

Mohammed Sami

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Mohammed Sami lived his early adult years in war-torn Iraq, surrounded by constant tension and the horror of daily bombings and assassinations, before moving to Sweden in 2007 at age 23. The marks of these deep traumas are apparent in his paintings where we can often see an umbilical cord extending from birds and animals (especially horses) to mother nature. Serving as a metaphor for imminent disaster, these perishable creatures have no other means of escape than their legs and wings. The fleeing or bleeding horses in the dark have lost their direction whether hovering around fate or crossing the canvas into the unknown, ascending to a place of no return.

Although they might appear fit and strong, Sami's fragile birds are always depicted crushed with broken wings. They represent our souls broken by senseless wars, the quiver of the uprooted nerves, Sami's nerves, healed by time, but scarred for life nevertheless.

Sami's paintings undergo three separate stages of production, albeit unified in subject and ambience. He first builds his scenes on backgrounds often overtaken by darkness. The black colour he uses is the blindness from which emerge the forms that stumble in the glow of cosmic glimmers.

Then, the forms of his ethereal creatures are outlined in coloured etched lines according to their migratory intentions, sometimes intersected by the shrapnel of the dark background, which in turn fragments or scatters them, or even blurs some of their features.

The third level is represented by the glimmer of nerves and their extensions, their effects on one another and on the surface of the painting.

In Sami's paintings, nothing is stationary; all the drawings appear as if they are moving. There is always something hidden. Beauty becomes part of this great confusion, which the viewers live as the drawings themselves live. When we look at Sami's paintings, we feel as if we do not see all the reality. Many parts of which have vanished, disappeared, been erased. What we see is only the traces of reality. The painter does not recall his art from memory but rather follows his passion, which blurs his eyes with tears. He sees nothing but ghosts.

Sami relates a story of a long history of destruction that afflicted his country through restless, distant looks that he directs to a wild land bound in mysterious rhythms. It is merely a play that entices the eyes with its music. In the few curved lines, there are many cries that reside in the heart of the world and the tortured human conscience. Sami's paintings are the diary of a storm that has playfully swept away a tide of static images. The artist's hand grasps the wind. There is nothing but the wind. And if the painter has chosen horses to symbolize this wind it is because they represent in all minds a history related to conquests and the principle of regaining good health and defiance. It is a double-faced mirror through which the painter expresses his familiarity with the controversy that surrounds death and immortal life. Following this death, there is a chance of another life coming from the unknown. These paintings, despite all the pain they evoke, do not despair of hope.

Mohammed Sami was born in Baghdad in 1984. He graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 2004. He lives and works in Norrköping, Sweden. He has had solo shows in Baghdad, Aleppo, Syria and Norrköping, Sweden, and has participated in group exhibitions in Paris, London, Stuttgart, Germany, Saint Petersburg, Russia and Abu Dhabi.

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