

## Riyad Ne'mah

Riyad watches over his heroes carefully. While some of them are marginal, not concerned with what happens around them, others are careful witnesses, expressing their outlook on life. This group of heroes is Riyad's source of inspiration, which he uses to build his world as a storyteller. Biased to his humanity and creating from these heroes a festival of colors, he incorporates quick interventions with careless brushwork to meticulously decorate his conceptions of sensationally colored heroes that appear on his canvases with their own essence of happiness. Throughout the years, Riyad's paintings were diverse and unchanged by the harshness of his surroundings, while his humanity was uncompromised by the marginal temptations. He remained astutely aware of his political and social boundaries. This careful follower, thrifty with his transformations, finds himself in a soldier's world, with his subject trapped between bias and total rejection of destruction. He pictures his subjects with humanity, which does not hide the savagery of his insides, and deals with it as though it was an industrially planned creature, an annex for a society of destruction, imposed carelessly upon us by Riyad. He plays with the colors of the creature's hard face, as though it was a sample made of wax, with joints that can be changed without care and as though the artist, in this position, does not feel the bitterness of regret for this sample of bravery and does not withdraw its possibilities for allusion. With the bullets that bring the day to its death, those soldiers are brought to life without a sound, waving their weapons and fearing what was left from the cadavers scattered between their homes. As for the missing friends, they pass like ships seeking to be disembarked. The possibility of a comeback glimmers in their eyes, ascends their memories and is scattered warily between the layers of his canvases. Their faces are covered with the dust of a faraway Iraq, after having crossed the forbidden borders and the insults of the secret police. These soldiers, in Riyad's world, are like sealed boxes; they obscure the capability of thinking, they recall the days that he lost between Iraq and his exile, they listen without boredom to the music of his colors and they create, from his silence, a protest, so that our eyes may become lanterns that bear a louder life.

Diaa Al Azzawi '2015

## Biography:

Born in 1968 in Baghdad, Iraq, Riyadh Ne'mah received his B.A. in Fine Arts with a specialization in Painting from his home country in 1992. Ne'mah belongs to a generation of visual artists that expressed their talent amidst fear, suffering and political turmoil. His journey as an artist began with the rise of Saddam Hussein rule, during his attempted totalitarian control of Iraq. This dramatic period of the country's history was filled with oppression and hatred, especially towards those who challenged the regime. The artists at the time formed an insightful and powerful movement of contemporary Iraqi art and strove for creative liberation.

## Artist's statement:

The pain of life is interminable, however, a single look at a man's face sums it all up. I often think about what I witness, and I reproduce what I see onto a painting. Because we witness a lot, our primary concern behind everything is to attempt to embody language in art, to expose our worries and to materialize the way in which we deal with reality in view of the intensity of what we endure. In this exhibition, I have translated my thesis, which for me gathers the personal pictures of this man in my painting, as the only short and truthful summary to describe all events, whether sweet or bitter. Hence I have chosen a collection of pictures from friends and people I know, all of whom I see as being the most important chapter of a story called life ...

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 "Portrait", Art on 56<sup>th</sup>, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2015 Markhiya gallery, Doha, Qatar
- 2013 CAB gallery, Amman, Jordan
- "Venue" Solidere, Beirut.
- 2010/11 Dar Al Anda Gallery, Amman, Jordan
- Rafia Gallery, Damascus.
- 2010 Babel Theater, Beirut.
- 2009 Sami Abdurrahman Park, Erbil, Iraq
- Courtyard Gallery, Dubai, AUE
- 2006 Zaman Gallery, Beirut.
- 2005 Almada Gallery, Damascus.
- 2004 Ministry of culture, Prague
- Gallery of Kuwaiti Plastic Artists, Kuwait
- 2003 Zaman Gallery, Beirut.
- 2001 French Culture Center, Damascus.
- 2000 Ishtar Gallery, Damascus.

## Group Exhibitions

- 2009 Jane Geneih Exhibition (Arabic view), Babel Theater, Beirut.
- Rafia Gallery, Damascus.
- 2005 City Hall, USA
- Aldroubi Gallery, Baghdad, Iraq
- 2004 M Gallery, Paris, France
- Manes Gallery, Prague, CZ
- 2003 Almezan Gallery, Baghdad, Iraq
- Almada Gallery, Damascus.
- 1997 Association of Jordanian Artists Gallery, Amman, Jordan
- 1995 Inana Gallery, Baghdad, Iraq

## Awards

- 2000 Realize the prize of British Council, Damascus.