

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

December 20, 2013

PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY
980 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK NY 10075
HOURS:

T. 212.744.2313
F. 212.772.7962
Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



Y.Z. KAMI: *Paintings*

Thursday, January 16–Saturday, February 22, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, January 16th, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

When you go through the process of looking at a face and you meditate on it with pigments and brushes in hand, it is like living with the face. In a way, it becomes part of you.

—Y.Z. Kami

Gagosian New York is pleased to present an exhibition of recent paintings by Y.Z. Kami.

Kami's portraits of introspective subjects, often with eyes closed as though in meditation, project a broad and inviting spiritual presence. With his own photographs of family, friends and strangers as source material, he uses faces as vessels to convey an almost sacred and universal atmosphere of reflection. The matte surfaces of the canvases resemble fresco, while the closely cropped, centered compositions evoke El Fayûm portraits of ancient Egypt. Beginning with a primary paint layer in warm terra cotta, Kami renders these figures in a uniform sfumato that evokes a light tremor, imparting to the paintings a striking effect of movement. This sense of vitality may stem from our own associations with photographed subjects in motion, but it transcends the veracity of photographs. Kami does not aim to create photorealistic portrayals; rather, he seeks to make his subjects uncannily present in spirit.

Paintings depicting hands joined in prayer directly indicate Kami's concerns, as a common action spanning across faiths. Similarly, a universal sense of spirituality is conveyed by *White Dome* paintings, characterized by a central white light that pours over countless rows of tiny white rectangles, hand-painted or stamped onto the canvases. New large-scale portraits zoom in on Kami's chosen faces. A further softening of features is achieved in large areas of nebulous skin textures and hair tones. Each painting possesses a distinct sense of fluidity—between the various faiths and texts that constitute Kami's philosophical influences; between representation and abstraction; and, most unexpectedly, between painted portrayals and energies present.

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by Robert Storr.

(Continue to page 2)

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

Y.Z. Kami was born in Tehran, Iran in 1956, and lives and works in New York. His work has been collected and exhibited by Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, and many other institutions worldwide. Solo museum exhibitions have been presented at Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (2003); Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (2008); Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London (2008); and National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (2009–10). His work was included in the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007, curated by Robert Storr).

For further information please contact the gallery at newyork@gagosian.com or at +1.212.744.2313. All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.

Press Enquiries

Blue Medium, Inc.

T. +1.212.675.1800

www.bluemedium.com

Contact: Deirdre Maher

E. deirdre@bluemedium.com

Contact: Andy Ptaschinski

E. andy@gagosian.com

Please join the conversation with Gagorian Gallery on Twitter (@GagosianNY), Facebook (@GagosianGallery), Google+ (@Gagosian Gallery), Instagram (@gagosiangallery), and Tumblr (@GagosianGallery) via the hashtag #YZKami.

Image: Photo: Louis Heilbronn

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.

980 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK NY 10075 T. 212.744.2313 F. 212.772.7962

NEWYORK@GAGOSIAN.COM WWW.GAGOSIAN.COM