

Offerings: The War Series / قرايين

Ahmad Kasha | Solo Exhibition | Presented by Fann A Porter in collaboration with Ayyam Gallery

31 May – 14 June 2025

Opening night:

Saturday 31 May; 4 - 8PM

Fann À Porter, in collaboration with Ayyam Gallery, is pleased to present Ahmad Kasha's complete *War Series* (2018–2025) for the first time. This body of work is a meditation on the condition of humanity in the shadow of war, rendered by Kasha through arresting color palettes and large-scale paintings which convey fragility and overwhelming violence. Influenced by various traditions of war art, the *War Series* reflects on the psychological toll of violence on people, animals, nature, and in the essence of art across time.

With an experimental, uncanny use of color, Kasha's paintings possess a tableau-like quality—reminiscent of theatrical scenes—where scale is exaggerated and figures loom large. Depicting five panels of distorted pink flamingos and flesh forms arriving on a shore, *Season of Migration to the North* (2019–2025) stands out as a significant work in the series—not only for its imposing scale, but for its thickly layered oil and acrylic application, frantic brushwork, and dizzying detail. The result is a scene that feels both frozen and frenzied, a moment suspended between stillness and mania. Painted over four years, the piece functions like a timestamp, capturing the artist's shifting emotions.

The War Series is inspired by key moments in the history of war imagery, spanning from ancient to modern times. Kasha references prehistoric cave drawings, Pharaonic depictions of the Battle of Kadesh, Assyrian reliefs like *The Dying Lioness*, the Palmyrene sculpture *Lion of Al-Lāt*, and Trajan's Roman columns. He draws from Renaissance works such as Uccello's dramatic battle scenes, and modern interventions, Goya's *Disasters of War*, Picasso's *Guernica*, and the brutal, unflinching works of Otto Dix, Chaim Soutine, and Georg Baselitz. Kasha is also deeply influenced by his mentor, Leila Nseir, whose emotionally resonant and expressive techniques have profoundly shaped his introspective practice.

Symbolism plays a vital role in Kasha's compositions. Recurring motifs such as plants, birds, and embryos serve as metaphors for life and renewal. Amid the chaos, these figures affirm existence and the resilience of the human spirit. His works confront the dualities of existence—war and peace, beauty and brutality,

hope and despair. This tension invites reflection, where Kasha's art acts as both protest and witness, destruction and renewal.

For press inquiries, images, or other information, contact Zoya Zalatimo: zoya@fannaporter.com

Artist statement

“ممارستي لأعمال تحاكي مشاهد الحرب دفعتني لكي اتفوق على ذاتي أولاً ومن ثم إلى الغوص في أعماق النفس البشرية، تلك النفس التي لا تكف عن العودة إلى القربان الأول، هابيل.

يصعب علي وصف ما شعرت به طوال تلك السنوات بالكلمات؛ فقد كانت رؤيتي غارقة، ومبتلة بدموعي العاجزة عن إيقاف هذه القيامة الدمشقية القديمة، المستمرة منذ وجد الإنسان في تلك البقعة من الأرض التي تشهد آثارها الموجودة على ان المنطقة كانت منطقة حروب وصراعات منذ الأزل وما زالت.

وكأنما حلت عليها لعنة الجغرافيا، تلك الأرض التي ابتلعت أبناءها كالقربانين، جعلت لوحاتي تنبئ بكلام مبهم، يشبه أنين موتى الحروب في كل زمان ومكان. وكأننا نسير على طريق الجلجلة؛ طريق الحياة والموت معاً، حيث تتجلى التراجيديا في أبهى صورها الملحمية.” وكأننا القربان الأكبر والأقدم لهذا العالم.

“Creating works that reflect scenes of war has pushed me to transcend myself, and then to delve deeply into the human psyche—into that part of us that always returns to the first sacrifice: Abel. It’s difficult for me to put into words what I felt over all those years. My vision was submerged, drenched in tears that couldn’t stop this ancient Damascene apocalypse—an apocalypse that has persisted since humanity first set foot on this land, a land whose ruins reveal it has always been a place of conflict and war.

It’s as if this land has been cursed by geography—a land that swallowed its children like offerings, causing my paintings to groan with obscure utterances, like the cries of war’s dead in every time and place. It’s as though we are walking the path of Golgotha—where life and death intertwine, and tragedy unfolds in its most epic form. As if we ourselves are the oldest and greatest offering this world has ever known.”

About the artist

Ahmad Kasha is a contemporary abstract painter and sculptor represented by Fann A Porter whose raw and visceral depiction of reality emanate movement and dynamism. Born to a notable family of artists, Kasha’s early encounters of art and lived experiences has influenced his art practice.

Born in 1996 in Syria, Kasha graduated from Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus. With a strong interest in the various movements of Syrian and Arab art, Kasha has been an active promotor and organizer of art exhibitions from the region and has collaborated with institutions such as Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE, Atassi Foundation, Dubai, UAE, Mathaf, Arab Museum of Modern Art. Winning several art prizes



from a young age, Kasha has participated in group exhibitions in Germany, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the UAE. His works are collected by public institutions and is included in private collections.

Born in 1997, Jisr Al Sheghour, Syria

Lives and works in Dubai, UAE