



XVA GALLERY

Akim Monet: Seeking Al Tawhid in Andalucía

Vernissage: October 11, 6-9pm

Exhibition dates: October 11 – December 10, 2014

XVA GALLERY, Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood, Bur Dubai

XVA Gallery is pleased to announce Swiss American artist Akim Monet's first solo exhibition in Dubai. Monet first publicly exhibited his work in 2002, since then he has had several solo exhibitions including *Passage to India* in New York and Mexico City, *Homage to Gaudi* in Geneva and Belgium, and *Pergamon* in Paris.

Seeking Al-Tawhid in Andalucía is a project Akim Monet began whilst contemplating the lack of human or animal imagery in Islamic Art. Monet began to explore the practice of symbolizing that which is beyond manifestation using abstract geometry, and simultaneously explored the parallels he noticed in using photography to represent the third dimension.

Having spent years in the dark room developing a photographic technique that creates a burnt out effect on his photographs of ancient temples and monuments, Monet developed a style where the final image matches the original negative. The result is an image more akin to the actual act of photography.

Artist Statement:

The idea for *Seeking Al-Tawhid in Andalucía* came to me while thinking about the longstanding rejection of depictions of humans and animals in Islamic art, and the resulting development of the Arabesque in which abstract geometry and stylized organic motifs are used to symbolize, within our manifest realm, that which is beyond manifestation.

I pondered about a possible connection between the invention of this visual language, which leads the eye back and forth between the second and third dimension, and the practice of photography, in which the representation of three-dimensional subject matter is rendered on a flat surface.

I discovered that the infinitely extensible designs in Islamic art, that are themselves made up of individual, self-replicating units have been interpreted as visual demonstrations of the singleness of God and his presence everywhere. They represent 'unity in multiplicity' and 'multiplicity in unity'.

Technically the term for this 'Oneness' is Tawhid - a belief in God's uncompromised unity and transcendence. The best-known expression of this Divine Unity is 'La-ilaha-ill-Allah', (Quran 112:1): 'There is no god but God'.

With these thoughts, I embarked on a journey that began in Andalusia, where in the words of British orientalist and archaeologist Stanley Lane-Poole, "Whatever makes a kingdom great, whatever tends to refinement and civilization was found in Moorish Spain."

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

Eleanor Smith, XVA Gallery Manager

E: ellie@xvagallery.com

E: xva@xvagallery.com

M: 0097150 1533813