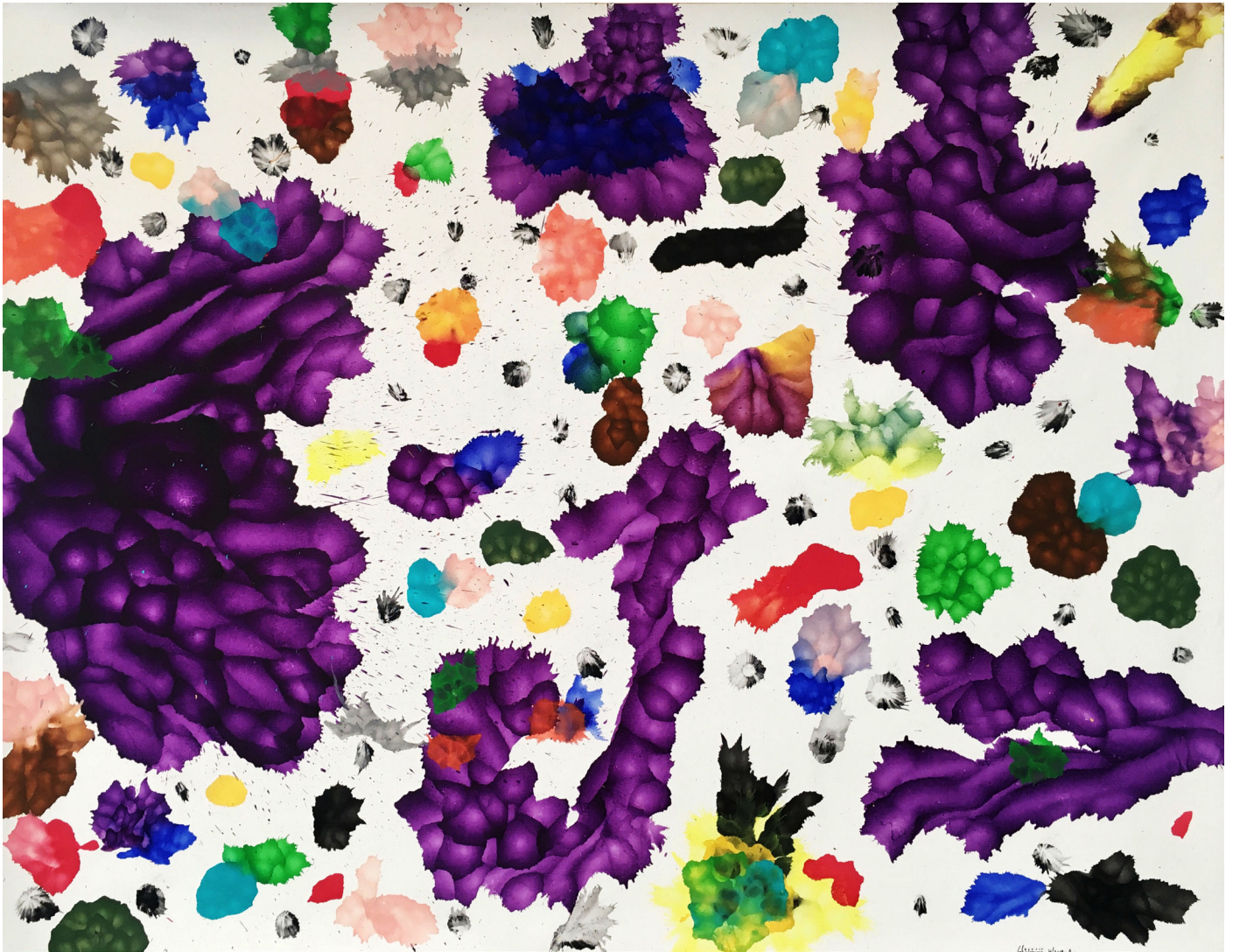


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ayyam gallery



P.62-D23, 2019, Charcoal and oil on canvas, 116 x 294 cm (Diptych)

FAISAL SAMRA

Thriving Emotions - Immortal Moment

13 November 2019 - 5 January 2020

Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present *Thriving Emotions - Immortal Moment*, a solo exhibition featuring Faisal Samra's latest body of work.

Please join us in the presence of the artist at the opening reception on 13 November from 7 - 9 pm.

Faisal Samra's *Thriving Emotions - Immortal Moment* is expressed through different mediums that elevate the artist's concept and creative process. The artist is looking to create a body of work through the accumulation of instances. The numerous instants that the artist is referring to are a mere expression of emotions at their peak; these moments become this recent works key.

As Roxana Azimi shares about the artist, "His sensitivity for the interstices led him into a tangle of works with a key. He never gives us the keys, but rather a guiding thread that the observer can unwind at his own pace, depending on how he interprets it." To grab the viewers' attention, the artist understands the need to capture through "the poetry of the material."

These statements are appropriate to all works by this multimedia artist; in fact, we draw some relationships between his recent and past body of work. In the past, Faisal also captures the essence of singular moments; in *Distorted Realities*, Faisal produces most of the body of work through video stills of his own performances. In his previous series, Faisal chose the moment once done with filming. In this series, the artist decides on the moment before anything else. Nonetheless, the first moment that drives production in this exhibition ties itself to a temporary emotion that the artist wants to prolong through artistic creation. This chronological shift enforces the abstraction of the work.

