



Untitled, 2017, mixed media on canvas, diptych, 250 x 360 cm

ELIAS IZOLI *SEVEN YEARS*

17 September – 31 October 2018

Opening reception: Monday, 17 September from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai is pleased to announce *Seven Years*, a solo exhibition of artist Elias Izoli. Featuring a new body of work, the exhibition highlights figurative paintings representative of the state Izoli has witnessed living in Syria over the past seven years.

About the Show

As the seven-year anniversary of the Syrian war has come and gone, the conflict is getting only more entrenched and complicated, while the outside world has hit a ceiling of shock. Izoli's empathetic paintings in which the artist draws from his surroundings and atmosphere in his country of residence provide a new ground for comparisons. Somber yet softly coloured, the paintings depict children with hunched shoulders and evocative gazes, either looking directly at the viewer or off to a distance, unaware that anyone is looking.

In some of Izoli's works, the children are placed alongside toys or objects with which they would usually playfully interact. In *Untitled* (2017), a beach ball is floating near a seated girl while she longingly gazes at it. Her body slightly turned towards the ball, hands in her lap, seemingly yearning. Yet she shows no intent to get up and play, resigning herself to her chair. With scenes as such, Izoli intends to depict the everyday reality of Syrian children who hope for a better future after the war.

The portraits of *Seven Years* create a sense of intrusion and a heightened awareness of one's own presence in front of the paintings. The children's strong gazes resonate with the observer, building an empathic connection between viewer and subject. The melancholic nature of the works, combined with the muted palette, draws the spectator to step into these private spaces that lie between intimacy and invasiveness. Hence depicting the general atmosphere the artist has been living in over the last seven years.

About the Artist

Elias Izoli is a self-taught painter whose creativity was harnessed at an exceptionally young age. In Damascus, his talent was recognised early on and he was given a solo exhibition at the Russian Cultural Centre at age seventeen. With consummate draftsmanship, a marked command of colour, and an intensive approach to capturing his subjects, Izoli's compositions defy conventional portraiture. Colour is meticulously distributed and contrasted in sections, creating volume and dimension, and serves as an emotive indicator, while different uses of texture and clear divisions of the painting's surface allow the viewer to enter the psychological depth of his subject matter. Born in Damascus, Syria in 1976, Elias Izoli lives and works in the city. Izoli has exhibited regularly since 1993, and was included in exhibitions at Ayyam Gallery Beirut and Dubai in 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2016.

About Ayyam Gallery

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

Exhibition Dates: 17 September – 31 October 2018

Opening Reception: Monday, 17 September from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Regular Hours: Sun – Thu: 10.00 am to 6.00 pm, Sat 12.00 to 6.00 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Dubai (11 Alserkal Avenue), Al Quoz 1, Dubai

T: +971 4 4392395

Email: dubai@ayyamgallery.com

Website: www.ayyamgallery.com

For press information, artwork images and interview requests, please contact press@ayyamgallery.com or call +971 4 4392395