

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

ALI CHAABAN

TITLE

September 18 - December 30, 2019



ARTWORK CAPTION ????????????????????

We are pleased to announce the first solo exhibition in the UAE of contemporary Lebanese artist Ali Chaaban, titled *????* at Leila Heller Gallery in Dubai, opening September 18th and on view through December 30, 2019. Ali Chaaban, Lebanese-Saudi Based artist born and raised in Kuwait, an observer of culture and traditions which are often reflected in his work. With a background in anthropology, some seem to recognize Ali as a pop-culture analyst. His work revolves around the notion of nostalgia which is depicted so intricately in his art, tackling socio-political issues such as the Arabian identity and the state of dystopia.

The impression that "Arabs are strangers everywhere," resides with diasporas; the struggle of identity amongst the masses is a never-ending research. Through art is where one finds a common language that displays what is seen but never told. Ali as an artist has exhibited with galleries such as Ayyam (Jeddah), Mark Hachem (Beirut) and Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt in (Paris).

As an artist, Ali likes to create 'space' that provides an opportunity to create a model of dialogue interest; exchanging ideas and notions, creating discussions that transcend intersectoral and interdisciplinary boundaries.

Lebanese-born artist Ali Chaaban is as much a sociocultural commentator as he is an artist. He's also fast emerging as a fashion photographer, shooting for Vogue Arabia and the Fashion Prize winners' collections. With a blend of retrospective western sensibilities and an acute passion for Arab heritage, Chaaban has taken the plunge and is set to cut the ribbon on his first solo exhibition at La Cantine du Faubourg, Dubai on January 15, 2017. "My art is not furniture art that you hang in your living room. It is museum or gallery art," says Chaaban. The Kuwaiti-raised artist—with a background in anthropology—has the confidence to blend the influences of comic strip pop art approaches with Arabic aesthetics. "As a kid born and raised in the GCC, you have a certain security in your comfort zone. There's everything you need; instant gratification," he notes. "I'm a westernized kid letting the Arabic influences come back in." His artwork, titled *The Broken Dream*, features a fractured Persian rug with a bruised Superman interrupting the weaves. "The Persian rug has its own prominence from visual to felt. Whether poor or rich, we all have a mindful appreciation towards it," Chaaban explains. "Pop culture [mixed] with traditional aesthetics felt like a broken dream; to somehow connect what I loved as a child with what I love now, as an adult." On a mixed medium of poster sticker on carpet, Chaaban's superhero character is browbeaten. "The bruises on him are cultural shocks," explains the artist. This piece plays a starring role in his "Technicolor" exhibit, situated at La Cantine du Faubourg, a space that the artist refers to as "timeless." The venue is the Middle Eastern sister to its Parisian founding location, N°105 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Having previously been a part of collective exhibits alongside Saudi artists, Chaaban name-checks his contemporaries: "Khalid Zahid, Rashed Al Shashai, Sarah Al Abdali, and Arwa Al Neami." As the founder of Live Demo, an experimental art collective, Chaaban classes the Middle Eastern art scene as "booming, super-cultural [and] nostalgic."

The show, inspired by ???

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Group shows:

2019

Hafez Gallery at Shara 2019, Hafez Gallery, Jeddah

Hafez Gallery - Galleries at MAS, Hafez Gallery, Abu Dhabi

Hafez Gallery at Art Dubai 2019, Hafez Gallery, Dubai

2018

3 Directions, Hafez Gallery, Riyadh

Warehouse 421 at Galleries Week, Hafez Gallery, Abu Dhabi

2017

Beirut Art Fair 2017, Hafez Gallery, Beirut

Shara Art Fair, Hafez Gallery, Jeddah

Warehouse421 at Galleries Week, Hafez Gallery, Abu Dhabi

"Tadafuq / Flow" Group Exhibition, Hafez Gallery, Jeddah

Fair booths:

2017

Hafez Gallery at Abu Dhabi Art 2017, Hafez Gallery

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

Press Inquiries: For more information, images and prices, please contact clemence@leilahellergallery.com