

## Ammar Al Beik: Notes on Reality from its Many Angles

*By Maymanah Farhat*



**Hearing Therapy**, 2008, Archival Print on Canvas, Edition of 3, 108x180cm - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

Artist and filmmaker Ammar Al Beik's latest film "The Sun's Incubator" (2011) is dedicated to three martyrs of the Arab Spring: Mohamed Bouazizi of Tunisia, Khaled Saeed of Egypt, and Hamza al-Khateeb of Syria.

In September, the twelve-minute short was featured in the 68th Venice Film Festival. Having first participated in this international film program with "I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave" (2006), which he co-directed with Hala Al Abdullah-

Yacoub, Al Beik returned with equally powerful subject matter and an intensified method of observation that combines elements of fictional, autobiographical, and documentary filmmaking.

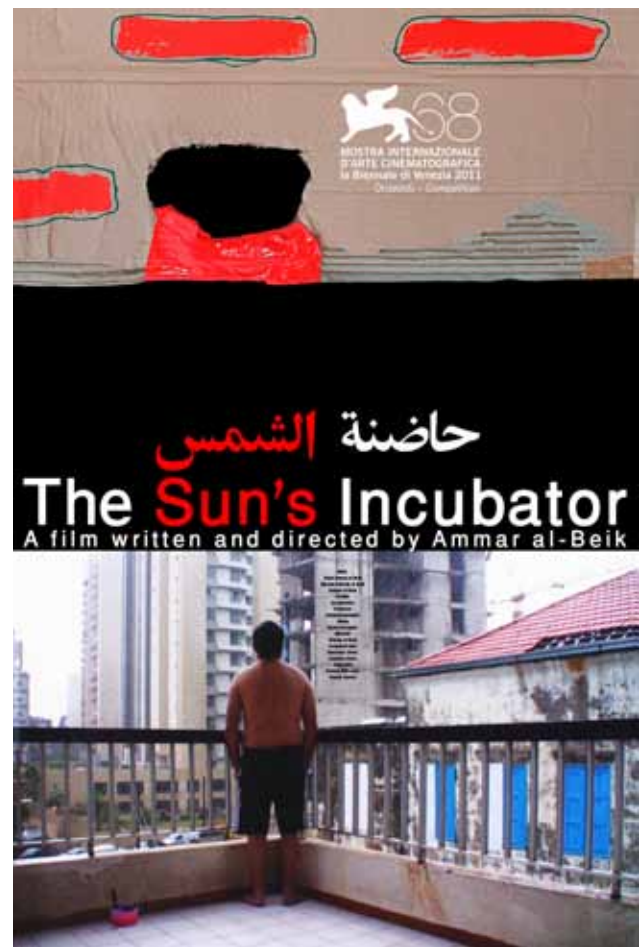
"The Sun's Incubator" is shot almost entirely in an apartment overlooking downtown Beirut. As news of the protests that filled Cairo's Tahrir Square are broadcast on a small television, a man and his family are first shown moving about their home while they prepare

to attend a political rally. Al Beik's camera remains fixed throughout, never moving about the domestic setting. Thus the private realm of his subjects is distinguished by an exaggerated sense of normalcy amidst the chaos that lies outside their window.

A cooing infant is outfitted in a dress that matches her parents' crimson attire and the bold lettering of a sign that reads "Get Lost, Liberty for Egypt." As the child's mother is shown exiting the apartment, the film flashes back to the woman lying in a hospital bed with her husband by her side. The man bears the same red shirt that he shown wearing in the beginning of the film, creating a visual connection between the anticipation, awe, and sense of optimism that is universal to both the path of revolution and the creation of human life.

Although devoid of dialogue, this depiction of a young family against the backdrop of a remarkable historical moment is quickly punctured by images of the autopsy of thirteen-year-old Hamza Al Khateeb, who was tortured and killed during the first wave of political protests in Syria early this year. As they watch the news in silence, a journalist describes the extent of the abuse that led to his death. A lack of emotion and sentimentality from the film's central characters makes for a deliberately disconcerting scene through which the encountering of horror amidst devastation is explicit to the Middle East's modern day political tableau.

The film's credits reveal that Al Beik cast himself and his wife and child as its main protagonists, using a recording of his daughter's birth for its final scene. The only instance in which the intimate space of the apartment is disrupted visually (and psychologically) is when the film ends with footage of Al Beik frantically attempting to document this unfolding moment, his camera swaying with the direction of medical personnel who work to place the baby in an incubator. This noticeable difference in how the director seeks to affect the viewer with the placement and movement of the camera is utilized to establish an emphatic state that reconsiders the lives of his characters, thus changing the mood of the film altogether. One of his most accomplished works to date—it stands as a culmination of the various experiments, directions and studies in cinema that have shaped his filmography since debuting his first short "Light Harvest" in 1997.



