



Coming up at XVA Gallery – ‘*Babel*’, a solo exhibition by Richard Ketley

Join us from November 19th – December 18th, 2022 to discover the latest collection of Richard Ketley’s abstract works exhibiting at XVA Gallery.

Curatorial Statement

This exhibition draws its inspiration from the legend of the Tower of Babel. Various cultures and religions contain similar tales and legends, of a world where all people spoke the same language and aspired to reach the heavens through the construction of a very tall building. This displeased their God who destroyed the tower and the people’s ability to communicate through a single language.

“If as one people all sharing a common language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them. Come, let’s go down and confuse their language so they won’t be able to understand each other.”

In modern times Babel became associated with the “Babel Fish” a free Web-based multilingual translation application - that used technology to enable people to speak to one another. To the artist, Dubai is a city in which peoples of different languages strive to achieve a common purpose expressed through the creation of some of the world’s largest buildings. The references to Babel and “Descent” in the work raise the question of sustainability of much of this endeavor.

About the Artist

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.

"I find meaning where others do not - in the fall of light on a sandy building in Riyadh, the chaos of the shacks of Kampala, the crowded taxi parks of Johannesburg. I travel widely in the Middle East and Africa, and am inspired by these places of contemporary significance; landscape covered in sandy construction sites, tin roofed shacks, humanity sweating as trucks are loaded with voluminous bundles - struggles for hope in adverse contexts. Hope that I create with the form and structure of my work." - R. Ketley

About XVA Gallery

XVA Gallery 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 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 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.

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