WALID EL MASRI (SYRIA, B. 1979)

Painter Walid El Masri's practice revolves around the repeated examination of a single material subject as he explores variations in depth and space through abstracted compositions. In the past, the artist's subject of choice was a chair, the stillness of which provided an anchoring pictorial element amidst the riotous brushwork of an unidentified setting. Like Morandi's vases or Cézanne's apples, El Masri's depictions are less about the objects themselves and more about the possibility of transformation that is derived from paying close attention to the object over time. In a recent body of work the artist observes movement and vibration as encapsulated in the life cycle of a butterfly cocoon, the dramatic transition of which stands as a symbolic representation of Syria in its current state.

Of Lebanese background, El Masri was born in Syria in 1979. Prior to completing a Bachelor of Art at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus in 2005, he studied the art of mosaic and trained with renowned expressionist painter Marwan Kassab Bachi at the Summer Academy of Darat Al-Funun, Amman, Jordan. Selected exhibitions include Europia Gallery Paris (2016, 2014); Cité du Livre, Aix-en-Provence (2016); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2014); Ayyam Gallery London (2014); Ayyam Gallery Jeddah (2013); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2013); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2012); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2009); Art Beijing Contemporary (2009); Art Hong Kong (2009) and Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2008).