

ARTSPACE



GALLERY ATASSI

Dubai's Renowned Artspace Gallery Proudly Presents solo show by Syrian artist "Monif Ajaj" in collaboration with Atassi Gallery, Damascus

A diverse and moving exhibition of contemporary works by Monif Ajaj

Dubai October 2011 - Artspace Gallery is pleased to be showcasing an innovative selection of works by the Syrian artist Monif Ajaj, at an exhibition entitled "*Mondaseen*" that is taking place from the 19th of October to the 10th of November 2011. This will be in collaboration with Atassi Gallery in Damascus, the first gallery to open up in Damascus and pioneering in promoting Syrian art.

Born in Deir Ez-Zor, Syria, Monif Ajaj (1968) graduated from the Belarus Academy of Fine Arts in Minsk in 1995, and has since gone on to teach at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Damascus, as well as illustrate children's books. In 2006, he was awarded first prize for young Syrian artist of the year. He has had individual exhibitions at the Zara Gallery, Amman (2009, 2007 and 2004) and group shows at Art Dubai (2011), Shaab Gallery in Damascus (2010), Khan Assad Pasha and Maktab Al Assad in Damascus (2006) and Darat al Founoun, Amman (2005). His artwork also forms part of private and national collections, such as the British Museum (London), Darat al Founoun (Amman), and the Minister of Culture (Damascus).

Monif Ajaj's portraits are generally inspired by his daily life in Damascus and his childhood in Al Jezireh. Men are playing with their rosaries, slouching on the floor eating nuts and engaging the viewer with a penetrating gaze. Highly dexterous in his drawing, his exclusively male and almost life-size portraits depict Syrian society in a satirical way and are reminiscent of the work of early 20th century western artists, particularly Daumier.

Mixing classical sanguine drawing with modern urban art as the spray used for graffiti, this large format new series entitled "*Mondaseen*" (meaning infiltrators, after the word used by the government to describe protestors) depicts the recent events in Syria. Influenced by internet, television and newspaper pictures which invaded the Syrian visual public and private space, Monif Ajaj presents street portraits including for the first time in his work, the presence of women.

Exhibition opening

A cocktail reception will be held at Artspace, located in The Gate Village, DIFC, from 8:00 pm on the 19th of October 2011. The e-invitation is attached.

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Media is welcome from 7.00pm.

If interested in arranging a personal interview, please contact:

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Notes to Editor

About Artspace Gallery:

Launched in May 2003 at the Fairmont Dubai, Artspace Gallery invited Dubai and the region to acquaint themselves with Contemporary Middle Eastern Art. Having dedicated the past five years to promoting and establishing Contemporary Middle Eastern artists in the region, Artspace Gallery now boasts a portfolio of over 20 artists, and is located in the art district at The Gate Village, DIFC.

For more information and location:

Visit www.artspace-dubai.com or call +9714 3230820