Still image from the film "The Sun's Incubator"

The "The Sun's Incubator" opens with the following quote by filmmaker Robert Bresson:

*The future of cinematography belongs to a new race of young solitaires who will shoot films by putting their last penny into it and not let themselves be taken in by the material routines of the trade.*

Although seemingly out of place due to the film's charged content, this statement describes much of the Syrian artist's own views on global cinema and the qualities that should characterize filmmaking. Bresson, who Al Beik cites as one of his greatest influences, believed that the purest form of filmmaking could only be achieved through the art of cinematography. In "Notes on the Cinematographer" (1975), a compilation of his thoughts on film, he emphasized that cinematography,

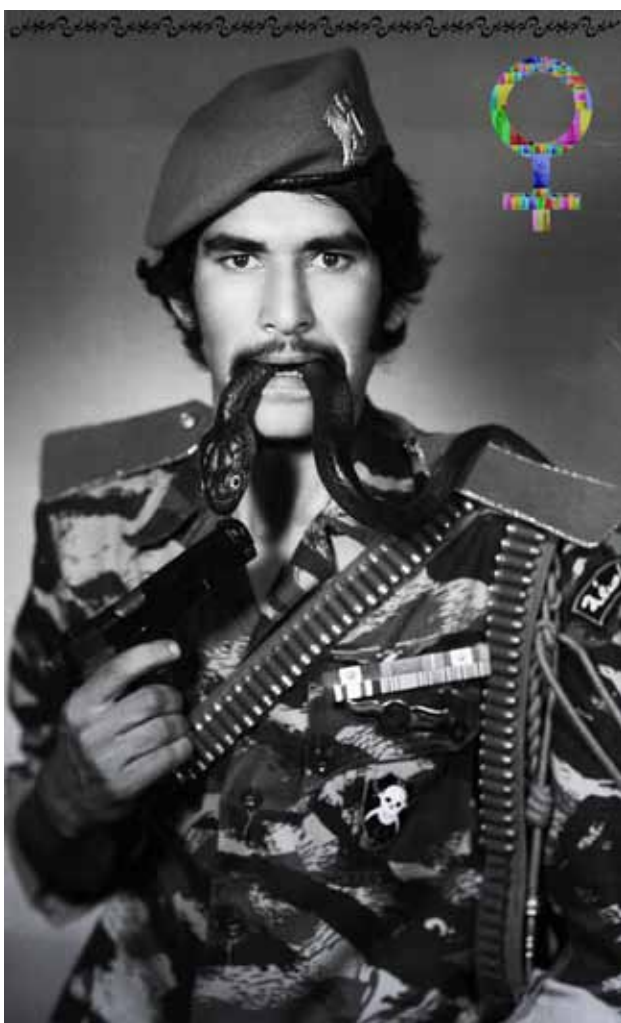
what can be categorized as “creative film-making” is “writing with images in movement and with sounds.”<sup>1</sup> This presumably simple notion actually encapsulates how Bresson developed a particular approach to cinema and is most fitting for a discussion of Al Beik’s work. For both, success as a cinematographer, to which commercial benchmarks are irrelevant, means the capturing of imagery and the communication of a particular idea, narrative or sensation as integral parts of the same whole. The roots of filmmaking in photography, as a historical progression of aesthetics and a product of the technological fervor of the Second Industrial Revolution in the late 1900s, reminds us that cinema is very much an extension of the still-image, even in its contemporary manifestations. That one of the first real experiments with the possibilities of film occurred when twenty-four stereoscopic cameras were utilized to capture the movement of a trotting horse, points to the almost natural way in which cinema evolved from the nineteenth century image-maker’s desire to depict reality from its many angles of motion, space and time. Like photography, cinema has taken on various roles, most importantly that of expanding the narrative capabilities of the visual arts. The point of outlining this history and the interconnectedness (if not mutual dependency) of these two mediums is to elucidate the vantage point from which Al Beik works effortlessly in both photography and film: *There is no difference between cinema/filmmaking and photography. Twenty-four pictures make one second in a film. One picture can make for a very long film. Cinema and photography are two hearts in one body. If the first stopped beating, the other would continue.* <sup>2</sup>

