

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Mohamad Badr “The Power of...”

Location: Ayyam Gallery, Beirut

Dates: April 19 – May 18, 2012

Opening: Thursday, April 19, 2012



From beautifully staged monochrome fashion photography, to playfully encasing the sun's orb in a street lamp, immortalizing the shadows caressing a wall, and evoking the desolation of a train station, the memory of a scent or a provocative look, Badr's images consistently conjure the poetic and precisely illustrate lucid moments with sharp eloquence. A veritable visual storyteller and a firsthand witness, Badr turned his lens to chronicle a plethora of scenes as overwhelming as the Shivaratri rituals, and the deafening scenes of emotionless public human cremations. He has documented the daily lives of locals in remote and extraordinary places stretching between Azaz on the Syrian/Turkish borders, and all the way to the Himalayas.

In this unique interactive installation, 'The Power of...' on show at Ayyam Gallery, Beirut from April 19 till May 18 2012, Badr's lens bears witness once more to a local tradition. Presenting two photographic projections and ten printed photographs taken during the 2011 Ashoura rituals in Nabatiyeh, south of Beirut in Lebanon alongside the actual tools employed by the participants in this ritual, 'The Power of...' will immerse visitors in this multi-level experience, transporting them to stand alongside those who engaged in the ritual and share their experience. Engaging visitors interactively, this exhibition asks the viewer to question this cultural experience and the form of power at play, ultimately questioning the very essence of power, how it manifests and influences and whether such power is a positive or negative force.

The photographs comprising this exhibition have been nominated for the 2012 cycle of the 'Prix Pictet', the world's leading photographic award in sustainability. What might be considered by some as shocking is a simple and natural reality for others. The art of the image lies less in their ability to shock and more in the attempt to portray a reality that's distinctly red and white onto the consciousness of the beholder. The viewer is unable to escape scenes of people powerfully self-flagellating juxtaposed with those willingly cut with razors upon their skulls, mourning women clad in black, falling tears and the unsettling stare of turquoise eyes that gaze through a blood stained face towards a different reality; a reality that both exerts power over yet also empowers them with the will to live through a bath of their own blood and the prejudiced eyes of the world.

Born in 1981, Mohamad Badr is a social entrepreneur, photographer and poet with a background in Marketing and Management. Creator of 'Lakum HamraZakoum wa Li HamraZi', the first professional photography project in Lebanon in 2009, and the acclaimed photography project, 'Mosaic: Achrafieh International Photography Contest', Lebanon's

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first and largest international photography competition in 2010. In 2011, Mohamad Badr was awarded the Live Achrafieh Honorary Award for his contribution to the community. With his 2011 series, 'Prayer of Light', he placed among the top 5 winners in the Pan-Arab Shabab Ayyam Photography competition. In 2012, his series, 'Bloody Streets – Manifestation of Power' was nominated for the Prix Pictet. Badr's diverse photographic oeuvre of story telling, photo-documentary, glamour and visual poetry is represented by Ayyam Gallery.

*Since opening in 2006 Ayyam Gallery has become one of the most prominent galleries in the Middle East, with four exhibition spaces throughout the region, notably in Syria, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. Ayyam Gallery proudly represents some of today's most recognized emerging and established Arab artists. For more information visit [www.ayyamgallery.com](http://www.ayyamgallery.com)*

*For interviews with the artist or any further details, please contact us at +961 1 374450 or email [beirut@ayyamgallery.com](mailto:beirut@ayyamgallery.com)*