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# TAMMAM AZZAM

## *Forgotten Cities*

September 5 - November 2, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 12, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is proud to present ***Forgotten Cities***, the first US solo exhibition of **Tammam Azzam**, one of the most prominent Syrian artists of his generation.

Born in Damascus in 1980, Tammam Azzam was forced to leave his home and studio in Syria at the outbreak of the civil war in 2011, relocating with his family to Dubai before settling in Berlin, Germany. Since creating the viral image *Freedom Graffiti*—a digital collage that combines Syrian ruins with Klimt's *The Kiss*—Azzam has become one of Syria's most visible contemporary artists, gaining widespread attention for his poetic and powerful works. In the past decade, he has developed a dynamic practice that includes painting, installation, and digital and paper collages.

*Forgotten Cities* introduces audiences to Azzam's singular practice through a series of new paintings and mixed-media collages. Combining paint with colorful pieces of torn and shredded paper, Azzam's collages present startling imagery of a homeland devastated by years of violent conflict: collapsed buildings, abandoned buses, and the broken surfaces of ancient, once-bustling cities. With their painterly compositions and layered, tactile surfaces, the works are at once beautiful and devastating. These cityscapes are paired with a selection of related works, including psychologically charged portraits and intimate landscapes that sit between abstraction and figuration.

*Forgotten Cities* is both a frank depiction of the current state of Azzam's native Syria, and an exercise in memory and growth. The exhibition's title refers to the uninhabited ancient cities in northwest Syria, abandoned since the 10th century. As he creates images of Damascus, the artist delves into a cathartic exercise of remembering and piecing together fragments of a home, while rebuilding his life and practice in Berlin. Beyond violence, loss, and displacement, Azzam's new body of work reflects an ongoing artistic evolution that transcends politics and time. Said the artist, "Political events come and go, but what remains is the art produced as a testimony of that time." (*Artforum*, 2016)



*Untitled, 2019*  
Paper collage on canvas  
55 x 63 inches



*Untitled, 2019*  
Paper collage on canvas  
71 x 71 inches

**Tammam Azzam** (b. 1980, lives and works in Berlin, Germany) received his BA from the University of Damascus. In addition to recent solo exhibitions in Germany's Kunstverein Iserlohn (2019) and City Museum of Oldenburg (2017), his work has been shown at the American University, Washington, D.C. (2019); Wallach Gallery at Columbia University, New York, NY (2016); Banksy's *Dismaland*, Somerset, UK (2015); Busan Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea (2014); Dak'Art: Biennial of Contemporary African Art, Dakar, Senegal (2014); and *Home Land Security* (2016) and *Sanctuary* (2018), both San Francisco, CA. In 2016, he was awarded a fellowship placement at the prestigious Hanse-Wissenschaftskolleg Institute for Advanced Study in Delmenhorst, Germany.



*Untitled*, 2019  
Paper collage on canvas  
55 x 47 inches