

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

' Dirty Mirror Selfie '

By

Marwan Sahmarani



Golden Hour, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 250 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is delighted to announce the upcoming solo exhibition by Marwan Sahmarani, titled *'Dirty Mirror Selfie'* opening on 14th November 2024.

"Dirty Mirror Selfie" confronts the complex interplay between self-perception and the often distorted realities that surround us. Through a provocative lens, the artworks delve into the darker aspects of human nature, reflecting the unsettling beauty found in ugliness and chaos. They challenge us to accept the uncomfortable truths of our existence, acknowledging the violence, sexuality, and horror that both fascinate and terrify us.

In a region marked by significant political turmoil, Marwan Sahmarani poignantly illustrates the paradox of advanced civilization juxtaposed with a regressive, aggressive human instinct. Each piece serves as a mirror, urging us to look beyond our superficial selves and engage with the raw, often disturbing realities that shape our lives and societies.

Marwan Sahmarani challenges the viewers to engage in a profound confrontation with their own egos, revealing how what we perceive around us is intricately connected to our inner selves. Through the lens of "Dirty Mirror Selfie," the artworks lay bare the dirty realities we collectively carry, reflecting a shared consciousness that intertwines the conscious and the subconscious. The pieces are rich with flesh,

depicting the tearing and wearing of human skin as a visceral metaphor for vulnerability and existence. Vivid colors pulse throughout the exhibition, embodying the ecstasy of life amidst the inevitability of death. This interplay of hues, particularly the myriad shades of skin, serves as a striking representation of our lived realities, evoking both the beauty and the fragility of human experience.

"Dirty Mirror Selfie" invites one to explore the complex relationship between life and death, suggesting that within the vibrant chaos of existence lies the ultimate truth. As viewers traverse this exhibition, they are invited to reflect not only on the world around them but also on the unsettling truths that reside within.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Marwan Sahmarani is a Lebanese artist based between Beirut and the small Mediterranean mountain village of Tarbena, Spain. With strong brushstrokes and vivid colours, Sahmarani's practice reflects on the increasing political turmoil and tension felt throughout his native Lebanon. His textured paintings have abstract, expressionist tendencies but are rooted in the early traditions of landscape painting.

Notably, he received the prestigious Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2010, affirming his impact in the Middle Eastern art scene. His work has been showcased in renowned venues like the Thessaloniki Biennale and New York's Museum of Arts and Design, where he exhibited pieces reflecting on conflict and cultural identity. Recently, his large-scale painting *Summer Shooting* (2015) was highlighted by Christie's, where it received acclaim for its intense, emotive style and layered critique of social issues, exemplifying his blend of Western and Middle Eastern influences.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four 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, Central Asian, Southeast Asian 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 16,000 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. In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogs and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.