Mohammed Sami
Vicious Circles

29 May–27 June 2026
Place de l'Alma

Modern Art is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Mohammed Sami. This is Sami's second solo exhibition with the gallery, and his first with the gallery in Paris.

Vicious Circles continues Mohammed Sami's study of internal and external spaces, where state-led and state-sanctioned violence appears as an unresolvable aspect of everyday life, the quotidian. Across nine new mixed-media works on linen, Sami builds dense atmospheres that convey troubling absences and a sense of groundlessness about a world that may or may not have been: a curtain tie resembles a tightened noose; a lipstick becomes bullet casing; a pile of leaves could be amputated hands. Into this vertigo of associations, Sami intensifies affect to create a sense of estrangement, where the blueness of a sky, or the colour of falling phosphorus is heightened to reveal it as something outside us – something alarmingly strange and other. As he states: 'There is light, there is shadow; my paintings are a device to translate something to you'.

The Iraqi-born, London-based artist is further drawn to the conceptual strategies found in modern Arabic poetry, viewing this history as a site of transgression and as a language coded with complex metaphor developed to evade state, religious and social censorship. How a word carries hidden meaning so that it slips beyond the apparent or deliberate and becomes transformed, holding another – where the speaker 'deliberately presents the close meaning to mislead the listener, while secretly intending the far meaning'. His paintings exist within this open and unclosed system.

Throughout *Vicious Circles*, Sami's interest in the proximities between meanings is found in recurring forms and objects – oil stains and slicks, circles, loops – details that render strangeness closer to home. A painting of oil on water, for example, carries meanings beyond its dazzling surface. Sami describes his work as having a 'belated' aspect that 'hunts the viewer', where his painterly constructions reappear in the mind at unexpected future contexts. As Sami notes, 'only painting has the capacity to manipulate the material scenes'. He extends this strategy through his control of architectural devices, arrangements that seem to resist spatial reconciliation: rooms with missing ceilings, shadows, spaces or viewpoints that would otherwise be impossible to occupy. Sami constructs these worlds as part of an unfinished history; something both burned out and belatedly arriving back into the mind.

– Chris McCormack

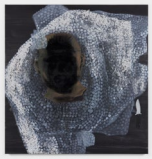
Mohammed Sami was born in Baghdad in 1984, and lives and works in London. Having completed studies at the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, he worked at the Ministry of Culture before emigrating to Sweden in 2007. Sami graduated from Belfast School of Art in 2015, and earned an MFA at Goldsmiths', London, in 2018. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include: KM21, The Hague; Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (both 2025); Blenheim Art Foundation, Woodstock; Fondazione Sandretto re Rebaudengo, Turin (both 2024), Camden Art Centre, London; and De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea (both 2023). He has participated in group exhibitions at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2026); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2025); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2024); Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2022); Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art (2022); the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2022); the Hayward Gallery, London (2021). His paintings are held by the Art Institute of Chicago; Buffalo AKG Art Museum; Arts Council Collection, London; Musée National d'Art Moderne, The Centre Pompidou, Paris; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; ICA Miami; MAMCO Genève; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Carnegie Institute of Art, Pittsburgh; the Imperial War Museum, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk; Singapore Art Museum; and Tate, London. He was nominated for the 2025 Turner Prize, in recognition of his exhibition *After the Storm* at Blenheim Art Foundation. In 2026, Fridericianum, Kassel will present a major solo exhibition of new work, the artist's first institutional exhibition in Germany; in 2027, the exhibition will tour other institutional venues across Europe.

For press enquiries, please contact Sam Talbot (sam@sam-talbot.com); for more information, please contact Clément Raveu (clement@modernart.net).

Gallery 1



Oil Eyeliner, 2025
mixed media on linen
290.5 x 223 cm
114 3/8 x 87 3/4 in
(MA-SAMIM-00266)



Faceless Blade, 2025
mixed media on linen
125 x 120 cm
49 1/4 x 47 1/4 in
(MA-SAMIM-00249)

Gallery 2



Gallows, 2024
mixed media on linen
105.5 x 75 cm
41 3/8 x 29 1/2 in
(MA-SAMIM-00238)



The Main Entrance, 2025
mixed media on linen
290 x 230 cm
114 1/8 x 90 1/2 in
(MA-SAMIM-00242)



Nothing Is Empty, 2025
mixed media on linen
110.5 x 150 cm
43 1/4 x 59 in
(MA-SAMIM-00247)

Gallery 3

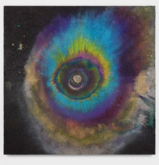


Toxic Orbit, 2025
mixed media on linen
229 x 289 cm
90 1/8 x 113 3/4 in
(MA-SAMIM-00268)

Gallery 4

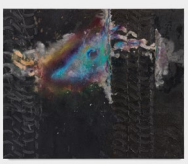


Vicious Circles I, 2025
mixed media on linen
150 x 222 cm
59 x 87 3/8 in
(MA-SAMIM-00264)



Vicious Circles II, 2025
mixed media on linen
141.5 x 139 cm
55 3/4 x 54 3/4 in
(MA-SAMIM-00259)

Office



Vicious Circles III, 2025
mixed media on linen
115 x 139.5 cm
45 1/4 x 54 7/8 in
(MA-SAMIM-00265)