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**For Immediate Release**

**SHAHPOUR POUYAN**  
*PTSD*

**17 March, 2014**

**Private Preview 11am – 5pm**  
**Reception 5-7pm**

*Exhibition continues until 22 April, 2014*

Lawrie Shabibi is proud to announce Shahpour Pouyan: *PTSD*, his second solo exhibition at Lawrie Shabibi, consisting of new sculptures and drawings and curated by Murtaza Vali.

Pouyan's first foray into ceramics, an ancient material and technique of artistic production, this body of work draws inspiration from the fact that working with ceramics is a commonly prescribed therapeutic tool for those struggling to overcome the stress, anxiety, and depression associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The core of the exhibition will be four discrete sets of typologically related ceramic objects, grouped together and presented on individual tables—playing on the double meaning of table as a structure and surface for both organization and display. The tables will suggest a variety of distinct modes of display employed throughout history up to the current moment, ranging from painted still-lives and scaled down architectural models to displays of recently uncovered ancient artifacts or seized caches of arms or other contraband.

Part of an ongoing investigation into the forms and structures of power and hegemony, Pouyan's past work repeated the phallus—as tower, hoof and missile—as a symbol of the enduring patriarchal structure of society across the Middle East. Though many of the ceramics remain indubitably phallic they are decidedly less monumental and more thing-like in scale, reference and material. And like much of Pouyan's previous work their final forms synthesize his far-ranging knowledge of and research into ancient mythology and religion, and histories of art and architecture, science and technology, and war and conflict. Through repetition and variation of this set of simple but suggestive symbolic forms, Pouyan investigates scale and proportion in relation to the ideologies, architectures and structures of possession, domination and destruction, both ancient and modern. One table presents a skyline of differently styled historical domes conceived purely as expressions of power, from the iconic Pantheon in Rome to the gigantic edifice anchoring Welthauptstadt Germania, the planned but never realized renewal of Berlin into the capital of Nazi Germany. Another presents a row of

six perfectly hemispherical domes, identical but ranging in size from millimeters to meters, whose shifting scale demonstrates the growing capacity of nuclear destruction through the twentieth century.

Additionally, presented alongside the artillery shells, bombs and domes are other things, more ambiguously gendered and less functionally clear—engines, batteries, jars, pipes and other “failed objects”—that introduce suggestions of containment and protection, of nurturing and vulnerability, of fertility and generation. While Pouyan’s playfully perverse object genealogies of terror and aggression seek to establish the traumatic scale of human ambition, the ratio of evil, through history, they temper this chronicle of human hubris and the destruction it enables with the hope and possibility of creation and regeneration.

### **Shahpour Pouyan**

Born in Isfahan, Iran, in 1979, Shahpour Pouyan currently lives and works between New York and Tehran. He recently completed an MFA in Integrated Practices and New Forms at Pratt Institute, New York, and has an MFA in Painting from the Tehran University of Art. He previously studied Neoplatonic Philosophy at the Iranian Institute of Philosophy and received a diploma in Math and Physics from Elmieh School, Tehran. Between 2007 and 2009 he taught art history and the history of Persian Architecture at Science and Culture University, Tehran. Pouyan has had numerous solo gallery shows including at Ave Gallery, Tehran (2008), XVA Gallery, Dubai (2009), and Lawrie Shabibi (2011), and has participated in numerous group exhibitions and art fairs around the world. His work has also been included in publications produced both in and out of Iran and is part of many prominent private collections and of the permanent collection of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. He has participated in several international residencies including International Cite Des Arts, Paris, and the Pegasus Art Foundation, Hyderabad, India, and begins one at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York, in March 2014.

### **Murtaza Vali**

Murtaza Vali is a critic, curator, editor, and Visiting Instructor at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, USA. He received an MA in Art History and Archaeology from New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts (2004). A recipient of a 2011 Creative Capital | Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for Short-Form Writing, he is a Contributing Editor at *ArtAsiaPacific* and an Editorial Correspondent for *Ibraaz.org*, and his writing has appeared in numerous international publications and in catalogues for galleries and nonprofit institutions. He was most recently Guest Curator for the Abraaj Group Art Prize 2013, and his previous curatorial projects include *Accented* (2010) at BRIC Rotunda Gallery, Brooklyn, USA, and *Brute Ornament* (2012) at Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE. He also edited *Manual for Treason*, a multilingual publication commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation for Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011). He lives and works between Sharjah, UAE and Brooklyn, USA.

### **Further information**

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary gallery located in Dubai’s Al-Quoz industrial district focusing on both established and emerging contemporary artists from the Arab world, Iran, North Africa, South Asia and Turkey. Founded in 2010 by William Lawrie and Asmaa Al-Shabibi, the gallery engages the public with art that imparts a cultural and political discourse together with a powerful aesthetic.

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Opening Hours: 10am to 6pm Sunday to Thursday, 11am to 6pm Saturday.