

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik

'Against the Wall'

22 November – 31 December 2012

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 22 at 7PM

Ayyam Beirut is pleased to present 'Against the Wall', a solo exhibition of new works by Syrian artist Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik, from 22 November to 31 December 2012.

Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik's painterly compositions seek untold stories amongst the multitude of graffiti, etchings, marks and cracks of the walls of Damascus's Old City. Originally employing only shades of white, black and grey, and the exact materials used in the construction of the ancient Damascene walls, Majdal Al-Beik's practice has evolved to incorporate a wider palette and the inclusion of additional elements such as small crosses, fabric strips, string, guns and knives; a response to the on-going turmoil afflicting Syria.

'Against the Wall' demonstrates the loss of naivety that is the inevitable consequence of war and the passage of time. The violence to which Damascus now bears witness is evidenced in the works on display; no longer passively subdued, Majdal Al-Beik's muted canvases are emboldened with splashes of bright colour and prominent red-soaked areas. Etched demonstrations of affection, quips of frustrated adolescence, names carved for posterity, funeral notices, municipality postings, and 'For Rent' signs have been replaced by commentary on the current state of affairs in Syria; the same walls where children once scrawled their names form the backdrop to executions where men and women are lined up and shot.

In 'Scarecrow', small white crosses are reminiscent of those left at the death site of a loved one. From behind the multitude of crosses, fabric rays radiate outward from a central golden orb, positioning these crosses as apotropaic symbols. 'In Pain', four small crosses at the top of the canvas lie in an explosion of black and red, whilst the fractured wall and sutures dividing the canvas like a wound make violence tangible. 'The Trap I' features undefined faces, reminiscent of scarabs, created with string. From each dangles a piece of paper with sketched arrows and the words 'security', 'stability', 'resistance' and 'confrontation'. The message is one 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 ones from Lattakia Biennale and Shabab Ayyam. 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 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 include 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.

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. 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, including Safwan Dahoul, Nadim Karam, Ammar Al-Beik, Thaier Helal, Mustafa Ali, Mohammad Orabi, Samia Halaby, Sadik Alfraji, Afshin Pirhasehmi, and Khaled Takreti. In 2013, two new galleries 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

Exhibition Dates: 22 November – 31 December 2012

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday, 10 am to 8 pm

Location: Ground floor, Beirut Tower, Zeitoune Street, Beirut

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