

MEDIA RELEASE

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Khaled Hafez *Codes of Hermes*

November 14, 2015 through January 31, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 14th, from 6:00 to 9:00pm

Deborah Colton Gallery is pleased to present *Codes of Hermes*, a solo exhibition of multimedia works from international artist Khaled Hafez. This exhibition is a personal diary in ten mystical chapters and will feature paintings as well as large video installations. *Codes of Hermes* marks Hafez's first solo exhibition in the United States! The show opens Saturday, November 14th, with an opening reception from 6:00 – 9:00 pm that evening.

In *Codes of Hermes*, Khaled Hafez proposes a series of mixed media paintings, installation and video works, coded with personal experience that continuously explore notions of identity, the intimate, migration and the struggle of wealth and power, all visually coded in pictographs, ideograms and—at times—déjà vu banal symbols from the consumer goods culture. The project *Codes of Hermes* is inspired from the merged concepts of the ancient Greek snake God Hermes and the Egyptian wisdom God Thoth.

Some ancient cultures made Hermes the God of nature, farmers and shepherds with shamanic attributes linked to divination, reconciliation, magic, sacrifices, experience-initiation and contact with other planes of existence, a role of mediator between the worlds of the visible and invisible. Hafez draws on the physical attributes of the God to express hybridized cultures of today's globalization; Hermes was the teacher of all secret wisdoms available to knowing by the experience of religious ecstasy, and due to his constant mobility, Hermes was considered the God of commerce and social intercourse, the wealth brought in business, travel, roads and crossroads, borders and boundary conditions, agreements and contracts, friendship, hospitality, sexuality (represented for over a decade in Hafez's paintings by the symbol of the tulip) and playfulness. Playfulness and irony play a major role in the visual language of Hafez across all the mediums he uses to express; Hafez believes that both artist and viewer must enter a game of coded pleasures while living with the artwork.

Khaled Hafez is a Cairo-based visual artist and filmmaker. Born in Cairo, Egypt in 1963, where he currently lives and works, Hafez explores through painting, film/video, photography, installation and interdisciplinary work elements of local identity exposed to the global consumer goods culture and uses irony to probe notions of subjugation, equal rights, games of wealth and power and changing social politics. His work has been shown at the 56th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2015) and the 55th Venice Biennale (Italy, 2014), 3rd Mardin Biennale (Turkey, 2015), Manifesta 8 (Spain, 2010) and in the USA (The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY), France (Centre George Pompidou, Paris); UK (British Museum), Germany (Kunstmuseum Bonn); Belgium (MuHKA Museum of Art), Greece (Thessaloniki State Museum of Contemporary Art); The Netherlands (Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde); Sweden (Uppsala Museum of Art) and Brazil (Instituto Tomie Ohtake, Sao Paolo) among other places.

Khaled Hafez has exhibited in Houston during the 2014 FotoFest, which focused on the Middle East and in the Group Exhibition, "Mapping Strife" at Deborah Colton Gallery. His work was also featured at the 2014 Houston Fine Arts Fair. Khaled Hafez is represented by Deborah Colton Gallery throughout the Americas.

Deborah Colton Gallery is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists worldwide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance, conceptual future media and public space installations. The gallery aspires to provide a forum through connecting Texas, national and international artists to make a positive change.