Faisal Sama is looking to immortalize moments just as photography usually does yet is doing so through the study of several mediums. The artist is pushing the viewer to question the opportunities of a single moment, the present moment. Faisal transmits emotions through specific moments and mediums, yet the sum of all of these becomes an immortal expression and a single felt moment.

Selection of quotes text from Faisal Samra's monograph by Skira curated and authored by Roxana Azimi and Gilles de Burre.

Artist statement

"Capturing my abstract emotions at their peak, I articulate them the instant they are felt. Hence, the artworks' execution portrays the feelings' transmission; the element of medium is directly related in this transition and made of importance. I approach the medium through intervention instead of dictation or application. This intervention creates a new, unexpected result with a controlled margin of improvisation - an accurate result of the transmission of emotions through the mind.

The sum of these creative acts produced at different time intervals creates a timeless moment visually and sensorily. Based on the fact that existence is the living present, the before and after are merely an illusion.

The final product of my recent body of work becomes the accumulation of a specific order of immortalized moments that create a condensed, conceptual, and abstracted moment. I am looking to provoke the viewer's awareness of the present, to acknowledge the positivity of creating "something" out of a golden, immortal moment."

Long considered one of the Arab Gulf's foremost artists and a pioneer of conceptual art in the Middle East, Bahraini-born, Saudi national. Faisal Samra incorporates digital photography, painting, sculpture, video, and performance in a creative repertoire that explores existentialist themes with the figure at its center. Since the mid-1970s, Samra has tested the conventional functions of media through meticulously structured works with experimentation and research as the guiding principles of his artistic practice. As his oeuvre has progressed and defied traditional modes of representation, he has rebelled against his understanding of art, transitioning into new works that maintain three essential concepts: spontaneity, dynamism, and secrecy.

In 1974, Samra emigrated from Saudi Arabia to France to attend the *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts* (ENSBA), Paris. While studying at the esteemed institution, he immersed himself in the work of modern and contemporary European artists. This initial period of Samra's development was distinguished by expressionist drawings and paintings that investigate the body in motion or at rest, establishing a conceptual basis for later videos, photographs, and installations, while also demonstrating his initial rejection of the prescribed forms of figuration.

Upon graduating from the ENSBA in 1980, Samra settled in Saudi Arabia and continued to exhibit abroad. In the late 1980s, he returned to France, where he spent four years as an art consultant at the *Institute du Monde Arabe*. After nearly a decade of contributing to collective exhibitions across Europe, he held his first solo show at *Etienne Dinet Gallery* in Paris (1989). This milestone was followed by *Le Pli* (1991), a critically acclaimed exhibition at the *Institute du Monde Arabe* that established Samra as a leading artist from the Arab world. This period of his career was distinguished by early investigations of emotive and sensory approaches to art.

In the 1990s, Samra's *Heads and Other Body* series introduced hanging art objects that blur the lines between painting and sculpture by liberating the treated canvas from the stretcher or frame and incorporating materials such as wire mesh, which create an armature for three-dimensional forms. This enabled Samra to explore the dynamics of an artwork as it is experienced in a particular setting while presenting constructive materials as its form and content. These formal and conceptual breakthroughs led to influential installation, video, and multimedia works that continued his career-long investigation of life, the space between birth and death, and how time can be reflected through the visual devices of art.

The artist's selected solo exhibitions include the *Ministry of Culture* in Bahrain (2016); *Bin Matter House*, Bahrain (2015); *Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz*, Dubai (2014); *Ayyam Gallery London* (2014); *Ayyam Gallery Jeddah* (2013); *HD Galerie*, Casablanca (2012); *Traffic Gallery*, Dubai (2011); *Albareh Gallery*, Bahrain (2010); *Galerie Nathalie Obadia*, Paris (2009); *XVA Gallery*, Dubai (2007).

Recently, Samra has participated in collective exhibitions at the *Bienalsur*, Argentina (2019); *OFF Biennale Cairo* (2018, 2015); *Musée Labinet*, France (2017); *Low Gallery*, San Diego, USA (2016); *Abu Dhabi Festival*, UAE (2015); *Busan Museum*, South Korea; *FotoFest*, Houston (2014), *Edge of Arabia*, London (2012); *Mori Art Museum*, Tokyo (2012); *Maraya Art Center*, Sharjah (2010).

Samra's works are housed in the collections of *The British Museum*, London; *BuchDruckKunst e.V Art Book Museum*, Hamburg; the *National Museum*, Mexico City; the *Modern Art Museum*, Cairo; *Almansouria Foundation*, Jeddah; *Jameel Art Foundation*, Jeddah; *Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts*, Amman; *Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art*, Doha; and *Bahrain National Museum*, Manama, among others. He has participated in biennials in Singapore and Cairo (2008) and is a jury member for the *Alexandria Biennale*, Egypt.

In 2012, *Skira Editore* published an eponymous monograph on the artist.

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organization that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. Blue-chip art space in Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts program have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship program 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

Exhibitions Dates: 13 November 2019 - 5 January 2020

Opening Reception: 13 November 7 - 9 pm

Regular Hours: Sun - Thur : 10 am - 6 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery, B11, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Al Quoz 1, Dubai

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