

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: “Colored Earth...Black Chainsaw”
Artists: Tammam Azzam and Ammar Al Beik
Location: Ayyam Gallery, Damascus
Dates: June 26 - August 5, 10AM-8PM
Opening: 07:00PM till 09:00PM



ColoredEarth...
BlackChainSaw
an Installation by Ammar Al Beik

From June 26 until August 5, Ayyam Gallery Damascus will proudly present two coinciding events: “Metallica,” the solo exhibition of artist Tammam Azzam and “Colored Earth...Black Chainsaw” (2010), a new installation by photographer/filmmaker Ammar al-Beik. These simultaneous events will demonstrate the breadth of young Syrian art by highlighting the cutting-edge experiments that are defining its movement. Remarkably, both artists will offer work that explores the push and pull of cityscapes, underscoring the juxtaposition of urban sprawls against natural elements and the hidden spaces that lie in between.

Tammam Azzam “Metallica”

Moving from his previous body of work, “Laundry Series,” which included mixed media canvases evoking the tactile quality of ordinary objects that are weathered amidst the force of a metropolis, Azzam’s recent paintings fall under the title “Metallica,” a reference to the metallic quality of his new techniques and the blunt luster of industrial spaces. Seeming to emerge from a thick fog, or perhaps a dark cloud of smoke, his brooding portrayals of the city read like moments in a film noir, in which the subtlety of black and white imagery is drenched in an element of mystery and psychology. These monochromatic compositions, which are layered with the silhouettes of buildings, telephone poles, cranes and satellites, are executed in a manner that also hints at the influence of street art, where stencils are used to assemble quick, flat compositions on the side of edifices. Whereas “Laundry Series,” emphasized the materiality of his inanimate subjects as witnesses to the changes of an environment steeped in history, Azzam’s “Metallica” points to the void of a human presence, as manmade monuments overrun the poetics of a terrain. In many ways, this latest series continues the narrative of his former work, as he continues to observe the city with a matured approach. His forthcoming solo show at Ayyam Gallery includes paintings from both stages, allowing the viewer to appreciate these developments.

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Born in Damascus in 1980, Tammam Azzam is one of Syria's rising young talents. A graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts with a concentration in oil painting, he has exhibited with some of the country's leading art spaces, including Atassi gallery and the French Culture Centre. He has also been featured in such events as Scope Art Fair (Basel) and Art Miami.

Ammar Al Beik “Colored Earth...Black Chainsaw”

“Colored Earth...Black Chainsaw” is the latest installation of Ammar Al Beik., a work that relies on striking imagery and equally powerful symbolism. An informal portrait, the piece revolves around a lone chainsaw, a subject that conjures up notions of labor, destruction and in this case renewal. For al-Beik, the object alludes to a story of an old man that works incessantly to cut down barren trees, an act that will make way for the process of regeneration and new buds. Resembling an old samurai sword, which represents honor and discipline (and to some extent craftsmanship) in Japanese culture, and an old Damascene dagger, which had similar connotations but was later used as a building tool in the early stages of urbanization in Syria, the chainsaw traverses landscapes and history. Using a similar process, he evokes the past. Al-Beik reinforces these notions by creating frames that are plastered in colored earth. This marks the shifting face of the city and the subsequent repositioning of its inhabitants as they adapt to the transformation of their surroundings.

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Born in Damascus, Syria in 1972, Ammar Al Beik's artistic career stems from unconventional roots. Although graduating from the University of Damascus with a degree in business administration, his love for photography intensified while working at a camera repair shop for ten years. He has been exhibiting his photographs since the mid 1990s, at a time when he simultaneously began an impressive career in filmmaking. In just a little over a decade he has become one of country's leading filmmakers. Equally accomplished 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 grabbing the attention of viewers and critics alike through a number of international events.

Since its founding in 2006, Ayyam Gallery has become one of the Arab world's leading art spaces. With a selection of cutting-edge painting, sculpture and photography that represents some of the Middle East's most exciting talent, the gallery has sought to promote the region's dynamic cultural scene at home and abroad. The Damascus gallery is located in the Mezzeh district of Damascus. Please contact the gallery at info@ayyamgallery.com or call +96311631089. You can also visit www.ayyamgallery.com for more information.