

PRESS RELEASE

Ayyam Gallery
Gate Village Building 3
DIFC, Dubai
Gallery Hours:

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Sun-Thur: 10.00am - 8.00pm



Wall, 2015, Mixed media on canvas, 120 x 150 cm

Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik

A Heart on a Wall

9 November – 31 December 2015

Opening reception: Monday, 9 November from 7.00 to 9.00 pm

Ayyam Gallery Dubai (DIFC) is pleased to announce *A Heart on a Wall*, the solo show of Beirut-based Syrian artist Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik. Featuring a selection of recent works, the exhibition will spotlight a new direction in the artist's painting style. Following a widely successful 2014 multimedia solo exhibition at Ayyam Projects, Majdal Al-Beik revisits a body of work that he began in Damascus in an effort to document the time that has passed since the start of the Syrian conflict.

Viewing city walls as records of daily occurrences where memories are preserved, Majdal Al-Beik explores the many lives that are now on hold, particularly of Syrians residing in Beirut. Using a brighter palette and additional materials that create dense, layered surfaces, the artist describes the volatile nature of this in between space and the horrors of war that manifest in pain, love, and hope. Warm colours and new symbols have replaced the greyness of Damascus walls that represents 'silent wounds' in his previous paintings. Arabic script and graffiti, remnants of advertisements, and childlike scratches adorn his walls, as he includes the textures and overlaid paint that are found on the exteriors of weathered buildings.

For the artist, the current reality and his restored memories are closer to him as he refuses to allow the imagery of the city to be 'bitterly forgotten.' Majdal Al-Beik revisits this concept of architecture as an indicator of living history 'in order to eternalise this fragile and tedious moment, when desire is unattainable and dreams are broken.'

Most importantly, Majdal Al-Beik's new works demonstrate an attempt to incorporate the 'concerns and desires and hopes and dreams' of friends and acquaintances, new and old, or those who have emigrated or passed, leaving behind 'beautiful or painful' memories. This new series forms 'a remembrance of heroes who are ordinary people.' Recreating their engraved voices prevents their memories from fading away.

About the Artist

In his large-scale mixed-media works, Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik transforms unconventional materials such as charcoal, plaster, starch, ash, and burlap into evocative mediums that reproduce the patina of imbued surfaces. Basing his 'combine paintings' on the layers of graffiti, markings, and cracks that can be found on the exterior surfaces of public spaces, he seeks to explore how such understated facets can serve as records of the oscillation of society over time. Replicating the outer textures, colours, and shapes of deteriorating

facades, Majdal Al-Beik excavates the buried traces of past lives, passages that situate cities as reluctant witnesses.

With the start of the war in Syria, Majdal Al-Beik's practice has reflected greater usage of assemblage through the addition of found objects such as small crosses, fabric strips, string, guns, and knives in order to communicate the stark circumstances of life under conflict. His more recent works include a series of conceptual sculptures and installations alongside paintings and photographs as part of the larger series *Postponed Democracy* (2014).

Born in a small village on the outskirts of Al-Hasakah, Syria in 1973, Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Damascus. His works are housed in public and private collections throughout the Middle East and Europe, and he has been the recipient of several awards, including those from the Latakia Biennale and the Shabab Ayyam competition for emerging artists. Selected solo and group exhibitions include Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice (2015); Ayyam Gallery London (2014); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz (2014); Ayyam Gallery DIFC (2014, 2013); Ayyam Projects (2014); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2014, 2012); Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2008); National Museum of Aleppo (2006); Tehran Biennale for Art in the Islamic World (2005); UNESCO Palace, Beirut (2001); and the British Council, Damascus (2000).

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organisation that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists from the Middle East. Blue-chip art spaces in Beirut and Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts programme have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art by introducing the dynamic art of the region to a global audience. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship programme that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also spearheaded recent efforts to document the region's art history.

Exhibition Facts

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Location: Ayyam Gallery, Gate Village 3, DIFC, Dubai

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