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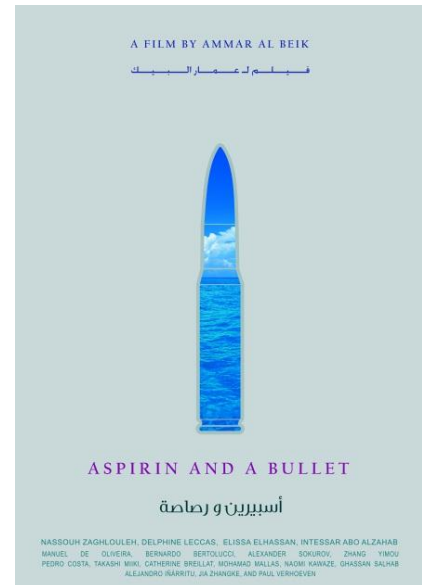
Ammar Al Beik: Artist Tour and Film Screening

Date: 29 January 2013, 7pm

Exhibition: *Boya Boya Boya*

Film: *Aspirin and a Bullet*

Location: Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai



Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz is pleased to announce a special artist-led tour on 29 January 2013 of Syrian artist and filmmaker Ammar Al Beik's current exhibition, *Boya Boya Boya* (continues until 22 February). This will be followed by a screening of Al Beik's film *Aspirin and a Bullet*, which has only previously been screened at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2011.

Al Beik's first feature film, *Aspirin and a Bullet* (2011, 125 minutes), is a tale of confession, poetry and pain, recalling how the artist's father attempted suicide forty years ago. His father was rescued from his self-destructive actions and a second suicide attempt by marriage to Al Beik's mother. Al Beik describes the film as a 'concise autobiography' which serves as a forty-year long therapy session for the artist, and his first step towards making independent films with patience, honesty and complete freedom.

Al Beik will be present to introduce his film and will first give a tour of his recently opened exhibition at Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz. *Boya Boya Boya* presents a series of works inspired by the purchase of a handmade baby blue shoe shine box from an old man. In an acutely humane, almost anthropological exploration of this handmade shoe shine box and the associated tools of the valet trade, such as round shoe polish tins, sponges, tooth brushes, and swatches of dirty fabrics, Al Beik documents a life and a profession. Art, humanity and the economy converge as Al Beik places the disparaging levels of society associated with the trade under close scrutiny. The exhibition is accompanied by a video of the well-known song *Boya Boya Boya* (in Arabic with English subtitles), about the life of a poor shoe shiner.

Concerned with the importance of contextualisation in defining a work of art, Al Beik utilises found objects to illustrate the subjectivity of his practice and demonstrate how perception is inherently rooted in the concept or idea as designated by the artist.

Believing that art must not only imitate but capture life, he examines his subject matter with unflinching enquiry and heightened sensitivity.

Born in 1972 in Damascus, Al Beik lives and works in Dubai. Internationally renowned for his work in film and documentary, he has shown at numerous international festivals including the Sao Paulo International Film Festival; Edinburgh Documentary Film Festival; Berlin International Film Festival; and Locarno International Film Festival. He is also the recipient of numerous awards including the Golden Award at the Rotterdam 7th Arab Film Festival, Holland (2007); the Golden Award at the Tetouan 13th Film Festival, Morocco (2007); and the Jury Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival, Australia (2002). In 2006 he was the first Syrian filmmaker to receive the award for best documentary at the Venice International Film Festival for his film *I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave*. In 2010 the film was screened at MoMA, New York. In 2011 he presented *The Sun's Incubator*, a work exploring the domestic affects of the Arab Spring at the 68th Venice International Film Festival. Most recently he has participated in the 9th Dubai International Film Festival (2012). Solo exhibitions include Ayyam Gallery Damascus (2011, 2010, 2008); Ayyam Gallery Beirut (2010).

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. Key non-commercial exhibitions, as well as the launch of Ayyam Publishing, 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. In 2013, two new gallery spaces will open in London and Jeddah. Ayyam Damascus currently functions as a studio and creative haven for artists who remain in the war-torn city.

Exhibition Facts

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Exhibition: Ammar Al Beik, *Boya Boya Boya*

Date: 29 January 2013, 7pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz I, Dubai

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