



Coming up at XVA Gallery – “Paintings of Nowhere” by Richard Ketley, and “Rooted” by Alejandra Palos

Join us from September 13 to October 16, 2025, as we explore how these two artists share and transform our gallery space—revealing the ways their work resonates, contrasts, and connects.

Curatorial Statements

Paintings of Nowhere by Richard Ketley

In "Paintings of Nowhere," Richard Ketley unveils a stunning collection of abstract works, born from the very essence of his journeys into the rugged, silent heart of the United Arab Emirates. Ketley, an artist deeply moved by the unseen energies and ancient narratives embedded within the landscape, found his muse not in the bustling metropolises, but in the stark beauty and ethereal quiet of the UAE's interior, most notably the majestic Hajar Mountains. Through his unique lens, these imposing peaks and expansive, empty spaces are not merely geographical features but conduits to a deeper understanding of existence. His works, rendered exclusively in a powerful monochrome palette, pulsate with the raw textures and nuanced shades that echo the rubble of the desert, the mountains' unyielding stone, revealing a universe of form and depth within the absence of color. "Paintings of Nowhere" is an invitation to shed the confines of the familiar and embrace a journey into the abstract. Each striking black and white piece serves not as a portrait of a place, but as a meditation on its spirit – a visual symphony of the light, the shadow, the monumental scale, and the profound sense of timelessness that defines these often-overlooked territories. Prepare to discover the "nowhere" that resides within the very heart of the UAE, revealed through Ketley's hand.

Rooted by Alejandra Palos.

Cement holds the memory of the earth. An industrial yet earthen material shaped by ancestral echoes. These sculptures carry the sense of being woven into something larger: the land beneath us, the stories that guide us, and the generations whose presence still moves quietly through our lives. Each piece captures a phase in the journey of transformation. Solid yet breathing in form, they invite us to pause and feel the quiet continuum between all who came before and all still to come.



About the Artists

Richard Ketley was born in 1964, Johannesburg, South Africa. Lives between Johannesburg and Dubai. Richard has painted since a young age and 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 Galley in Kampala, Uganda. 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. When not painting, Richard runs a consulting business, which opened its Dubai office in 2009.

Alexandra Palos was born in 1971 in Caborca, Mexico. She has lived in Geneva, Switzerland, Sendai, Japan and currently resides in Dubai.

Alejandra sees the universe through the matrix of multiculturalism, and this has gifted her with a special perception of the world. Over twenty years she has focused on the arts and participated in specialty courses, by international experts to enrich herself. A very important period of her artistic career was the one while living in Japan – land of silence, beauty and Zen – where she presented a Solo exhibition. She enjoys working with a wide range of materials like old wood, cement, recycled metal and everyday objects. Alejandra's sculptures and commissioned art installations have been presented and awarded in Solo and Collective Exhibitions in prestigious venues as: The regional Museum of Anthropology and History and at the city theater of La Paz Baja California Sur, Mexico; In Universities, Galleries and Art Fairs across Mexico; Port Louis, Mauritius; New York, USA; Beirut, Lebanon; as well as across UAE in Dubai, Ras Al Khaima, Um Al Quwain and Abu Dhabi.



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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