



XVA Gallery presents *Perpetual Footnotes*, a solo exhibition, opening 17/12/20

30th November 2020, Dubai, UAE // XVA Gallery is pleased to present *Perpetual Footnotes* a solo exhibition by Meera Alhameli, curated by Walter Willems.

Perpetual Footnotes is the first solo exhibition by Emirati artist Meera Alhameli. Meera is a dancer without a stage, without music and without a public. She draws with her hands and feet and photographs her performances alone in the studio or in remote abandoned places in the outskirts of Abu Dhabi. Her work is laden with bold gestures made by performing refined, repetitive movements. She exposes subtle details defying social norms. As an Emirati woman she is bound to adhere to family traditions and expectations.

In an effort to overcome social limitations and family restrictions, Meera turned to ballet as an adult at 19 years of age. Dance and movement have become her drawing practice. For Meera ballet requires a rigor of understanding, study and performance that she also experiences in the more rigid aspects of being an Emirati woman. The constant return to the paper is a counterbalance to the constant return to the conversation and pressure to focus on a domestic role in life. Ballet allows the expression of thought and emotion as a physical manifestation that she can't channel socially.

The artworks are rebellious, but to her they are respectful to her heritage and cultural background. She resists the notion that she is 'exposing herself' as a dancer or performer. She reveals the invisible traces a dancer leaves following a performance. Every move leaves a mark recorded in deep black graphite. Nothing is hidden or edited. Her choice to use black is a deliberate rejection of the idea that colourful clothes or behaviour make a woman feminine.

Meera's dynamic body prints are raw, visceral and immediate. There is an urgency to the work, and she leaves it all on the surfaces she works on. Her drawings and photographs are visual, tangible recordings of silent performances choreographed in the language of ballet on paper, canvas or as an alternative form of rural graffiti on the walls of abandoned buildings.

In this exhibition Meera is confronting the audience with drawings, works on canvas and photographs ranging from letter sized works on paper to a large wall mural made specifically for the exhibition. The artworks give an insightful look at Meera's motivations for being an artist in the UAE, and above all her versatile approach to technique and determination to express without constraining herself or offending others.

- Walter Willems, Curator

Included in the exhibition are (in alphabetical order): Meera Alhameli

Exhibition Dates: 17th December 2020 – 16th January 2021

Meera Alhameli holds a BFA in visual arts from the College of Arts and Creative Enterprises at Zayed University. The main inspiration for the drawings, photos and works on canvas she makes comes from

her observation that the movement of the body, its energy and the healing process can stimulate new ways of understanding what she is capable of as a young Emirati woman. The black and white palette comes from putting graphite powder on her feet and performing ballet movements on white paper and canvas, a continuation of her experiments with dynamic body prints and classical ballet. Meera completed the Cultural Foundation Art Residency 2020 in Abu Dhabi. Her work has been included in group shows nationally and internationally.

Established in 2003, **XVA Gallery** is one of the leading galleries in the Middle East that specializes in contemporary art from the Arab world and the Sub-continent. 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 London, SH Contemporary and Art Basel Hong Kong 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 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. In 2011 – 2013, XVA Gallery moved to DIFC but has since returned to the XVA location in Al Fahidi with more space. The convenient stock area allows for viewing many artists work in one location.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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