



XVA Gallery presents *Insiders*, a solo exhibition, opening 18/02/2021

2nd February 2021, Dubai, UAE // XVA Gallery is pleased to present *Insiders*, a solo exhibition by Richard Ketley.

2020 was a year in which we all became insiders, confined to our homes for much of the year. Although this was for many of us a lonely period and a time of change, it was also a chapter of growth, introspection and in many instances an opportunity to appreciate our homes that so often we are too busy to actually live in.

Through *Insiders*, XVA shares the experience and responses to the Lockdown of Richard Ketley, a sometime resident of Dubai and regular exhibitor at the gallery. Lockdown caught Richard in Johannesburg, where he was forced to close his studio and to refocus his practice on his home environment.

The works exhibited in this collection start off as very small works on paper - drawings in paint made during the early stages of the lockdown. Unlike his previous work the colours are domestic, the concerns emotional and domestic - inspired by sunny living rooms, courtyards and gardens. As the lockdown was lifted and Richard was able to return to the studio a new outpouring of pent up creativity occurred - visually expressed in the *Great Insider: The Battle Against the Virus*. This is by far the largest piece of work ever exhibited at the gallery and picks up many of the same themes of the smaller domestic pieces but on a grand scale. The title and scale of the work, captures the tumultuous year we have experienced and the victory that is now in hand.

Insiders, whilst reflecting on more solitary and unsure times, looks ahead to the future. The audience is ushered into an uplifting and positive space where they are encouraged to learn from the past and accept it as a part of their lives. Through his work Richard is optimistic about the world's future whilst narrating the beauty in the isolation of Lockdown.

Exhibition Dates: 18th February - 16th March 2021

Richard Ketley is a South African artist based in Dubai and Johannesburg. He has a Masters in Fine Art degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. His work centres on his global travels and experience of place and culture that he captures in abstract works executed in a diverse range of media.

Born in 1964, Richard held his first solo exhibition while in school at Hyde Park High School, Johannesburg. During his early years he exhibited at Artist in the Sun, the Sandton Gallery, Johannesburg, and also participated in an exhibition at the National Gallery in Kampala, Uganda. After a career break Richard recommitted to his painting career in 2013 and has held a string of exhibitions in the last five years. Today Richard works principally in charcoal, acrylic

and oil and seeks to develop images that are drawn from life but extend the viewer's imagination.

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 region's 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.

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