

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

MECA and Leila Heller Gallery Present:

The Space Between: Contemporary Perspectives on Tradition and Society

An exhibition of Iranian and Arab Contemporary Art



Khosrow Hassanzadeh, *Haft Khan*, Mixed media on 728 pieces of ceramic tile, 77 x 333 in / 195 x 845 cm

March 3 – May 5, 2013

Opening: Sunday, March 3, 1-5 PM

Shuttle buses leaving from Milk Studios (450 West 15th Street, NYC) hourly

For more information see: <http://www.artmanafest.com/index.php>

Too often, the Middle East and its people are cast along extremes. The region's traditions and culture are stereotyped to fit assumed binaries (modern vs. traditional, religious vs. secular), and its artists are expected to create works that fit within an ahistorical oriental aesthetic.

At Mana Contemporary, the Middle East Center for the Arts (MECA) in collaboration with Leila Heller Gallery will show works by prominent Iranian and Arab artists that explore not the binaries and stereotypes of the Middle East, but rather the space between. Having undergone geographical relocation and exile, these artists inhabit an ambiguous and contested space, situated within a contemporary landscape permeated by cultural and historical legacies.

These works reflect a dialogue between the artists and the political, geographical, traditional and spiritual spaces they frequent. On the backdrop of the ruins of a slaughterhouse, Shoja Azari questions the price of humanity's so-called pursuits of global justice and equality in the 21st century. Ayad Alkadhi's work explores the loss and terror of the horrors that took place in his native Iraq. Leila Pazooki's work inhabits yet another space—the tight realm set upon non-Western artists as they are incessantly compared to their Western counterparts and held up to a Westernized aesthetic expectation. The exhibit will also feature work by Roya Akhavan, Dena Al-Adeeb, Khosrow Hassanzadeh, Youssef Nabil, and Hadieh Shafie. These artists no longer inhabit the white or black of the spectrum, but find themselves dispersed within the grey.

The Space Between will be on view from March 3 to May 5, 2013.

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About Leila Heller Gallery

Founded in 1982, Leila Heller Gallery has established a worldwide reputation in both the primary and secondary art market. Known for an active and innovative exhibition schedule, the gallery shows paintings, works on paper, sculpture, installation and video from international contemporary artists to modern masters, with a specialization in artists from the Middle East.

<http://leilahellergallery.com/>

About the Middle East Center for the Arts (MECA)

MECA is a nonprofit exhibition space providing an equal-opportunity platform for artists, curators, scholars, and institutions—based in the Middle East and its Diasporas—to showcase new and influential works of art. MECA's core mission is to broaden the perception and educate the greater public about the Middle East. With a yearlong program of events, exhibitions, film screenings, and lectures, MECA creates an exciting forum for cultural exchange.

<http://www.themeca.org>

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