

Khaled Akil (Syria, Turkey, B. 1986)

Khaled Akil is an Aleppo-born multi-media artist who initiated his career in photography and gradually liberated himself through different media. In Khaled's practice, photography is an understanding of light and dark, halting a moment indefinitely, and culminating it in a raw "image" of life. As the artist progressed, he began exploring collage and split the images into layers, slowly contriving different realities. Akil is perhaps best known for his series titled *Pokémon Go in Syria*, showing the animation characters amid woeful scenes of ravaged Syria; an intense juxtaposition.

Akil's artistic debut took place in 2009, during which he was completing his bachelor's degree in Law. This pursuit sharpened his awareness of politics and human rights, which translated into his bodies of work. In fact, Akil takes great inspiration from his father, renowned Syrian painter, Youssef Akil. He elucidates the pressing issues facing contemporary Middle Eastern society, the nucleus of his work is rich with symbols and intricacies that are representative of modern-day Syria. In 2012, Akil immigrated from Syria to Istanbul, which prompted a shift in his work's narrative. Akil leaned into concepts of identity, cosmic connectivity and energy; developing a largely spiritual approach.

In 2015, Akil was nominated by The Victoria and Albert Museum for the Jameel Art Prize.

Akil has participated in numerous solo exhibitions such as Brown University, Rhode Island, U.S.A (2018); Stanford University, California, U.S.A (2016); Chalabi Art Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey (2013); Ladhd Art Gallery, London, U.K (2012); Karma Art Gallery, Aleppo, Syria (2011); Mustafa Ali Art Foundation, Damascus, Syria (2010) and as aforementioned, at Sarmad Art Gallery, Aleppo, Syria (2009).

Akil has also exhibited in group shows, at venues such as the Bozar Art Museum, Brussels, Belgium (2019); American University Museum in Washington; Katzen Arts Center, D.C, U.S.A; World Bank, Washington D.C, U.S.A; The Reach Museum, B.C, Canada; Langley Centennial Museum, Creative Debuts, London, U.K (2018); West Branch Gallery, Vermont, U.S.A; Gaya Art Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia (2016); Gaya Gallery, Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia; Fotofest, Houston, Texas, U.S.A (2015).