

Kourosh Salehi



Painting Name;“Sweet Dreams”; Oil and digital print on Canvas Size;130cm x 130cm

Born in Iran (Abadan), raised in London and searching for his artistic roots in Abu Dhabi, like many artists of his generation Kourosh Salehi is familiar with diaspora. Since arriving in the UAE a few months ago, British Iranian visual artist Kourosh Salehi he has been trying to rekindle his connections with the source of his work which is the eastern sensibility and character.

Identity plays a significant role in Salehi’s work. He is part of a group of post-revolution Iranian artists who have merged East-Western traditions and have invented a new language of exile. Partly as a result of this, he is considered one of the most significant painters of his generation. Salehi left Iran for the UK before the Islamic revolution, whilst still in his early teens. Within a year of arriving



Kourosh Salehi_ Born a Hero oil and digital print on

in London, he joined the local Art Collage. After 3 years of training he decided to leave to study architecture at university.

Artistically, Salehi had a privileged upbringing compared to the average Iranian of the time. He was exposed to art and culture, such as western movies and classical music, from an early age. His influences were the people around him, like his father who took him to galleries and encouraged him to paint, and his maternal grandfather who read Shahnameh for him. It is these early exposures to art and literature that can be traced today in his narrative driven works.

His paintings construct a narrative of emotional severance from people, places and time – a personal journey which is patched together using old letters, photos, digital imagery and hand drawings, and which is retold with passion and candor. The viewer is drawn into his canvases as they try to read his personal letters written in obscured text. They witness his family albums and become an observer in the process where old photographs, along with precious letters, have been exhumed from an old shoe box and displayed for all to witness.

Salehi's paintings are vivid in tone yet layered with vintage imagery. The viewer is placed as the protagonist of his

narrative and engaged in a dialogue with his ghost-like characters.

As an artist, he deals with solitary feelings rather than mass social or political concerns. His works are not for the purpose of promoting any ideology, nor do they represent any "ism" in art. The subjects, filled with intensity and melancholy combined with raw pride, represent the mood and even character of Iranian exiles longing to be absorbed by the sounds and the earth of Iran.

His video-art films, which are generally shot in Iran, are both intense and dreamlike. They represent a temporal distortion of memory, and the process of creating a personal mythology. They each have a story to tell and in this sense are closer to narrative based films than conventional video-art. Longing and reconciliation are common themes and are repeatedly invoked in his films.

Salehi has had numerous group and solo exhibitions in Europe and the Middle East.

Salehi is represented by Salwa Zeidan Gallery – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.