

Fractures

Nicky Nodjoui

Curated by Media Farzin for *Bidoun*

May 12, 2018 – July 31, 2018

The Third Line is pleased to present *Fractures*, Nicky Nodjoui's first solo exhibition at the gallery curated by Media Farzin for *Bidoun*. The show features Nicky's work from the past two years, including large and small-scale oils on canvas, ink drawings, and a collection of archival source imagery and collages.



Nicky Nodjoui, *The Oaths of Infidels*, 2017, oil on canvas, 243 x 304 cm.

Nicky Nodjoui is a figurative painter with an abstract sensibility. His paintings explore the emotional dynamics of contemporary politics. The brushwork is quick, loose, and expressive, though the compositions are carefully worked out well in advance. His protagonists are often men in suits — the uniform of contemporary authority — painted against spare backgrounds.

Nicky's recent body of work focuses on breaks, ruptures, and the layering of objects and bodies. He uses found photographs to make collages that repeat the same image with small shifts in scale. A selection of his working sketches and collages, drawn from his archive of source material, is also on view. In the final work, bodies are crisscrossed by sometimes violent slicing and fractures — vivid traces of the social violence that has caught up with them.

The theater of politics, in Nicky's work, is often an absurd space. His juxtapositions are both disturbing (atomic clouds, bombed out landscapes) and darkly humorous (giant apes, satanic wrestling). The artist captures the spectacular hypocrisy of political rituals and gestures in a sensory rather than narrative way. The space of the painting can be strongly theatrical, with high-contrast lighting, as well as props, masks, and harlequin patterns (the last two references to the Italian commedia dell'arte tradition.)

On the relationship between painting and politics, Nicky has said: "What I'm looking to express in my paintings are the relations of power. I find a situation and a composition that touches on the relations between people, objects, and spaces, on their embeddedness in power. And then I try to approximate it in painting."

PO Box 72036, Dubai, UAE

T +971 4 341 1367

F +971 4 341 1365

www.thethirdline.com

About Nicky Nodjourni

Brooklyn-based artist Nicky Nodjourni was born in Kermanshah, Iran in 1942. Earning a Bachelor's degree in art from Tehran University of Fine Arts before relocating to the United States in the late 1960s, Nodjourni received his Master's degree in Fine Arts from The City College of New York in 1974. Returning to Tehran to join the faculty of his alma mater, Nodjourni joined his politically galvanized students in their criticism of the Shah's regime, designing political posters inspired by the revolutionary spirit sweeping the country, only to be exiled once more in the aftermath of the revolution.

This political engagement has continued to the present day. His nuanced figurative paintings engage in political discourse with a light, satirical touch, layering his personal heritage and lived experiences in Iran and the United States into scenes that resonate beyond specific historical contexts or geographical boundaries. Nodjourni's works are conceived of as theatrical stages, where compositions of figures both serious and ridiculous, in the words of Phong Bui, "house meanings without irony, narratives without stories, humor without morality, above all creating a space that heightens the awareness of old and new history." Serious in subject matter and witty in execution, these rich and diverse characters enliven Nodjourni's narratives and allude to collective experiences underpinned by sociopolitical struggles, articulating the full spectrum of feelings from aggression to victimhood.

Nicky Nodjourni's works are in several prominent institutional collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the British Museum in London, the DePaul Art Museum in Chicago, Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi and the National Museum of Cuba. In 2014, Nicky had a solo exhibition at the Cleveland Institute of Art titled *The Accident*.

The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NYC.

About Bidoun

Bidoun is an award-winning publishing, curatorial, and educational platform with a focus on the Middle East and its diasporas. Outside of publishing, Bidoun's core activities include exhibitions (to date at the Serpentine Gallery, Townhouse Gallery, New Museum, Carnegie Museum & elsewhere), screenings & talks, as well as an itinerant library project. In June of 2018, Bidoun will be curating the first-ever large-scale exhibition around the late avant-garde theater director Reza Abdoh. The exhibition will move on to KW Institute, Berlin, in early 2019.

About Media Farzin

Media Farzin is a New York-based art historian and critic, and a frequent contributor to *Bidoun*. She teaches at the School of Visual Arts and the Sotheby's Institute of Art in New York.

About the Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtakar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamyra Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Pouran Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

Ramadan Hours (May 15 - June 14, 2018)

Saturdays to Thursdays, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Alserkal Avenue Ramadan Lates: Every Wednesday 6:00-10:00 pm.

[Press Images and Artist Bio](#)

Media Contact

Tima Radwan | PR & Media Coordinator | press@thethirdline.com | +9714 3411 367