

OTHMAN MOUSSA (SYRIA, B. 1974)

Othman Moussa's early paintings capture the often-overlooked poetics of the mundane in realist still lifes that feature humble offerings, for example a battered but polished cooking pot alongside a lone pomegranate or a rusted teapot that glimmers as its exterior catches light. Recalling the naturalism of Spanish still lifes, his initial series emphasises that which provides sustenance with reflective detail and a spiritual sense of monumentality. As the artist's aesthetic progressed, his arrangements of inanimate objects began to take on allegorical traits, evincing subjective themes such as love and desire.

Recently, the impact of the Syrian conflict has entered his compositions, turning everyday objects into subjects of war. Although these works are accomplished with greater realism, Moussa has simplified his compositions by not including the embellishments of classical examples, such as the silken white cloth in Dutch still lifes that guides the eye across elaborate table settings. Isolating his objects, he focuses on jarring pairings. In these latest works, something as simple as food is now transformed into a weapon, reflecting the presence of violence in the most minor details of life. Other paintings of the series utilise satire as a biting form of social commentary as the thrones of absent monarchs are portrayed in an absurd manner and symbols of power are stripped of their aura.

Born in 1974 in Zabadani, Syria, Othman Moussa lives and works in Damascus. He received his artistic training in painting from the Adham Ismail Center for Plastic Arts (1999) and the Walid Izzat Sculpture Institute in Damascus (2000). Solo and group exhibitions include Ayyam Gallery London (2014); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2014, 2012); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2014, 2011); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2014); Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2009).