

Elias Izoli (Syria, b. 1976)

A self-taught realist painter whose creativity was harnessed at an exceptionally young age, Elias Izoli's talents were recognized early on. At the age of seventeen, he was given a solo exhibition at the Russian Cultural Centre in Damascus. With consummate draftsmanship, a marked command of colour, and an intensive approach to capturing his subjects, Izoli's compositions reinvent conventional portraiture.

With inspiration deeply embedded in the work of his predecessor, Louay Kayyali, Izoli's works comment on the rise of consumerist escapism, which has desensitized our capacity for compassion and empathy. Having a career spanning over two decades, Izoli's works investigate the motif of children caught in the crossfire of violence. The impact of the Syrian war has inspired the artist to create works that are balanced between intimacy and invasiveness.

Continuing to introduce new figures through his paintings, Izoli's subjects seem to evoke a sense of intrusion in the viewer while building an empathetic connection between the two. The melancholic nature of the works, combined with the muted palette Izoli uses, draws the viewer to step into these private spaces.

Born in Damascus, Syria in 1976, Izoli lives and works in the city. He has exhibited since 1993, and was featured in solo and group exhibitions at Ayyam Gallery Beirut and Dubai in 2018, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2016.