

Mutual Change | Mayar Obeido

October 28 – November 30 2023

Opening Reception:

October 28, 2023; 5 – 9 PM

Over the last year, Mayar Obeido has produced a large body of work that explores how ordinary objects are part of the interconnectedness of everyday life. Interested in the concept of change and the visual possibilities of documenting this process, Obeido explores how the passage of time can alter an object's appearance and physical state, specifically something that is linked to one's survival. As the monotony of daily routines causes us to interact and pay attention to the spaces and things that form reality, the artist encourages a deeper look into how we experience everyday objects as a means of understanding consciousness.

In his methodically drafted works, an apple on a table is shown in various stages, from harvest to decay, a cycle that symbolizes changes that are gradual yet significant. A lone figure or pair of androgynous figures are shown observing the apple as it undergoes this natural process. Contorted postures describe their intense state of focus, as though while observing the object they are also in the midst of slow transformation. Whereas figurative painting and drawing are typically understood as snapshots of a time and place, Obeido reimagines the compositional space as a site where images seem to evolve in real time. He achieves this sense of continuous motion by first covering his canvases with collaged newspapers that serve as a sort of timestamp, establishing context. Using charcoal, he then draws his riotous scenes over these textured surfaces. The paintings are finalized with atmospheric washes of acrylic paint that bring these disparate layers together while illuminating his darkened scenes. The resulting works are mixed-media paintings that are at once otherworldly and affecting.

Encountering these new works, the viewer will note that charcoal, despite being traditionally applied in drawing, has become the central medium of Obeido's paintings. According to the artist, the medium allows him the freedom of a certain type of gestural and automatic figuration, one that is expressive yet lends to the detailing of volume and depth. Applied in paintings, charcoal linework replaces brushstrokes, which are then applied to the outer areas of the composition. This experimental approach to painting is indicative of the artist's emphasis on a type of formalism that, like his imagery, is constantly evolving.

-- Maymanah Farhat

About the Artist

Mayar Obeido (b. 1995) is a Syrian artist based in Dubai. A graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus, Obeido works in painting, drawing, and sculpture, moving freely between media while producing a focused body of work. In his most recent works, anonymous human figures and how they relate to their surroundings, which include the inanimate objects that occupy these spaces, become meditative reflections on the mundane.

In his mixed-media paintings, composed of acrylic, charcoal, and collage, Obeido incorporates clippings from Arab newspapers, a reference to the current events that inevitably impact inner worlds. His anguished figures appear to melt into the background, as though overcome by the details of these texts or perhaps internalizing the news. In other works, an apple becomes a point of reflection, a symbol of sustenance that slowly takes on anthropomorphic characteristics in response to the emotional torrents that sweep over his figures. Obeido's drawings are distinctively expressive as he combines figuration and abstraction, a dynamism in draftsmanship that informs his paintings, while his sculptures animate the objects shown in larger works. This multimedia investigation provides the viewer with greater insight into his subject matter, creating an immersive experience.

Obeido has participated in solo and collective exhibitions at art spaces and galleries in his native Syria, in addition to exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates.

About Fann À Porter

Fann À Porter is a contemporary art gallery at The Workshop Dubai 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 program.

The gallery's exhibition program includes eight curated exhibitions a year, and features artists working across diverse media.

Fann À Porter has established a series of dialogues and collaborations with curators, writers, governmental entities, and institutions to affirm its commitment to support the long-term development of young contemporary artists from the Middle East.



By hosting a regular public programming including exhibitions, talks, non-profit and charitable initiatives and by participating in fairs, Fann A Porter has established itself in forefront of the region's exciting arts landscape.

Founded in 2006 by Ghada Kunash, Fann À Porter is based at The Workshop, a unique inter-disciplinary community space consisting of an art gallery, a sustainable store, design studio, and a cafe. The Workshop aims to engage the audiences and support the development of Dubai's arts scene through its extensive programs, educational initiatives, and community projects.

For more information and for interviews, and media RSVP, please contact at info@fannaporter.com or visit fannaporter.com.