

Hassan Sharif

Hassan Sharif (1951–2016) made a vital contribution to conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East through 40 years of performances, installations, drawing, painting, and assemblage. In his early artistic maturation, Sharif rejected calligraphic abstraction, which was becoming the predominant art discourse in the region in the 1970s. Instead, he pursued a pointedly contemporary art vocabulary, drawing on the non-elitism and intermedia of Fluxus and the potential in British Constructionism's systemic processes of making. In 1984, Sharif graduated from the Byam Shaw School of Art, London, and returned to the UAE shortly after. He set about staging interventions and the first exhibitions of contemporary art in Sharjah, as well as translating art historical texts and manifestos in Arabic, in order to provoke a local audience to engage with the contemporary art discourse. Born in 1951 in Dubai, Sharif continued to work up until his death in late 2016. In addition to his own practice, he also encouraged and supported several generations of artists in the Emirates. He was a founding member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society (founded in 1980) and the Art Atelier in the Youth Theatre and Arts in Dubai. In 2007, he was one of the four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution for promoting contemporary Emirati artists, which is now solely dedicated to his works. His works are held in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, Tate, London, Guggenheim New York and Abu Dhabi, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, and M+ Museum, Hong Kong, among others.

Haleh Redjaian

Haleh Redjaian (born 1971, Frankfurt) lives and works in Berlin. Her works on paper, textiles and site-specific wall installations are grounded in geometry, but she uses its rules to reshape and retrace the apparent order of angles and lines. Her compositions subtly belie their own errors and form what she calls a 'natural abstract language'. Redjaian believes that these works, nimble yet systematic, refer in part to the manner in which people create, adapt to and deviate from order in their lives. She will often base her drawings on a precise background, such as grid paper, and weave graphite into its rigid structures with rough shadings and free-radical lines. Conversely, Redjaian may overlay two pieces of grid paper, drawing directly onto their discordant lines, creating a paradoxical order in the result. A similar approach can be seen in the artist's textiles, for which she appropriates carpets made in Kerman and lightly stitches patterns onto them. The irregularities in these hand-knotted carpets contrast with the long, smooth lines of thread she stitches over the top. A conversation of abstraction takes place within the threads of the fabric, between these two hand-made yet very different systems.