In her 1977 collection of essays *On Photography* Susan Sontag established that, “Photographs do more than redefine the stuff of ordinary experience (people, things, events, whatever we see—albeit differently, often inattentively—with natural vision) and add vast amounts of material that we never see at all. Reality as such is redefined—as a record for scrutiny.”<sup>3</sup> And while she also outlined “a new visual code” through which modern photography had created an oversaturated, desensitized, false sense of knowledge through the consumption of photographs, she emphasized the way in which a single image is capable of alluding

to subsequent images, setting forth a narrative that continues into an “ongoing biography or history.” This is essential to how quickly cinema evolved from early attempts at demarcating the visual, which was in a matter of years after the establishment of photography as an artistic medium, and speaks volumes as to how Al Beik, an individual who began his artistic career with the simultaneous adopting of photography and film as his mediums of choice, would find it second nature to move easily between the two. And like this pair of creative outlets, the distinction between reality and fiction for the Syrian artist remains malleable, as the two often commingle and are essentially mutually informative: *For me there is no difference between documentary and fiction because both melt in harmony together. This is an artistic must for me, one that is created and strongly imposed on its own.* <sup>4</sup>

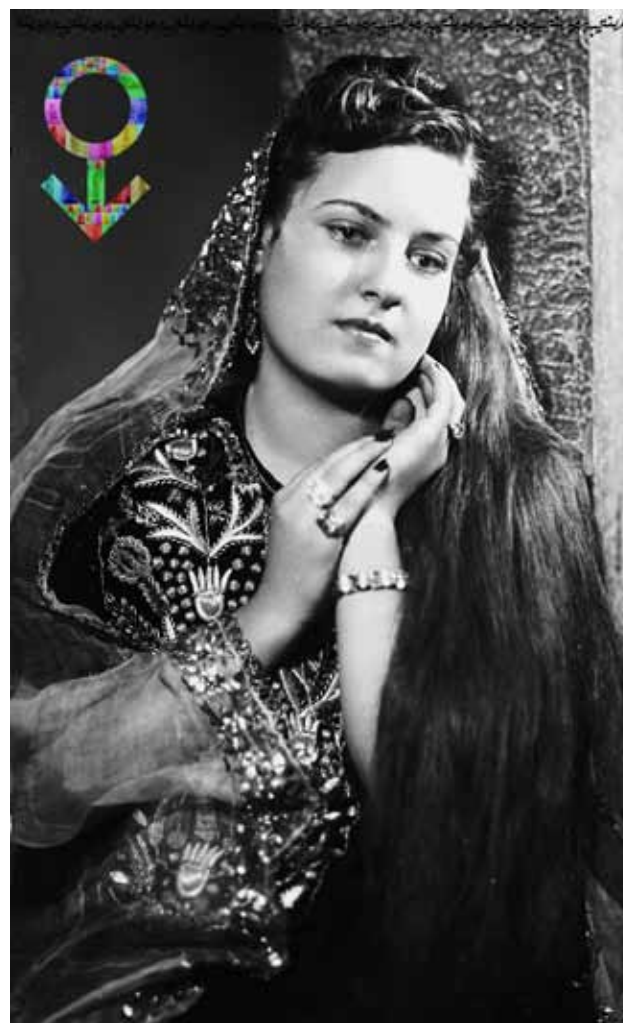
To describe Al Beik’s artistic training is to tell the story of an image-maker who has been attached to his craft for most of his life. While a sort of succession of serendipitous moments have defined both his creative output and the branching of his work into photography, filmmaking, and new media and installation work, as a “self-taught” artist he has spent years in the field.

He was born in Damascus in 1972 and as a young man worked long hours for nearly a decade at Studio Haig; which was founded in the 1950s, making it one of the first professional photography studios in Syria. Providing him with a lot of invaluable technical and artistic training, there he learned the mechanical workings of equipment, from the ability to dismantle and reassemble cameras to the essentials of photography itself. At Studio Haig he also had the opportunity to read the very texts on cinema that became indispensable to his approach to filmmaking and was able to sift through the huge archives of a photographer who had taken portraits of hundreds of Syrians over the span of decades, discovering his own image as an infant in a photograph that his mother had commissioned. An interest in found images and Syria’s photographic history as seen through the eyes of “photo-shooters” that worked outside of a fine art distinction, i.e. academic tradition, continued long after he prepared his first solo exhibition in 1995.



