

OUSSAMA BAALBAKI
spectres of the real

Spectres of the Real

After an elected absence of two decades from Beirut, I returned to document that past era when I was actively involved in its art and cultural scene; I tried to find traces of that stormy and dynamic past, but came back empty handed... Two generations had lapsed, and many of my contemporaries had passed away along with much of the intellectual spirit of that time, as well as the debate subjects. The cultural landscape had changed. In the place of that period's polemics in modernism, political and cultural debates on identity, personal freedoms, etc., I found most replaced by a strong presence of references that were mostly imported, applied and practiced in an art scene that was completely alien to the cultural values of that epoch. Change had set in to the environment that was the arena of our struggle and growth.

So, and with a bit of skepticism I decided to canvas the art scene in the city of my youth, discarding what was obviously and alas predominantly belonging to the newly dominant ideals and practices of market hegemony.

That narrowed down my focus to a younger generation that grew in the pangs of the social and cultural changes that brought this day, and that defined their practice and the strong presence of their careers.

Ousama Baalbaky is one of many of this talented, original and strong willed generation. I was thrilled to identify that trend among the young artists and designers of the city. They merit great interest and attention, primarily for their daring, original and none derivative approach and for their critical awareness to the cultural and social changes in our environment.

"I approach the painting canvas with an inverse will to the simple descriptive account, because I actually want to paint the present, not to rid it from its contradictions, rather to emphasize them by setting them in a poetic context."

In resisting the temptations to fall in line, Ousama very aware of the transformation that invaded the image's role in culture worldwide. He selected to understand and employ aspects of its technological properties that register a moment for his memory archive of the scenery he describes.

In his works he evokes what we see and forget.

He employs near monochromatic predominance to recreate the poetic quality of dream recollection in images imbedded in his memory. Similarly, his grey scale dominant portraits, successfully employ the B&W snap shot qualities of an instant, his figures are ready to change position, breath, or make the next movement.

This is an artist, a contemporary romantic that reflects and clearly sees his time. He calmly defends his point of view and interpretation with an excellent practice of his art.

