

## **CHAOUKI CHAMOUN**

### **BEYOND WALLS**

**May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

Mark Hachem Gallery - Beirut is delighted to present “Beyond Walls”, a solo exhibition by artist Chaouki Chamoun, featuring a selection of his most recent works.

“This exhibit is a reflection of the continuous visual, social, and psychological shuttle I, among others, live between opposing environments: man-made and nature. Having works on both under one roof intensify that contrast. It is hoped to bring the best of the most confronting visual encounters.

It is also, in part, about separation walls between nations stacked with concrete and steel: the culmination of man-made fortress of hate, greed, fear and cowardly political, economic and military powers.”

To Chamoun, large works have always been the arena of his experimental state of mind. They are not however about XL sizes and infinitely sought out dimensions and are not in themselves a preset formula for artistic success.

They are rather the carrier of dense and multiple aesthetic components of a creative enjoyment, which a small surface may not afford.

Chaouki’s brush strokes vary from a chaotic abstraction of calligraphy of writing in the skies to a calm canvas of waiting in the distant blues.

From crossing the Hudson Valley to a dream in the Bekaa Valley, Chamoun takes us beyond walls and into unlimited possibilities.

His rhythmic variations of space layouts are based on a specific and individual graphic alphabet. Artworks with solid and fluid shapes, the vertical and the horizontal, the figurative and the abstract, the known and the unexplored are the structural equations that we have come to know as Chamoun’s signature.

The horizontally laid out human figures at the bottom of each painting have yet to leave his paintings. A unique signature that defines the place of man in this universe, a small scaled human in the face of the greater world that he has made.

This exhibit is not a retrospective in the full sense of the term, although some of the paintings were in the hide of his studio as of 2007; Chamoun found it necessary to bring them to light with the recently produced artworks.

It is only a matter of convenience, a pure aesthetic decision, a reminder of the experimental line of aesthetic inquiry he found helpful for an honest communication with his viewers.

Born in Lebanon in 1942, Chaouki Chamoun received his Diploma of Higher Studies from the Fine Art Institute at the Lebanese University in 1972. Being the first in his class, he was awarded a six-year fellowship to pursue his graduate studies in the United States and rejoin its faculty upon his return.

In 1975, he received his Masters in Fine Arts from Syracuse University, NY and from 1975 to 1979 he was a full time fellow at the PhD program at New York University concentrating on Aesthetics and Studio Art.

Chamoun has had over 30 One-Man shows since 1975. Exhibiting in New York and several other cities in the United States, Beirut, Europe, Hong Kong, and the Arab world. He has also participated in over 55 group Art shows and Biennales since 1968 including Rochester Memorial museum in 1974, Lowe Art Centre, Syracuse 1975, Sursock Museum in Beirut in 1984-2008, Europe’ Art, Geneva 1999, Sotheby’s Exhibit and Auction London Oct 2007, Christie’s exhibit and auction Dubai October 2007 and April 2008, Washington AU museum 2010, London 15 and Basel Art Fair 2016.