



Samira Abbassy: *Redemptive Narratives and Migrating Patterns*

Vernissage: 11th March, 6pm-9pm

Exhibition Dates: 11th March 2017 – 25th May 2017

XVA GALLERY, Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood, Bur Dubai

XVA Gallery is pleased to announce *Redemptive Narratives and Migrating Patterns*, the second solo show of Samira Abbassy at XVA. The exhibition will present works on paper and oil paintings on gesso panel, from 2002 to 2016.

Abbassy describes her work as an excavation of art history and an exploration of the Self; a form of autobiographical self-portraiture that draws from tradition, history and culture, whilst simultaneously offering contemporary ideas and reminders to the viewer.

The exhibition will open with a reception for the artist on Saturday the 11th of March 2017, from 6pm – 9pm. Abbassy will be available for interviews and tours from the 10th – 18th of March.

Artist Statement

This selection of works consists of works on paper and oil paintings on gesso panel. They are worked, reworked and occasionally destroyed.

These works take on questions and ideas of how to reveal the figure as a psycho/emotional being, and how to depict "a state of being" rather than making objective portraits of the figure.

My work can be described as autobiographical, and perhaps even confessional. I make appearances as various avatars evoking archetypes from various traditions; Greek myths, Old Testament stories, Hindu deities and Muslim folklore.

The titles offer clues to their source of intellectual, cultural, mental and emotional dilemmas, with which we all struggle. By excavating the art of cultures that were considered to be outside the "Western Canon" (Indian, Persian, Tibetan, Hindu/ Muslim/ Buddhist etc), I concoct fictional or mythological histories.

The canvas becomes a place of self examination; "a mirror of inclusion", a place to contextualize the Self and establish an identity. The central figure appears as an archetype rather than a literal attempt at self portraiture, as if attempting to depict myself from the inside out, starting with how it feels to be me, or rather, how it feels to be human.'

By fusing together disparate languages, conventions and myths, I'm seeking an iconography of hybridism, where their underlying common threads can be found. My work attempts to transcend cultural boundaries by proving the porous nature of cultural influence through migration, both historically and currently.

Samira Abbassy
January 2017

About the Artist

Samira Abbassy was born in Ahwaz, Iran & moved to London, UK as a child. After graduating from Canterbury College of Art, she began exhibiting in London. In 1988 she moved to New York to help establish & found the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Studio Program NY, where she currently has lifetime tenure and is a board member.

Her NY solo show in 2007 was reviewed by Benjamin Genocchio in the New York Times and by Ariella Budek in Newsday. In Sept/Oct 2012, Nisa Qasi interviewed Abbassy for the Financial Times lifestyle section.

Her work is shown internationally and has been acquired for private and public collections, including: the Metropolitan Museum, the British Museum, the British Government Art Collection, the Burger Collection, the Donald Rubin collection (Rubin Museum, NY), the Farjam Collection, Dubai, the Devi Foundation, India & the Omid Foundation, Iran.

Her awards include: a Yaddo residency fellowship in 2006, a NYFA in 2007 & a Joan Mitchell Painting/Sculpture award in 2010 and a Pollock-Krasner award in 2014. In April 2012 she was the artist in residence at the University of Virginia & has recently been nominated for the Jameel Prize.

In September 2014 her work was included at the Istanbul Art Fair with the Todd Hosfelt gallery. Upcoming shows in 2015 include a solo show at the Bernstein Gallery, (Woodrow Wilson Schl,) Princeton University, as well as a solo show at XVA galley, Dubai. Also in 2015, the work aquired by the Metropolitan Museum will be on show from Feb - May. Other group shows in 2015 include: "Azadi va Edalet": Stories Retold by Contemporary Iranian Women Artists at The Oglethorpe University Museum of Art - Atlanta, GA, and "Bittersweet"(curated by Jaishri Abichandani) at the Peabody Essex Museum, MA, as well as a curated show by Souhad Rafey at FiveMyles gallery, Brooklyn. Currently a bequeathment to the British Museum by Dr Diana Lipton is in process, which will be the museum's second acquisition.

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 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, 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

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