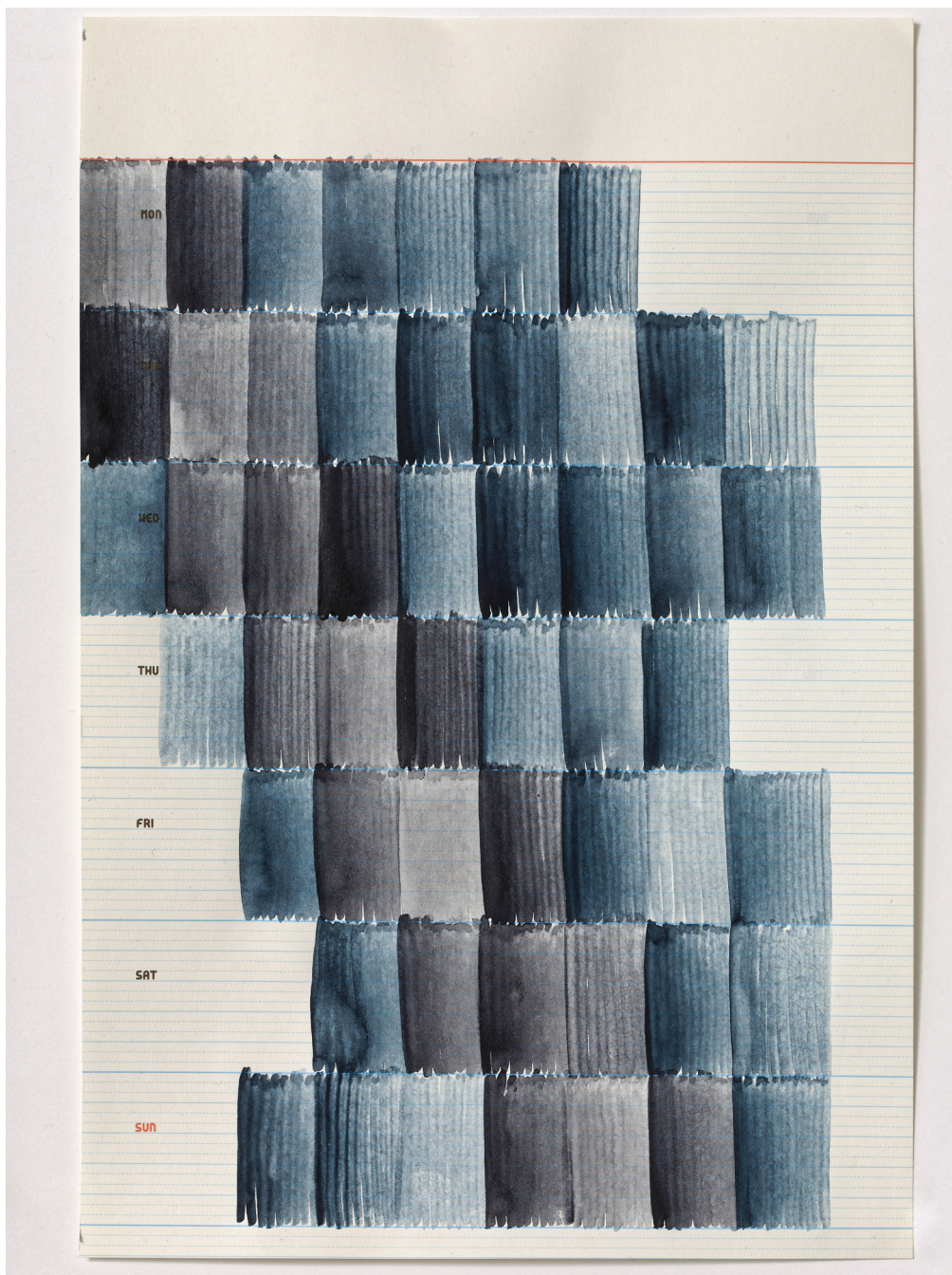
Haleh Redjaian Hassan Sharif

Focus, Booth D11
Frieze New York

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Haleh Redjaian
The Journey of a Volume Along the Line of Time, 2017
 Graphite, ink pen and watercolour on note paper
 28.5 x 19.5 cm



Hassan Sharif
Colours, 2016
 Cotton rope, acrylic paint and copper wire
 240 x 535 x 10 cm

The booth highlights Emirati artist **Hassan Sharif** and Berlin-based Iranian artist **Haleh Redjaian's** critical approach of using the grid as a measurement tool and foundation for their composition, allowing for chance and repetition. Both Sharif and Redjaian's works are presented within a more formally and visually similar framework to investigate how this philosophy translates into their three-dimensional objects, hand-woven carpets and works on paper.

Redjaian deploys ready made or hand-drawn grids and lines as a framework for her geometric elaborations. By pulling threads across the surface of her weaved carpets, and using its weaving as a grid for her work, the artist allows irregularities and deviations within this strict order. In doing so, she acknowledges the ever-present and unforeseen surprises that make up our incomprehensible lives, where the grid is often not sustained. Her perceptive approach towards the imperfect grids in daily life thus allows us to break away from conventional patterns and reveal a gateway to unlimited possibilities.

Sharif, on the other hand, created *Objects* via random and arbitrary rules that generate continually evolving and failing systems. He used mass-produced materials such as rope, rubber, plastic and cloth that he twisted and tied together into assemblages and heaps in a technique that he referred to as 'weaving'. The *Objects* came to be known as a commentary on the commonly unseen by product of the UAE's globalised, consumerist society that developed since independence. Once Sharif became bored or too comfortable with a particular technique, he abandoned the project and considered it complete. In seeming diametric opposition to *Objects*, his *Semi-Systems* are governed by numerical equations that are open to chance and error and whose outcomes are not predetermined. By bringing these two components of Sharif's practice together, the audience is invited to consider how these opposite methodologies can exist within the same philosophical approach to art.