

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Exhibition: Ammar Al Beik: "Oil Leaks"**

**Location: Ayyam Gallery Damascus**

**Dates: April 23 – May 31**

**Opening: April 23 at 7pm**

On April 23 Ayyam Gallery Damascus will proudly unveil "Oil Leaks," a series of new installations by the artist and filmmaker Ammar Al Beik. Coinciding with Nassouh Zaghloleh's "Trance," which will be on display in an opposite section of the gallery, "Oil Leaks," is comprised of six works, "Maradona Vs Bush," "Demopublicans, No War for Oil," "Trickyleaks," "Awaiting for Grendizer," "And the Cooper Stumbled". At a time when the US has expanded its military operations to Libya, Al Beik examines some of the events that have defined American intervention in the Arab world over the past decade with some of his most overtly political art to date. Elucidating the geopolitical agendas that have fueled these interventions, mainly the issue of who controls the world's largest oil reserves, Al Beik presents unyielding commentary on the current state of global politics.

These large installations incorporate a number of elements, from found objects to media. In "Maradona Vs Bush," an animated film of George Bush in a duel with leftist-leaning Argentinean soccer star Maradona is surrounded by notes from the former's recently issued diaries (specifically the section on his war on Iraq), a number of pictures of American car license plates, and a fuel pump whose spout turns into a symbol of a startling penis.

In the third work, the artist shreds alleged "Wikileaks" documents, placing them between the red stripes of the American flag, while a circular labyrinth replaces its stars. In "Demo publicans, No War for Oil" dozens of gas spouts move automatically as they abruptly shoot out towards the viewer. Of these charged works, which were produced while taking care of his newborn daughter, the artist explains, "Spending five months inside the house led to this installation, as a reflection of political news, which is sometimes driven by interests more than reality, and the tension that comes with it. Through conceptual art, I am taking a stand from all that is happening in the region."

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Born in Damascus, Syria in 1972, Ammar Al Beik has been exhibiting since mid 1990s, at a time when he simultaneously began a prolific career in filmmaking. Having participated in screenings worldwide since 1999, his films have been featured in such prestigious film festivals as the Venice and San Paulo International Film Festivals. Never abandoning his original interest, he has continued to work in photography (and recently in conceptual art). His work has been featured in venues throughout the Middle East, Europe and the US. Since joining Ayyam gallery in 2007, Al Beik has gained recognition through acclaimed solo shows, notable group exhibitions, and the Alexandria Biennale and "SCOPE Art Fair (Basel)."

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Since its founding in 2006, Ayyam Gallery has become one of the Middle East's leading contemporary art spaces. With a selection of cutting-edge painting, sculpture and photography that represents some of the Arab world's most exciting talent, the gallery has sought to promote the region's dynamic cultural scene at home and abroad. For more information visit [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)

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Ammar Al Beik will be present on the opening day and during the first week of the exhibition. For interview with the artist or any further details, please contact us at +963 11 6131088 or email [info@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:info@ayyamgallery.com)