

MARWAN SAHMARANI



The Skewed 04, 140 x 200 cm, mixed media on paper, 2012

Marwan Sahmarani's artwork is linked to his Middle Eastern origins. His oil paintings, drawings, ceramics and performative work are a reflection upon the mediums themselves in the face of socio-political problems. Alluding to the classical masters such as Rubens, Breughel or Bosch Lebanese painter Sahmarani gives the eternal themes of martyrdom, damnation and war a new expression in contemporary painting transcending boundaries of time, space and culture. Returning to these themes in his own works he not only pays homage to the old masters but also exemplifies the cyclical nature of human nature and history that keeps repeating itself. Whereas many motifs refer to the classical masters of the past Sahmarani's technique shows a strong influence from modern and contemporary masters such as the abstract expressionism of Pollock or Francis or a brushstroke strongly reminiscent of Picasso's ink sketches.

His large-scale vertical paintings furthermore resonate with the complexity of Sahmarani's Middle Eastern identity – which rich in cultural heritage is also fraught with enormous social, religious and sexual tensions. On the white paper the artist's pen blends and blurs his colours and paints just as he does with boundaries between ideology, reality and identity. With just a few strokes of charcoal, light brushes of paint and traces of pastel – all of which merely graze the paper – his paintings suddenly transform from tender caress into full-fledged battle. The artist brushes with death and flirts with madness, leaving no viewer untouched. Perfectly mastered strokes translate a unique language that is at once raw and bare, and has become Sahmarani's very own signature.

In spite of his strong rooted-ness in painting and drawing, he stretches his practice onto other forms including sculpture, ceramics and performance. What strengthens his position as an artist, is the fact that all of these facets of his work are tied together and support each other completely; forming part of a stable, strong personal expression, which is his very own.

GALERIE KASHYA HILDEBRAND

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MARWAN SAHMARANI

Born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1970
Lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon

EDUCATION

1989 – 1994 Atelier Met de Penninghen Paris, France

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 *Marie, Marie the devil in me has taken you for a ride*, Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai, UAE
The Wolf Is Crying Like A Child, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2010 *The Dictators: Studies For A Monument*, Selma Feriani Gallery, London, UK
The Feast of The Damned, Museum of Art & Design, New York, N.Y., USA
The Feast of the Damned, Art Dubai, UAE, Abraaj Capital Art Prize
- 2009 *The Dictators: Studies for a Monument*, Boutique I Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2007 *Can You Teach Me How to Fight?* The Third Line, Dubai, UAE
- 2006 *Paintings And Drawings (1990-2005)*, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
Masturbation, Ard Bia Gallery, Galway, Ireland
- 2005 *Beirut el Koubra*, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2004 *Mecca Cola*, Clair Obscur, Montreal, Canada
No-body, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2003 *Non-dit*, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon
Non-dit, Alternative, Montreal, Canada
- 1997 *Le prophète*, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *Domination, Hegemony and The Panopticon*, Traffic, Dubai, UAE
- 2011 *The Changing Room: Arab Reflections On Praxis and Times*, Spazio Qubi Gallery, Turin, Italy
Between A Rock And A Hard Place, 3rd Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece
Heroes And Villains, Lawrie Shabibi Gallery Dubai, UAE
Rebirth, Beirut Exhibition Centre, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2010 *Told/Untold/Retold*, Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar
All About Beirut, Kunsthalle whiteBOX, Munich, Germany
Convergence: New Art from Lebanon, American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center, Washington, D.C., USA
- 2007 *Espejismos: Contemporary Art from Middle East and North Africa*, International Festival of Puebla, Puebla, Mexico
- 2004 *Pensées et mesures*, La Fabrique, Montreal, Canada
- 1994 *Le prophète*, Espace E.S.A.G, Paris, France

AWARDS

2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize, Dubai, UAE

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