

Nadine Hammam



I'm For Sale, 2010
Image Courtesy of the Artist

Egyptian-born artist Nadine Hammam has caused a few heads to turn since she appeared on the regional scene a few years ago. Trained as a painter in Central St.Martin's MFA program, Hammam's bold strokes of audacious nudes have broken bounds in an artistic landscape that has adapted itself to self-censorship. In both her first solo exhibit in Egypt, *Akl Aish*, and her second, *I'm For Sale*, Hammam uses nudes to probe issues of gender dynamics with the intricacies of relations between the masculine and the feminine, and the commoditization of the female body as an object for equal purchase, label, and display.

While her first solo exhibition revealed the rigor of her training, conceptual gaps left audiences questioning whether she had what it takes to elevate her art to a different level of skill. In *I'm For Sale* she puts past criticism to rest, with a group of paintings that reflect a mastery of her chosen technique as well as a stronger voice and sharper eye. In *I'm For Sale*, her acrylic multi-layered paintings accentuated with Swarovski diamonds appear as solid, almost print-like photographic silkscreens, speaking with purpose to consumerism and the reality that the monetary tool can buy, perhaps, just one singular and surface-level facet to a being to which

there are infinite ones.

The theme of human product-consumer relationships seems to be a running thread through Hammam's work, and perhaps not surprisingly as a female in a male-dominated landscape where objectification is a day-to-day norm. But in freeing herself of feminist objection or the personal woe that is often common in such work, she creates a body of work that offers winsome aesthetic as well as a compelling and growing voice.

Born in 1974 in Cairo, Egypt, where she currently lives and works, Hammam, who has exhibited in Cairo, London, Dubai, Paris and Washington DC, has set for herself a difficult challenge in the Middle East with her nude-based works. While she has found her own small following in regional art aficionados, the question remains: Will she be the voice that breaks a boundary to create change, or will her works find their homes in other landscapes further a field?

- YR

Nadine Hammam will be exhibiting *I'm For Sale* at the Safar Khan Gallery, Zamalek (Cairo), Egypt in March 2010.