

## *The Collection of Y. Hayek*

Series 1, works by Salah Saouli. Paintings, objects and installations

For several decades, Y. Hayek has been building up a small, but exquisite collection of modern European art. Approximately 20 years ago, he began to collect works of some young Arab artists. He saw in their work something new and ground breaking and decided to concentrate his energy on actively supporting these artists, by buying their work and connecting them with fellow collectors and art professionals.

Long before the large successes of Middle Eastern art at international auctions, Y. Hayek was thus part of the avant-garde of international collectors who started to focus on art from non-Western countries. Never seeking attention, Y. Hayek followed the artists that interested him closely, buying those works he felt represented important milestones in their careers. Thereby he consulted with a group of international art historians and other scholars. The collection of Y. Hayek stands out through its selective quality of the works in its holdings and the meticulously gathered information surrounding the work processes of the artists, something Hayek has always placed a high importance on. Thus, sketch- and notebooks, models and objects of various kinds take up an important place in the collection.

The need to engage the public in meaningful discussions about art and its history in the Arab world led Hayek to develop the idea of opening a private museum some years ago. Consequently, while looking for the best location for this museum and also to test this idea, he decided to show a part of his collection in a series of exhibitions in different cities around the world. Each single exhibition will concentrate on the works of one particular artist, presenting his or her work in a wider art historical context. Thus, for each exhibition, ample textual material will be produced together with an art historian of Hayek's choice and made available to the audience.

The first exhibition of this kind will present works by the Lebanese artist, Salah Saouli, one of the pioneering artists to explore new artistic media immediately after the Civil War and who, from the distance of his German base, has investigated different aspects of the war's consequences throughout his work. A series of projects stemming from different periods of the artist's career will be presented together with other works that form an art historical dialogue with Saouli's works. The texts accompanying the exhibition have been produced together with the art historian Charlotte Bank.

The opening of this first exhibition in April 2014 also sees the launch of the website of the collection where art historical texts, images and general information on the collection and the artists are featured. It seeks to create a space for dialogue and debate on the subject of contemporary Arab art and aims to help inspire innovative art historical research in the Arab world, about Arab artists and their works, seen in their global context.

Among the artists in the collection are: Said Baalbaki, Taysir Batniji, Mona Hatoum, Larissa Sansour, Salah Saouli, Zineb Sedira

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