

**Ammar EL Beik**

Exhibition From 13<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> June

On May 13, 2010 Q Contemporary will present “A Small Wedding” the solo show of Syrian artist and filmmaker Ammar al Beik, which will run for three weeks. Highlighting a series of enigmatic works, the event will reveal another side of the artist, one that has been hidden for sometime. A prominent Arab photographer, Al Beik is recognized for his striking subject matter, his experimental use of medium, and his intuitive approach to creating powerful visual narratives.

Represented by Ayyam Gallery (Damascus/Dubai/Beirut), Al Beik has shown his photographs in exhibitions throughout the region and has participated in numerous international art fairs. A leading figure in Syrian cinema, his films have been featured across the globe, including in such prominent events as the Venice International Film Festival.

This special exhibition will mark the artist’s entrance into a new phase that is sure to affect his work. Q has teamed with up with Ayyam to celebrate this milestone by giving viewers the opportunity to witness this transition firsthand while reflecting on the works that have set him apart from other artists of his generation. The exhibition will present a selection of his remarkable images—those that have defined a previous chapter of his hefty oeuvre.

There are often quiet moments in al Beik’s photographs, a silence that exists between his subjects and their surroundings, as space becomes an indicator of things that are unmentioned. This functions as an opening into his world—the people, places and objects that he is drawn to and seeks to capture. He does so with profound observation. It is within these breaks in the composition, the emptiness that engrosses his female protagonists in “The Lost City” or the stark contrast of a display case and the dark hall in which a gallery attendant stands at the Syrian National Museum in “The Museum Warden” that the viewer can begin to understand the intensity of his work. The impact of these exterior and interior spaces is juxtaposed with the energy that emanates from his subjects, their faces and bodies often functioning as emotive anchors. Yet these are not staged moments but rather meditations on the essence of man, cities and culture, psychological portraits that demonstrate the complexity of our interactions.

Printing his photographs with ultra chrome ink on canvas, he uses a technique that produces works marked by intense color saturation so that his striking black and white images seem to radiate alongside objects that are coated in reds, blues, yellows and greens.

With the introduction of small female nudes, antique Syrian stone sculptures, al Beik situates his subjects within a dialogue of the past and present, framing his compositions with what he describes as “probably the only legitimate example of the naked body in Syria...a reality to nudity that has nothing to do with shame or disgrace.” It is with these small icons that he seems to ask the viewer to contemplate an existence free of the invisible barriers that often hold us back. As such, these lyrical photographs serve as the perfect backdrop for “A Small Wedding.”