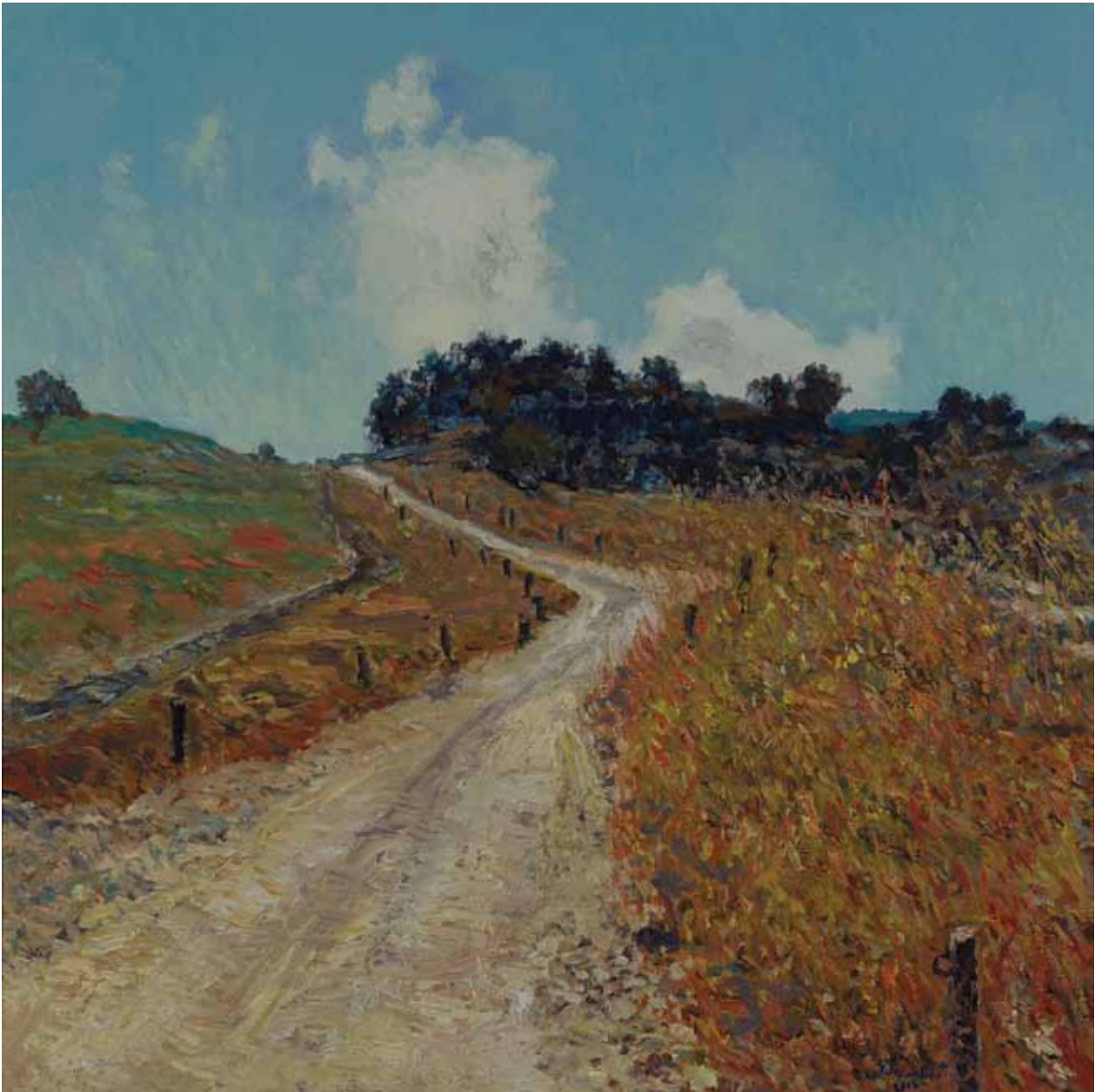
Waddah Faris
December 2015

| 2014-2015
| Acrylic on canvas

An Efficient Moon
115x130 cm



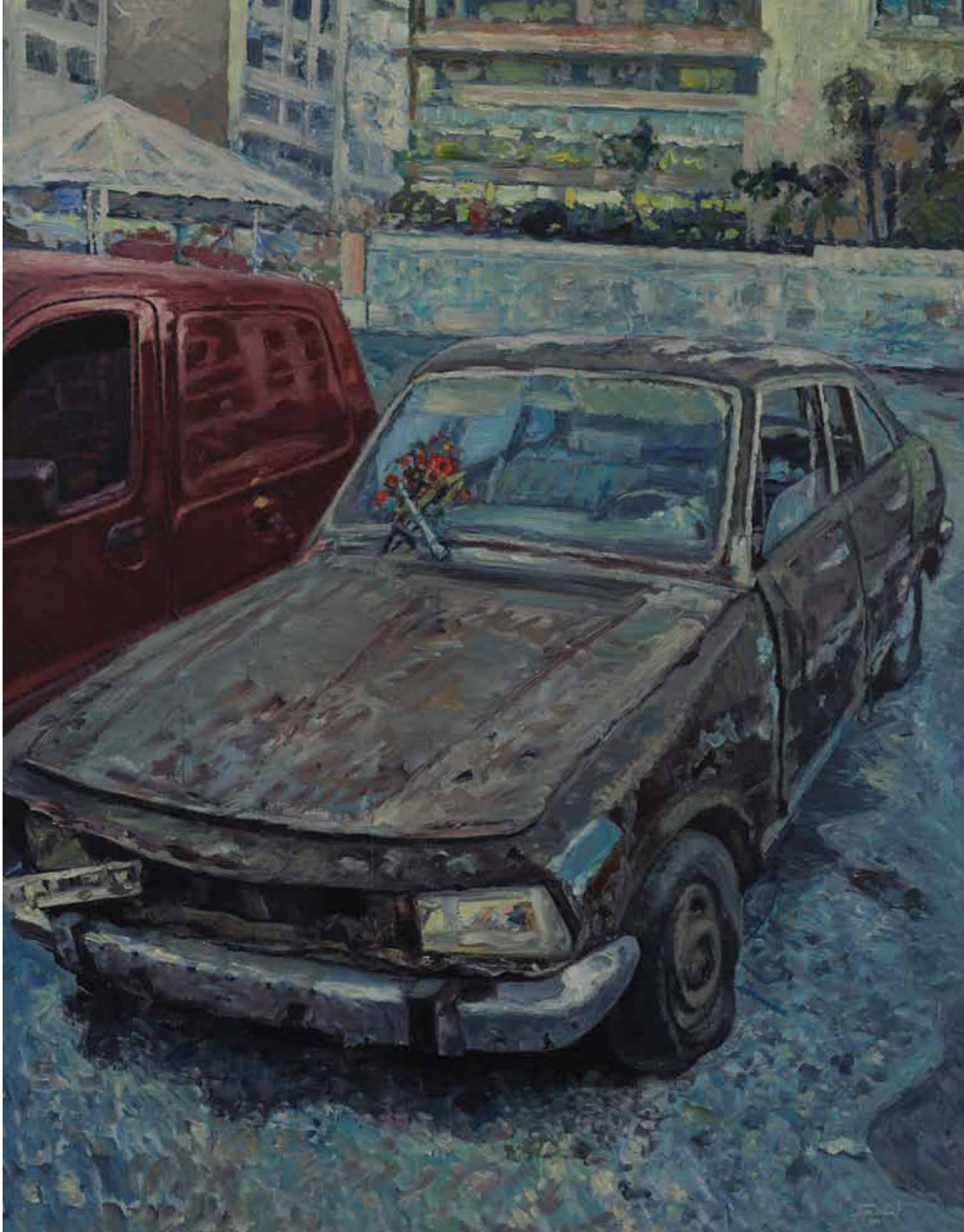
The Lazy Lane
100x100 cm



Untitled
100x100 cm



Untitled
200x155 cm



A Nocturnal Promenade
115x130 cm



Goodnight Beirut
115x130 cm



A Precipitous Sky
70x100cm



Untitled
70x100 cm



“Al Amra”
115x130cm



