



The Cultural Exposé

(<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/>)

THE LIFE AND STYLE OF A JOURNALIST IN LONDON

SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/CATEGORY/RECOMMENDATIONS/SOMETHING-YOU-SHOULD-SEE/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/category/recommendations/something-you-should-see/))

Something You Should See... Safwan Dahoul at Ayyam Gallery

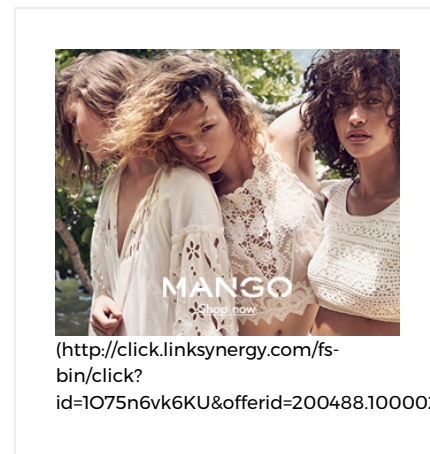
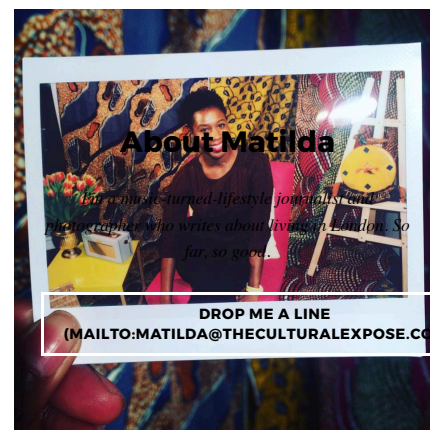
FLORENCE RITTER ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/AUTHOR/FLORENCERITTER/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/author/florencecritter/)) - MAY 17, 2013

- 2 COMMENT ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/RECOMMENDATIONS/SOMETHING-YOU-SHOULD-SEE/SOMETHING-YOU-SHOULD-SEE-SAFWAN-DAHOUL-AT-AYYAM-GALLERY/#COMMENTS](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/recommendations/something-you-should-see/something-you-should-see-safwan-dahoul-at-ayyam-gallery/#comments))

- 67 VIEWS



'If it were possible, I'd love to make a painting with no colours, not even black and white' muses **Safwan Dahoul**, thinking aloud. We are at the opening of an exhibition of his work at **Edge of Arabia**, Battersea, which is running concurrently with his show at **Ayyam Gallery**'s space in New Bond Street. Dahoul dislikes interviews; Ayyam Gallery co-founder **Khaled Samawi** even joked that the



KEEP IN TOUCH!

[RSS](#) [Email](#) [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Instagram](#)

(<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/>)

painter was disappointed to have been given a UK visa to visit his own show. As one of Syria's most successful artists, Dahoul is curiously humble; a characteristic that can be read into his deeply personal paintings. Along the walls of Ayyam Gallery, bent over figures with bowed heads and interlocking limbs shrink into themselves, their heavily maquilled eyes blank and deeply introspective.

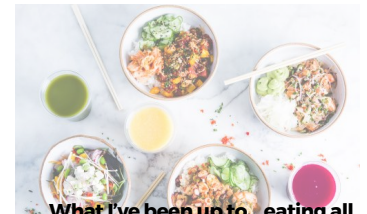


<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/recommendations/something-you-should-see/something-you-should-see-safwan-dahoul-at-ayyam-gallery/attachment/dream5721/>

Each of the works on show at both **Ayyam Gallery** and **Edge of Arabia** are entitled **Dream**, and together they form a strange portrait of the artist's subconscious mind. Working from memories of his own dreams, Dahoul transforms their transitory and uncontrolled narratives into smoothly executed and compositionally well-balanced works of art. Painted in a range of greys, black and white, they have a sobering and stilling effect on the viewer.

Although the works are open to interpretation, it is interesting to read them with reference to Dahoul's own biographical history. He began numbering his **Dream** paintings after the passing of his wife, from which time his works became more contemplative and darker, in both spirit and palette. The checkerboard grid patterns, with their stifling repetition and restrictive structure, appeared as a motif after Dahoul was forced to move from his native Syria to live in Dubai.

