

Art Basel Hong Kong
Insights Sector, Booth 3D21
Mohammed Kazem and Hassan Sharif
15 – 17 March, 2015



Hassan Sharif
Pot, 2014
Ceramic, and cotton rope
174 x 34 x 12 cm



Mohammed Kazem
Tongue, 1994
Silver gelatin print
39 x 28 cm

Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde is pleased to return to Art Basel Hong Kong in 2015 to build on the success of its participation last year. The gallery will again exhibit new and archival works by Hassan Sharif, at the vanguard of conceptual practice in the Middle East for 40 years, as well as works by his protégé Mohammed Kazem, who represented the United Arab Emirates at the 55th Venice Biennale.

A dialogue of ironic, playful and conceptual works by the two Emirati artists will show how their prolonged conversation – more than 20 years of mutual encouragement and critique – has become palpable in their individual practices and philosophies.

During the last edition of ABHK, Sharif's 2005 work 'Cotton Rope' entered the collection of Hong Kong's forthcoming museum M+, and his solo presentation was described as the fair's 'most conceptual booth' in the local press. For 2015, the gallery will unveil new works by Sharif including 'Weave' (2014) in which he makes pointlessness – a conceptual gesture that has underpinned his career since the '80s – into a physical act of making: Cutting apart ropes, then retying them at the same point in an absurd process of destruction-reconstruction. 'Weave' will span three metres across the booth and be presented in dialogue with other acts of assemblage and bricolage created in recent years that demonstrate Sharif's continued playfulness with the form.

The gallery will also exhibit a number of Sharif's *Semi-systems* and experiments on paper. In these works, the artist formulates a series of arbitrary rules and follows them to create over-

elaborate visual experiments – the tonal gradations of squares of red watercolour in a grid, for instance, or the transformations of angular lines within a set of arbitrary perimeters. Together, these works will illustrate the ideas and techniques that have underpinned his provocative practice since the early 1980s and show how Sharif has developed such *Semi-Systems* from paper into 3-dimensional sculpture in recent years.

Mohammed Kazem was a leading figure in the ‘Second Generation’ of Emirati artists that rose to prominence in the 1990s and his conversations with Sharif in Dubai and Sharjah at that time has laid the roots for his conceptual practice today.

During ABHK, the gallery will present a selection of new works on paper by Kazem in which he represents the subjective ‘Sound’ of an angle as a braille-like network of scratches into cottony paper alongside works from his early Tongue series of photographs (1994-96), which show the artist inserting his tongue into objects found around the home. This is accompanied by *Keyboard* (1995), an ironic impression of a board of hooks for keys of the kind usually found on the wall in a locksmiths shop, but on which the keys are simply drawn onto the panel, and *Measuring Walls*, a series of absurdist architectural drawings that represent banal areas of the artist’s house in impossible dimensions.

As Hassan Sharif says, Kazem makes “subjectivity a subject in its own right” in his work. Across the various series presented here, the viewer is invited into Kazem’s ‘private languages’, which often have a performative, bodily quality or are an attempt to make tangible transient phenomena.

About Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde

Isabelle van den Eynde organised her first exhibition of contemporary art in Dubai in 2004. After establishing B21 Gallery in 2006, one of the first contemporary art spaces in the UAE, Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde was launched in Alserkal Avenue, Dubai, in 2010 with a pluralistic roster of artists from the Middle East. Today, the gallery works with artists from Europe, Latin America and Africa, though often with some palpable connection to the Middle East. Through exhibitions, publishing and fair participation, the gallery prides itself on making collaboration a principal of its operations, working closely with artists to create insightful, often provocative, total presentations that challenge the conventions of a commercial art gallery. Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde will open a second outpost in Brussels, Belgium, in 2015.