Another Ordinary Day |
150x180 cm

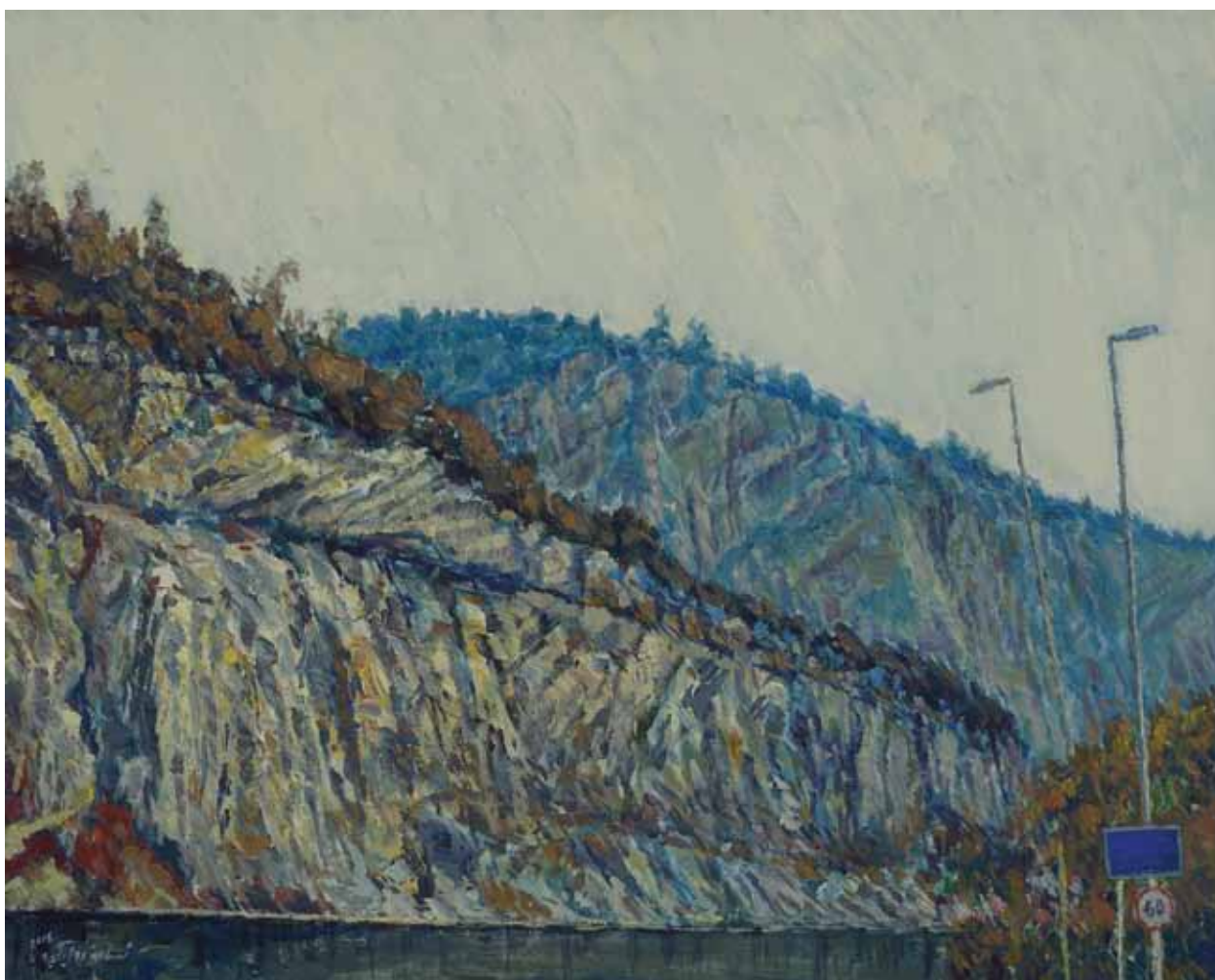


Untitled
50x60 cm

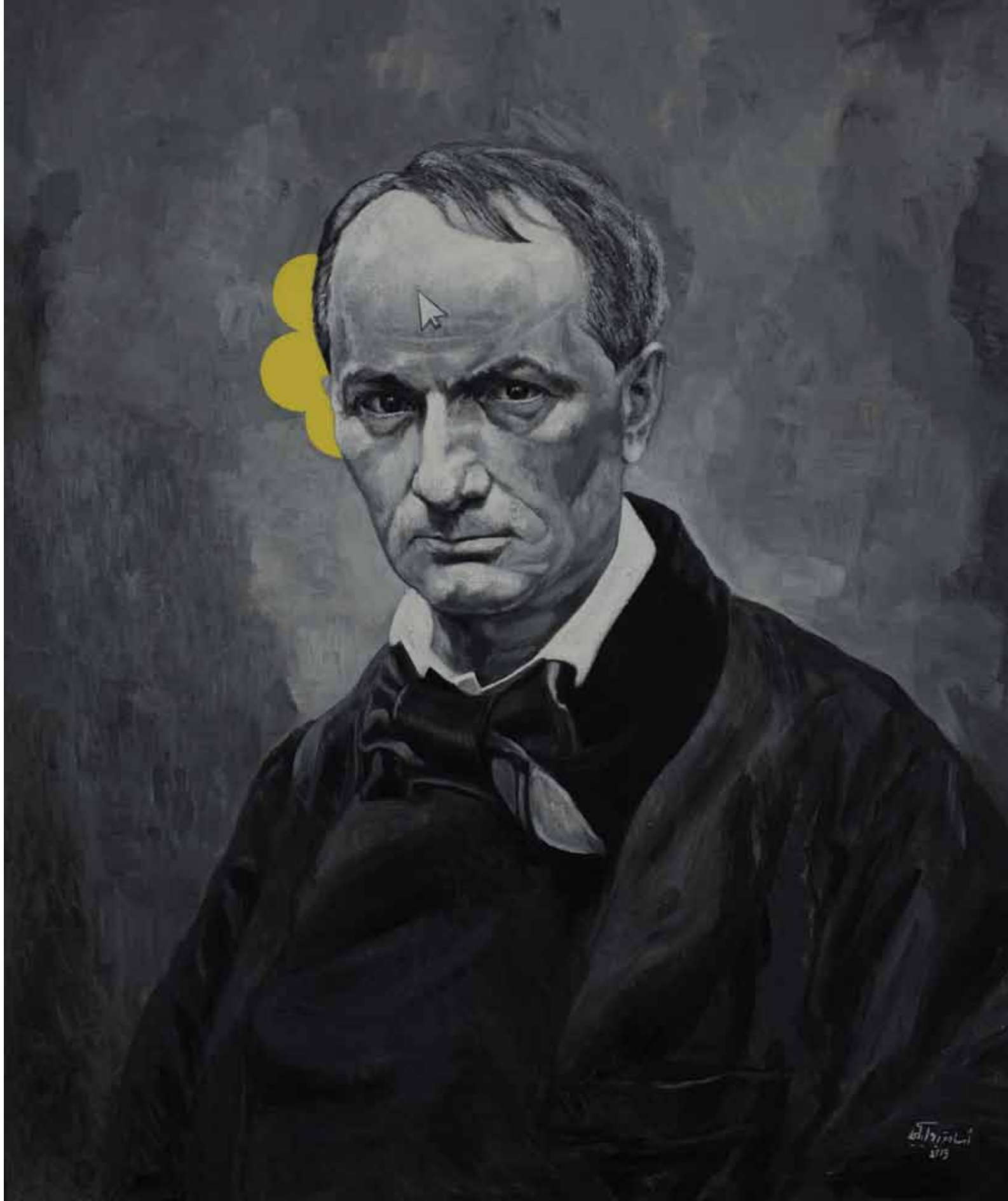


Untitled
50x70 cm

Untitled
80x100 cm

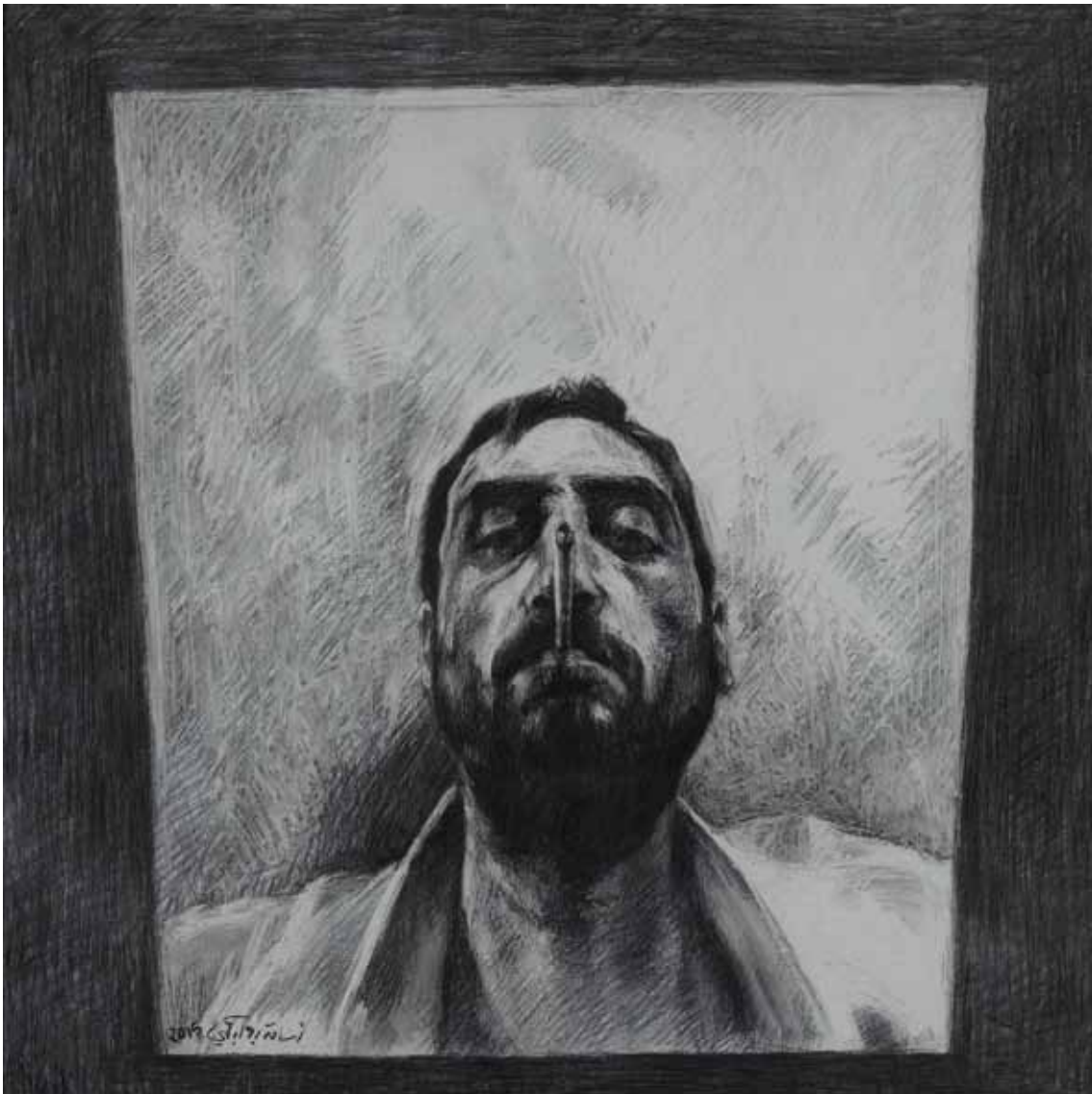


| To Baudlaire
| 230x190 cm



اساتذہ کرام
۲۰۱۵

Untitled
100x100 cm



Selfie at the Museum
100x100 cm



Oussama Baalbaki
Lebanon, b.1978

Oussama Baalbaki was born in Lebanon, 1978. He graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Lebanese University in 2002. Oussama held several solo exhibitions: "Paintings in Black", 2004 at Dar El Nadwa, "Scenes of Isolation", 2007 at Safana Gallery, "Less smoke, and more...", 2009 at Agial Art Gallery, "Rituals of Isolation", 2011 at Agial Art Gallery and "Shadows of Gloominess", 2014, at Tanit Gallery. He lives and works in Beirut.

He participated in numerous collective exhibitions at various cultural institutions and museums in Lebanon, including the Sursock Museum, and abroad such as Washington, New York, London, Munich, Miami, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi. In 2009, he won the silver medal for painting at the "Jeux de la Francophonie".

His paintings subject matter and style stem from a monochromatic expressionist realism centered on nature and human figure. In this perspective, they become the stage of a reality that swings between fact and illusion, an intuitional painting that emerges out of the figurative expression and wraps itself in the cloak of literalism.



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