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Khaled Takriti: Masterfully combining two schools of art

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Renowned Syrian artist, Khaled Takriti was born in Beirut in 1964. He is a graduate of the Architecture and Painting Academy in Damascus, and he worked as an architect in Damascus's General Directorate of Antiquity and Museums. Since childhood, he mastered drawings and oil painting, developing his skills at several schools of art. He moved to New York in 1992, where he stayed for two years, acquiring artistic techniques on temporary art. As he matured artistically, he moved to Paris where he has chosen to live and work as a full-time artist since 2006.

Takriti's style is much more inclined to realism. His main artistic theme is the woman, whose presence on the canvas, for him, brings power, tranquility, balance and stability. The big spaces in his canvas reflect hope and optimism, but still under continuous artistic supervision, necessitated by a creative artist who forever seeks further artistic discoveries of the unknown.

He has held numerous art exhibitions that have revealed his mastery, many at galleries in Damascus, Beirut, and Paris. His paintings are part of numerous public and private collections, owned by the Syrian National Museum and the Royal Foundation in Jordan. From his residence in Paris, Takriti spoke with FW: Magazine about the evolution of his art, and his connection to Damascus.

There seems to be a shift in your style since you moved to Paris. Can you explain what that is?

Ever since I moved to Paris, I haven't been changing the subject of my paintings. What changed is the technique and practical method I use. There is an evolution in the material, especially the canvas and its size. I am working more and more on large-framed pictures. I am also using a more daring set of colors than ever.

How has Paris enriched your life as an artist?

In Paris, I have the opportunity to visit museums and exhibitions often. I see, I hear, I learn more about contemporary art and contemporary artists. As I said before, this does not have an influence on my subject, but on my technique, which becomes, I think, more contemporary.

Many agree that you combine both Eastern and Western elements in your paintings.

Can you speak to that a bit?

The East has always been depicted as a woman in my work, through her eyes, her soul and her stillness. The West is more about color, frame and motion. I think my paintings are definitely influenced by both cultures.

What is your assessment of the Plastic art movement in Syria?

Plastic art in Syria is opening up to the global art world and market. It is more contemporary and connected to the world. Syrian artists' works are being circulated more often, especially by Syrian galleries such as Ayyam Gallery, and that plays a crucial role. Syrian artists work a lot, and are very brave. I like the fact that even though they are getting closer to the global art world, they still keep their own identity as artists.

What most simulates your artistic creation back home?

My personal life, my circle of family and friends, and the people close to my heart have always inspired me. Painting, to me, is like keeping a diary, a book where I can write down, or draw, moments of the present, memories of the past and hopes for the future.

Where have you held your latest exhibitions, and what shows are you planning for the future?

My last exhibition was in Dubai, organized by Ayyam Gallery, and was a wonderful event. Late January 2009, there will be a new solo exhibition, also by Ayyam Gallery, this time in Damascus, and I am really looking forward to this. Also in January 2009 some of my works will be exhibited at Palm Beach Art Fair in Florida. In March 2009 my works will be exhibited at Art Paris, the Parisian art fair, and in April I will be, sponsored by Ayyam Gallery, at Art Beijing '09.

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