

GREEN . ART . GALLERY

KAMROOZ ARAM

PALIMPSEST: UNSTABLE PAINTINGS FOR ANXIOUS INTERIORS

Exhibition Dates: 17 March – 3 May 2014

Opening Reception: Monday, 17 March 2014, 5 – 8 pm

Green Art Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Kamrooz Aram, the artist's first solo show in Dubai, entitled *Palimpsest: Unstable Paintings for Anxious Interiors*. On the occasion of the exhibition, a fully illustrated 80-page, hardcover publication will be co-published by Green Art Gallery and Anomie Publishing, London, UK, with contributions from Eva Díaz, Media Farzin and Murtaza Vali.

For many years, Kamrooz Aram's work has engaged the complex role that ornament has played in Modern painting. The latest works expand on this project, proposing new possibilities within this framework.

The term *palimpsest* is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning "scratched or scraped again" and is typically used to refer to tablets that were written upon and scraped down to be reused, thereby revealing the layers of their own history. Likewise, Aram's *Palimpsest* paintings reveal their histories through a similar process.

Working serially, the artist begins each painting with the same floral form sourced from a Persian carpet. This motif is drawn across the surface of the canvas in a grid, creating an overall pattern. Aram then begins destroying and rebuilding this pattern through a process that involves additive as well as subtractive mark-making: wiping away and scraping down the painted surface over time to reveal previous layers.

Although erasure is not new to his work, Aram's gesture of covering up his own mark with broad strokes of black, white or grey paint appears for the first time in these new paintings. This gesture references a phenomenon the artist calls *the cover-up*: the ubiquitous covering up of graffiti in urban centers around the world by municipalities and landlords. The artist's interest in *the cover-up* is both in its social significance as well as its formal function in creating ready-made paintings in the contemporary urban landscape.

The *Palimpsest* series raises critical questions about the possibilities of contemporary abstract painting to engage content beyond its own form. Challenging the Modernist notions of self-referential or "pure" painting—as well as subjectivity in gestural abstraction—Aram asks whether the process of image-making can become central to informing the meaning of a painting. As the title *Unstable Paintings for Anxious Interiors* suggests, the paintings evoke the unstable feeling of the present historical moment. In her essay on the series included in the publication, Media Farzin suggests that:

Their formal and thematic lines of inquiry are by no means ahistorical; their target is less the broader societal relevance of painting than its relationship to present-day political shifts, ruptures, and moments of hope. Rather than attempting contemporary history painting along the lines of, say, a David or a Gericault, the challenge they take up is whether painting can identify the crucial fault lines and potent visual symbols of our early millennial moment.

GREEN . ART . GALLERY

Kamrooz Aram will also be exhibiting his project for the Abraaj Group Art Prize 2014 at Art Dubai (March 19 - 22, 2014).

Note to Editors

Kamrooz Aram (born 1978, Shiraz) received his MFA from Columbia University in 2003. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Kamrooz Aram/Julie Weitz* at The Suburban, Chicago, Illinois (2013); *Brute Ornament: Kamrooz Aram and Seher Shah*, curated by Murtaza Vali, at Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2012); *Negotiations* at Perry Rubenstein Gallery, New York, New York (2011); *Generation After Generation, Revolution after Revelation* at LAXART, Los Angeles, California (2010) and *Kamrooz Aram: Realms and Reveries* at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Massachusetts (2006). He has shown in numerous group exhibitions including *roundabout*, City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand (2010); the *Busan Biennale*, (2006); P.S.1/MoMA's *Greater New York 2005*; and the *Prague Biennale I* (2003). Aram is the winner of the Abraaj Group Art Prize 2014; he has also been awarded grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts (2004) and the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program (2001-2003). His work has been widely featured and reviewed in publications such as *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Artforum.com*, *ArtAsiaPacific*, *The New Yorker*, *The National* and *Bidoun*. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

For more information, please contact the gallery at info@gagallery.com or +9714 346 9305