

Culture

Music

Lifestyle

Exhibitions

Fashion



A new trend in collage art

Ayyam Gallery is to show an art exhibition of Al-Beik works in its Damascus Gallery on April 23. Al-Beik's three art works will be novel to the Syrian audience, who will see a new style of art belonging to the 'Structural School.' His works are made from plastic, wood, iron and pieces of photos with electric lights. The theme of the exhibition is 'No War for Oil.' It shows opposition to the US-led invasion on Iraq in 2003 and later wars, right up to the most recent one in Libya.

Al-Beik entered the world of art from photography. Born in Damascus

in 1972, he began with simple cameras and took photos for friends.

"When I was ten years old, I began taking photos with a very simple plastic-made camera but in those days, it was a dream for me. When I finished high school, I got a good Russian-made camera. It was then that I entered the professional era," Al-Beik said to Forward Syria.

Although graduating from the Intermediate Institute of Commerce, Department of Business Administration, University of Damascus in 1990, his love for photography intensified while

working at a camera repair shop for ten years.

It is there that he received his formal training in the field, exploring various methods and approaches while becoming an expert in photographic equipment. He has been exhibiting his photographs since the mid 1990s, at a time when he simultaneously began an impressive career in filmmaking. In 1996, he put on his first solo exhibition at the Spanish Culture Center.

"I participated with three works [in my first solo exhibition] and got first prize. It was very important to be re-

warded and achieve the first position among professional photographers.”

Later, he did a second solo exhibition at the Goethe Institute, Damascus and a third one in Tunisia in 1999. A fourth exhibition took place in Biennale, Italy in 2001.

The current exhibition shows three big works that shed light on the US- led war on Iraq and the recent wikileaks documents. One piece illustrates wikileaks, showing America as a big lie and built on waste paper and false news. Another piece shows Iraq’s oil as the main reason for the 2003 war on Iraq.

“I will show three artworks. I can’t give them names but the third work has ‘no war for oil’ written on it. I shouldn’t explain to everyone what the idea of each work is,” he said of his latest exhibition.

Al-Beik’s works will likely attract criticism because he makes them in a new style for Syrians, but he expects that.

“If I feel that a viewer wants to deeply understand my work, then I am ready to explain to him more about it. But if I feel that someone just wants to criticize for criticism’s sake, I will leave him or her.”

Taking his cinematic works to the international stage, he has earned critical acclaim from audiences and juries across the global and has been honored with a number of awards. Having participated in screenings worldwide since 1999, his films have been featured in such prestigious events as the Venice and San Paulo International Film Festivals. His invitation to the 63rd Annual Venice Film Festival was a first in the history of Syrian cinema. In a little over a decade he has become one of country’s leading filmmakers.

Never abandoning his original interest, he has continued to work in photography despite the great success he has found in cinema. Equally accom-

plished in both genres, his photographs have been shown in venues throughout the Middle East, Europe and the US. Since joining Ayyam Gallery in 2007, Al-Beik has been impressing viewers and critics alike through such notable exhibitions as ‘Shabab Uprising,’ ‘Black vs. Color’ and the ‘SCOPE Art Fair (Basel).’

As a result of his great artistic range and background, Al-Beik’s photographs possess a cinematic quality that can only be found amidst the portfolio of a seasoned image-maker. Forever embracing experimentation, he works with an assortment of techniques. Often materializing in the form of large ultra chrome prints on canvas, his photographs toy with the manipulation of light and contrast and delve into the art of visual storytelling, holding the narrative of his subjects up with careful scrutiny and heightened sensitivity ●

