

ABDUL KARIM MAJDAL AL-BEIK (SYRIA, B. 1973)

In his large-scale mixed-media works, Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik transforms unconventional materials such as charcoal, plaster, starch, ash, and burlap into evocative mediums that reproduce the patina of imbued surfaces. Basing his 'combine paintings' on the weathered layers of graffiti, markings, and cracks that can be found on the exterior surfaces of public spaces, he seeks to explore how such understated facets can serve as records of the oscillation of society over time. Replicating the outer textures, colours, and shapes of deteriorating facades, Majdal Al-Beik excavates the buried traces of past lives, passages that situate cities as reluctant witnesses.

With the start of the war in Syria, Majdal Al-Beik's practice has reflected greater usage of assemblage through the addition of found objects such as small crosses, fabric strips, string, guns, and knives in order to communicate the stark circumstances of life under conflict. His more recent works include a series of conceptual sculptures and installations alongside paintings and photographs as part of the larger series *Postponed Democracy* (2014). Majdal Al Beik now lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Born in a small village on the outskirts of Al-Hasakah, Syria in 1973, Abdul Karim Majdal Al-Beik trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Damascus. His works are housed in public and private collections throughout the Middle East and Europe and he has been the recipient of several awards, including those from the Latakia Biennale and the Shabab Ayyam competition for emerging artists. Selected solo and group exhibitions include Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice (2015); Ayyam Gallery London (2014); Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2014); Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai (2015, 2014, 2013); Ayyam Projects, Beirut (2014); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2014, 2012); Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2008); National Museum of Aleppo (2006); Tehran Biennale for Art in the Islamic World (2005); UNESCO Palace, Beirut (2001); and the British Council, Damascus (2000).