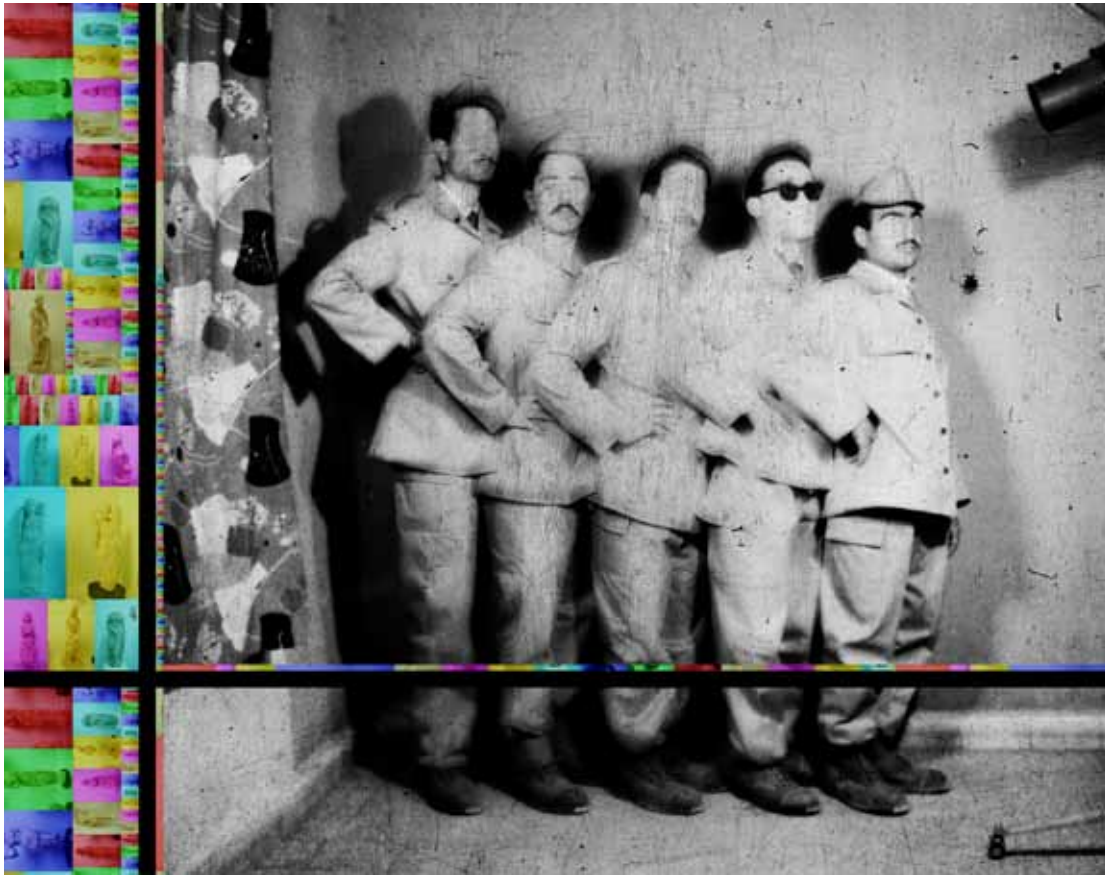
**Adam**, 2008, Archival Print on Cotton Paper, Edition of 7, 180x110cm - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

Although Al Beik's official start in the local art scene came after deciding not to pursue a degree in Business Administration from the University of Damascus, he traces his early creative experiences to his childhood. Memories of his mother taking him to the now-closed Zahraa and Sufaraa cinemas in the heart of the Syrian capital, color the early narrative of a young boy for whom film became an object of fascination and an eventual destiny. Recalling how at age five he watched the films of Abdulhalim Hafez, Farid Al Atrach, and Faten Hamama (to name a few) as part of a sort of "cinematic ritual" that provided solace for his mother from her troubled life—who had been left to raise her son in one of the poorest areas of the Old City after



**Eva**, 2008, Archival Print on Cotton Paper, Edition of 7, 180x110 - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

being abandoned by Al Beik's father—he describes developing a passion for the medium at a very young age. This exposure to cinema was intensified, if not eclipsed, by the filming of scenes for Mohamed Malas' "Dreams of the City" (1983) in Al Beik's neighborhood. It was then that "the rituals of filmmaking and its magical atmosphere" first mesmerized him. Enlisted as an extra in a scene that described the failed unity between Syria and Egypt during the Nasser-era, he was enthralled by the process of creating a separate reality, one that, in his young mind, became mixed-up with that of his daily existence. At the time, after being instructed to exclaim "give space, give space, between your legs Abdul Nasser!" among a group of children during the film's scene,

