



Ammar Abd Rabbo, *Untitled*, 2020, Archival print on cotton paper, Edition of 10 + 2AP, 60 x 90 cm

AMMAR ABD RABBO

To Beirut...

14 October - 12 November 2020

In tribute to the Lebanese people and with deep compassion, Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present *To Beirut...*, a charity exhibition featuring Ammar Abd Rabbo's latest photographs from August fourth's tragedy. Together with the artist's generosity, we are donating 75% of the proceeds to Beit El Baraka's mission to rebuild and help the vulnerable.

Artist statement

Throughout my career as a photojournalist, I've faced difficult and emotional moments. Whether it be shots of torn families, besieged cities, or destroyed homes, it was never my neighborhood. For the first time, the atrocity and destruction took place in a very familiar environment. Of course, I felt compelled to capture what was going on.

In just a few seconds, friends were lost, families were separated, people were wounded, and not to mention the material devastation. We all bear scars from August Fourth. Fortunately, I wasn't in Lebanon during the blast. I can only empathize with the shock everyone lived through and survived. I made sure to take the next flight into Beirut.

Here is a selection of the scenes and moments I captured; trying to mask the explosion, I avoided shots of the injured and vulnerable. The large scale shots not only show the immensity of the catastrophe but are also abstracting the situation. Creating incredible images straight out of Sci-Fi movies such as 'Mad Max' and 'Planet of the Apes.' I just wish those were also fiction rather than Beirut's reality.

I believe photographs remain when people separate, dictators fly away, loved ones leave, images are witnesses. They are a constant reminder of the past, a reality we cannot deny, an issue we have to address. We cannot hide moments we've witnessed.

Dearest Beirut, I wholeheartedly hope for all your wounds to heal, all scars to fade, all houses to be rebuilt, all businesses to revive, and that from this tragedy, only these photographs remain.

To Beirut, with Love...
Ammar Abd Rabbo

About the artist

As one of the Arab world's prominent photojournalists, Ammar Abd Rabbo's work has been published in leading and widely circulated publications, from Time Magazine to Paris Match, Der Spiegel, Le Monde, and Asharq Al Awsat, where he signed more than eighty magazine covers. Spanning over thirty years, Abd Rabbo's portfolio includes war coverage in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria; portraits of heads of states; world-renowned celebrities such as Michael Jackson; and high profile events such as the Cannes Film Festival and Paris Fashion Week.

Born in Damascus in 1966, Abd Rabbo lived in Libya and Lebanon before moving to France in 1978 after the intensification of the Lebanese Civil War. Before joining Sipa press agency in 1992, he studied political science at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques. He later left Sipa to create 'Balkis' photo agency, which is now syndicated by Abaca Press.

Abd Rabbo's first artistic solo exhibition, 'Coming Soon' was held in Ayyam Gallery, Beirut in early 2012. More recently, his artistic work covers censorship, body freedom, nudity, women empowerment and more.

In 2018, the French government named him "Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres", in recognition of his work, including coverage of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.

His works are housed in the Barjeel Foundation, Sharjah; Daniel Barenboim Collection, Berlin; Salsali Private Museum; and The Samawi Collection, Dubai. Abd Rabbo has recently participated in solo exhibitions at the Beiteddine Palace, Lebanon (2019) ; Institut Français du Liban, Beirut (2019); and collective exhibitions such as: Phillips Auction House, London, (2019) ; d'une mediterranee, l'autre, Marseille (2016); Banský's Dismaland, Weston-super-mare, England (2015); Imago Mundi at Benetton Foundation, Venice Biennale (2015); BOX Freiraum gallery, Berlin (2015); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2014); The Milan Triennale (2014); MAXXI Museum, Rome (2013). His work has been highlighted in solo shows at Katara Cultural Village, Doha (2016); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2015; 2012); Europa gallery, Paris (2014); and Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2012).

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organization that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. Blue-chip art space in Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts program have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship program that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also contributed to recent efforts that document underrepresented facets of global art history.

Exhibition Facts

Exhibitions Dates: 14 October - 12 November 2020

Regular Hours: Sun - Thur : 10 am - 6 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery, B11, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Al Quoz 1, Dubai

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