

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Lara Zankoul, *Depths*

Location: Ayyam Gallery Beirut

Opening: 10 January 2013

Dates: 10 January – 15 February 2013



Ayyam Gallery Beirut is pleased to present *Depths*, the first solo exhibition of photographic and cinemagraphic works by Lebanese artist Lara Zankoul, from 10 January – 15 February 2013.

The compositions of Lara Zankoul are contemporary fairy tales, which explore the charm and mystery of the human psyche. Whimsical and playful, they represent an attempt to invent new worlds, to push against the boundaries of our reality and escape the monotony of everyday life. The characters inhabiting Zankoul's work are anonymous and timeless, universal symbols existing within a fantastical and surreal landscape.

The exhibition will comprise a series of ten photographs exploring the role of surrealism and dreams in the construction of our reality. In *Drown in Her Dreams* a woman sleeps on a bed adrift in the sea, peaceful and unaware that she lies on a dangerous surface full of secrets. *Birds* depicts bowties fluttering through the air, free from their owner who watches from below. In *Excess*, a girl engages in the futile task of watering the sea. Like other works in the exhibition, these images, with their distorted perspective on the natural order, space and time, serve to challenge the role of photography as a means of capturing truth in the world.

Also on display will be a series of cinemagraphs - still images incorporating an element with movement - which further play with our understanding of what is real and unreal. The absurdist surrealism of *Generations* features tea cascading down a successive series of teapots in an elegant dance before finally filling a teacup below. *Heartbeat* presents a young woman clad in white holding a butterfly trapped within a glass jar upon her lap. The wings of the butterfly beat continuously in this still world, while the colors pervading the piece - the red lacquer of her fingernails, vivid azure of the insect and the overwhelmingly white ground - are symbolic and suggestive of a bottled hope. In *Gossiper*, four seemingly inanimate teapots hang down from the ceiling. On closer inspection, the gentle swaying to and fro of one teapot becomes apparent, breathing life into the otherwise static image.

Born in Lebanon in 1987, Lara Zankoul lives and works in Beirut. She has participated in group exhibitions within the Middle East and France. Part of the Shabab Ayyam incubator programme, she was an award recipient at the 2011 Shabab Ayyam Photography Competition.

Notes to Editors

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded by collectors and cousins Khaled and Hisham Samawi in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery sought to nurture Syria's burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through landmark non-profit initiatives such as the Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator for emerging artists. Expansion into Beirut and Dubai enabled Ayyam Gallery to broaden its scope from the promotion of work by Syrian artists to those from the wider Middle East region. In doing so, Ayyam Gallery has established itself as one of the foremost exponents of Middle Eastern contemporary art to the international community.

Today, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Arab and Iranian artists with an international profile and museum presence, such as Nadim Karam, Safwan Dahoul, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhashemi and Khaled Takreti. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, have further succeeded in showcasing the work of Middle Eastern artists with the aim of educating a wider audience about the art of this significant region. In 2013, two new galleries will open in London and Jeddah. Ayyam Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city.

Exhibition Facts

Preview: 10 January 2013, 7pm

Exhibition Dates: 10 January – 15 February 2013

Location: Beirut Tower, Ground Floor, Zeitoune Street

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