

**al markhiya gallery in collaboration with Dalloul Artist Collective  
presents**

***WHEN BEIRUT WAS A CINEMA***

Works by Yervant Hawarian

25 August - 10 September

There was a time when cinema in Beirut did not begin when the lights went down. It began outside, in the streets, beneath illuminated marquees and monumental hand painted posters, among passing buses, taxis, cafés, and crowds gathering before a screening. Cinema was part of the city's architecture, its rhythm, and its public life.

*When Beirut Was a Cinema* brings together fifteen paintings by Yervant Harwarian that revisit this chapter of Beirut's cultural memory, reimagining cinemas and theatres such as Cinema Royal, Piccadilly, Rialto, Byblos, Cristal, Hollywood, the Grand Theatre, and the National Theatre, landmarks around which the city once moved.

These are not simply nostalgic images of old Beirut; they carry the memory of an artist who witnessed and shaped this history. Hawarian arrived in the city in the early 1960s and began working at fifteen as a cinema poster painter, producing monumental film posters for theatres across Lebanon. By the early 1970s, he expanded into cinema operations, including Cinema Royal, where his studio was based. The streets and theatres he paint today were not distant subjects; they were the visual world in which his artistic language first emerged. Before the gallery, there was the street; before the canvas, there was the cinema poster.

Since the early 2000s, Yervant Hawarian has often returned to this world through his practice, transforming imagery once created for public display into reflections on memory, place, and cultural history. The young Hawarian once painted the images that invited Beirut into the cinema. Today, he paints the cinemas so that we may enter that Beirut once again. For a moment, the city was not merely a place with cinemas; the city itself was cinema.