

FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE



Exhibition: Ammar Al Beik, *Boya Boya Boya*

Location: Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai

Opening: 15 January 2013

Dates: 15 January – 22 February 2013

Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai, is pleased to present *Boya Boya Boya*, a solo exhibition of new works by Syrian artist and filmmaker Ammar Al Beik, from 15 January – 22 February 2013.

Concerned with the importance of contextualisation in defining a work of art, Ammar Al Beik utilises found objects to illustrate the subjectivity of his practice and demonstrate how perception is inherently rooted in the concept or idea as designated by the artist. Believing that art must not only imitate but capture life, he examines his subject matter with unflinching enquiry and heightened sensitivity.

For the exhibition at Ayyam Gallery Ammar Al Beik will present a series of works inspired by the purchase of a handmade baby blue shoe shine box from an old man with a gentle, time stricken face. In an acutely humane, almost anthropological exploration of this handmade shoe shine box and the associated tools of the valet trade, such as round shoe polish tins, sponges, tooth brushes, and swatches of dirty fabrics, Al Beik documents a life and a profession. Art, humanity and the economy converge as Al Beik places the disparaging levels of society associated with the trade under close scrutiny. The exhibition will be accompanied by a video of the well-known song *Boya Boya Boya* (in Arabic with English subtitles), about the life of a poor shoe shiner.

Al Beik's pursuit and acquisition of the found objects presented in the exhibition at Ayyam Gallery is meticulous to the point of being archaeological in its nature. His careful cataloguing of each brush, each piece of fraying fabric, records the beauty and unique craftsmanship found in objects as diverse as the roughly hand-sculpted wooden shards comprising the shoe shine case; the reconfigured side compartments created from pinned aluminium milk containers; and the bottles of paint re-appropriated from empty Tropicana containers. Each relic of humanity displays the resourcefulness of mankind.

Born in 1972 in Damascus, Ammar Al Beik lives and works in Dubai. Internationally renowned for his work in film and documentary, he has shown at numerous international festivals including the Sao Paulo International Film Festival; Edinburgh Documentary Film Festival; Berlin International Film Festival; and Locarno International Film Festival. He is also the recipient of numerous awards including the Golden Award at the Rotterdam 7th Arab Film Festival, Holland (2007); the Golden Award at the Tetouan 13th Film Festival, Morocco (2007); and the Jury Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia (2002). In 2006 he was the first Syrian filmmaker to receive the award for best documentary at the Venice International Film Festival for his film *I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave*. In 2010 the film was screened at MoMA, New York. In 2011 he presented *The Sun's Incubator*, a work exploring the domestic affects of the Arab Spring at the 68th Venice International Film Festival. Most recently he has participated in the 9th Dubai International Film Festival (2012). Solo exhibitions include Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2011, 2010, 2008); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2010).

## 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. Key non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, 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. In 2013, two new gallery spaces will open in London and Jeddah. Ayyam Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city.

**Exhibition Facts**

Preview: 15 January 2013, 7pm

Exhibition Dates: 15 January – 22 February 2013

Location: Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz I, Dubai

Tel: +971 4 3236242

Email: [dubai@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:dubai@ayyamgallery.com)

Website: [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

**For press information and images please contact**

Toby Kidd and Amy Sutcliffe at Pelham Communications

Tel: +44 (0) 208 969 3959

Email: [toby@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:toby@pelhamcommunications.com) or [amus@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:amus@pelhamcommunications.com)