

**CHAOUKI CHAMOUN**  
**'TRANSFORMATION'**

**February 1<sup>st</sup> – February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018**

Mark Hachem Gallery - Beirut is delighted to present "Transformation", a solo exhibition by artist Chaouki Chamoun, featuring a selection of his most recent works.

Upon a visit to Chamoun's studio, Akel Awitt had the chance to study the truly magnificent new series after which he wrote: *"I prefer not to stand long in front of Chamoun's paintings so that I am not jealous, so that I do not burn and drown. I flee from it and into it so that it does not pull me into its ropes; those infernal ropes. It infuriates me that he is ahead of me, that he is intriguing and bold. That he takes me out of my own self, so that I become part of the painting, of its atmosphere and mixture."*

Awitt carries on to write: "According to Chamoun, the substance is his subject, and the shape is the subject, as well as the color. Even the fine surface is his subject."

Chaouki himself wrote: "The most important thing in a painting is its surface; you either see it all in there or you see nothing". To him, the surface is not only considered to be the invitation but also the event. It is not there to be bypassed in order to reach other elements of the work, it is primarily there because it is the most important thing in a painting.

In this exhibition, Chamoun proves that his surface is the carrier of all the aesthetic elements of his work and believes that no element has any independent value of its own if it does not add value to the whole. The horizontally laid out human figures at the bottom of each painting have yet to leave his paintings, they have become vital to his works and through them he saw the world. A unique signature that defines the place of man in this universe, a small scaled human in the face of the greater world that he has made.

As any of Chamoun's previous shows, this exhibition is no different in the sense that it is a reminder of the experimental line of aesthetic inquiry he found helpful for an honest communication with his viewers.

Chamoun 'transforms' in his new series. He is an artist that creates something new every day-and any day that he does not paint, he feels as though he is not a painter.

Born in Lebanon in 1942, Chaouki Chamoun received his Diploma of Higher Studies from the Fine Art Institute at the Lebanese University in 1972. Being the first in his class, he was awarded a six-year fellowship to pursue his graduate studies in the United States and rejoin its faculty upon his return.

In 1975, he received his Masters in Fine Arts from Syracuse University, NY and from 1975 to 1979 he was a full-time fellow at the PhD program at New York University concentrating on Aesthetics and Studio Art.

Chamoun has had over 30 solo shows since 1975, exhibiting in New York and several other cities in the United States, Beirut, Europe, Hong Kong, and the Arab world. He has also participated in over 55 group shows and Biennales since 1968 including Rochester Memorial museum in 1974, Lowe Art Centre, Syracuse 1975, Sursock Museum in Beirut in 1984-2008, Europe' Art, Geneva 1999, Sotheby's Exhibit and Auction London Oct 2007, Christie's exhibit and auction Dubai October 2007 and April 2008, Washington AU museum 2010, London 15 and Basel Art Fair 2016.