

Hoffman Donahue

Osama Al Rayyan
June 6 – July 25, 2026
Los Angeles

Hoffman Donahue is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by Osama Al Rayyan, the artist's first exhibition in California.

Al Rayyan has described these works as “shy paintings,” shaped by memory rather than direct reference. His compositions develop gradually through revision and association, working directly on canvas to allow decisions about form and color to materialize intuitively. Initial gestures move across his surfaces like passing clouds, shifting into figures, symbols, or scenes before receding again into their inevitable entropy.

As a child in Damascus, Al Rayyan's uncle exposed him to a world of monographs, prints, museums, and archives. Al Rayyan describes Goya as a “teenage crush.” Throughout his practice today, Al Rayyan might be remembering an image that belongs to his own family history, or perhaps a painting he saw reproduced in a book. Personal memory and art-historical reference are inexplicably intertwined, overlapping without borders or authorship.

Literature is also an important influence to Al Rayyan, particularly twentieth-century Latin American writing and Magical Realism, which offer a way to understand his oscillation between the quotidian and the uncanny. Across his canvases, low-contrast colors – tangerines, muted yellows, and hints of muddy teal – accumulate in thin layers, suggesting undefined figures and landscapes. Geometric interventions introduce tension against the loose, blurred brushwork. Architecture, walls, roads, and divisions are insinuated through hard-edged lines. These interruptions hint at a historical context deliberately obscured. Al Rayyan seems to ask how emotional intimacy can exist without visual information, or is perhaps emphasized because of that absence.

Osama Al Rayyan (b. 1995, Damascus, Syria) is an artist based in Basel, Switzerland. Al Rayyan received his BFA/MFA from Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Basel in 2021.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Smoke*, Galleria Federico Vavassori, Milan (2026); *Camping*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2025); *Poets or Poems*, Francis Irv, New York (2025); *New ways of preparing tea*, curated by Sandra Teitge, Braunsfelder, Cologne (2024); and *The Mail Man*, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2024).

Selected group exhibitions include *In a Free State*, curated by Salman Toor and Doron Langberg, Luhring Augustine, New York (2026); *Eruption*, Jarvis Art, New York (2026); *A string of tongueless bells*, Francis Irv, New York (2024); Zürich Biennial, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich (2023); and *World's Rainbow*, Kunsthau Baselland, Basel (2021).