

Kais Salman (Syria, b. 1976)

Kais Salman 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.

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).

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.