

JAMM to exhibit at Art14 London

Olympia Grand Hall, Booth C8

28 February – 2 March 2014

JAMM is pleased to be participating for the first time in Art14 London, 28 February – 2 March 2014, Olympia Grand Hall, booth C8. The gallery will present a solo booth of selected photographs exhibited for the first time together by emerging Yemeni-American artist, Ibi Ibrahim.

Born in the United States and raised throughout the Middle East, between Yemen, Libya, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, Ibrahim reflects his multicultural mindset through his photography and film. While many of the pieces are based on his own life experiences, they often address controversial topics which conflict with the traditional Yemeni society from which he comes. Ibrahim's work touches upon issues of sexuality, gender and tradition, and through his unfiltered images, he has succeeded in instigating heated discussions between Yemeni youth regarding the social and cultural effects of the widespread conservatism which has grown in his country and the region over the last forty years.

On view during Art14 there will be a survey of Ibrahim's works over the past four years, highlighting the artist's affiliation to monochromatic compositions featuring self-portraits alongside portrayals of young women and men contesting a traditional Muslim space. Photographs from Ibrahim's highly acclaimed *Social Codes* series will be on display, from which his photograph *Fatima* secured Ibrahim the 2010 GLAAD OUT Best Emerging Artist Award. Featuring two veiled women seated hand-in-hand in an intimate moment of subtle proximity, the camera seems to quietly consider the relationship of its subjects.

An expression of turbulent emotional upheavals was the instigator for the *Sans toi* and *Nous ne nous sommes jamais mariés* series, shot in cities around the world such as Paris, New York, and Toronto, the multiple framed images function as a story-board documenting the artist's fears, pains, and loneliness. The artist's candid display not only delves into the realm of emotions, but also does not shy away from his passions. In his works from the *Yemeni Orgasm* series, Ibrahim openly indulges in his sexual desires consciously pushing the boundaries of the inappropriate and suggesting that indulging in one's sexual desires should not be a sin.

A selection of Ibrahim's photographs which comment on the social and cultural state of Yemeni and Muslim women will also be on view. Photographs from the *Sitara* series are a clear critique of the colourless modern-day black abaya worn in public by women in Yemen. The sitara, which is a vibrant and colourful traditional Yemeni cloth used for centuries for covering, has gradually been put aside for the supposed more modest sombre attire. The sitara functioned as a symbol of individuality and pride for Yemeni women with regards to their Muslim sisters throughout the Middle East. Ibrahim's series is a reminder of the sitara's prevalence and place within Yemeni cultural history which should not be forgotten but instead revived.

In his body of work, Ibrahim seeks to emphasise a pivotal aspect of Middle Eastern culture and history that is accepting and open to change, regardless of conservative trends that have swept throughout the region. He also hopes to shed light on the clear tradition of liberalism in the region dating back centuries which now can only reveal itself through contained spurts. Through his practice, Ibrahim engages in controversial topics in an effort to normalise public discussions about self-exploration, sexuality, gender equality and freedom of expression in his country and the region as a whole.

Ibi Ibrahim was born in 1987. He lives and works in Sana'a, Yemen.

For further press information, please contact Mojgon Davari at mdavari@jamm-art.org.