

PRESS RELEASE

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Marlborough New York is pleased to present new work by the New York-based artist Ahmed Alsoudani. The exhibition is comprised of ten paintings, as well as a selection of works on paper from the artist's *Cut of Time* series, which borrows its title from a text by the French-Egyptian writer Edmond Jabès (1912-1991). The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated book for the *Cut of Time* series, featuring a foreword by Adonis, entitled *Painting's Horizon, Meaning's Expanse* (with English translation by Kareem James Abu-Zeid, PhD), and an essay by the American poet and art critic Raphael Rubinstein, entitled *Strange Beauty: The Drawings of Ahmed Alsoudani*.

For his third solo exhibition at Marlborough, Alsoudani returns with his distinctive paintings of polychromatic forms that writhe through suggested interior spaces. Whereas much of the artist's previous works on canvas incorporate charcoal and colored pencil throughout, the present group of paintings is predominantly composed in pure acrylic. The works on view are inspired in part by the artist's ongoing interest in the body (here, the artist has studied medical texts and drawings), with certain passages evoking body parts, sexual organs, anatomical cross-sections of muscles, bones and organs, as well as globular forms suggestive of cells.



Ahmed Alsoudani, *Purple Cell*, 2020, acrylic on canvas,
73 x 49 inches | 185.4 x 124.5 cm.

On occasion, the appearance of textures in charcoal and colored pencil, or of rigidly defined geometric shapes in solid, undifferentiated hues gesture toward Alsoudani's interest in draftsmanship, as well as in art-historical antecedents such as André Masson, Max Ernst, Francis Bacon, and Philip Guston. Like the automatism of the Surrealists, Alsoudani considers his own practice as one which collapses thought and execution into one swift instinctive act, an activation of the unconscious wherein his internalized passion for works of fiction and poetry—especially those conveying the experiences of the historically occupied and exiled—is translated directly onto the painting's surface.

Alsoudani's *Cut of Time* series of drawings in acrylic, pen, and ink offers a new, scaled down glimpse of the artist's oeuvre, having found himself working within the spatial constraints of a domestic space smaller than his usual studio accommodations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing, after all, has always formed the physical and emotional underpinning of Alsoudani's work, with primal explorations in graphite or charcoal on raw canvas providing the skeletal rebar for his chromatic symphonies.

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Ahmed Alsoudani (b. 1975, Baghdad, Iraq) lives and works in New York City. In 1995, he left Baghdad for Damascus, Syria, where he became deeply engaged with a rich intellectual circle of Iraqi and Arab artists and poets. Alsoudani relocated to the United States in 1998, where he would receive his BFA from the Maine College of Art in 2005, and his MFA in Painting from Yale School of Art in 2008.

Alsoudani represented Iraq in the 54th Venice Biennale (2011), the country's first presentation in thirty-five years; during this time, he was included in *The World Belongs to You* at the Pinault Collection's Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2011). Institutional solo exhibitions include *MATRIX 165* at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT (2012), and *Ahmed Alsoudani: Redacted*, which traveled from the Phoenix Museum of Art, AZ, to the Portland Museum of Art, ME (both 2013). Group institutional presentations include *Told / Untold / Retold* at the Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar (2011), *Maine Collected* at the Bates College Museum of Art, Lewiston, ME (2015-16), *Artists in Exile: Expressions of Loss and Hope* at Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT (2017), and *Chaos and Awe: Painting for the 21st Century*, which traveled from the Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN, to the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA (2018-19). Alsoudani's next museum solo exhibition will open in November 2021 at the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA, following a two-year residency there.



Ahmed Alsoudani, *Cut of Time 13*, 2020, acrylic and pen on paper, 11 x 14 inches | 27.9 x 35.6 cm.

Marlborough New York follows New York State's guidelines for physical distancing amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To schedule an appointment, please call or write to gichan@marlboroughgallery.com. It is essential that visitors wear a face mask and observe the six-foot social distancing rule at all times. Contactless temperature checks and information for contact-tracing will be gathered at Reception upon entry.

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