



Amir H. Fallah, *The Laws of Order*
acrylic, oil, ink, pencil, and collage on paper mounted to canvas
72 x 60 in (183 x 152 cm)
2012

MEDIA ALERT:

Amir H. Fallah: *The Collected*
March 14 - April 27, 2013

Gallery Reception: Thursday, March 14, 2013, 5-8 pm
Gallery Wendi Norris
161 Jessie Street (at New Montgomery), San Francisco, CA 94105

SAN FRANCISCO, CA.

Gallery Wendi Norris is pleased to announce *The Collected*, the first solo exhibition of paintings by Amir H. Fallah. Drawing inspiration from not only the subjects of Renaissance portrait and *vanitas* paintings, but also the economic models in which those works were produced, Fallah's exuberant compositions also incorporate distinctly contemporary visual concerns.

Commissioned portraits traditionally involve visual symbols indicating the power, influence, and sophistication of their subjects. Portraits in "The Collected" have been commissioned and thereby sold before the opening of this show, which is a business reality rooted in traditions from medieval ateliers and modern galleries alike. In the style of such historical masters as Holbein and Ingres, Fallah went into each collector's home to select personal mementos, souvenirs, and other objects to appear alongside his subjects to create each portrait. *The Laws of Order* (2012) includes a bongo drum, various houseplants, a knife, and a picture in a frame, among other items belonging to its subject. In Fallah's works, however, these items take over the picture, and the identity of each subject must be pieced together through these symbolic clues. This is because Fallah drapes each subject he works with in blankets, obscuring their faces, forcing his or her possessions to the foreground. Improvised, colorful abstractions also decorate each composition. While of course the collectors are necessary collaborators in this process, Fallah's portraits address issues of identity, economics, and artistic agency in a distinctly contemporary manner.

Similarly, Fallah's wildly lush paintings of flower arrangements harken back to the old tradition of depicting objects of fleeting beauty to evoke thoughts of life's brevity and fragility, but complicate the straightforward symbolism of the Dutch masters with color, abstraction, and other formal strategies. A contemporary merry prankster, Fallah's depth of knowledge and painterly chops enable him to investigate serious issues about art, painting, life, and human power relations with adventurous wit.

About the Artist

Amir H. Fallah holds an MFA from UCLA and a BFA from MICA, Baltimore. He has had solo exhibitions in New York, Dubai, Miami, California, and been included in the 2011 Sharjah Biennial and in group shows at the Weatherspoon Art Museum and the University Art Museum at CSULB. He has been awarded the Jacob Javits Fellowship, and been featured in such publications as *Frieze*, *Whitehot Magazine*, *The LA Times*, *Artweek*, and the *Boston Globe*. He has been a visiting lecturer at a range of respected institutions, including Columbia College, USC, UCLA, Cleveland Institute of Art, California State University, University of New Mexico, Otis College of Art, and Maryland Institute College of Art. He is the founder and publisher of art and design publication *Beautiful Decay*.

About the Gallery

Gallery Wendi Norris presents a compelling contemporary and modern program with a strong emphasis on the global market. Since 2003, we have worked with over one hundred of the top museums around the world, placing works in their collections and collaborating on solo and group exhibitions. Though, by design, the range of works we show is diverse, a common thread runs through them all: a focus on the human ability to create psychological and spiritual meaning through form and content. Both the artworks and the artists themselves are emblematic of this aesthetic ambition and our trans-cultural nature. Through our expertise in the modern art world, with an unparalleled network in Surrealism, and through our considered selection of some of today's most dynamic artists, we support a range of private clients, museums, and not-for-profit art organizations.

For additional information and images please contact the gallery (415) 346-7812 or email molly@gallerywendinorris.com.