

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik,  
*Against the Wall II*

Location: Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai

Preview: 29 April 2013, 7pm

Dates: 29 April – 27 June 2013



Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai is pleased to present *Against the Wall II*, a solo exhibition of new works by Syrian artist Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik, from 29 April – 27 June 2013.

Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik uncovers hidden stories and histories amongst the graffiti, etchings, and marks that can be found on the walls of Damascus's Old City, which he then sets down in expressive canvases. While in past works Majdal Al-Beik restricted his materials and used a stark palette of white black and grey, in his recent work he has employed a wider palette and layered a variety of symbols - small crosses, guns and knives - over stitched patchwork surfaces, in a physical response to the on-going turmoil afflicting Syria.

*Against the Wall II* demonstrates an inevitable loss of naivety caused both organically by the passage of time and as a consequence of the on-going conflict in Syria. The violence witnessed by Damascus, now evident across the city's scarred and war-torn structures, is similarly apparent in Majdal Al-Beik's works; no longer passively subdued, the artist's canvases are punctuated by bold splashes of colour, and regions soaked in swathes of red. The marks that once covered the city's walls with declarations of affection, passive protests of frustrated adolescence, names carved for posterity, funeral notices, municipality postings and 'For Rent' signs, have been replaced by a more politically engaged commentary.

The mass of white crosses in *Scarecrow* are evocative of those left by mourners at the site of a loved one's death. Radiating outwards from a golden orb at the centre of the composition, these crosses also serve as symbols to ward off evil. In *Pain*, four small crosses at the top of the canvases emerge from an explosion of black and red, whilst the fractured wall and sutures which divide the canvas create a sense

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of violence that is uncomfortably tangible. In *The Trap I*, pieces of paper dangle from undefined faces constructed in string, their form reminiscent of scarabs. Scribbled across these scraps are the words '*security*', '*stability*', '*resistance*' and '*confrontation*', suggestive of strength, determination, and commitment to the cause.

Born in a small village on the outskirts of Al-Hasakah, Syria in 1973, Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik has participated in numerous exhibitions throughout the Middle East and has been the recipient of several awards, including those from the Lattakia Biennale and the Shabab Ayyam competition for emerging artists. His works are housed in public and private collections throughout the Middle East and Europe.



## Notes to Editors

### About Ayyam Gallery

Founded by collectors and cousins Khaled and Hisham Samawi in Damascus in 2006, Ayyam Gallery sought to nurture Syria's burgeoning and dynamic contemporary art scene through landmark non-profit initiatives such as the Shabab Ayyam Project, an incubator for emerging artists. Expansion into Beirut and Dubai enabled Ayyam Gallery to broaden its scope from the promotion of work by Syrian artists to those from the wider Middle East region. In doing so, Ayyam Gallery has established itself as one of the foremost exponents of Middle Eastern contemporary art to the international community.

Today, Ayyam Gallery is recognised as a leading cultural voice in the region, representing a roster of Arab and Iranian artists with an international profile and museum presence, such as Nadim Karam, Safwan Dahoul, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhashemi and Khaled Takreti. A number of non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, Ayyam Editions, and The Young Collectors Auction, have further succeeded in showcasing the work of Middle Eastern artists with the aim of educating a wider audience about the art of this significant region. Ayyam Gallery Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city. In early 2013, Ayyam Gallery launched new spaces in London and Jeddah.

### Exhibition Facts

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Exhibition Dates: 29 April – 27 June 2013

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

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