

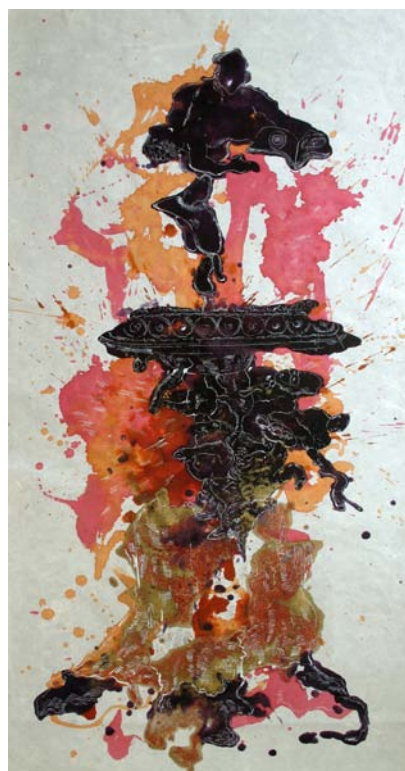
Press Release

MARWAN SAHMARANI  
The Wolf Is Crying Like a Child

25 August – 8 October 2011



*The Wolf Is Crying like a Child*, 2011,  
145 x 75 cm, mixed media on paper



*Blue As Your Blood*, 2011,  
145 x 75 cm, mixed media on paper

Galerie Kashya Hildebrand is delighted to present new works from Lebanese artist Marwan Sahmarani. Sahmarani was awarded the prestigious Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2010 and has exhibited at numerous major museums, including the Matarf Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar and the Museum of Art and Design in New York. This will be his first show in Switzerland.

This show represents an important new direction for Sahmarani. Unlike his previous works, which tended to dialogue with art history and the past, his new works are inspired by current events in the Middle East, and they arise consciously and unconsciously from his perspective as a Lebanese artist. He is not, however, merely using

his art to comment directly on the recent revolutions; instead, he is interested in the revolutionary fire that these events have ignited in ordinary citizens specifically and across the Middle East generally. In this way, he is invoking the spirit of the surrealists working at the beginning of the 20th century who were calling for a revolution in the arts and in the minds of the people of their time. This spirit of revolution captivates Sahmarani in a unique way: it resonates with the energy he felt during Lebanon's 2005 revolution – but it also reminds him how that energy has faded. As the artist explains, "Where there is revolution, there is creation. And therefore some dictatorial regimes and governments are actually crying like children."

Encompassing both his Western cultural education in Art History and his Middle Eastern identity, Sahmarani's painting continues to be infused with Islamic and Mesopotamian iconography, influenced by Greco-Roman traditions, and inspired by masters such as Uccello, Rubens, Picasso, and Bacon. Sahmarani sources timeless themes from the history of art and uses them as lenses to explore and develop stories inspired by his personal experience of war, exile, and travel.

As reflections on revolution, the works in the exhibition explore a range of sensations and vibrations: from the new energy of potential change to the hopelessness he feels for his home country. But beyond these political inspirations, there is spontaneity and vitality in his works arising from his engagement with the act of painting, from his use of perspective to illustrative figuration and gestural abstraction. He uses oil, ink, varnishes and watercolor as his primary mediums of expression, creating a unique language that is as poetic and ephemeral as it is sumptuous.

## Opening reception in the presence of the artist:

Thursday, 25 August 2011 5 – 8 pm

Press release and images may be downloaded under:

<http://www.kashyahildebrand.org/zurich/press/sahmarani>

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