

## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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### PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY  
456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE  
BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210  
GALLERY HOURS:

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Tue – Sat 10:00am– 5:30pm



## Y.Z. KAMI

Tuesday, January 8 – Saturday, February 9 , 2007

Opening reception for the artist: Tuesday, January 8th, 6 – 8 pm

*The soul is not obscured by forms.  
Even if it were wrapped in a hundred folds of felt  
the rays of the soul's light  
would still shine through.*

-- Rumi

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by Iranian born artist Y.Z. Kami. This will be his first exhibition in Los Angeles with Gagosian Gallery.

The flux between matter and spirit, life and mortality, the outer layer and the inner soul lies at the core of Kami's oeuvre. Kami binds his study of Sufi poetry and philosophy to the traditions of figure painting, portraiture and collage. His works reflect a diverse range of interests, from portraiture to Islamic architecture, from photography to sacred and literary texts.

Kami's silent, meditative paintings project a quiet monumentality that invokes various mystical traditions culled from both the East and the West, as well as the austere Persian mausoleums and somber ruins of the ancient world. In earlier small-scale paintings that recall Fayyum funerary portraits, anonymous sitters gazed directly at the viewer. Larger than life portraits of people, some friends, others complete strangers, have a haunting presence. In this exhibition, five large-scale paintings of introspective figures, are at once majestic and intimate, strikingly present yet withdrawn. These "quotidian mystics," as Homi Bhabha has called them, are centered on their axis as in a state of meditation.

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In a suite of twenty-four collages entitled *Endless Prayers*, Kami turns to abstract configurations whose building blocks are Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew texts cut to emulate bricks and mosaics of sacred architecture. Retaining the color of both earth and heaven, these pasted units whirl around a center like the eye of a dome, embrace a cross, or recall Buddhist mandalas. Arranged in a circle, the structure of these assemblages evoke the cyclical, ritual nature of prayer as a daily practice.

**Y.Z. Kami** was born in Tehran, Iran in 1956 and lives and works in New York. He studied philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley (1974-75) and the Sorbonne in Paris. His work has been widely exhibited at venues including the Parrish Museum of Art (2007), the Museum of Modern Art (2006), the Istanbul Biennial (2005), and Deitch Projects (2001, 1999, 1998). Most recently, his work was featured in "Think With the Senses, Feel With the Mind" curated by Robert Storr at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale in 2007.

A fully illustrated catalogue will be available, with an essay by Steven Henry Madoff.

For more information, please contact the gallery.