

PRESS RELEASE

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim: *The Space Between the Eyelid and the Eyeball*

Private View: Tuesday, 5th March, 2019, 6 – 9 PM

Exhibition Continues until 9th May, 2019

Lawrie Shabibi is delighted to announce *The Space Between the Eyelid and the Eyeball* a solo exhibition by Khorfakkan-based artist, Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim comprising three bodies of work that span his engagement with painting and sculpture. Linking each of these works is Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim's compulsive and intuitive sense of repetition, variation and humor.

Ibrahim is part of the UAE's first generation of contemporary artists from the 1980s and one of "the five" - a signature given to five conceptual artists who formed The Flying House collective and who include the late Hassan Sharif, Hussain Sharif, Abdullah Al Saadi and Mohamed Kazem. Always based in Khorfakkan, a rambling coastal town surrounded by the rocky Hajar Mountain range, this deep connection to his local environment repeats itself throughout his practice and the materials he has worked with for over three decades. His choice of material are rudimentary and local – rock, copper wire, earth, clay, discarded plastic bottles and waste paper – as, too, are his forms and colours.

The exhibition revolves around a large group of irregular-shaped sculptures that dominate the gallery floor space. Some resemble pylons or scaffolding, others toys, animals, trees and fruit. The brightly coloured papier-mâché sculptures are made of natural paper pigments combined by the artist, their vivid repeated lines of colour consistent with the obsessive mark-making of his practice, whilst the shapes reflect the natural formations of his domestic landscape. His choice of vibrant and at times garish colour combinations seek to capture the "explosion in his eyes" he experienced when he first saw the sunset – until that moment life between the Hajar Mountains had obstructed its view.

Black and white papier-mâché architectonic works, part painting, part sculpture, part collage line one of the gallery's walls a series first shown at his survey at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2018. Drawing from Ibrahim's two-dimensional Lines series (drawings of black or white lines that are reminiscent of ancient cave markings) these peculiar pieces have a primordial quality to them – a grouping of hand-molded oblong shapes wedged with blocks, slivers or bodies of paper hanging from strings. At times minimal, at times complex, the works play with notions of multiplicity and division.

On the other walls are groups of Sitting Man portraits, an intriguing series in different sizes and colours in which the head of the sitter is always cropped, moving the focus instead to the bodily posture and clothing. The image was originally taken from a photograph of his friend, the late artist Hassan Sharif, Ibrahim's mentor and pioneer of conceptual art in the UAE.

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim's modest structures explore his deep fascination with memory, imagery and ways of seeing and experiencing the environment. Consequently 'the space between the eyelid and the eyeball' is the place where forms and shapes reside even with closed eyes. Ibrahim's art comes from both his personal experiences and the kind of innate memory found in our DNA, which he describes as a "primitive urge."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim (b. 1962, Khorfakkan, UAE) is part of the UAE's first generation of contemporary artists from the 1980s, an avant-garde that included Hassan Sharif, Abdullah Al Saadi, Hussein Sharif, and Mohammed Kazem. Ibrahim has exhibited internationally including at the Venice Biennale (2009), the Kunstmuseum Bonn (2005); the Sharjah Art Museum (2005 and 1996); the Dhaka Biennial (2002 and 1993); the Ludwig Forum (2002), the Havana Biennial (2000); the Cairo Biennial (1998); L'Institut du Monde Arabe (1998); the Sittar Art Center (1995); and the Sharjah Biennial (1993- 2003 and 2007). In March 2017 a survey of works spanning three decades of practice was presented at the Sharjah Art Foundation curated by Hoor Al Qasimi.

His works are in significant international collections, including the Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE), the Sharjah Art Museum (UAE); Art Jameel (UAE); Arab Museum of Modern Art (Qatar); KunstcentrumSittard (Netherlands), the British Museum (London) and Le Centre Pompidou (Paris).

Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim lives and works in Khorfakkan, United Arab Emirates.

ABOUT LAWRIE SHABIBI

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organizes art historical exhibitions working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presented Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary arts community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has in the space of seven years been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit: <http://www.lawrieshabibi.com>

PRESS INQUIRIES

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