

Destination UNKNOWN

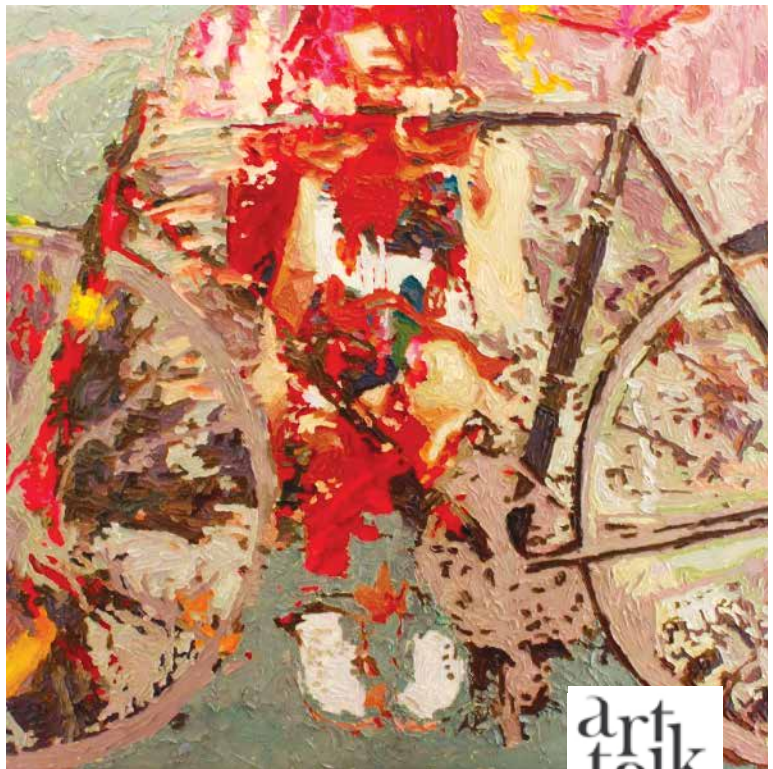
Hossam Dirar's second exhibition at ArtTalks is a journey in time and space

After his highly acclaimed dual show with prominent Syrian artist Sabhan Adam in *"Beauty and The Beast"* held at Zamalek's ArtTalks in 2014, Hossam Dirar returns with *"Invitation Au Voyage."* A

reference to Charles Baudelaire's 1857 poem in *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Dirar seeks to create an imaginary world to liberate the mind and uses, symbolically and figuratively, a two-wheel ride, a very much en vogue transportation means in our bustling city these days. The art of choosing an object, the bicycle, is to reveal a temporary world of freedom, an invitation to meet furthest away from politics, wars, injustices and violence, and to reach an unknown destination au-dela.

Dirar uses the journey, both in time and in space, in order to convey this sense of heightened liberty through a simple means of mobility that we are missing in many Arab cities like Cairo. The presence of the feminine figure, a consistent subject in Dirar's work, is an outlet of a dream-state, conveying liberation so particular to his work and so meaningful to contemporary Egypt. The artist combines fragmented images of faces, at times of the whole body. He paints chaotic, impulsive and richly multilayered texturized palettes to express a multitude of feelings— independence, control, indecision, escape, solitude and above all peace. Perhaps the invisible that the artist is chasing in his work is the phantom idea of breaking free from all shackles of society.

Born in 1978, Dirar lives and works in Cairo. A 2002 grad-



Hossam Dirar, *Le Calme*, 2015, oil on canvas, 128 x 128 cm

uate of the Applied Arts Faculty at Helwan University, Dirar is a multidisciplinary artist working across painting, photography, installation, video and graphic. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions in Egypt, Bahrain, Ireland, Slovakia, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and South Africa. His works are conceived as a reinterpretation of Egypt's rich visual heritage, overlapping between the multicultural character of Cairo, the city's complex and ever-expanding urban façade, the region's traditional iconography and the influence of contemporary media in shaping cultural referents.