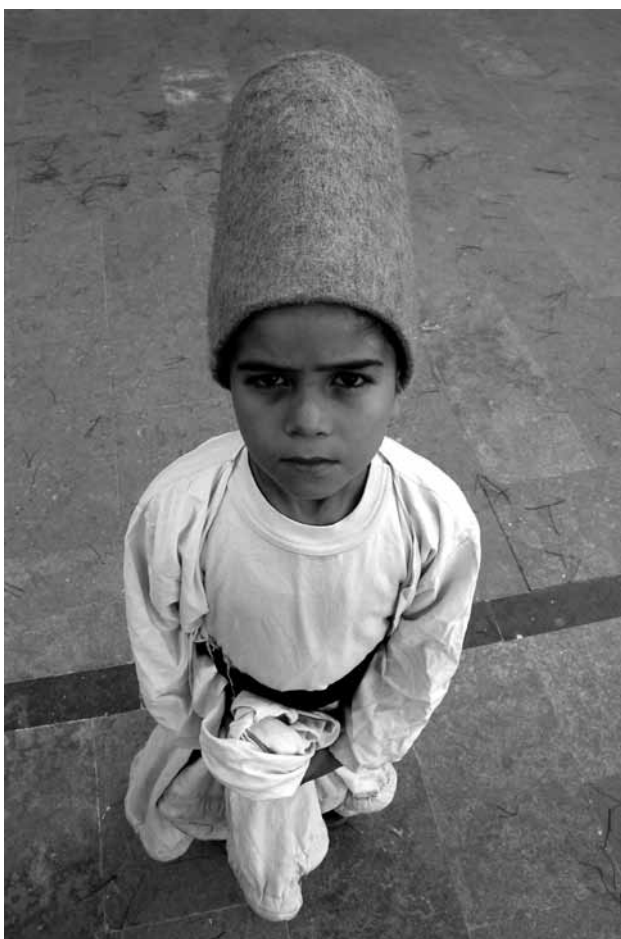


**Maximum Alert**, 2008, Archival Print on Cotton Paper, Edition of 7, 110x140cm - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

AlBeik wondered to himself if, as ordinary citizens, they could openly insult heads of state during filming? The convergence of his life on King Faisal Street in the Old City with the creation of a cinematic work that looked back at one of Syria's most formative political periods, marks his first direct engagement with the art form. Reflecting back on how this experience secured his future in filmmaking, he affirms, "I will forever be in the middle of it, involved in it, and will continue to express the tears that fell down my mother's cheeks in the darkness of movie theaters. My choice for cinema was a choice of life, a choice of rebellion through the reality of its political, social and artistic means." In 2005 he found himself working with Malas once again, this time as assistant director of the feature film "Bab Al Maqam." Al Beik's early cinematic works, such as "Light Harvest" (1997) and "They Were Here" (2000), provide evidence of his strong foundation in photography, as nearly each scene results in the perfect still, acting fundamentally

as a sequence of images. Focusing his camera on agricultural and railway workers, respectively, he relays the silenced undercurrents of Syria's socioeconomic strata through the worn bodies and deliberate gestures of his subjects. Whereas in "Light Harvest" atmospheric music carries this narrative, the monologues of workers who have been abandoned by the system in "They Were Here" cement what Susan Sontag referred to as an "ongoing biography or history," as the fate of their lives is unknown after the film ends.

These cinematic portraits can be viewed as "poetic images" in reference to filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky's description of that which expresses the totality of the universe. For the film image is "indivisible and elusive, dependent upon our consciousness and on the real world which it seeks to embody...It is a kind of equation signifying the correlation between truth and the human consciousness, bound as the latter is by Euclidean space."<sup>5</sup> If we recognize that the notion of



**18 Child Dervish**, 2006, Archival Print on Cotton Paper, Edition of 7, 160x100cm - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

“truth” is entirely subjective, as the concept of “reality” is similarly perception-based, then Tarkovsky’s emphasis on the relationship between the real world and human consciousness in regards to cinema establishes the visual language of film as a vehicle of illumination that brings both the viewer and the filmmaker closer to the collective. When asked about the autobiographical versus a more general projection of collective experience in his films, Al Beik contends that, “In a moment of the collective, the individual is present. And when the individual is elevated, the collective floats.” It is this median point that marks the moment in which these two forms of “truth” come together that is woven throughout his work. Take for example “I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave,” a collaborative documentary that follows the filmmaker Hala Al Abdullah-Yacoub as



**Child Darvish**, 2006, Archival Print on Cotton Paper, Edition of 7, 160x100cm - Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

she returns to Syria after a long period of exile. Intent on realizing the films that she had longed to make, she sets out with Al Beik to execute these premises, as he documents the process through which she attempts to gather material. As several storylines are interspersed throughout the film, this cinematic journey touches on the lack of permanence and the longing for home that informs the many cruelties of exile.

Through interviews with three women who are former political prisoners, two of whom live in Syria, Abdullah-Yacoub probes notions of memory and the internal exile of the mind. As the film continues, it becomes more about the female director’s own past as a native of Hama, activist, and political prisoner, and how filmmaking is a process through which her life’s demons can be exorcized. While the content of this



Still image from the film “Samia”

narrative is thoroughly fascinating with its overlaying of subject matter, traversing landscapes that create a map of the dispossessed across Syria and beyond its borders to France, its artistry and mastery of storytelling is anchored in Al Beik’s cinematography.

