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Driscoll Babcock Galleries  
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Tuesday – Friday: 10:00am – 6:00pm  
Saturday: 12:00pm – 6:00pm

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**Wafaa Bilal: Lovely Pink**  
February 26-March 14, 2015  
Project Space



Left: Wafaa Bilal, LOVELY PINK: ARES, GOD OF WAR, 2014, Cold cast resin, nail polish, enamel paint, shrink-wrap, fabric, latex, and crude oil, 12 1/2 x 6 x 5 1/2 inches



Right: Wafaa Bilal, LOVELY PINK: WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE, 2014 Cold cast resin, enamel paint, shrink-wrap, fabric, latex, and crude oil, 10 3/4 x 3 7/8 x 3 3/8 inches

DRISCOLL BABCOCK GALLERIES presents *Wafaa Bilal: Lovely Pink*, an installation which, in the wake of ISIS's destruction of Iraqi cultural heritage, resonates with the destabilization of iconic structures. In *Lovely Pink*, Bilal has manipulated miniature reproductions of twelve of the most recognizable sculptures in Western history—including Michelangelo's *David*, *The Venus de Milo* and *The Winged Victory of Samothrace*. The mass produced tourist objects, made of cold cast resin and bonded marble, are covered with heavy black enamel and heated industrial shrink wrap, creating a veil that obscures faces, appendages and bodies in whole. Shining with the slickness of the petroleum-based enamel paint, the figures drip with black – like so many casualties of an offshore oil spill. While creating these new works of art, Bilal must in essence destroy the original cultural artifacts. This act of destruction carries with it the weight of mirroring the actual and horrific destruction of Iraq's cultural heritage sites (including the Shia Saad bin Aqeel Husseinia shrine in Tal Afar and Mosul's al-Qubba Husseinia mosque) by the militant group ISIS.

In *Ares, God of War*, Ares's spear and shield are covered under a layer of "Lovely Pink" glitter nail polish that contrasts sharply with the sculpture's representation of classical, idealized hyper-masculinity. At this miniature scale, Ares's weapons are rendered comical and impotent, evoking children's toys. In contrast, *Perseus Beheading Medusa* is dipped entirely in funerary black as Perseus stands victorious, rising above a beheaded female form and holding high a blurred and featureless head distorted by Bilal's shrink wrap shell. Here, weapons are lethal, their victim obliterated both in body and in name, standing in for the innumerable nameless fallen.

In *Winged Victory of Samothrace*, the goddess Nike is similarly drenched in the glossy black enamel. The canon of art history has immortalized the Greek sculpture as a masterpiece of the ancient Western world and Nike as a messenger of victory. Yet Bilal engages her here as a recipient of violence, her wings bound and draped in a heavy oiled coat. Calling new attention to her decapitated, dismembered body—to her physical inability to sound the call of victory—dispels the possibility of triumph through warfare.

### ABOUT WAFAA BILAL

Wafaa Bilal has been represented by Driscoll Babcock Galleries since 2013. Bilal's work is represented in major public collections, including Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Milwaukee Art Museum; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California. He has exhibited extensively in galleries and institutions throughout the world, including the US, Thailand, Iraq, the UK, Dubai, Lebanon, France, and Germany, and he has served on the panels of over twenty major global universities and institutions, including the Tate Modern, UK; Harvard University; Stanford University; Museum of Art and Design; the Global Art Forum, Qatar; and the Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts, Turkey. His work has been reviewed in major publications, including *ARTnews*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Newsweek*, and he is the author of the critically-acclaimed 2008 publication Shoot an Iraqi: Arts, Life and Resistance Under the Gun.

### ABOUT DRISCOLL BABCOCK GALLERIES

Driscoll Babcock Galleries, founded in 1852, is the oldest gallery in New York City, and the nation's oldest gallery which from its inception has focused on American art. During the tenure of current president Dr. John Driscoll, the gallery has helped to secure numerous prized works for major private collectors and museums across the country including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery, all in Washington, D.C.; The Cleveland Museum; The Detroit Institute of Arts; Minneapolis Institute of Arts; Greenville County Museum of Art, South Carolina; Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville Arkansas; The Kemper in Kansas City; The Museum of Fine Arts-Houston and dozens of other museums.

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