

Athier (British-Iraqi, b. 1982)

Athier's work has centred on posing unanswerable questions against undefined answers, forming a visual narrative between the two. Creating works that, from a distance, seem to be simply aesthetically pleasing compositions, up close the works are riddled with symbolism and visual references. Placing high emphasis on three dimensional elements in his work, the artist depicts his homeland, Iraq, his diasporic relationship to his foreign homeland, as well as the concept of nostalgic referencing in how we idolise and remember our past, present, and future.

Of the main constructs used in Athier's painting, the initial response is that of scale and colour, which guide the viewer through his multidimensional compositions. Immersing the viewer with layer upon layer of symbolism in these large-scale paintings, the artist manages to find the middle ground between fluid organic forms and hard edge geometric shapes.

Separate to his artistic practice, Athier has worked extensively as an educator in the United Kingdom and abroad. For three consecutive years, beginning in 2007, Athier worked as a British Museum Arab Artist in Residence, working in schools throughout the UK. In 2011, he was selected to serve as the Chasing Mirrors Artist in Residence at the National Portrait Gallery, leading workshops in community centres across London. Athier has also worked in a number of refugee camps as a workshop leader in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan, and in 2014 was invited by the Palestinian Museum as a Visiting Artist to conduct workshops with children in the West Bank. In 2015, he was selected to work at the artist-run interdisciplinary space Beirut Art Residency.

Born in 1982, Athier lives and works between Paris, London, and Istanbul, and holds a graduate degree in Communication Design with Illustration from Central Saint Martins, UK. Athier's selected solo and group exhibitions include: Ayyam Gallery - 12 Alserkal Avenue, Dubai (2018, 2016); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2017); Nest Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland (2014); Ayyam Gallery London (2014); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2013); Edge of Arabia, London, UK and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2013); Cuadro Fine Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2013); National Portrait Gallery, London, UK (2011); The Royal Academy, London, UK (2011); Tashkent International Art Biennale, Tashkent, Uzbekistan (2011).