Establishing his role in the film early on, he appears in scenes in which he is shown to be physically or audibly present as he advises Al Abdullah-Yacoub on visuals, instructs young actors (who are in fact non-actors, so to speak), or takes moments to himself to reflect on the journey before them. Al Beik’s lens becomes the means through which he sees the subject matter they encounter and a direct link between what captures his eye and the film’s overall narrative. If a scene is compositionally stunning or can be classified as a “poetic image” it is because it is how Al Beik has viewed a particular moment at that very instance, not how he has consciously composed it. This is crucial, as it becomes the line of sight through which the audience is presented with the film’s content and departs from his usage of traditional cinematography in previous works such as “Light Harvest” and “They Were Here” in which it is clear that the laws of formal aesthetics determined

what he recorded with his camera.

In “I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave” Al Beik is free from these conventions, employing the form of filmmaking that Robert Bresson advocated for by emphasizing, “place yourself according to your unforeseeable impressions and sensations. Never decide anything in advance.”<sup>6</sup> It is a reflective way of seeing that drives such methods of capturing the visual as it stems from a desire to record an instantaneous reality and belongs to the auteur theory in cinema, in which the director’s vision becomes detectable as the signature of a film. Some of the most impacting scenes of “I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave” occur when the audience is aware that what it is viewing was created under his authorship. A close up of Al Abdullah Yacoub’s profile as she sleeps on the way to a remote town in Syria is shot by Al Beik from the backseat of a car, first recording the process by which he is able to position his camera from such an awkward angle. A connection is made between the grey hair of Al Abdullah Yacoub’s mother-in-law—a woman who was born in Syria years after her mother escaped the Armenian genocide—and that of her aging husband,



Still image from the film “Samia”

painter Youssef Abdelke, who has not returned to Syria in nearly twenty-five years, connecting a mother and her adult child across painful separation. This unbreakable tie resonates as the viewer witnesses Al Beik noticing this firsthand while Al Abdullah Yacoub interviews her about her familial history, his camera resting on the silver locks that fall onto the old woman’s shoulders. Such acts of natural observation occur out of Al Beik’s preference for filmmaking. “I don’t like to put plans on the form of my film or how it will be in its different scenes,” he explains. “I give freedom as much as I can (the maximum) to my film, which opens to me on its own in its different forms and possibilities.”<sup>7</sup> “I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave” won the award for best documentary when it was shown at the Venice Film Festival in 2006. In Al Beik’s film “Samia” (2008), this type of “collaboration” again adopts several forms of cinema, from Al Beik’s own semi-autobiographical portrait to a visual diary of a visit to the West Bank and Palestine 48 that was recorded by artist Samia Halaby. Halaby gifted this footage to Al Beik after he asked that she bring him a stone from Palestinian soil—a relic of a land that, as a Syrian citizen, he is unable to

travel to. This simple yet symbolic request is something that Al Beik asks of all of his Palestinian friends and colleagues, as he stores these stones in an album that is labeled with the names of the villages that they were brought from. Halaby’s unexpected documentation of this process of selecting a stone from an olive orchard in Ramallah becomes the premise for a cinematic homage to the Palestinian painter, standing as a creative exchange between two artists. As she shoots the ground before her with a digital camera, narrating her every step while she searches among dozens of strewn stones, she inadvertently demonstrates the ways in which her celebrated abstract paintings come into being. Al Beik, who recognizes and relates to this reflective way of seeing, juxtaposes her shots of olive trees with paintings that correlate with how she visually computes the Palestinian landscape before her.

Adding scenes from his fictional film about the Palestinian struggle that is interlaced with material from Jean-Luc Godard’s “Notre Musique” (2004), Al Beik also contextualizes Halaby’s footage as part of larger discussion on representations of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the oft-ignored narrative of those exiled



with the founding of Israel. The excerpts from Godard's film, which mainly consist of an interview with the late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, are both a reference to a call for the French filmmaker to boycott an Israeli film festival in 2008 and the passing of the Darwish that same year. The weight of "Samia" however is derived from the return of the Palestinian artist to the site of her family home in Jaffa, from which she fled during the encroachment of Zionist gangs upon the city in 1948. Leaving her homeland behind to seek shelter in Beirut, her family was never able to return. As an adult Halaby films her ancestral home from a distance, as it is now occupied by Israelis—the evidence of her life in Palestine having been erased from the site years before. The final chapter of the film begins with Al Beik stationing his camera on Halaby in a garden in Syria. As the Palestinian artist sits facing him silently trying not to stare into the sun, the sounds of Damascene traffic and a song by Lebanese icon Fairouz serenade the scene. Over this meditation, the filmmaker has placed Arabic and English subtitles of Halaby reflecting on her creative process and career, acting as a summary of an artist who is in the late period of her work and well aware of her mortality. After a long pause, Al Beik then shakes her hand and thanks the artist for her time. The film ends with a scene near the Mediterranean Sea, the same body of water that Halaby and her family used to escape the Nakba. Al Beik turns his camera so that his shadow is shown while he films the sand, and Fairouz's voice fades. Although an overtly committed work, "Samia" is relatively subtle—free of the graphic imagery and sloganism that is associated with political art. This is indicative of how the political is often engaged in Al Beik's work. It is not that it becomes secondary; on the contrary he remains faithful to his art, giving equal time to all of its converging vantage points. Andrei Tarkovsky's discussion of the connection between aesthetics and the upholding of "truth" summarizes the importance of such work:

