

THAIER HELAL (SYRIA, B. 1967)

Texture is central to Thaier Helal's practice, it has allowed him to craft a unique visual language that captures and reconstructs the physical and sensory dimensions of the world around him. Incorporating a variety of artistic approaches, including unconventional media, such as paint, sand, glue, coal, found objects, and more, Helal has consistently demonstrated a profound fascination with the three-dimensional qualities of his work, aiming to establish an immediate, tactile connection with his audience. Abstraction has been a defining element throughout his career, although it occasionally allows for figuration to emerge. Figurative elements have appeared in Helal's earlier work, especially in response to the war in his native Syria.

Helal's recent works explore landscapes, using gestural brushstrokes and dynamic, vivid colors. Through his expressive use of acrylic paint—a traditional medium—he captures nature's transformative cycles of formation, evolution, decay, and renewal. These paintings blur the line between representation and abstraction, evoking natural forms while remaining rooted in layered color and energetic mark-making.

Born in 1967, Helal began his artistic journey in Syria, studying under influential painters at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus. After relocating to the United Arab Emirates in the 1990s, Helal has heavily relied on the exploration of various media that parallels his nearly three decades of dedication to art education in the region, particularly as a Senior Member of the Sharjah Arts Institute and a Professor at the College of Fine Arts, University of Sharjah, where he has mentored emerging artists.

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, 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.