



*Compressed Thoughts*, 2017, rusted steel, 32 x 42 x 42 cm

## NADIM KARAM *COMPRESSED THOUGHTS*

6 November 2017 – 6 January 2018

Opening reception: Monday, 6 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (11 Alserkal Avenue) is pleased to announce *Compressed Thoughts*, a solo exhibition by internationally acclaimed artist Nadim Karam presenting his newest sculptural works.

### About the Show

This latest body of work is a development from the artist's *Stretching Thoughts* series, in which he explores the infinite possibilities of creative thoughts to go beyond boundaries, and *Neglected Thoughts* series, his allusion to abandoned potential.

Karam experiments with the idea of condensing far-reaching thoughts into a palpable essence. Using the same sculptural language as the other *Thoughts* series, Karam continues working with recycled steel rods, previously housed in residential buildings in the suburbs of Beirut prior to their destruction. Extracted and rendered into pure matter, these steel rods are the starting point of the *Compressed Thoughts* series.

Through these works, Karam questions the place of thoughts in space and time – examining the concept of pure thought, the form in which it resides, and the possibility of reaching it. His compressed steel rods are representations of the creative mind: extreme condensations of energy within a restrained space. Each individual work is a unique configuration, and all share a still, concentrated potential.

Karam writes:

If countless strands of human thought could become infinitely condensed into a block of compressed matter, how would this intense zone of thought exist? Would all thoughts of the universe fall into it?

Would our own thoughts fall into it?

What would be the intensity of these chunks of unimaginable complexity?

Could we reach pure thought, distilled to an essence?

Compressed Thoughts is about silent energy, a hive of continuous internal agitation with explosive power.

Karam continues to work in abstraction, developing different phases in his conceptual practice.

#### About the Artist

The multidisciplinary practice of Lebanese artist and architect Nadim Karam incorporates painting, drawing, sculpture, and writing in the creation of bold and inspiring, uncanny artworks that challenge common preconceptions. With a background that fuses Oriental and Japanese theories of space, Karam has created his own concepts and a distinct artistic vocabulary that tackles the universality of the human condition, working towards the reconfiguration of environments. His research focuses on the conviction that cities need to dream, and it is the role of artists to provoke this dream, injecting art into still structures by setting up silent, yet palpable, cultural movers with the power to act as magnets that influence the paths of people. Naturally, cities are often the inspiration and target sites of his ground breaking conceptual proposals and initiatives.

Born in 1957 in Senegal, Karam lives and works in Beirut, where in 1996 he founded, and still leads, a satellite grouping of Lebanese architects and designers: Atelier Hapsitus. Based on a cross-fertilisation of disciplines and nationalities, the twenty year-old practice has a multidisciplinary composition, which feeds into the experimental nature of its work.

Karam initially trained in architecture at the American University of Beirut before travelling to Japan in 1982 to attend the University of Tokyo. In Japan, he studied with world renowned architects and thinkers Hiroshi Hara, Fumihiko Maki, and Tadao Ando, and earned a doctorate in architecture. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Art, and Design at Notre Dame University in Lebanon (2000-2003) and taught architectural design at the American University of Beirut (1993-1995; 2003-2004).

Karam has been commissioned to create large scale urban art installations for cities across the globe and has participated in international events such as the Liverpool (2006), Venice (1996), and Gwangju (1995) biennials. Recently he has held solo shows at The Fine Art Society, London (2017); Ayyam Gallery Beirut, Dubai, and London (2017, 2013); and has been featured in group exhibitions at venues such as Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2014); the Shanghai JSIP Biennale (2014); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2013); Villa Empain, Brussels (2012); and the Royal College of Art, London (2012). This year, Karam has inaugurated commissions of public art works in Yerevan, Armenia, Yokohama, Japan, and Suzhou, China, and will open his Kuwait commission of works at the end of the year.

Nadim Karam's most recent book, *Stretching Thoughts*, was published by Booth Clibborn Editions, London in 2014. His sculptures of the same name were installed in the grounds of UWC Atlantic College, Wales in 2016.

#### About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organisation that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. Blue-chip art spaces in Beirut and Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts programme have furthered the gallery's

mandate of expanding the parameters of international art. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship programme that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also contributed to recent efforts that document underrepresented facets of global art history.

#### Exhibition Facts

Exhibition Dates: 6 November 2017 – 6 January 2018

Opening Reception: Monday, November 6 from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Regular Hours: Sun – Thu: 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, Sat 12.00 to 6.00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai (11 Alserkal Avenue), Al Quoz 1, Dubai

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