

Sharjah to host Hassan Sharif retrospective

Exhibition starting next month to showcase most of Emirati artist's work



Sheikha Hoor bint Sultan Al Qasimi,
Art Foundation, during the press con

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Ramzan/ Gulf News

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Sharjah: Hitherto unseen work of late Emirati artist Hassan Sharif will be on display in Sharjah, beginning November 4, as the Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) presents a retrospective of the pioneering conceptual artist who transformed the UAE's art scene.

Curated by Shaikha Hoor Al Qasimi, President and Director of SAF, 'Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist' traces nearly five decades of the artist's multimedia practice, including painting, sculpture, assemblage, drawing, installation and photography, besides never-before-seen works by the artist.

Marking the largest and most comprehensive survey of the Emirati artist's work to date, the exhibition that will run until February 3, 2018 will cover the entirety of Sharif's studio, which was recently donated to SAF by the artist's estate, providing a new perspective on the artist's practice

“Hassan Sharif was a dear friend and strong advocate for the contemporary art community here in Sharjah. We are so humbled to have worked with him since his presentation at the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993, and to have witnessed his incredible impact through the years,” said Shaikha Hoor, as she announced the details of the exhibition.

“Now, we will come full circle in mounting this significant retrospective in Sharjah, a city that was not only a site of intense artistic production for the artist, but also a place he greatly enriched through his teaching and community activities,” she added.

Offering a sneak preview of the exhibition, Shaikh Hoor led a media tour to the galleries of SAF.

Open to public for free, the exhibition will be held at Sharjah’s Al Mureijah Square and Bait Al Serkal.

The artist who almost single-handedly guided the Emirati art scene from the realist school of art to the conceptualised era of art making, Sharif’s retrospective is the culmination of his lifelong role as an advocate and pioneer for the development of contemporary art and thought in the UAE.

Furthering his efforts in promoting contemporary art among the Emirati youth, the exhibition will also host workshops for children where his students will offer the participants an insight into various forms of art.

A pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East, Sharif famously used common everyday material like kitchen utensils, broomsticks, wires, ropes etc. to create art installations conveying that art has endless possibilities

‘I Am The Single Work Artist’ is organised thematically and traces the development of Sharif’s conceptual art practice from 1973 to 2016, highlighting his unprecedented influence through key series that he revisited throughout his life, and which illustrate his enduring social and philosophical reflections on mathematical systems, time and the banality of the everyday.

“The exhibition showcases a wide range of Hassan’s artwork, from 1970s till his death last year, including his conceptual installations, his paintings as well as his caricatures,” said Abdul Raheem Sharif, Hassan’s brother who has played a big role in collecting and preserving the artist’s work.

Some of the earliest works featured in the exhibition are Sharif’s newspaper caricature and comic strips of the 1970s, which predate his radical shift towards experimentation and conceptualism.

The exhibition also features what are perhaps his best-known ‘weaving’ series of assemblages and ‘urban archaeology objects,’ which were created from inexpensive and mass-produced consumer materials.

Speaking about the artist’s use of ordinary material, Abdul Raheem said: “Hassan loved using ordinary material to create works of art. He wanted to highlight consumerism while at the same time showcasing that artistic thought couldn’t be confined to the narrow ways of traditional art making.”

Sharif, who graduated from the Byam Shaw School of Art, London, in 1984, lived and worked in Dubai until his death last year.