

For Immediate Release

So Long, and Thanks for all the Fish

A group show with works by Adam Dix, Tala Madani, Basim Magdy & Taus Makhacheva

Private Preview:

Monday 2 June 2014 7 – 9pm

Exhibition continues until 17 July 2014

As the heat dawns upon us and a lucky few start contemplating leaving for cooler climes, Lawrie Shabibi is pleased to present a group show bringing together four artists whose work all include elements of the absurd, the surreal and hint at possible futures. Inspired by the fourth book in The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy series, the title is a message left by dolphins when they left Planet Earth just before it was demolished to make way for a hyperspace bypass. Preoccupations with Sci-Fi, fantasy, transformations and magic permeate the show, which combines animation, painting, photography and video. Elements of nostalgia for an ordinary life are cajoled by bizarre forces into a strange new world, where ritual, violence and technology complete to be catch of the day. The little things that justify our existence are questioned as we seek to find a way out on a new wave.

Adam Dix's neo-futurist paintings speak of a time of historical optimism, when absolute faith was put into new communication devices; embraced as powerful spiritual icons for the modern age, which deserved to be worshipped and revered. The collective awe and wonder is palpable; any sense of individuality is forgotten in the group dynamic. Using a muted palette and strong, dramatic lighting, Dix's fictive landscapes seem to be taken from a post-apocalyptic world. Satellite discs take on the role of haloes or crop circles and phone masts totems or flags; lead characters are disguised by wearing Shaman-like masks and costumes. The merging of folklore, local religion and science fiction throw us into an uncertain future.

Tala Madani infuses her video animations with the rich brushstrokes and loose, expressive technique that characterize her paintings, creating uncomfortable scenes in which bald, middle-aged men engage in absurd scenarios that fuse playfulness with violence and perversity. *Eye Stabber* is a fantastical vignette, taking place in a sinister alleyway where the protagonist's torso becomes covered in cutouts of different eyes. Overcome by this curious turn of events he lashes out, eventually escaping this bloody mess and propelling his shrunken form into a rubbish bin at the rear of the set. Created for Madani's travelling show at Moderna Museet, Malmo and Stockholm in 2013, it was also exhibited at the Marrakech Biennale 5 earlier this year.

A winner of the 2014 Abraaj Group Art Prize, Basim Magdy's practice is grounded in an interest in iconic images and objects found outside of explicit historical investigation and political referencing. His work concerns itself with the social implications of such symbols, and their transformation over time, forming a mix of legend and bizarre cultural constructions and encounters. Here he presents a selection from the ongoing photographic series *Every Subtle Gesture*, which featured in the Istanbul Biennial in 2013. Snapshots seemingly from an archive, whose relevance and purpose remains unknown, are paired with phrases invented by the artist, coming together to create an indecipherable narrative.

The video *A Space of Celebration* from 2009 by Taus Makhacheva that was part of the Art Dubai 2014 film programme, brings us back to earth by revealing the absurdity of highly commercialized lavish wedding ceremonies. By focusing on an event that is common to all worldly cultures and speaks to the heart of human existence, Makhacheva helps us discover (or remember) the traits that make us distinct and extraordinary.

Biographies of the artists

Adam Dix (b. 1967, London, UK) lives and works in London where he graduated with an MA in Fine Art From Wimbledon College of Art in 2009. Notable exhibitions include 'The Future Can Wait', Saatchi Gallery, London (2011 & 2012), 'Transmission', Haunch of Venison, London (2010) and most recently 'Yesterday's Prophets', Eleven Gallery, London (2014). Dix has been nominated for the Jerwood Drawing Prize (2007 & 2013), the Caitlin Art Prize (2011) and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Awards for Visual Arts (2000). His work is in the private collections such as the Royal Collection of Monaco, the Zabłudowicz Collection, London and the University of the Arts, London.

Tala Madani (b. 1981, Tehran, Iran) received her MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2006 and lives and works in Los Angeles. She has exhibited widely internationally since then. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Tala Madani', Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham; 'Rip Image', Moderna Museet Malmö & Stockholm (2013) and 'The Jinn', Stedelijk Museum Bureau, Amsterdam (2011). She was shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize (2013) and awarded the Catherine Doctorow Prize for Contemporary Painting (2013) and was included in the exhibition 'The Generational: Younger Than Jesus', The New Museum, New York (2009).

Basim Magdy (b. 1977, Assiut, Egypt) currently lives and works between Basel and Cairo. Selected recent exhibitions include The Abraaj Group Art Prize, Dubai (2014), the 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013), 'Dissident Futures', Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco and the Biennale Jogja XII, Yogyakarta. He was also shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize (2013) and participated in La Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2011); 'Transmediale', Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2012); 1st Time Machine Biennale of Contemporary Art. D-O ARK Underground, Konjic (2011) and Sharjah Biennial 11, Sharjah (2011). His films have screened at Tate Modern and Film Festival Rotterdam.

Taus Makhacheva (b. 1983, Moscow, Russia) currently lives and works between Makhachkala and Moscow. She holds a BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths College and an MA in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art, both London. Selected exhibitions include 'History of Russian Video Art, Volume 3', Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2010), 'Rewriting Worlds', 4th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011), 'City States', 7th Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool (2012); 11 Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah (2013); 'Love me, Love me not', 55th Venice Biennale, collateral event, Venice (2013) and 'A Walk, A Dance, A Ritual', Museum of Contemporary Art,

Leipzig (2014). She has won the Innovation State Prize in Contemporary Art, National Centre for Contemporary Art, Moscow (2012) and the Future of Europe Prize, Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig (2014).

About Lawrie Shabibi

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in a 3000 square foot warehouse in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery's programme supports multi-generational, international contemporary artists mainly from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, the gallery engages the wider local and international community.

The gallery represents Hamra Abbas, Wafaa Bilal, Asad Faulwell, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Selma Gürüzbz, Nabil Nahas, Driss Ouadahi, Marwan Sahmarani, Larissa Sansour, Yasam Sasmazer, Shahpour Pouyan and Adeel uz Zafar.

Media Contact

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To download the accompanying publication and for further information about the exhibition and other gallery activities please visit www.lawrieshabibi.com.