

LEILA HELLER.

MARWAN SAHMARANI

Before The Blast

December 1, 2020 — January 1, 2021



MARWAN SAHMARANI, *Hundred Nights*, Oil on canvas, 225 x 300 cm

Leila Heller is pleased to announce *Before the Blast*, an exhibition of work by artist Marwan Sahmarani on view December 1, 2020 through January 1, 2021. Ninety-five percent of the works in *Before the Blast* were completed prior to the explosion 2020 in Beirut, Lebanon. These works thus illustrate the aggravated tension in which the country was living in the eighteen months leading up to the blast. While none of the works explicitly address the explosion, they all exemplify, through brushstroke, movement, and color, the increasing strain between government and peoples that was well underway prior to the blast.

Breaking slightly with his previous works, those in *Before the Blast* are highly connected to the people and region. Geometric bodies en masse convey the chaos and conflict that constituted day to day life in Lebanon. Motifs of flesh, body, and violence populate the canvases and emphasize human destruction.

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One of his works, *Revolution I*, was hit by a window when his studio went down in the blast. Now sewn back together with a needle, it still holds the scars of the blast.

Within the works in *Before the Blast*, the background and foregrounds are mixed together and the viewer can almost experience the turmoil and tension that Sahmarani felt in Lebanon. Unequivocally, Sahmarani expresses his feelings about living in a country torn economically, politically, culturally, and structurally.

Ten percent of all proceeds from *Before the Blast* will be donated to a charity of the artists choice to aid in blast relief efforts in Lebanon.

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 a 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 ella@leilaheller.com