Poster/Brochure Design Kashya Hildebrand Gallery

Poster/Brochure Design Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, London Format A3 — Four Fold Distributed at Abu Dhabi Art 2014





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Looking at the recent and current trends that have swept the Middle East, a combination of ongoing simmering tensions as well as a boom in construction and development have led to an urban landscape that is changing at an alarmingly rapid pace. In the process, history and local heritage sees itself becoming erased, and identities are in a constant state of flux.

Those living with - and observing - these changes, are forced to ask themselves: What is retained today to be referenced tomorrow? Artists are challenged to respond to how these events are reflected to not just a global audience, but, indeed, future audiences. How can these realities be presented without falling into a clichéd view of a region already plagued by stereotypes and pre-conceived notions of endless strife, oppression and upheaval?

It is precisely these insights into the Middle East's untold realities that this exhibition aims to explore. As the wider geopolitics are determined from above, another layer of history is being made, in the streets and behind closed doors. The artists here seek to reflect the actual realities of those who live and struggle to maintain them. They represent the everyday and question preconceptions and misconceptions of an otherwise preconceived and misunderstood region.

These are the subjects that artists are choosing to record. This is the today that they are saving for the future.



Ayman Yossri Daydban, Al Qablah Al Oola (The First Kiss), 2014, Arabic comic on acid free paper, 77 x 56 cm Image Courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery, Jeddah

Ayman Yossri Daydban Al Qablah Al Oola (The First Kiss) and The First

& Last Prayer

In 1999, Ayman Yossri Daydban created a series of paintings that portray figures standing alone in a large, isolated cube. Titled *The Room*, the series dealt with identity and communication. These two concepts make up the backbone of the artist's practice. As Daydban sits alone in his studio, working in a room filled with miscellaneous objects and artwork, he ponders the environment that has become his sanctuary, the medium through which he communicates with the outside world. He questions whether it is the room that he belongs to, or rather the world beyond, through a connection via modern-day technology. Daydban's work hinges on this interaction between his life in the room and his life in the space outside of it. This interchangeable existence suggests, for him, that belonging (as a result of communication) is nothing more than shifting a momentary state of consciousness. Indeed, as a Saudi resident of

Palestinian origin, concepts of belonging hold particular

to *The Room* by revisiting objects found within it.

significance for Daydban. In these works, Daydban returns

Randa Mirza Beirutopia

Since the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, Beirut has been striving to regain the glamour and splendour associated when it was known as the 'Paris of the Middle East'. Beirut's current urban landscape is undergoing rapid change with numerous reconstruction and renewal projects. Part of this construction boom comes from large inflows of foreign capital and the profitability of the speculative real estate sector. Here advertisements for construction projects show large billboards in situ reproducing fantastic proposed realities to come. Computerised 'biopolitic' renderings simulate the building, its interior, surroundings, illusory residences and lifestyle. Beirutopia does not differentiate these illusory images and the pastiche narrative that they embody. This confrontation allows for new forms of identification to arise and become reappropriated within the wider social and architectural fabric of the city. The photographs become sites of resistance.



of the artist and Kashya Hildebrand, London.

Ibrahim Abumsmar Al Qiblah Kite

against prevailing defiance.

Winston Churchill once said "Kites rise highest against the wind, not with it." This idea takes on new meaning with Al Qiblah Kite, by Saudi-born Ibrahim Abumsmar, who repurposes everyday objects as sculptures. In the case of his life-sized kite, Abumsmar explores the experience of one's individual faith and its role within a collective. Al Qiblah Kite embodies the tenuous balance of one's moral compass in the face of social pressure and a time of rivalled and challenging circumstances. The Qiblah is the direction Muslims face for prayer, fixed in the direction of the Holy Kaaba in Mecca. By appropriat-

ing such a recognizable symbol onto a kite, Abumsmar

explores the moral triumph of faith and collectivism

Ibrahim Abumsmar, Al Qiblah Kite, 2011, kite, 102 x 200 cm. Image Courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery, Jeddah