LATEST POSTS



What I've been up to... eating all the poké in London (for real)
<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/you-should-eat/poke-in-london/>

I'm not ashamed to admit I'm a tad late to the poké game: exactly nine months late. But hey, who's...

Three brilliant hotels you should visit for your next London staycation

MARCH 28, 2017
<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/hotels-london-staycation/>

It was about 15 months ago that I flirted with the idea of the 'London staycation' – a holiday that...

Somewhere you should go... Mo' Better Blues at Rio Cinema

MARCH 15, 2017
<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/go-mo-better-blues-rio-cinema/>

In the year that the legendary African-American filmmaker Spike Lee turns 60, it's hard to not appreciate the cultural relevance...

Somewhere you should go... Chuku's Nigerian tapas pop-up lounge

MARCH 7, 2017
<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/drink/chukus-nigerian-tapas-pop-lounge/>

We all know London's got its fair share of restaurants with cool, creative concepts – but when it comes to the...

Three things I learned working out at Ministry Does Fitness

FEBRUARY 12, 2017
<http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/does-fitness/>

Gone are the days when you'd have no choice but to sweat it out in a DEAD gym in London...



[\(http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/recommendations/something-you-should-see/something-you-should-see-safwan-dahoul-at-ayyam-gallery/attachment/dream5012/\)](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/recommendations/something-you-should-see/something-you-should-see-safwan-dahoul-at-ayyam-gallery/attachment/dream5012/)

Although **Dahoul** uses painting as a conduit for self-expression, there is a surprising regularity, order and logical pattern to his work. The paintings contain visual references to **Insular metalwork**, **Egyptian** and **Roman art**, as well as **Arabic calligraphy**. Although he is a Syrian artist first and foremost, this widespread range of influences confirms that it isn't possible to reduce Dahoul's work to its area of origin. **Ayyam Gallery**, who raise awareness for and promote art from the Middle East, have this month chosen to show the work of an artist who matches their own broadening scope of influence on the international art scene. And one who, in spite of his initial reluctance to come to see us, quietly admitted that he has loved London. **(Words: Florence Ritter)**

Safwan Dahoul's Repetitive Dreams is on at the Ayyam Gallery until June 8th. For more info, visit: www.ayyamgallery.com/exhibitions/safwan-dahoul_2/press-release (http://www.ayyamgallery.com/exhibitions/safwan-dahoul_2/press-release)

ART ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/TAG/ART/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/tag/art/))
 EXHIBITION ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/TAG/EXHIBITION/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/tag/exhibition/))
 MIDDLE EAST ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/TAG/MIDDLE-EAST/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/tag/middle-east/))
 SAFWAN DAHOUL ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/TAG/SAFWAN-DAHOUL/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/tag/safwan-dahoul/))



FLORENCE RITTER ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/AUTHOR/FLORENCE RITTER/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/author/florence Ritter/))

Florence is a freelance writer and long-time contemporary arts devotee. Having spent some time living in Edinburgh and Paris, she recently returned to her hometown London and has promptly fallen back in love with the capital.



(<http://twitter.com>/<https://twitter.com/FlorenceRitter>)

PREVIOUS ARTICLE

NEXT ARTICLE

ARCHIVE

APRIL 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2017/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2017/))

MARCH 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2017/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2017/))

FEBRUARY 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2017/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2017/))

JANUARY 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2017/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2017/))

NOVEMBER 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

OCTOBER 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

SEPTEMBER 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

AUGUST 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

JULY 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

JUNE 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

MAY 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

APRIL 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

MARCH 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

FEBRUARY 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

JANUARY 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2016/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2016/))

DECEMBER 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))

NOVEMBER 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))

OCTOBER 20
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))

SEPTEMBER 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))

AUGUST 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))

JULY 2
 ([HTTP://WWW.THECULTURALEXPOSE.CO.UK/2015/](http://www.theculturalexpose.co.uk/2015/))