

# LUHRING AUGUSTINE CHELSEA

531 West 24th Street  
New York NY 10011  
tel 212 206 9100  
www.luhringaugustine.com

## **Mohammed Sami**

*Muzzle of Time*

September 8 – October 28, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, September 7, 5:30-7:30PM

Luhring Augustine is proud to present *Muzzle of Time*, Mohammed Sami's first solo exhibition with the gallery and his first in the United States. On view in our Chelsea location from September 8 through October 28, the show will feature new and recent paintings by the Iraqi-born, London-based artist. Several of the works in the exhibition were included earlier this year in *Mohammed Sami: The Point Zero*, the widely lauded first institutional solo show of Sami's work in the United Kingdom, organized by the Camden Art Centre in London and accompanied by the first monograph dedicated to the artist's work.

Sami's evocative paintings are an exploration of memory and its vulnerability to time. Mining personal experiences to ground his work, Sami creates a palpable sense of mystery with oblique references to turmoil or conflict. Distinctively absent of human figures, the settings and quotidian objects in his paintings nevertheless convey traces of human presence. Through his singular mark-making methods and compositional approach, Sami creates a sense of ambiguity that parallels the use of metaphor and metonymy prevalent in Middle Eastern literature and language. By interrupting a straightforward reading of his work in this manner, and while exploiting the narrative capacity of representational painting, Sami allows for what he refers to as a sense of "muteness" to occupy his paintings, rendering them both enigmatic and deeply engaging. One of the monumental paintings in the exhibition, *One Thousand and One Nights* (2022), depicts a magnificent Baghdad night sky dotted with the bright lights of what appear to be either stars or missiles. The painting's poetic title, and the similarity of its palette to military night vision technology, further complicate the viewer's experience and understanding of the work. In *Meditation Room* (2022), a portrait of an authoritarian male figure—his face hidden by shadow—hangs on the wall of an ominous domestic interior. A crumpled rug ineffectually barricades a slightly ajar door, allowing an intense, fiery light to cut through the space. Throughout Sami's work, attempts to classify memory as an exact experience are eluded. For the artist, regardless of distance and time, memory is capable of stretching slowly and gradually over the years like an oil stain, until eventually, indelible, it necessitates a belated response.

Mohammed Sami (b. Baghdad, Iraq, 1984) currently lives and works in London, UK. He studied drawing and painting at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad, graduating in 2005. Subsequently, he worked at the Ministry of Culture in Baghdad, before being granted asylum in Sweden in 2007. In 2015, Sami left his adopted country to pursue a degree at Ulster University-Belfast School of Art, Northern Ireland, which was followed by an MFA at Goldsmiths College, London, completed in 2018. The artist's recent solo museum exhibition *Mohammed Sami: The Point Zero* was presented at Camden Art Centre, London, UK (January – May 2023), and at the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-On-Sea, UK (June – August 2023). Sami's work is in the permanent collections of Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Tate, London, UK; Arts Council Collection, London, UK; The Government Art Collection, London, UK; York Art Gallery, UK; Blenheim Art Foundation, Woodstock, UK; Imperial War Museum, London, UK; Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; ICA Miami, FL; Rollins Museum of Art, Winter Park, FL; MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland; He Art Museum, Shunde, China.

For more information about the artist, please contact Donald Johnson-Montenegro at [donald@luhringaugustine.com](mailto:donald@luhringaugustine.com).

For press requests, please contact Caroline Burghardt at [caroline@luhringaugustine.com](mailto:caroline@luhringaugustine.com).