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282 words

**Kayyali, Louay (Born Aleppo, Syria, 1934-died Aleppo, Syria, 1978)**

Louay Kayyali was one of the leading painters in the emergent Syrian art scene during the 1960s and 1970s, and his most admired works depict individual laborers as “types” illustrating the tragic humanism of everyday life. Kayyali began his career in Aleppo, exhibiting academic portraits and still lifes locally. In 1956, he won a fellowship to study the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, where he became interested in fresco and other traditional techniques. After finishing his studies in 1961, Kayyali settled in Damascus and joined the faculty at the new College of Fine Arts. For a period of five years, he exhibited his portrait types, flowers, and architectural landscapes – rendered in simple lines and color stains on pressed chipboard – regularly, to acclaim from collectors. From 1965 onward, Kayyali began to struggle with mental illness. In this later period, he turned to more overtly politicised themes, including a series of dramatic charcoal drawings of citizens under siege, which was sponsored by the Syrian government as a touring exhibition in support of the Arab liberation cause. He also continued to produce paintings of fishermen, street sellers, and mothers as representations of the social themes then preoccupying him.

**References and further reading**

Atassi, Mouna, and Samir Sayegh (1998) *Contemporary Art in Syria, 1898-1998*, Damascus, Syria: Gallery Atassi. (Contributor’s comment: Most comprehensively illustrated volume on modern Syrian art).

Al Sharif, Tariq (1972) ʿ*Ishrūn Fannānan min Suria (Ten Artists from Syria)*, Damascus, Syria: Ministry of Culture. (Contributor’s comment: Includes a chapter on Kayyali, with a detailed reading of his artistic practice up until 1972).

Kashlan, Mamdouh (1974) *Louay Kayyali*. Damascus, Syria: Fine Arts Syndicate, Artistic Publications Series. (Contributor’s comment: An Arabic-language monograph by a colleague of the artist).