

Press Release

Not towards home, but the horizon

Marwan

9 October - 28 November 2015

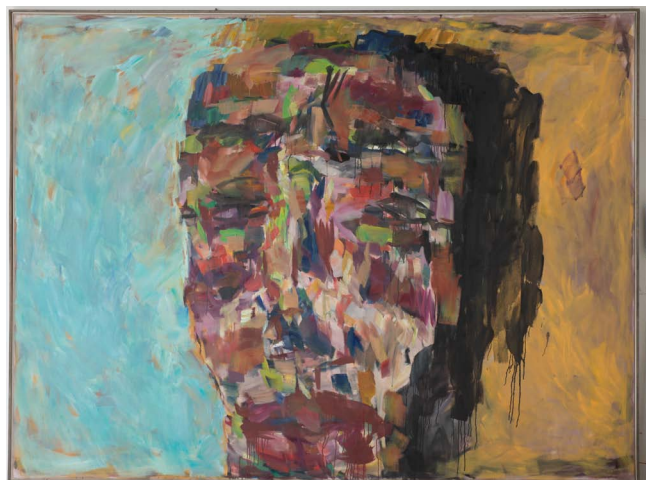
Private View: Thursday 8 October, 6.30pm-8.30pm

Exhibition Open: Tues-Sat, 11am-6pm, FREE

The Mosaic Rooms, 226 Cromwell Road, London SW5 0SW



Untitled, oil on canvas, 156cm x 195cm, 1973



Untitled, oil on canvas, 195cm x 260cm, 2009-2010

The Mosaic Rooms, London, are pleased to present the first UK solo exhibition by Syrian artist Marwan, featuring paintings, etchings and works on paper. Marwan is considered a leading artist from his generation, both internationally and in the Arab world. Recognised in museum collections around the globe, Marwan has yet to exhibit in London. At 81 years old this exhibition is a celebration of the artist's work. Featuring pieces selected from the artist's studio, showcasing the breadth of his practice from the 1960s until the present day, the exhibition offers UK audiences a rare chance to reflect upon and encounter Marwan's unique and inspiring oeuvre.

The exhibition journeys through stylistic approaches, with the main motif always remaining the human head. The early works tend towards a more formally figurative approach, with aspects that challenge the traditional, including a flatness of plane, a disproportionate rendering of the skull, limbs appearing and disappearing. From here the expression becomes stylistically freer, larger in scale, more focused on solely the face, beginning to abstract it with vivid brushstrokes and colours. This leads to the visual language audiences are perhaps more familiar with: bold strokes of paint and layers of colour forming the faces themselves; emerging from and submerging into the paint. Form is shaped through the tension between one brushstroke and another, suspended between surface and depth.

Marwan's latest works, on show here for the first time, see a reduced layering of the surface, a pared down sensibility, which leaves the faces and marionettes floating amidst the white of the canvas. Throughout the artist's body of work the head is used as multifaceted form to encompass and project the depth of human experience.

Also on display for the first time in London will be Marwan's *99 Heads* series, ninety-nine etchings made between 1997 and 1998, which reference Sufism and the 99 names of God. A space is always left to represent one hundred, a place of light, the attainment of God.

Marwan Kassab-Bachi was born Damascus, Syria, in 1934, and is based in Berlin. He studied Arabic Literature at the University of Damascus (1955-57) before moving to Berlin, Germany, to study painting. From 1980, he held a professorship at the Hochschule der Künste, Berlin. Marwan has exhibited mainly in Germany, but also in the Middle-East and U.S.A., and has works in many public collections, including Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Darat al Funun, Amman; National Museum, Damascus; Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; British Museum, London; Tate Modern, London; Barjeel Art Foundation; Sharjah; Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi; Nationalgalerie, Berlin; Berlinische Galerie, Berlin; and Städel, Frankfurt.

For further details, images and to arrange interviews contact Rosa Attwood at press@mosaicrooms.org or on + 44 207 370 9990.

Notes to Editors

- Marwan will be available for select interviews upon request.
- Images and biographies are available on request.
- Copy of the publication available on request.
- Entry to the exhibition is free. The Mosaic Rooms are open from 11am–6pm Tuesday to Saturday.
- The exhibition is accompanied by a public program of talks and events. Visit www.mosaicrooms.org for full listings
- The Mosaic Rooms are a leading London-based non-profit cultural organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary culture from and about the Arab world. They provide an international platform for the arts, particularly new work, and create opportunities for collaboration and professional development between artists, collectives and organisations from the Arab world and the UK. They do this through their free-entry contemporary art exhibitions, their multidisciplinary events, artist residencies and learning and engagement programme. They work in partnership with national and international organisations to disseminate their combined arts program to the widest possible audience. The Mosaic Rooms' program is run by Rachael Jarvis, Director. The Mosaic Rooms are a project of the A.M. Qattan Foundation.
- The Mosaic Rooms are situated on the corner of the Cromwell Road and Earl's Court Road in Kensington, London, a short walk from Earl's Court Underground Station and Exhibition Centre. For further information about The Mosaic Rooms and the A.M. Qattan Foundation visit www.mosaicrooms.org.
- The exhibition is supported by, and part of, [Nour Festival of Arts](#). The exhibition is also part of [Open Art Spaces](#).

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