

tracing every instance of the letter 't' on a page of The Daily Mail newspaper. These absurdist and purposely boring practices were initially performed, in part, as an ironic response to the functionality of economics and globalisation: uselessness as gesture. This critical stance, what he termed 'positive irony', has since been developed on in subsequent works in other mediums, including *Objects*.

Sharif's drawing series *Semi-Systems* were initially informed by British Constructionism and particularly Kenneth Martin's notion of 'Chance and Order'. He invented a set of rules, following this system to create line drawings that transform within a grid and colour studies on paper. Sharif revealed in the mistakes and errors that naturally occur in the monotonous creation of the work, believing that "Art is a result of errors".

Born in 1951, 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 of the Art Atelier in the Youth Theater and Arts, Dubai. In 2007, he was one of four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution for promoting contemporary Emirati artists. The first Emirati to have his work shown in Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Sharif was also selected to be the debut artist to represent the UAE during its first National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2009. In 2011, Sharif was the subject of a retrospective exhibition, *Hassan Sharif: Experiments & Objects 1979-2011*, curated by Catherine David and Mohammed Kazem, and presented by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage/Platform for Visual Arts. His works are held in the collections of the Guggenheim, New York and Abu Dhabi, Tate Modern, London, Centre Pompidou, Paris, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, among others.

GALLERY
ISABELLE
VAN DEN
EYNDE

HASSAN SHARIF

Artissima
Main Section
Booth Black 12

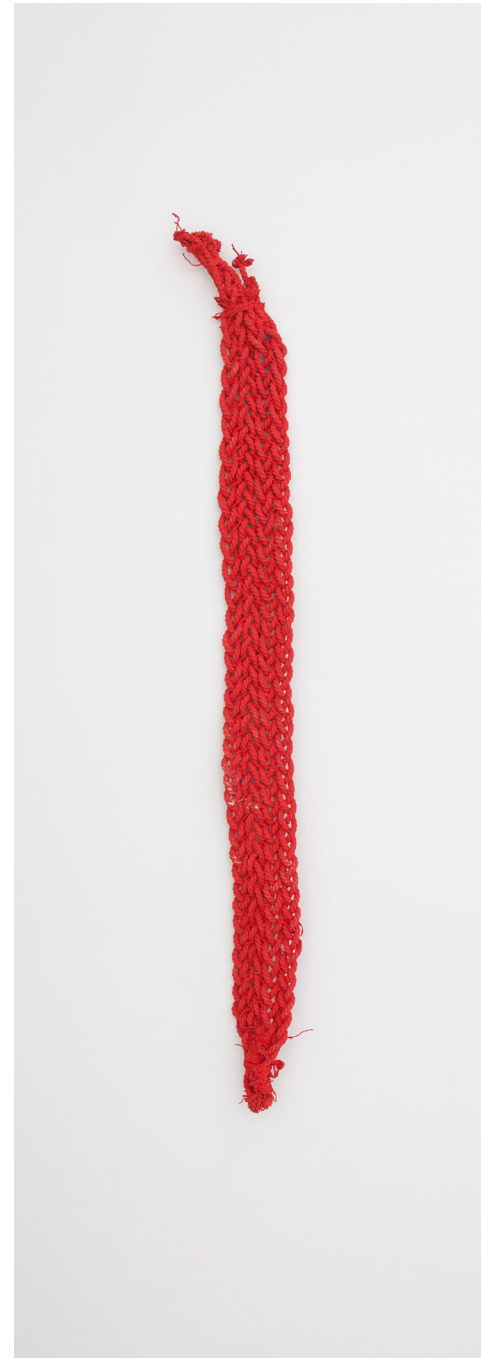
4 – 6 November 2016

Unit 17, Alserkal Avenue
Street 8, Al Quoz 1
PO Box 18217
Dubai, UAE

T: +971 4 323 5052
E: info@ivde.net
www.ivde.net



Slippers, 2016
Slippers, wool thread and cotton thread
150 x 240 x 20 cm



Weaving, 2015
Jute, cotton rope and emulsion paint
174 x 23 x 13 cm

As a continuation of *Involved in Nonsense* - a solo presentation dedicated to Hassan Sharif's early *Experiments in Back to the Future* at Artissima in 2015 - this year we are pleased to present the artist's recent *Objects*, which he started creating in the 1980s.

Always questioning the functional and the useless, the found and the created, Sharif transformed consumer products and waste into complex assemblages and weavings. In his *Objects*, he raised concerns about consumerism and social order, the human body and the physical evidence of our times. According to the artist, his *Objects* are the vernacular aesthetics of everything that is 'useless, meaningless and artificial' and illustrate an important truth about the world we live in. Weaving them together with rope, coil and twine, the heaps and bundles that he created became a visualisation of the surplus of mass-production - the commonly unseen by product of the UAE's globalised, consumerist society that developed since the country's formation.

Hassan Sharif (1951-2016) made a vital contribution to conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East through 40 years of performance, installation, drawing, painting and assemblage. Prior to leaving the UAE to study in London in 1979, Sharif gained attention for his cartoons published in the UAE press - ironic, outspoken critiques of the rapid industrialisation of the Emirates and political deadlock of 1970s Arab Nationalism. As an artist, he rejected calligraphic abstraction, which was becoming the dominant discourse in the Middle East at that time, and pursued instead a pointedly contemporary vocabulary, drawing on the non-elitism and intermedia of Fluxus and the potential in British Constructionism's systemic processes of making.

Sharif graduated from The Byam Shaw School of Art (now part of Central Saint Martins) in 1984 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 into Arabic so as to provoke a local audience to engage with - or at least reject - contemporary art discourse. Beginning in 1982, Sharif began to formulate and document private performances of mundane activities (e.g. discussing art in a toilet cubicle with the faculty of The Byam Shaw School, jumping or digging holes in the UAE desert). Simultaneously, he began work on what he referred to as *Experiments* - formal exercises, like counting cars on a street in Dubai or