

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



ABDULNASSER GHAREM: RESTORED BEHAVIOUR

XVA GALLERY, DUBAI, UAE

17 JANUARY - 10 MARCH 2010

XVA Gallery is proud to announce the first major solo show by acclaimed Saudi artist, Abdunasser Gharem. Opening On 17 January, the exhibition is entitled *Restored Behavior* and will showcase recent 'stamp' paintings, installations and photographs from a series of site specific performances made in and around his home in southern Saudi Arabia.



The Path (Al Siraat), Site Specific Installation, Tihama Strip, Saudi Arabia, 2007

Gharem is unique for a number of reasons, not least the way he combines his life as a conceptual artist with a career in the Saudi Arabian Army. Gharem sees his studio as the street (or wherever in the landscape he locates an artistic opportunity). Critically, he is someone who understands the value of contingency. It's something he positions at the heart of his practice. Gharem is canny, clever and daring; an individual who is switched on politically and socially. The work in this exhibition is rooted absolutely in its (and his) geographic and social context. Gharem moves among people remixing social situations in order to question them, playfully.

Throughout the work in this exhibition, Gharem questions our relationship and trust in the structures and materials that surround us. In *Restored Behaviour*, Gharem is concerned with our understanding of, and relationship to, concrete, the material and the premises that we trust in ideas and structures that are presented as absolute. Concrete in this context denotes safety and immovability. The yellow lines and signifiers in these works are identical in colour and proportion to those you find edging the roads that spiderweb Saudi Arabia.



The artist with *Detour*, from the series, *Restored Behavior*, 2009

In his use of rubber-stamps in these works, Gharem is addressing bureaucracy and the authority of its accoutrements. As an artist whose work deals in intervention there is an analogy here between the idea of delivering a judgment on your environment as an artist, and the approval or disapproval implied by Gharem's use of stamps.

Gharem believes that "Life is a kind of stamped contract since you're born. You have religion, it's a contract, you have a wife it's a contract, between the countries there is a contract for trading...."

Ultimately Gharem asks us about the choices we make in life; whether we, as individuals, as cultures, as societies are following the straight path, or whether we trust in a path at all.



Flora & Fauna, Performance, 2007



Concrete Block, 2009

Abdulnasser Gharem – Biography

Born 1973, Khamis Mushait where he lives and works today, Gharem is both a practicing conceptual artist and a Major in the Saudi Arabian Army. In 1992 Gharem graduated from the King Abdulaziz Academy before attending The Leader Institute in Riyadh. In 2003 he studied at the Al-Miftaha Arts Village in Abha where the artists shared a similar vision and in 2004 they staged a group exhibition, *Shattah*, which was a significant step in the recent history of contemporary art in Saudi Arabia.



Detail from Mahmoud Darwish, from the series, Restored Behavior, 2009

XVA Gallery

From 2003, XVA has pioneered contemporary Middle Eastern art in Dubai. It is now one of the foremost contemporary art galleries in the Middle East. In 2008 and 2009 XVA participated at the Shanghai and Hong Kong Contemporary Art Fairs, the Asia Contemporary Art Fair in New York and the Dubai International Design Forum. XVA artists have recently exhibited in the 2009 Venice Biennale, Art Abu Dhabi 2009 and the 'Unveiled: New Art From the Middle East' exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery, London. XVA Gallery founded the Bastakiya Art Fair in 2007, initiating an important platform to showcase the art of local galleries as well as attracting international curators. Held every March, BAF coincides with the events of Art Dubai and the Sharjah Biennale.

Contact details for all press enquiries, interview scheduling and high-resolution image requests:

Rosie Hayes, XVA Gallery Director
Tel. +9714 3535383
Fax. +97143535988
Email: rosie@xvagallery.com