

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Ginane Makki Bacho, *Afterimage*

Location: Ayyam Gallery Beirut

Preview: 11 April 2013, 7pm

Dates: 11 April – 31 May 2013



Ayyam Gallery Beirut is pleased to announce *Afterimage*, a solo exhibition by Lebanese artist Ginane Makki Bacho from 11 April – 31 May 2013.

Afterimage presents a highly personal series of paintings which Makki Bacho refers to as her 'memoirs'. Having trained as a writer before attending art school, narrative is central to her artistic practice. Working from personal photos collaged together to create 'flashes' of her past that overlap and merge, the paintings allow the viewer glimpses into Makki Bacho's history set against a wider narrative of the changing face of Lebanon; the viewer shares in her intimate memories, but also the pain of a country torn apart.

Through working from photographs, the artist invokes the language of the personal snapshot, and the universality of this – the shared experience of attempting to capture a fleeting moment through a photographic token, or adopting a conventional pose. At the same time, her muted pastel palette is evocative of old and faded family albums, creating a sense of nostalgia within her compositions.

When war broke out in Beirut in 1982, Makki Bacho's apartment was completely destroyed by a shell. As she sifted through the rubble, she collected twisted shrapnel that she would later use to make sculptures and this cathartic act became her process for dealing with the trauma and shock of such an attack. Though working with two-dimensional media for this new series of works, the artist is still fascinated with building layers and textures in order to construct a complex narrative, which is also informed by her extensive work with printmaking.

One such layered work is *The Icon* (2012), which presents a young girl gazing at a photograph of her father while also seemingly reflected back at the viewer in the same frame. A vast sea scape in the background suggests a father gone away to sea, leaving nothing but

a photo as a memento. The painting is based on Makki Bacho's memory of her father going to France to pursue his PHD at the Sorbonne, leaving behind a picture that became her 'icon', which she used to maintain a connection to him.

It is through such works that we are introduced to Makki Bacho's method of building a rich story within each painting, a story which is continued and developed throughout *Afterimage*. Taken as a whole, these different scenes – a girl playing with a hula hoop, a young woman on the threshold of adolescence, a pregnant woman beaming at the camera – weave together into a tale of the artist's life.

While commenting on conflict, Makki Bacho does not rely on shock imagery in order to engage with her viewer on the subject. *Look the Other Way* (2012) presents a young woman sitting peacefully with a baby, quiet and content, while behind her lies a barely visible room in tatters with piles of books and rubble. Though this tender exchange between a mother and her child is marred by the surrounding destruction, the ravaged interior is rendered in subdued tones, as if the artist wishes to erase this devastation from view.

Ginane Makki Bacho was born in Beirut in 1947, where she currently lives and works. She received a Master's of Fine Arts in Printmaking and Painting from Pratt Institute, New York (1987) and a Bachelor's of Fine Arts from the Lebanese American University, Beirut (1982). Recent solo exhibitions include ArtCircle, Beirut (2010); Agial Art Gallery, Beirut (2004); and a retrospective of her works at the French Cultural Center, Beirut (2005). Group exhibitions include Fa Gallery, Kuwait (2012), Beirut Art Center (2009); the Lebanese Association of Artists and Sculptors in Beirut (2013, 2012, 2010, 2009); the Biennale Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria (2008); and Sursock Museum, Beirut (2006).

Her work is held in a number of public and private collections including the Centre Culturel Francais, Beirut; the Museum of Digne les Bains; Cabo Frio Museum, Rio de Janeiro; the Arab League, Washington DC; the Hariri Foundation, Washington DC., and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria. She is also known for her artist books, such as *Face to Face, the Artist as Woman and Mother* (1985), *Ginane, Diary of a Woman* (1986), *Extraordinary People* (1998) and *Dichotomie en Blanc et Noir* (2009).



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. 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. Ayyam Gallery Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city. In early 2013, Ayyam Gallery launched new spaces in London and Jeddah.

Exhibition Facts

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Location: Beirut Tower, Ground Floor, Zeitoune Street

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