the Alexandria Biennale and Art Hong Kong. His works are housed in the Syrian National Museum, the Jordanian National Gallery of Fines Arts, and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, among other private and public collections. His recent exhibitions include solo shows at Ayyam Gallery London (2013) and Ayyam Gallery Dubai DIFC (2012); and group surveys at the Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea (2014); Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris (2014); Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2011); and Villa Emerige, Paris (2011).

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Middle Eastern artists with an international profile and museum presence. Spaces in Beirut, Dubai, Jeddah, and London 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.

Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Dates: 11 September - 24 October 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, 11 September from 7-9PM

Location: Beirut Tower, Ground Floor, Zeitoune Street, Across from Beirut Marina

T: +961 1374450/51

Email: beirut@ayyamgallery.com

For press information and artwork images, please email press@ayyamgallery.com or call +9611374450/51.