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The Countryside, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 100 x 100 cm

NIDAL KHADDOUR: *SPECTRUMS IN MEMORY*

24 September – 27 October 2018

Opening reception: Monday, 24 September from 7.00 to 10.00 pm

For the first time at the newly renovated Fann A Porter, Nidal Khaddour will present a solo exhibition *Spectrums in Memory*, featuring the artist's latest paintings. A survey of the artist's latest works, the exhibition explores human perception, impression, and projection through a collection of large and medium sized abstract works. Khaddour paints landscapes of open fields and of equivocal mountains, night skies, city streets, and interiors. Side by side and from afar, the works evidently share the artist's unique technique, building layer upon layer of paint yet maintaining an optically flat surface that still portrays the differing depths of the scenes painted.

Present in all his works is an element of nature. Drawing upon the nature of his city of residence, Al Ain, and the similar nature of his home country, Syria, Khaddour merges geometric abstraction with a colour palette that he describes as very much his own. His colour choice stands at a stark comparison to the geometric forms used to portray the different scenery in each work, and even though lighter and softer than the strict lines, the colours of each painting are what take charge, giving the works their overall hopeful quality.

Khaddour's earlier work saw him paint more freely, with more visible brushstrokes, and a more realistic portrayal of scenery – seemingly less structured. His newer works presented in this exhibition have the artist moving further towards abstraction with tightened control over his brushwork. This geometric abstraction however, does not come across to the viewer as a claustrophobic self-limitation, but rather appears as the natural progression of the artist's practice.

The viewer is strangely reminded of the open composition and of the light found in Impressionist paintings through their palettes and loosened brushwork, even though Khaddour's canvases are covered in sharp-cornered shapes, straight lines, and enclosed spaces. The works give off a sense of breathability and an air of nonchalance that allows the viewer to take a step back and see the beautiful facets of what is usually a landscape or a sky. Through their work, the Impressionists attempted to capture a split second of life, an ephemeral moment in time on the canvas: the impression, and very similarly, Khaddour

captures his impressions of his moments in nature, translating his feelings and state during that particular time into the light colour palette seen in his current works.

His painting *Lilac Mountain* is composed of sharp edged overlapping geometric forms in different purple hues, moving towards a lighter and warmer pink as the eye travels to the top of the mountain. The artist paints the background in light lilacs and lilac-tinted greys, eliminating a blunt contrast between the mountain the sky, yet allowing the mountain to still stand proud in the forefront. The constructivist style creates an almost a mechanical personality to the mountain, yet providing a unification between humane attributes and robotic characteristics.

Khaddour continues this in *The Countryside*. The canvas is split horizontally in almost equal parts, the bottom half painted in hues of earth tone reds and browns of a countryside scape with what looks like hills, some houses, and the land in between. Diagonal lines in the foreground move towards one another as the eye moves up the canvas to create a sense of depth. This is contrasted with vertically divided forms in the sky, giving a superimposing sense of the sky standing over the countryside.

With his newest works the artist hopes to create a space for the viewer to escape the negativity of the world around them – the wars, the natural disasters, and all that one sees on the news and is constantly being fed through different streams of modern media – and see the positivity and hope that he captures in the ephemeral moments he paints.

Spectrums in Memory by Nidal Khaddour is the inaugural exhibition of the newly renovated Fann A Porter Gallery, with a larger and sleeker exhibition space designed specifically for presentation of artworks. Located at The Workshop in Jumeirah 2, the space also features a café with a new menu of delicious meals, snacks, and beverages.



About the artist

Painter Nidal Khaddour uses his brush to create work that highlights beautification in its essence by drawing upon unconventional inspirations, mainly the impact of the socio-political state around him. The paintings see the unification of geometric abstraction with colours reminiscent of Impressionist paintings. This unification serves the artist's aim to create a positive reflection of his world. Khaddour explains that 'sadness pushes [him] to create joy. [He] has the desire to make the world see beauty, instead of ugliness.'

Khaddour is a member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society and has educational experience as an art teacher in the UAE and Syria. His works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions including *New Members Exhibition*, Emirates Fine Arts Society, Sharjah (2017); *1001 Nights*, La Parole Art Gallery, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi; *Life Through Art*, La Parole Art Gallery, Al Ain Rotana (2017); *12 Voices*, Rotana Beach Hotel (2016); *Shots of Nature and Human*, The French Alliance of Abu Dhabi (2015); *Future Identities*, Palazzo Radetzky, Milan (2015); and *Syrian Art & Culture*, Ismaili Cultural Center (2015).

Khaddour was born in 1979 in Homs, Syria. He received his BFA from the College of Fine Arts, Damascus University in 2009. He lives and works in Al Ain.

About Fann A Porter

Fann A Porter is a contemporary art gallery that represents a diverse selection of emerging international and regional artists. The gallery aims to nurture the burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through quality exhibitions, non-profit events, auctions, and an active community programme.

Fann A Porter is based at The Workshop Dubai, a unique concept store consisting of an art gallery, cafe and design studio.

About The Workshop:

The Workshop is a place to create, collaborate, interact, and showcase. A "shop in shop" spirit where you can exhibit and buy art, furniture, lighting, antiques, designer items, and much more. One space that offers a unique experience and atmosphere for designers, artists, architects, music lovers, bookworms and



shoppers to come and have a good time and feel at home. With a coffee corner and a quite outdoor area in the heart of authentic Jumeirah area in Dubai.

For more information and for interviews with the artist, please contact the gallery on +971559480363, or email fann@theworkshopdubai.com.