

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Press Release for Immediate Release

NABIL NAHAS

Private View 12 October, 2011 6-8pm

October 13 – December 3, 2011

Ben Brown Fine Arts is pleased to announce the gallery's first exhibition of works by Nabil Nahas, widely considered to be the most distinguished Lebanese artist working today. The exhibition is the artist's first in London since his major museum retrospective at the Beirut Exhibition Center in June 2010.

Nahas is renowned for his mastery of colour and texture in his atmospheric, layered paintings. The works in the exhibition display his characteristic textured treatment of the painted surface, built with layer upon layer of thickly encrusted acrylic paint mixed with pumice and often finished in vivid colours.

By reiterating one singular form, the artist reflects the micro processes of nature, conjuring notions of spontaneous growth and evolution of organic life. *"I am not what you would describe as a strictly 'abstract' painter, I am looking at organic forms, repeating and conjuring the minute parts of nature again and again."* Nahas reconciles the opposites of ideal geometry with the inconsistencies of the natural world's 'perfect geometry.'

Nahas has demonstrated a high level of pictorial innovation throughout his career, constantly employing a critical attitude to his work that has resulted in regular departures in his approach. As well as drawing upon the geometry of nature, Nahas also references Islamic traditions in his work, particularly its abstract geometric and chromatic qualities. When employing a rich gold colour to create his interlocking patterns the artist hints at Byzantine mosaics and coffered ceilings.

Many of the works in the exhibition incorporate paint chips, which are a by-product of his larger paintings and are effectively detritus from the studio floor which has been recycled. In this sense, they are ready-mades of the artist's own making and reveal previously invisible processes employed in larger paintings, specifically the underside of acrylic-pumice mixtures built up upon the painted surface. Inventively appropriated as the building blocks for individual paintings, the petal like pieces lend each work a highly sculptural quality, projecting concentric rings of vivid colour into the viewer's space. The same focus on texture is apparent in the artist's Starfish series which incorporate echinoderms into the painted surface in his signature tessellated and interlocking pattern style.

About Nabil Nahas

Nabil Nahas was born in Lebanon in 1949 and grew up in Cairo and Beirut. The artist attended university in the United States, earning a BFA from Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge in 1971 and an MFA from Yale University in 1973. Encounters with contemporary painters at Yale influenced Nahas to move to New York after graduation. He has exhibited extensively in the United States and abroad over the last three decades. 2010 marked Nahas' first major museum retrospective. Curated by the eminent American art critic Vincent Katz, it was a double honour for being the inaugural exhibition at the Beirut Exhibition Center. His work is included in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art amongst other international museums.

The artist will be in attendance at the Private View and is available for interviews. Please direct press requests to Kate Bryan at +44 20 7734 8888 or kate@benbrownfinearts.com