



*Doll Maker*, 2018, oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm

## NOOR BAHJAT VANTAGE POINT

29 April – 3 June 2019

Opening Reception: Monday, 29 April from 7:00 to 9:00 pm

Ayyam Gallery in collaboration with the Samawi Foundation is pleased to present *Vantage Point*, a solo exhibition by Noor Bahjat.

## About the Show

Noor Bahjat was one of the first participants in the 'Young Artist in Residency Program' (established in 2014) founded by the Samawi Foundation in effort to support promising emerging artists. During the span of her two-year residency in Ayyam Gallery's Dubai studio, Bahjat developed her painterly expressionistic style with a primary focus on figurative subject matter. *Vantage Point* reveals Bahjat's latest artistic development and represents a follow-up exhibition since her graduation solo-exhibition with Ayyam Gallery in 2015.

Noor Bahjat's colourful portraits investigate unconventional representations of women, primarily focusing on the female experience and their respective surroundings. Intimate human actions and various manifestations of "beauty" are her inspiration, allowing ideas of transformation to drift into dream-like compositions. The artist's recurring use of obstruct bodies or subversive spaces are meant to give her protagonist alternative identities, thus tapping into the significance of masquerade as indicators of social, psychic, and political conditions of modern life.

With energetic brushstrokes and a strong game of contrasts, Bahjat takes her canvases out of their static form. Creating surrealist still-lives that contain neither a beginning nor an end, Bahjat allows her subconscious to take over and lead her to include vibrant reoccurring scenes of underwater elements or nature. Through this process, the artist intends to represent the bleakness of reality while offering a starkly contrasted alternative with her fantastical settings.

In her most recent works, Bahjat appropriates and re-contextualizes collage images from the mass media to create dynamic and multi-layered compositions that offer a juxtaposition to her pastel canvases. By creating metaphoric and bold collisions and combinations of fragmented imagery, Bahjat is able to address the dominant role of media that filters our daily experiences and influences our perception of the socially constructed roles of women, popular culture and society.

## About the Artist

Bahjat is a surrealist self-portrait artist working in a painterly expressionistic style with a primary figurative subject matter. Creating deeply atmospheric canvases with her reoccurring female protagonist, Bahjat is able to address the intricacies of life as seen through her eyes. Following a visit to the Philippines in 2016, Bahjat's palette and visual narrative drastically changed. Her style began moving away from dark and static compositions and further awards illuminated backgrounds incorporating elements of nature and water within her portraits. Allowing her subconscious to take control, Bahjat depicts densely filled imaginative narratives in still-life settings that yearn toward a more simple life.

Born in Damascus, Syria in 1991, Noor Bahjat now lives and works in the United Arab Emirates. Bahjat studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus from which she graduated with Honors. Although struggling with perspective throughout her entire degree, Bahjat was able to transform this weakness into strength with her iconic still-life style. Her work is housed in public and private collections throughout the Middle East, Asia and Europe. Solo and group exhibitions include Ayyam Gallery, Dubai (2019, 2015); Atassi Foundation, Dubai (2019); Ward Gallery, Dubai (2019); Gallerie Stephanie, Manial (2018, 2016); Art Space DA:MDAA, Seoul (2017); Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah (2017); Gli Acrobati Gallery, Turin (2017).

## 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: 29 April - 3 June 2019

Opening Reception: Monday, 29 April from 7:00 to 9:00 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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