



Untitled, 2012, Mixed media on canvas, 46 x 166 cm



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## KAIS SALMAN

### *Liaisons*

21 November 2020 - 5 January 2021

Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present *Liaisons*, a solo exhibition featuring Kais Salman's works. The selection spotlights an important body of work from 2012 to his most recent canvases.

## About the exhibition

Continuously challenging notions of beauty, Kais is known for his bold and expressionist exploration of the human subject, society, and the collective. The artist critiques humanity's vanity, materialism, dependencies, and social norms through various compositions.

Kais' disfigured, nearly nude anti-heroes and heroines are placed vulnerable facing the viewers' gaze; the characters are left objectified and questioned. The selection of works chosen for this exhibition highlights relationships or the lack thereof between the characters. Kais illustrates a type of disconnect between the characters, implicitly recreating society's cliques, rivalries, and complex liaisons.

In some paintings, the characters' poses, stances, and costumes create a hierarchy. While some of the avatars are grouped and paired, others are left alone and alienated from any connection. The figures each take independent roles, playing a part in the collective consciousness. The artist's new work, on the other hand, differs in composition, creating a different narrative, one of unison and blurred lines, the figures overlap with space.

These associations link in the ideas of greed, and most importantly, ideological extremism embedded in contemporary communities. Kais's usual expressionism is paired with realism, and beacons of symbolism spread across the paintings.

## About the artist

Embarking on a different path than that of his contemporaries and predecessors, Kais Salman's work has been described as monochromatic, abstract expressionism. The artist uses satire to subvert the normalisation of greed, narcissism, and ideological extremism that is rapidly defining our era. As one of Syria's foremost expressionist painters, Salman has contributed to a decades-long artistic tradition that continues to serve as a powerful outlet for social commentary. A consummate formalist, he is recognised as one of the Arab world's most accomplished painters.

Since the early 2000s, Salman has sought to reflect the psychological violence that occurs when excess becomes rationalised and accepted by societies. Seeking to confront and exorcise sociocultural manifestations of depravity, Salman unearths a world of ugliness and abjection through intentionally hyperbolised imagery accentuated by punches of colour and aestheticised forms. Political corruption, terrorism, consumerism, cosmetic surgery, religious fanaticism, imperialism, and the voyeurism of the digital age have all served as topics of Salman's carnivalesque compositions.

Born in Tartous, Syria in 1976, Salman lives and works in Beirut. He received a Bachelor of Art from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus in 2002, where he trained with leading painters such as Safwan Dahoul. Salman's paintings are housed in collections throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. Salman has been featured in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal, among other international publications, and was listed for the second time in Arabian Business 100 Most Powerful Arabs Under 40 in 2016.

Solo and group exhibitions for the artist include the Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2018, 2015, 2014, 2012); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2017, 2014, 2011, 2010); Alexandria Biennale (2014); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2014, 2010); Damascus Museum of Modern Art (2009); The Park Avenue Armory, New York (2008); and Carthage Festival for Coast Mediterranean Sea Artists, Tunisia (2005).(2012).

## About Ayyam Gallery

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: 21 November 2020 - 5 January 2021

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

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

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