



**XVA Gallery presents *The Ink of Day*, a solo exhibition, opening 17/01/21**

12<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Dubai, UAE // XVA Gallery is pleased to present *The Ink of Day*, a solo exhibition by Hussein Al Mohasen, curated by Martha Hibbert.

*The Ink of Day* is the third exhibition by Saudi Arabian artist Hussein Al Mohasen set in the historic XVA Gallery. Walking through rooms laden with Al Mohasen's works, we are reminded of the tangible experience of poetry and landscape. Each piece puts forth a visual narrative of the transitions of the contemporary between the digital and real, political and social, private and public, and uninterrupted urban and cultural transformations of the Gulf region.

Al Mohasen's works have always acted as a commentary on the world in which we live, to find a gap within the fabric of society to reflect on it. The pieces included in *The Ink of Day* both record and participate in the time that they were made. Looking back can help us to understand and appreciate the visual environments which Al Mohasen creates as a series of conversational snapshots.

Al Mohasen uses intense bright colours and intense texture in a lot of his pieces, as if the message that they hold is shouting at us, grabbing our attention. These neon hues cry out to you, willing you to look. This is pivotal to the artist's voice and includes you in the visual narration of poetic rhythm. The artist has been shaped by poetry from the Arab world, notably Syrian poet Adonis, utilising short lyrical phrases in a graffiti style, translating words into the colourful space. The title *The Ink of Day* has been selected from one of Adonis' poems "Beginnings of the Body, Ends of the Sea", reflecting the descriptive element of Al Mohasen's works. Graffiti has long been used as an accessible form of artistic self-expression, mostly used in an unsolicited, unmonitored way to communicate thoughts anonymously. In this way, graffiti allows messages to be portrayed universally and without context. *The Ink of Day* presents these pieces with little context or narrative background so that the audience can attach their own personal meaning to them. The physicality of each message is received in an entirely different way each time. Each piece does not have one singular interpretation but instead reveals a myriad of meaning for each person that it is viewed by. By viewing each piece years after it was created, the interpretation becomes boundless, creating continuous and extended narratives of experience.

In this exhibition, Al Mohasen confronts us with messages that transcend time. We are met with poignant phrases that emanate emotion and history for the artist at the time of creation but can take on new meaning for each viewer. Since each piece's creation, it seems the world has changed drastically, to the point where sometimes it is unrecognisable. However, by interacting with the voices of the past through Al Mohasen's work, we can take comfort in the

relative similarities of both past and present. Perhaps the world has changed, perhaps you will be forever different because of this, but by using hindsight and messages from the past, one can find solace in navigating the future.

- Martha Hibbert

Exhibition Dates: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Born in Qatif, Saudi Arabia, 1971, **Hussein Al Mohasen** has been active in the art scene of the Gulf region since his first appearance in 1999 at the Al-Janadriya Festival in his native Saudi Arabia, where he has since then occupied an important place alongside the pioneering Saudi artists. Al Mohasen's work, characterised by a singular dialogue between the audience and the artist, conceives of images and visual environments as a series of dialogical snapshots. These images are never static; Al Mohasen's sharp-coloured stenciled images translate into continuous and extended narratives of experience. They are not only attempting to describe the world, but actively participate in it.

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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