



Hayan Kam Nakache (*1982)

Fri Art hosts the first solo exhibition of Hayan Kam Nakache, who has been honing his highly individual artistic style for the last seven years. From a collection of nearly 350 works, close to 60 drawings will be on display. Most are small-format and all date from between 2010 and 2014.

Freed from the shackles of artistic convention, Hayan Kam Nakache takes an experimental and exploratory approach to the creative process. His works are principally fine black-line drawings brimming with detail and suspense. The subject matter ranges from frenetic inner landscapes to, absurd art inspired by dubious visual idioms and demanding a “high degree of incompetence”, right up to genre pieces and scenes of day-to-day life drawn in alternative comic book-style.

These complementary approaches draw on a variety of visual sources, such as aspects of popular culture, contemporary art and Arabic calligraphy (part of the artist’s cultural background).

HKN celebrates and integrates elements that are generally regarded as the detritus of our prevailing iconographical culture, such as the clichéd and jaded artworks that hang in third-rate galleries or the mediocre graffiti that clutter underground car parks. His approach has certain parallels with the treatment of local visual art by Valentin Carron. These choices, coupled with the unusual framing of the works “transforms the hackneyed into something fresh and alive”.

This extremely vibrant work, which is unique in Switzerland, teems with references to other artists: from the experimental comics of Gary Panter to the off-the-wall pop art of Peter Saul, the illustrations of Saul Steinberg or the mescaline-fuelled drawings of Michaux, the paintings of Albert Oehlen, the catalogues of characters depicted by William Copley, the Heta-Uma style of punk illustrator Teruhiko Yumura, not to mention a plethora of other contemporary artists like Vittorio Brodmann, Josh Smith, Matt Brinkmann and Amelie von Wulffen.

The highly compacted, impenetrable and pulsating surfaces that he creates are unequalled, as is the sheer insolence of his jaded characters or the slightly stunned bull which the artist himself describes as a “crappy Picasso”!

Hayan Kam Nakache was born in 1982 in Damascus, Syria. A graduate of the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD), he was the artist-in-residence at Triangle in Marseille in 2011 and at the Cairo branch of the Swiss Arts Council, Pro Helvetia, in 2012.



Barricades of Life, a Pool Outside

With Marc Hunziker (*1989), Chantal Kaufmann (*1984), Rafal Skoczek (*1989), Mia Špindler (*1985), Urban Zellweger (*1991)

UP STATE is an off-space in Zurich, run by artists working in a variety of media. For their show at Fri-Art, they will apply their material and financial strategies to an institutional context. They will use the rooms of the institution as a medium to stage their way of working by means of a fragmented and elusive presentation of art works. They were collectively conceived and erase any trace of the artists' personal style. A DIY zine will provide insights into working process that led up to the show.

POOL is an sister project of UP STATE, a party label that serves the purpose of financing the self-organized space. POOL will present an after-party in the basement of Fri-Art, paid for by part of the exhibition budget. The proceeds, as with every POOL event, will flow back into UP STATE to pursue its exhibition program, exemplifying the circular nature of the twin projects.

Marc Hunziker, Chantal Kaufmann, Rafal Skoczek, Mia Špindler et Urban Zellweger live and work all in Zurich.