



XVA GALLERY

Wild Garden

curated by Moreza Zahedi, Artists: Hasan Hazer Mashar, Salim Karami and Davood Koocheki

Vernissage April 19th 10am - 9pm

April 19th – June 1st, 2014

XVA GALLERY, Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood

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About the Exhibition:

Wild flowers are an unexpected delight in a garden. They are an unknown element without planning or horticultural cultivation. They peek up between flagstones surviving non-ideal conditions to thrive, regardless of the lack of attention by the gardener. Autodidact and self-taught artists, liberated from formal training; current styles; and movements in contemporary art, resemble these wild flowers as they continue living their own artistic life. We envy the Outsider Artist, as he is called, his sagacity and creative spirit freed from the shackles of conformity.

The XVA Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of Outsider Art curated by Iranian artist, Morteza Zahedi entitled **Wild Garden**. The aim of this exhibition is to introduce you to three genuine artists from Iran (Hasan Hazer Moshar, Salim Karami, and Davood Koochaki). As indigenous artists, they have organically evolved in their environment as a living part of their own autochthonous natural, social and historical milieu. They reveal their existence without any veil, as they do not wear the mask of "enlightenment". This is one of the most prominent aspects of their work, however, they cannot escape social constraint, as they are deprived from formal and academic knowledge. We, as protectors of this type of contemporary art, should be the transmitters of these insights in the public forums of art in order to prevent autodidact learning to be mistaken for ignorance.

About the Artists:

Salim Karami

(born in Rasht, Iran 1946-2013)

Surprisingly, Karami had not done any painting whatsoever before the age of 60.

He started off with commercial projects in advertising 8-10 years ago using colored ballpoint pens. With no formal training, Karami created works from his vivid imagination.

In 2008 he had his first exhibition at the Orr Gallery in Rasht in northern Iran. His second show was held at the Marlecht Gallery also in Rasht. In 2013 Karami had his first and last solo exhibition in the Homa Gallery Tehran. It was during this final year of his life that Karami won a competition of Iranian painting before succumbing to cancer.

Davood Koochaki

(born in Punam, Iran 1939)

Koochaki's family was very poor and could not send him to school. As a result, he was illiterate and only able to write his name. At 12 years of age, Koochaki left home and moved to the capital city of Tehran. He had many different occupations, such as office boy, car mechanic, but still found himself homeless so he slept in a car every night.

At the age of 40 he experimented with calligraphy using paper he found in the garbage, such as a telephone book, or doctors office papers. It was not until the age of 65, after his retirement, that Koochaki began to draw seriously. People called him Davood the Mechanic. Although self-taught, Koochaki's work followed an Impressionistic style. His images maintains a magical quality regardless of the subjects he features which are often of afflicted or handicapped people.

Koochaki states, "I do not know about painting but I am a master mechanic. I worked many years to be an experienced master of mechanics. Now if there is any problem for any car, I feel I know how to repair it. But if I see a painting, I am not an expert and cannot say if it is good or not. In this, I have no experience. I do not feel I am a master at painting."

Koochaki had his first exhibition in the Dey Gallery in Tehran in 2007. This first exhibition was followed by a solo exhibit in Holland in 2011. Koochaki recalls, "In Holland they called me Pencil Man." Koochaki has had several exhibitions in both Paris and Tehran: they include the Haft Gallery, Lale Gallery and the Saba Gallery.

Hasan Hazer Moshar

(born in Rasht, Iran 1923)

When he was 16 years old Moshar became a furniture maker and a master carpenter in Armenia. People called him "Gepetto", like the carpenter in Pinocchio. During the 2nd World War he lost an eye in an injury but this did not stop him from continuing to work with wood. He then moved to Tehran where, without a proper workshop, he made and sold wood works from under a bridge. This went on for several years until one day he had an accident. After a severe trauma to the head, he fell into a coma and when he awoke he was no longer able to work as a carpenter. This is when Moshar turned to art thanks to his artist daughter who encouraged him.

"The old stories are inspiration for my paintings. I make statues from the stories. I lived all my life with wood and by the wood," states Moshar.

Even at 91 years of age, Moshar works and reads daily and manages to find time to write poetry. He is currently showing in several galleries in Tehran as well as the Saba Art and Culture Organization.

About the XVA Gallery:

Established in 2003, XVA 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 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 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. In 2011 XVA Gallery moved to DIFC and returned to Al Fahidi Neighborhood in November 2013.

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