



Spoons No. 5 (2012), spoons and copper, 18.9h x 19.7w x 55.1d in

Hassan Sharif

January 8 – February 8, 2014

Artist Conversation with Murtaza Vali: January 17, 2014, 6:00 pm

Alexander Gray Associates presents an exhibition featuring recent works by Hassan Sharif, accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalog and a conversation between the artist and independent curator Murtaza Vali. Sharif (b.1951, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) is recognized as a pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the United Arab Emirates, and has highly influenced the region's artistic landscape through his art and writings. Sharif's second exhibition at the Gallery focuses on his recent developments in two ongoing series, *Semi-Systems* (1983–2014) and *Objects* (1982–2014).

First conceptualized in the 1980s, Sharif's *Objects* are anchored in the process of weaving, which he describes: "Weaving requires a very simple handicraft that is at once repetitive and non-repetitive." Responding to the landscape of material culture in the U.A.E., which has undergone rapid social and economic changes since its independence in 1971, Sharif's *Objects* are created from consumer products sourced from local markets and stores, including spoons, towels, floor mats, and electronic wiring. The selected works in the exhibition both transform and synthesize these materials, questioning authorship and labor, permanence and social stability. For Sharif, his *Objects* are closely connected to his own body and push notions of social exchange.

Sharif approaches his *Semi-Systems* with the same rigorous and repetitious method embodied by his *Objects*. Departing from his *Objects*, however, the *Semi-Systems* are connected to the cerebral. In *February 2013* (2013), the artist uses self-invented calculations and permutations to determine a variety of possibilities for the shape of an angular line. Seemingly at random, he then selects some of the possibilities to depict on a large scale. At any point, the system is on the verge of unraveling, referencing the systematic but frenetic development of Modern Dubai. Both Sharif's *Objects* and *Semi-Systems* embody the tension between order and chance, repetition and randomness, detachment and involvement, which are fundamental aspects in his practice.

Hassan Sharif is a founder of the Emirates Fine Art Society and Art Atelier in the Youth Theater and Arts, Dubai, and in 2007 was one of four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution to promote contemporary Emirati artists. The first Emirati to have his work shown in the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Sharif was also selected to be the debut artist to represent the U.A.E. in its first national pavilion of the 2009 Venice Biennale. In 2011, Sharif was the subject of a retrospective exhibition, *Hassan Sharif: Experiments & Objects 1979-2011* curated by Catherine David and Mohammed Kazem, presented by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage/Platform for Visual Arts. Sharif's artwork is included in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar; the Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah, U.A.E.; the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah; the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; the Sittard Center, The Netherlands; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.