

Al Serkal Avenue, unit 21, Al Quoz
PO Box 123901 Dubai, UAE
T +971 (0)4 346 9906
F +971 (0)4 346 9902
www.lawrieshabibi.com

shabibi lawrie

For Immediate Release
Hamra Abbas
Kaaba Picture as a Misprint

Private Preview:
Saturday 26 April 5pm – 8pm
Exhibition continues until 27 May, 2014

Lawrie Shabibi is pleased to present *Kaaba Picture as a Misprint* a solo exhibition by Hamra Abbas. *Kaaba Picture as a Misprint* marks the return of the artist to the UAE after being awarded the Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2011 and the Jury Prize at Sharjah Biennial 9 in 2009.

Hamra Abbas' artistic practice draws from a myriad of sources and takes a diversity of forms. Her works originate from encounters and experiences – an image, icon or gesture – that are manipulated by the artist transforming its scale, function or medium. Her intention is to deconstruct the act of seeing by recreating images that form part of a collective memory. Unrestrained by subject matter or media, she takes an investigative approach to produce a diverse and holistic body of work addressing notions of cultural history, sexuality, violence, ornamentation, devotion and faith.

In her new body of work Abbas continues to explore the alternation of scale and medium but within the context of the visual language of devotion, using the Kaaba as the starting point of her enquiry. In *Kaaba Pictures* (a series commissioned for and first exhibited at the deCordova Biennial, 2013), Abbas takes her cues from souvenirs that are bought by pilgrims during the Hajj pilgrimage. Often found within the private homes of her native Pakistan, these objects serve as a portable memory to the sacred ritual. Appropriated by the artist and transformed - from object to painting to large-scale photograph – the works begin to follow the format of the mass-produced images of their origin and are returned to the public for consumption.

In *Kaaba Pictures As A Misprint*, a series of six photographs and the title of the exhibition, Abbas takes the cubist form of the Kaaba to its most simple geometric representation: two black rectangles. Through experimentation, the black form is broken down into cyan, magenta, and yellow versions of the shape, which are then printed off centre. Through this technique the image is only black when the three colours are layered upon each other. Thus the artist links the quest for truth through religious devotion to the plethora of ways in which that truth can be understood.

Abbas employs a humorous approach in her practice often using materials that hint at playfulness. In her *Artists* series for instance she uses plasticine to make miniature portraits of great-canonized artists of contemporary art. These have been photographed and hugely distorted in scale in order to emphasize the quasi-religious significance that has often been attached to the great artists in history. Through this approach, Abbas is able to convey the way in which, throughout history, artists have been mythologized and in doing so taken on an identity far greater than that of mere mortals.

In *Kaaba Picture as a Misprint*, Abbas employs the visual language of religion and contemporary acts of devotion to address transformation and individual experience. It is an investigation about the ideas and ideals that are beyond medium and homogenized understanding; an invitation to a personal assignation of value and evocation of memory.

Hamra Abbas

Hamra Abbas received her BFA and MA in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 1999 and 2002 respectively before going on to the *Universitaet der Kuenste* in Berlin where she received the *Meisterschueler* in 2004.

Abbas has exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions, most recently at Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India (2012); PILOT, Istanbul, Turkey (2012); Canvas, Karachi, Pakistan (2012) and Green Cardamom, London, UK (2011). She has taken part in group exhibitions at notable institutions and foundations including Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, USA; Singapore Art Museum, Singapore; Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK; Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, India; Asia Society Museum, New York, US; ARTIUM de Álava Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain; Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK; REDCAT, Los Angeles, USA and most recently the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, US. She has also participated in the deCordova Biennial, Lincoln, USA (2013); Asian Art Biennial, Taichung, Taiwan (2011); the International Artists Workshop of The Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece (2009); International Incheon Women Artists Biennale, Incheon, South Korea (2009); Sharjah Biennial 9, Sharjah, UAE (2009); Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China (2008); Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey (2007); the Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (2006) and the Cetinje Biennial, Cetinje, Montenegro (2004).

In 2009 she was shortlisted for the Jameel Prize and was a recipient of the Jury prize at Sharjah Biennial 9 and in 2011 was one of the winners of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize.

Her works are part of notable international public collections including the Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels, Belgium; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas, USA; Kadist Collection, Paris, France; British Museum, London, UK; Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, India; Kiran Nader Museum of Art, New Delhi, India; Art In Embassies Collection, USA; Koç Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey and Borusan Contemporary Art Collection, Istanbul, Turkey.

Abbas was born in Kuwait in 1976 and currently lives and works between Lahore and Boston.

About Lawrie Shabibi

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in a 3000 square foot warehouse in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery's programme supports multi-generational, international contemporary artists mainly from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. By holding a

regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, the gallery engages the wider local and international community.

The gallery represents Hamra Abbas, Wafaa Bilal, Asad Faulwell, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Selma Gürübz, Nabil Nahas, Driss Ouadahi, Marwan Sahmarani, Larissa Sansour, Yasam Sasmazer, Shahpour Pouyan and Adeel uz Zafar.

Media Contact

For media enquiries contact Laura Egerton, Gallery Curator, Lawrie Shabibi
laura@lawrieshabibi.com, +971509564021, +9714 3469906.

To download the accompanying publication and for further information about the exhibition and other gallery activities please visit www.lawrieshabibi.com.