

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Video Portraits

By

Robert Wilson



Kool, 2006
HD video seamless loop
Music by Weber
Arranged by Peter Cerone

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce artist Robert Wilson's solo show '*Video Portraits*' opening on 13th November 2022.

The only way to truly experience theater is to be physically on one side of the proscenium or be a part of the more participatory theater where the proscenium has been dispensed with all-together. Video, film and photography are offered as documents of a performance but rarely come close to the three dimensional experience; the sounds as they radiate through the theater, lighting as it wraps around a hand, the anticipation of the audience, the subtle gesture of the individual actor.

Robert Wilson is one of the rare artists who works across artistic media without being buoyed by one method of making. The process of creation transcends a single medium and instead finds outlet within the archetype of an opera, the architecture of a building, the stains in a watercolor drawing, the design of a chair, the choreography of a dance, the rhythm of a sonnet, or the multiple dynamics revealed in a Video Portrait.

By incorporating a multitude of creative elements; lighting, costume, make up, choreography, gesture, text, voice, set design, and narrative – the video portraits act as a complete synthesis of all the media in the realm of Wilson's art making. The medium is HD video but the form blurs time-based cinematography with the frozen moment of still photography. As in the layering nature of Wilson's creative process, the video portraits infuse references found in painting, sculpture, design, architecture, dance, theater, photography, television, film and contemporary culture. The final result on the HD monitor resembles a photograph, but on closer inspection reveals Wilson's highly developed theatrical language in conjunction with the startling clarity and precision of HD video. Because of the captivating nature of this exhibition – the child can experience a portrait just as thoughtfully as the academic, the patient can take away just as much as the impatient. It is also worth considering Andy Warhol's statement "If it moves, they'll watch it", a comment on the reptilian brain, which is why the moving image has extreme power in today's society. Wilson's Video Portraits because they kindle imagination and curiosity, and this is what transcends age, race, education, politics, and the like differences. Given Wilson's work across a multitude of media, the Video Portraits have turned into a defining project because it embodies all of Wilson's artistic languages in a timeless medium that can be experienced equally today, as they will be tomorrow.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

"Robert Wilson is a towering figure in the world of experimental theater and an explorer in the uses of time and space on stage." —The New York Times

Born in Waco, Texas, Wilson is among the world's foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide.

After being educated at the University of Texas and Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, Wilson founded the New York-based performance collective "The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds" in the mid-1960s, and developed his first signature works, including *Deafman Glance* (1970) and *A Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974-1975). With Philip Glass he wrote the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976). Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, Jessye Norman and Anna Calvi.

Wilson's drawings, paintings and sculptures have been presented around the world in hundreds of solo and group showings, and his works are held in private collections and museums throughout the world. He has been honored with numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Premio Ubu awards, the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale, and an Olivier Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the German Academy of the Arts, and holds 8 Honorary Doctorate degrees. France pronounced him Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (2003) and Officer of the Legion of Honor (2014); Germany awarded him the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit (2014). Wilson is the founder and Artistic Director of The Watermill Center, a laboratory for the Arts in Water Mill, New York.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East.