

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Houssam Ballan, Falling 3, 2021, oil on canvas, 135 x 200 cm

THE DOWNFALL **Houssam Ballan**

8 March - 30 April 2022

Fann Á Porter, The Workshop Dubai

Fann Á Porter and The Workshop Dubai are pleased to announce *The Downfall*, an exhibition by Houssam Ballan.

About the exhibition

"Run away, he said. Where to? I asked. Fall into the darkness, and so I did. There I saw myself. Never see but yourself and never come out of the darkness, he said. If I take you out of it, I will make myself known. If you see me, know you fell the furthest you could."

- Mohammed Abdel Jabbar AlNifari, Iraqi Sufi 10th Century

True to its name, Ballan's latest exhibition, *The Downfall*, explores the many meanings of the word. Inspired by the literary work of Mohammed Abdel Jabbar AlNifari, Ballan began first exploring what it is to fall out of ideology. In particular, a passage titled *Who am I and who are you?* influenced the first painting in the series, *Falling 1*, in which part of the passage is written directly on a black backdrop.

From there, Ballan realized this concept required much more than a single canvas to convey and so began the series. He explores falling out of ethics, the downfall of women in society, falling out of place, and falling out of critical thought.

Falling 3 is inspired by the Islamic book of fables, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, depicting humans as animals and birds. The painting itself is figurative, showing no ground or sky, but rather emptiness. In the work, two men carrying the Sultan trip, causing him to fall, a darkly comedic take of the violence and cruelty of those in power. The "fall" is not so dismal in every painting — the bluebird's fall represents freedom.

Alongside this concept of falling, ideology operates as a central theme throughout, depicting what our steadfast beliefs about war, religion, politics, and culture can do to us as a society. One painting titled *Fear* depicts a man peaking behind the curtains. This is Ballan himself, fearing the unknown as a result.



As a general rule, Ballan opposes the use of too many colors. Throughout his paintings, he creates a sense of harmony and realism through specific combinations. The colors speak to the ideas conveyed and in this way, a balance is struck.

With a focus on elements and colors at the forefront, Ballan leaves interpretation up to the viewer. The human eye and human experience speak volumes to the way we experience art and it is precisely this that Ballan expects from those who interact with his work.

The exhibition will be open from 8 March - 30 April 2022 at Fann Á Porter, gallery space at The Workshop Dubai, located at Villa 45 - St. 23b - Al Wasl Rd opposite Box Park - Jumeirah 2, Dubai, U.A.E.

About The Artist

Ballan is a tutor and member of the Teacher's Association at the University of Damascus since 2009. Between 1999 and 2007, he participated in workshops with artist J. Bradley Adams and painter Jose Friexanes, and trained in mural painting with Pierre Palas. The artist was part of the 13th Cairo Biennale, Cairo (2019). In 2020, the artist collaborated on a workshop with Berlin based non-profit, CoCulture e.V. Ballan has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions including MADS Gallery, Milan, Italy (2021); Azad Art Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2021); Litehouse Gallery, London, UK (2020); Egypt Int'l Art Fair (2022, 2021, 2020); BBA Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2019); Hafez Gallery, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (2019); Fann A Porter Amman, Jordan (2019); Atelier Stories, Paris, France (2018); Fann A Porter, Dubai, UAE (2020, 2019, 2018), Mark Hachem Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon (2014); Arab Cultural Centre (2010, 2007, and 2005); Ayyam Gallery, Damascus, Syria (2006); French Cultural Centre, Damascus, Syria, (2004); among others. His works can be found in numerous private and public collections.

About Fann Á Porter

Fann Á 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 Á Porter has locations in Dubai, UAE and Amman, Jordan.

The Dubai gallery is based at The Workshop, a unique inter-disciplinary community space consisting of a cafe, art gallery, sustainable store and design space, providing visitors with a diversified artistic and cultural experience. Bathed in natural sunlight with its garden, The Workshop is located in the heart of Jumeirah in Dubai.

Fann Á Porter Amman is located at Manara Arts & Culture, a creative hub and social space in the heart of Jabal Al Lweibdeh.

For more information and for interviews, please contact at fann@theworkshopdubai.com