*Every age is marked by the search for truth. And however grim that truth, it still contributes to a country's moral health. Its recognition is a sign of a healthy time and can never be in contradiction with the moral idea. Attempts to hide the truth, to cover it, keep it secret, artificially setting it against a distorted moral ideal on the assumption that*

*the latter will be repudiated in the eyes of the majority by the impartial truth—can only mean that ideological interests have been substituted for aesthetic criteria. Only a faithful statement about the artist's time can express a true, as opposed to a propagandist, moral ideal.* 8

Although Al Beik asserts that, "politics is the distribution of power and influence within a certain community or a certain regime," he nevertheless possesses complex views on how the political can arise in art:

*Noting that I am not involved in "politics" [as it pertains to this definition], I am a filmmaker and an artist—my art cannot be stripped away from what is going on around me. I am part of this social community and I like to practice my freedom and my rights according to what is allowed. I don't like anyone stealing from me, be it my money or my freedom, therefore no matter how our emotions change on the surface of the painting or in a film, we keep on expressing ourselves the way that we are and according to what is happening in our kitchen, our playground, our studios, our televisions, our art galleries and our friends. The political [in art] is, as much as possible, an attempt at social justice and a rejection of injustice. Anyone who is not affected by that cannot be honest in his art and his ideas, and will therefore be creatively lifeless. Let us forget this horror that dictatorial governments have shaped around us about prevailing concepts of politics. "Politics" means no interference, no communication, no participation and it means killing. This is a naïve and superficial way of thinking that drags us into the confiscation of freedom, thus the freedom of creativity and art. I am not into "politics" at all, but I am attached to my street until the end of my life.* 9

As in his films, Al Beik's photographs are reflections of this attachment to the personal. Having grown up in a marginalized community of Damascus—where he credits his interest in installation art as stemming from the necessity to engineer structures of survival and play, i.e. displays for the food and objects that he would sell to other children or the homemade soccer goals that lined his alleyway—the concept of aesthetics seems to have played a vital role in how he navigated the sociopolitical dimensions of his "street." His photographs, while taken through the same sense of capturing the immediate that defines his films, often carry political nuances.

In the series "The Lost City" (2008), three sisters are photographed within the grounds of Resafa, an ancient

town in northern Syria. Dating back to the time of the Assyrians, Resafa has fallen into disrepair in modern times due to a lack of concern and a halt in development on the part of the Syrian government. Al Beik's muses reflect an almost ghostly presence as they appear near Roman ruins with their backs turned to the viewer against a fading sun. Antiquities that can be found in the Syrian National Museum in Damascus are blanketed with saturations of color as they are arranged in contrast to these images of the three sisters—a psychic intensity radiating from the physical proximity with which they stand huddled together. Making for a photomontage that juxtaposes past ideals of beauty with the striking features of young women who represent an uncertain future, “The Lost City” possesses a certain psychological tension. If evidence of the past is relegated to the stuff of museums and high culture while descendants of this same history are forgotten or ignored, what does that say about the society (or even world) to which they belong? As first seen in “I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave,” Al Beik resumes his exploration of the internally exiled of Syria.

His use of photography to cast light on the mounting issues of the disenfranchised, sometimes ventures into the territory of Pop art, in which aspects of visual culture, namely that which results from material objects that are produced for mass consumption, is highlighted or elevated to the status of fine art. In “Hearing Therapy” (2008), over one hundred album covers of Syrian popular music from different times are placed in a large grid, the graphic designs of which become catching to the eye. Such covers often grace bootleg or independently produced Compact Discs that are widely sold in the many bazaars of Arab cities or by street vendors, a fact that is recognizable to anyone remotely familiar with the inner-workings of Middle Eastern culture. The fact that Al Beik transforms them into visual icons, paying special attention to how the imagery of one might inform the next, reconfigures their importance, questioning definitions of art versus kitsch according to the dominant sensibilities that govern capitalist societies.

