



Al Braithwaite, Halona Hilbertz & Jakob Roepke; *Empathetic Dream Construction*

Vernissage: Saturday January 12, 6pm-9pm

Exhibition Dates: *January 12 – March 5 2019*

XVA GALLERY, Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood, Bur Dubai

In this group exhibition XVA Gallery presents sculpture, collage and painting by British artist Al Braithwaite, American artist Halona Hilbertz, and German artist Jakob Roepke. The exhibition will open with a reception on Saturday the 12th of January, 2019 from 6pm – 9pm.

Halona Hilbertz's sculptures are made from found objects, both natural and man-made. They are about empathy, 'Humans' empathy toward other humans, but also humans' empathy toward life forms that are different from us. Empathy lays bare the connection between creatures (and can even do so between breathing creatures and inanimate objects). In this all-encompassing connection I find Nature, and I find Spirituality; I see Life Itself. Others might call this greater overarching entity God.'

Hilbertz awareness of our threatened planet and our need to protect it is ever present within her work. Mankind's impact on nature and our relationship with it is illustrated in her creature like sculpture: insects and fungi with human faces facilitate a dialogue between the two. She describes the awe-inspiring effect nature has on humans, and our constant quest to understand it. This parallel can be seen in the faces of the viewers, searching for meaning in the constructed shapes, trying to understand the thought processes of the artist, and her intended message.

Jakob Roepke's small scale drawings and collage put man and beast together in surreal and unusual settings, the juxtaposition of creature and environment prompts the viewer once again to question the relationship between man and nature. In Roepke's narratives a subtle balance between unease and harmony is achieved. The human figures are drawn from 19th century Jiu Jitsu and 1970s yoga handbooks and are seen warding off gigantic animals, wild geometric figures and strange alien forms. Drawing upon art history, popular culture and the surrealist tradition, each piece is left open to a wealth of contextual interpretations.

Roepke's sculptural work takes you across geometric planes; shadow and light alter the appearance of the piece based on the viewers perspective. When looking at Roepke's wall mounted abstract reliefs the viewer explores a landscape of abstract shapes, which could represent a mountain range, a cityscape, a quarry.

Al Braithwaite's work is often evocative of the world's current turmoil. 'Hearts' created by imprints from the artist's hand take the shape of a grenade. The viewer might recognize that heart wrenching feeling one gets in an uncomfortable situation, or when anxious about a future event, or when contemplating the unchangeable past. War, famine, climate change, are ever present at the forefront of the viewers mind.

About the XVA Gallery

Established in 2003, XVA is one of the leading galleries in the Middle East that specializes in contemporary art from the Arab world, Iran and the Subcontinent. Exhibitions focus on works by the region's foremost artists as well as those emerging onto the scene. The gallery's artists express their different cultural identities and perspectives while challenging the viewer to drop prejudices and borders. XVA Gallery exhibits both locally and internationally; collaborating with galleries and participating in international art fairs, such as Art Basel Hong Kong, SH Contemporary, Singapore Art Fair and Abu Dhabi Art in 2014, in order to further expose Middle Eastern contemporary art.

XVA Gallery and XVA Art Hotel are located in Dubai's heritage district, now called Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood. XVA founded and organized the Bastakiya Art Fair from 2007- 2010 as part of its commitment to raising the profile of contemporary art practice in Dubai. For three years XVA was located in DIFC, and has now expanded its premises in Al Fahidi.

XVA Gallery Contact

Eleanor Smith, Gallery Director

E: ellie@xvagallery.com

E: xva@xvagallery.com

T: +9714 353 5383

M: +97150 153 3813