



XVA Gallery presents 'The Ocean Refuses No River' a solo exhibition, opening February 22

- UAE based female artist
- Work on paper and sculpture exhibition
- Using maps of UAE to illustrate hope

"I believe maps are not just two-dimensional pieces of paper depicting geographies, but are documents that contain untold stories of adventure, promise, memory and hope."
Naz Shahrokh

January 20, 2020, Dubai, UAE // XVA Gallery is pleased to present *The Ocean Refuses No River*, a Solo exhibition by Naz Shahrokh, focusing on a series of mixed media studies made upon a surface, which originally was a map of the UAE.

The Ocean Refuses No River

The two bodies of work in this exhibition derive from different chronologies within my practice, but share a central contextual significance opening conversations about life's journey.

Ode to the Emirates (Seeking Nefertiti) is a series of mixed media studies made upon a surface, which originally was a map of the UAE. I believe maps are not just two-dimensional pieces of paper depicting geographies, but are documents that contain untold stories of adventure, promise, memory and hope. Indeed, aesthetically they are also beautiful in their own right. Here, the map acts as the base for reconstructed, reimagined, and dissected narratives where the roads and the journey intertwine. The practicality that the map recalls is at odds with the unattained discoveries of the potential journey held in those roads. Like arteries, the roads bring about isolation in location but lead to new horizons. As the map is deconstructed, the imagery depicted becomes less identifiable to the original surface, and components of it are spread across several works. The series *On the Road (from then to now)* are symbolic of combining journals and literature. The original source materials are used notebooks collected over time from my personal use and also from my daughter. Congruent to a journal where a moment is depicted through the usage of words, an image also exists in that moment within our mind. I am investigating the nature of memory and our futile attempts to crystalize it into solid form.

The additional sculptural objects in the exhibition reflect the continuous conversation I have within my practice of sharing narratives through collected parts. The *Artist Palette Series* is a conversation with the process of making objects through collected fragments; both in the active collection of things throughout the journeys and travels, as well as seeking particular materials to convey a personal meaning of a place and time.

Exhibition Dates: February 22 – April 28, 2020

Naz Shahrokh (b. 1969, Tehran)

Naz Shahrokh has worked as an artist and educator internationally in the United States, Egypt, and the UAE. She received a BFA and an MFA in Painting, and an MS in Art History from Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY, where she later taught Fine Arts and Art History from 1998 to 2008. She joined the faculty at the Performing and Visual Arts Department at the American University in Cairo, Egypt in 2004-2006, and has been teaching at Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE since 2008.

Naz has exhibited her work internationally and awards for her work include the Change Inc. (the Rauschenberg Foundation) Grant, Captiva, FL, and the Artist-In-The-Marketplace Fellowship, the Bronx Museum, Bronx, NY. Her work has been reviewed in the New York Times, TimeOut Abu Dhabi, the Connecticut Post, the Advocate and Greenwich Time, Contemporary Practices, and ART PAPERS, and is included in private and public collections internationally.

Throughout her creative process and research, Naz investigates common challenges found within the environment with a focus of bringing forth in tactile matter an experience that is both pleasing to the eye as well as revealing. Naz is currently working on several projects connected to land art, where she is investigating the landscape of the UAE, as well as a body of work linked to Cartograph.

XVA Gallery established in 2003, 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 regions 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.

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.

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