

PRESS RELEASE

Ayyam Gallery

Bougainvillea Center, 3rd floor

King Abdulaziz Road, Jeddah

Gallery Hours:

T: +966 12 613 4111

F: +966 12 613 2011

Sun-Thu: 10:00am-9:00pm

Sat: 5:00pm-9:00pm



Collective Exhibition: *Contemporary Kingdom*

Ayyam Gallery Jeddah

3 February - 28 February 2014

Opening reception: Monday, 3 February from 8:00 - 10:00pm

From 3 February to 28 February 2014, Ayyam Gallery Jeddah is pleased to announce *Contemporary Kingdom*, an exhibition of six contemporary Saudi Arabian artists. Spanning three generations, each artist in the show is specifically featured for their creative dynamism and consistent development in pushing the boundaries of contemporary and conceptual art in Saudi Arabia.

In *Contemporary Kingdom*, Faisal Samra, Maha Malluh, Abdunasser Gharem, Rashed Al Shashai, Shaweesh and Huda Beydoun will exhibit artworks addressing, as well as embodying the spirit of, the rapid modernity that has impacted the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Ranging in age from twenty to sixty, the varied perspectives and diversity of media will present a truly inclusive exhibition, engaging audiences with the wide spectrum of ideas present in Saudi Arabia and starting a creative dialogue.

Representing the younger generation, Huda Beydoun and Shaweesh both utilize Western Pop cultural symbology. While documenting the prevalence of undocumented immigrants in the Kingdom, Beydoun hides their identities and fears of deportation behind the form of Mickey Mouse, a character globally symbolic for innocence and joy. Street artist Shaweesh juxtaposes important political figures and events with iconic sci-fi and superheroes, paralleling the strengths and achievements of the mortal with those of the superhuman in an often humorous critique.

In the second generation, Rashed Al Shashai and Abdunasser Gharem both comment on the ecological impact modernity has had in the region and larger world. Though playful, Al Shashai's oversized stopper installations cleverly reference not only our innate necessity for water but also highlight its storage, supply and conservation in a world plagued by draught and shortages. Gharem's performance piece *Flora & Fauna*, captured in video and photography, focuses on the *conocarpus erectus*, a draught-resistant tree imported into the country, which caused those trees indigenous to the area to perish. His simple performance poignantly explores the ongoing, often-strained relationship with technology and the natural environment.

Representing the third generation is Faisal Samra and Maha Malluh. Samra's series *The Other Body* explores the possibilities of industrial media, placing his work at the intersection of sculpture and painting.

Alluding with his mesh and wire works to body parts or forms occurring in nature, Samra demonstrates how the ravages of time can bring about new richness and even give rise to a second creation.

Maha Malluh will present three photograms from her Tradition and Modernity series. With a process inspired by pioneering photographers Man Ray and William Fox Talbot, Malluh chooses objects relevant to the cultural heritage and present material makeup of Saudi to place on photographic paper and expose directly to light. With inverse, X-ray-like results, Malluh also comments on the lack of privacy associated with modern-day travel and employs photograms to reclaim her objects and their power, their arrangements speaking in ways that are not possible when unceremoniously screened by security officials.

Ayyam Gallery Jeddah hopes the *Contemporary Kingdom* exhibition will add value to the cultural events of 21,39 and Jeddah Art Week, which are taking place in the beginning of February.

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. 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

Ayyam Gallery Jeddah

Exhibition Dates: 3 February - 28 February 2014

Location: Bougainvillea Center Jeddah, Third Floor, King Abdulaziz Road, next to Stars Avenue, Al-Shati District, Jeddah.

Tel: +966 12 613 4111

Email: jeddah@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com

For press information and artwork images, please contact press@ayyamgallery.com or call +966 12 613 4111.