

"I did not play the hero"

He prefers to paint women. Since he lives in Lebanon, his subjects have larger breasts and thick lips. Tarek Butayhi is a Syrian artist. And a silent witness.



More than 2.6 million people, has expelled the Syrian civil war which has been raging for two and a half years out of the country. It is estimated that nearly a million of them have fled to the small neighboring country Lebanon, which counts itself only four million inhabitants. Numbers that sound great, but tell us little. An anonymous crowd. There are families who stuffed a few clothes in some cases and in the old Mercedes crossed the border, there are injuries that are patched together in Lebanese hospitals, they are students, hairdresser, bank employees, cancer researchers. In Beirut has every single one face. And a story. One of them is that of the painter Tarek Butayhi.

Tarek painted women. Exclusively. They fascinate him easily. He holds them in their everyday life. He paints in his underpants as reading a book, sitting on the bed. For this purpose he chooses models that he studied with his shy look closely. He observed the movements of a woman as she attracts, as her eyes squint when she laughs. From the pencil sketches arise later with generous brushstrokes abstract portraits. His artworks are selling well at his exhibitions in Beirut or Kuwait. Even in Syria hung his paintings earlier in art galleries.

"I did not play the hero"

In the life of 31-year-old artist from Damascus was no room for tragedy. Also not for politics. When the Syrians began to demonstrate he made with anyway. "Participation in the political process, a confrontation with the powerful - that there was not in Syria. We have worked, studied and lived according to the rules that others have made for us. "That did not seem right to him." But I did not play the hero, which I am not. As the clashes turned violent, I no longer went to the street. "

Tarek refused to leave Damascus anyway. "If we all go away, then who is there to witness what is going on?" Even more than the armed rebels fear the regime the civilians, he is convinced.

When his parents' home and his studio burnt out in an attack, the certificate which indemnified him from military service in al-Assad's army Bashar, the flames fell victim. "The take anyone they can get. Without these papers I would need to engage. And either you're with or you're their enemy. "So he had to flee yet.

More plastic surgery in Lebanon

Since Tarek lives in Beirut, the women get bigger breasts and thicker lips in his pictures. This is no accident: Lebanese women have a pronounced penchant for cosmetic surgery. "There are beautiful women, women who like to introduce yourself, love your body, but rape him simultaneously with surgery. I would not evaluate, I put it simply laid. "

Tarek is not a man of many words. And certainly not loud. The war in Syria has achieved but also Tarek's images, they have become more violent. The pictures show heads, from which flows blood, mothers with children mutilated in their arms, young women in tight jeans with soldiers helmet. In one image, a veiled woman can be seen who is baring down from the navel. It was created after a series of rape became known in a village. "I see it as my duty, what happened in my country, hold. I want to document the war. At the same time I want to force anybody to my point of view. Not even when I paint scenes from the war. The Expressionist style helps me. It allows each viewer its own access. "

When asked how it will be in Syria one day, he says: "In the Western media always talks about the jihadists who take the upper hand in Syria. But the Syrians are not fundamentalists. There are gentle people. We will not leave them our country. "