

Retrospective of Abdel Hamid Baalbaki's work

Abdel Hamid Baalbaki (1940-2013)

Saleh Barakat Gallery invites you to a retrospective of Abdel Hamid Baalbaki's work. The opening night will coincide with the book launch of a monograph on the artist by Gregory Buchakjian.

The retrospective showcases Abdel Hamid Baalbaki's oeuvre from his early years as a student at the Lebanese University's Institute of Fine Arts until his last paintings of the mid 2000s. As an artist whose practice developed during the years of the war, Baalbaki was concerned with how to represent his reality. He rejected the aestheticism of many of his peers, and refused to participate in the art salons of his time in resistance of art's commodification. He sought a critical form of realism to address the everyday in his region of *Jabal Amel* in the Lebanese South. Inspired by the Mexican muralists' engagement with socialist realism, he produced "murals", but on the portable medium of canvas. Towards the end of his life, he began to paint landscapes as a way to confront the rise of ecological disaster, as well as the political desolation that accompanied the emergence of the new world order.

Abdel Hamid Baalbaki (1940-2013) was an artist whose practice spanned painting, sculpture, fiction, and poetry. He graduated with a degree in Fine Arts from the Lebanese University's Institute of Fine Arts in 1971, and pursued advanced studies in Paris. He returned to the Lebanese University to teach in 1974, where he remained a professor until 2004. He published three books of poetry, and two of prose. He also wrote extensively for numerous journals and art and culture magazines. Notable solo shows of his took place in Gallery One (1983), Glass Hall in the Ministry of Tourism (1998), and Unesco (2008). He has participated in over sixty group exhibitions in Lebanon and worldwide. He was the president of The Lebanese Association for Painters and Sculptors (LAAPS) from 1992-1994.

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