

# ROSE ISSA

**ayman baalbaki:**

**"beirut again and again"**

**ROSE ISSA PROJECTS, LONDON**

**9 NOVEMBER - 9 DECEMBER 2011**

**TUESDAY - SATURDAY 1-5 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT**

For his second solo show in London, Lebanese artist Ayman Baalbaki returns to the theme of a city scarred by its experience.

Baalbaki was born in Lebanon in 1975, the year the Lebanese civil war began. Since childhood he has experienced invasion, war, displacement, destruction and deception. For this reason, many of his paintings register the impact of nearly 20 years of war and the turmoil of living in Beirut.

He expresses his themes in thick ridges of paint in a ravishing array of colours, juxtaposing his expressive brushstrokes with floral textiles that bring lightness and life to his depictions of bombed buildings, bullet-ridden façades, piles of rubble, snipers' towers, destroyed luxury hotels, and half-finished housing with skeletons of scaffolding. These are buildings that witness; buildings that talk and sometimes even bleed.

Brutal yet beautiful, Baalbaki's work records the destruction that civil war and repeated Israeli invasions have inflicted on Lebanon. They are highly charged, a fitting tribute to the traumatic recent history his countrymen have experienced, and yet somehow also joyful, with blue skies and flowers that suggest hope can emerge from despair.