

## Tarek Butayhi

Tarek Butayhi is a Syrian artist born in 1982, he graduated in 2006 at Damascus University He has held group exhibitions in his homeland, Lebanon, Cairo and participated in various solo exhibitions in Syria and Kuwait in 2006. However, his multitude of skills is what brought him to Art on 56th's radar. In 2012, he participated in two auctions sponsored by Jusoor Foundation to support Syrian educational aspirations in Dubai and New York. Tarek's work, is characterized by its expressive content and spontaneity. During the painting process, the colours are what define the shapes forming contrast. The series «Figures of Women» are also an essential aspect of his paintings. He breaks stereotypical constraints of the female character through distinct representations in his paintings.

## Collective Exhibitions

- 2016 Art on paper, Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2015 Collective 2015, Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2015 Art 15 London, «Emerging & Upcoming artists from Lebanon & the MEA» Art on 56th, London, UK
- 2014 Syrian Art auction 101 works of Art for Syrian Children Refugees, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2014 Humanitarian Art Show «Syrian Art: of today», London, UK
- 2014 Art 14 London, Art on 56th, London, UK
- 2014 - 2013 Summer Collective Exhibition, Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2014 - 2013 Beirut Art Fair , Art on 56th, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2013 Contemporary Istanbul, Art on 56th, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2013 Gallery Kab, «World Peace Day, Kuwait
- 2012 Kettaneh gallery "Artist from Syria Today", Beirut, Lebanon
- 2012 Mashrabiah art gallery, "Artist from Syria Today", Cairo, Egypt
- 2012 Mustafa Ali gallery, "Small Painting", Damascus Syria
- 2012 Auction sponsored by Jusoor Foundation to support Syrian educational aspirations. Dubai, UAE
- 2012 Auction sponsored by Jusoor Foundation to support Syrian educational aspirations. New York, USA
- 2012 Kozah gallery, Damascus, Syria
- 2011 Rewaq al Qeshla gallery "Sketch", Damascus, Syria
- 2011 Subhi Shuaib gallery, Homs, Syria
- 2009 Dar Kalamat gallery, Aleppo, Syria
- 2009 Exhibition at the museum of modern art, sponsored by UNDP, Latakia, Syria
- 2008 Exhibition at the Arab Cultural center in occasion of the international day for the elimination of violence against women, sponsored by UNDP Mezzah, Syria
- 2007 French cultural center, Graduates exhibition, Latakia, Syria
- 2006 French cultural center, Graduates exhibition, Damascus, Syria
- 2009 Youth Exhibition, Damascus, Syria
- 2005-2009 Cultural week for students, Golan, Syria

## Individual Exhibitions

- 2016 Encounter with women in Beirut, Boushahri art gallery, Kuwait
- 2015 Artiform, Le pois penche, Montreal, Canada
- 2015 Art on 56th, «Women on canvas 2015», Beirut, Lebanon
- 2014 Art on 56th, «Women on Canvas» Beirut, Lebanon
- 2011 Boushahri art gallery, Kuwait
- 2009 Dar Kalamat, Aleppo, Syria

## Artist Statement (Translation)

A PIECE OF HIS BEAUTIFUL SOUL/HUMANITY IS GOING TO RUB OFF ON US

Can we avoid looking at his women on the canvas, with their piercing eyes, despite knowing their detachment from their real character?

Tarek Butayhi may suggest this thought to us, in order to fairly acknowledge his power in transforming and elevating those bodies from their free senses into a space full of beauty which generously blesses his subjects with purity. This blessing of purity, however, is not exclusive to his women drawn with innocence.

The existence of those shattered women standing before us remains a secret. His sketches, despite implying the beauty and sensuality of the bodies, surely keep the secret while avoiding criticism. Those sketches (drawings) are invaded only by a sense of wicked flirtation which resembles memories from a distant past.

You can observe life based on what it brings, carrying pure and expressive values that the artist has already experienced while conceiving his drawings.

Those pure values may stand between us while we are contemplating this feminine and implicitly sexual body. According to Butayhi, this body was only an excuse to draw; an opportunity for the art to exist under extreme pressure. Undoubtedly, we are obliged to contemplate a secret world that we cannot perceive in our daily life. Although this world receives its happiness from the artist, it will soon be forgotten, as our eyes look over the paintings that have been soaked with the artist's pleasure.

One streak of Butayhi's brush will transport us far from this world full of tainted imagination. It is at this moment that Butayhi keeps his feet on the ground, peacefully thinking of his ancestors, tapping on his shoulders through the consented witches; Toulouse Lautrec and Egon Schiele. Butayhi resists the urge to look upon the work of his ancestors, although he is in continuous admiration of their legacy.

His drawings only describe his visual living experiences; he strives to be one of the few artists to concentrate on the secrets of the human body. The flirtatious desire and sensual curiosity freely transfuses our bodies, and reaches into our souls, a place where the effect of beauty meets the strength of art. This is when Butayhi relishes the memories, most of them in his imagination. His works of art raise all kind of questions regarding the fate of the body.

This is a sensual artist that has the power, with his bright imagination, to bring back memories and spark life in them.

While drawing, Tarek abandons his natural senses and submits to his ideas, governed by the primitive rules of imagination.

But, do we have to excuse him for using the feminine body as a purely personal experience? There should be no misunderstanding of the issue, because the Butayhi that is drawing is not the same one that is using his senses. His visual memory will come alive in the beautiful ending, which culminates in his art. This memory, however, will not be spared by the criticism of art itself.

Filling the emptiness of the suffering our reality brings is the goal of the artist. He uses his imagination and psychological gifts until he attains what he considers is close to perfection, and that is when he removes his hand from the canvas.

Tarek Butayhi is the son of his own visual memory, but he is also the enemy. He chose not to be handsome and flattering like Lautrec. Simultaneously, his artistic bareness resembles that of Schiele, without attempting to imitate Schiele's exaggerated obscenity.

What we can say about Tarek Butayhi is that he is a type of purist artist that does not regard the body in sexual terms. Rather, he takes a step back, transforming the desired body into an inspiration vessel, an opportunity to draw. He does not wish to expose the body, but instead to consider its suffering.

A piece of Tarek's beautiful humanity/soul will rub off on us when at the sight of his canvases.