In the photographic series “Design Ruler” (2008), he furthers his engagement in concept-driven art by



**Design Ruler**, 2008, Archival Print on Canvas, Edition of 3, 100x160cm  
- Courtesy of Ayyam Gallery.

creating an archival image that symbolizes an aspect of his childhood. Using a simple stationary tool to draft ornate circular patterns across several pages in pen on paper compositions, he then photographed these works and placed the resulting images side by side. The perfectly symmetrical forms that make up these drawings alternate in their cyclonic motion, displaying the tedious act of labor and precision with which they were executed. Although unaccompanied by visual clues that would spell out the story behind these works, the inexpensive plastic templates upon which the series is based are items that Al Beik used to sell as a boy in Damascus. The “Design Ruler” photographs thus underscore the origins of creativity that can shape the individual.

The notion of locating beauty and “truth” in the presumably unlikely of places is emphasized in his photographs as much as it is in his films, and correlates to how he has come to define a decidedly introspective view of aesthetics, one that inherently rejects “art for art’s sake.” Aesthetics, according to Al Beik is to “expect the unexpected, to accept the madness and the creativity and to fly high.”<sup>10</sup>

In order to work within a realm that allows for the greatest potential of “madness and creativity,” he has placed a high value on experimentation, creating a number of experimental films and videos throughout his career. These works, although important, are perhaps better left for a later discussion, as they require great attention to detail and deserve in-depth consideration.



Still image from the film "My Ear Can See"

Delving most recently into installation art, he has done so with the "urgent need to fill a certain void and the desire to ignite the shock of an initial meeting between the viewer [and the work] within an immersion in the details of a guarded space."<sup>11</sup>

References to popular culture and mass media are combined with insights into the impact of geopolitical and socioeconomic states in Al Beik's installations, which he first began exhibiting last year. In 2010 at Ayyam Gallery in Damascus, he debuted "Colored Earth... Black Chainsaw," a multi-room piece that links Pop art and the experiences of working class Syrians through the enshrining of portraits of construction workers, an image of Andy Warhol, the story of a lumberjack, and a photographic study of a handmade pinwheel lollipop. These ostensibly disparate subjects fuel a greater critique on the contemporary art world, as part of his ongoing exploration of the criteria through which (and how) art

is considered.

"Oil Leaks," which he exhibited at the 2011 MENSA art fair in Beirut, consists of several conceptual works that examine the political and the masculine; the metaphorical and the erotic; and the individual and collective, using video, found objects, installation, animation, and sound. Unifying the many aspects (and mediums) that have distinguished his art since the 1990s, "Oil Leaks" is a staunch condemnation of American interventions in the Middle East and the geopolitical agendas that have driven its military operations (and backdoor dealings) since 2001. In "Maradona Vs. Bush," for example, an animated loop of former US president George W. Bush in a duel with leftist-leaning Argentinean soccer player Diego Maradona is surrounded by extracts from the former's recently issued memoirs, notably the section that discusses the second American war on Iraq. Photographs of American license plates and



Still image from the film “My Ear Can See”

a fuel pump with a phallic spout correspond to other works in the installation that represent the violence and machismo posturing of war and the controlling of the Middle East’s natural resources as the motive for the US’ invasions, meddling and power wielding in the region. Maradona, a reoccurring figure in Al Beik’s work, serves as an embodiment of the artist’s ideals in life—in his political thinking, defiant way of being, and tending to the art of soccer. “Oil Leaks” was created after a long period of finding himself homebound while he cared for his infant child in the first months of her life. “Spending five months inside the house led to this installation, as a reflection of political news, which is sometimes driven by interests more than reality, and the tension that comes with it,” explains the artist. “Through conceptual art, I am taking a stand against all that is happening in the region.”<sup>12</sup>

*All he can do is present his own image of the world, for*

*people to be able to look at it through his eyes, and be filled with his feelings, doubts and thoughts.*

—Robert Bresson, *Notes on the Cinematographer* (1975)

#### Notes

- 1-Bresson, Robert. *Notes on the Cinematographer*, page 16. Green Integer: Copenhagen (1997).
- 2-Interview with the artist, September 2011.
- 3-Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*, page 156. Picador: New York (1977).
- 4-Interview with the artist, September 2011.
- 5-Tarkovsky, Andrei. *Sculpting in Time*, page 106. University of Texas Press: Austin (1989).
- 6-Bresson, Robert. *Notes on the Cinematographer*, page 92.
- 7-Interview with the artist, September 2011.
- 8-Tarkovsky, Andrei. *Sculpting in Time*, page 168.
- 9-Interview with the artist, September 2011.
- 10-Interview with the artist, September 2011.
- 11-Interview with the artist, June 2010.
- 12-Correspondence with the artist, April 2011.



Colored Earth... Black Chain-Saw, Installation 2010.

