



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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Abdullah Al Saadi, *Stone Slippers (Al Zannoba)*, 2013, installation, mixed media dimensions variable.
Courtesy of the artist

Exhibitions of works by Abdullah Al Saadi, Ahmed Mater and Eduard Puterbrot at Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces

February 22 – May 22, 2014

SAF Art Spaces, Al Mureijah, Sharjah Heritage Area

Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) presents three solo exhibitions of works by Emirati artist Abdullah Al Saadi, Saudi artist Ahmed Mater and Dagestani artist Eduard Puterbrot. The openings of the exhibitions titled *Abdullah Al Saadi: Al-Toubay*, *Ahmed Mater: 100 Found Objects* and *Eduard Puterbrot: Between my East and my West* will take place, in the presence of H.E. Sheikha Hoor Al-Qasimi, President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation at SAF Art Spaces in Al Mureijah, Sharjah Heritage Area at 6pm on February 22, 2014. Open to the public until May 22, 2014, works on view include paintings, installations, videos and photographs which explore wider issues of social, cultural and personal concerns that document the landscapes within which the artists live.

Abdullah Al Saadi: Al-Toubay focuses on a selection of works from Abdullah Al Saadi's long history as an artist, and his love and fascination for nature is evident through his artistic practise. Some of these projects, which he has just completed were works in progress, and companionship is at the very centre of his long journey and has contributed to this exhibition in many ways. From his donkey in *Camar Cande's Journey* (2010-2011), to the animals in *The Comparative Journey* (2013), to his mother in *My Mother's Letters* (1998-2013) and son in *The Watermelon Series* (2013) each of these companions has had a

profound influence on these projects. His more fantastical works, like *The Comparative Journey* (2013) explore how the need for companionship can even lead to relationships with inanimate objects, such as stones, which represent the various animals that later became companions on yet another journey. The hardships of these travels reflected in the *Stone Slippers* (2013) and the diaristic accounts and drawings reflect the life of a gypsy or nomad continuously travelling and searching for something. Al Saadi has previously exhibited his work in Sharjah Biennial 8 and Sharjah Biennial 10.

Ahmed Mater: 100 Found Objects includes images, videos and research material that Ahmed Mater has collected which chronicle Makkah's past to its present identity. Throughout his research, Mater has gathered a rich archive of conversations. These include personal references and continuous recordings of the urban developments and expansion of Makkah, some of which are presented in this exhibition. This unique archive draws on wider political and familiar histories of communities that once lived in Makkah's vicinity. Along with distinctive pilgrims' tales, both the intimacy and the anonymity implicit in mass congregations of peoples from all over the world is revealed. We are taken on a passage that encompasses individual recollections of broad social and political events. Personal and collective dreams and ideologies are reflected through symbolism associated with a site that draws on the visions of every man, woman and child interconnected by a shared religious faith. This project is an ongoing work which will be completed once the entire expansion and development of Makkah is accomplished. Mater was one of the participating artists in Sharjah Biennial 8 and Sharjah Biennial 11.

Eduard Puterbrot: Between my East and my West presents a selection of works by the late Dagestani artist, Eduard Puterbrot, tracing the artist's journey and work spanning two decades. While central to his work are Dagestani folk tales and culture, Puterbrot depicts the balance between East and West and uses various styles and techniques, including theatre and stage design, to portray these differences. He served as Chief Designer at the AP Salavatov Kumyk Music and Drama Theatre and Dagestan State Russian Gorki Drama Theatre for almost two decades. Even though he developed his own personal artistic style by translating the symbols of ancient rituals into modern art, Puterbrot painted for his viewers.

Following the exhibition openings will be a film screening of *Wadjda* by Saudi filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour. The screening will take place at 8.30pm in Mirage City Cinema, SAF Art Spaces; which was recently voted amongst the world's best outdoor cinemas. *Wadjda* is the first feature film shot entirely in Saudi Arabia and is the first feature-length film made by a female Saudi Director. It has won numerous awards at film festivals around the world, and was selected as the Saudi Arabian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards.

About the artists:

Abdullah Al Saadi

Abdullah Al Saadi is a 1993 graduate of the United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain and holds a BA degree in English Literature. From 1994 to 1996 he studied Japanese painting at Kyoto Seika University in Japan. Al Saadi's work ranges from painting, drawing, the creation of lengthy artist's notebooks, to the collection and systemic categorisation of found objects, and the invention of new alphabets. A great affinity with nature and rural life informs his practice, which explores the changing environment as well as personal and cultural history. He has exhibited internationally and regionally including; Emirati Expressions: Realised at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE(2013); Body Art and Performance in the Gulf Area: 16 artists at New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE (2013); Sharjah Biennial 10, Sharjah, UAE (2011); 54th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy(2011); ADACH Platform at the 53rd International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2009); Languages of the Desert

at Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany (2005); the 26th São Paulo Biennial, Sao Paolo, Brazil (2004); Sharjah Biennial 5, Sharjah, UAE (2003), 5/U.A.E., The Art of the Five from the United Arab Emirates at the Ludwig Forum for International Art, Aachen, Germany (2002).

Ahmed Maater

Ahmed Mater grew up in Abha, the capital of Aseer (in the south of Saudi Arabia) far from the urban centres of Saudi Arabia. He remains rooted to its identity and leads a young artistic collective called Ibn Aseer (Son of Aseer). Mater studied medicine and has become an integral part of the history of Abha's Miftaha Arts Village. Mater also co-founded Edge of Arabia in 2008.

His recent work presents an unofficial history of Saudi sociopolitical life. It is concerned with the representation of traumatic events of collective historical dimensions, and the ways in which films, video, image, performance and text can document physical and psychological violence.

Mater's work has been widely exhibited internationally including The Mori Museum of Art, Tokyo (2012), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (2013), Sharjah Biennial 11, Sharjah (2013), Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde, Leiden Museum of Ethnology (2013), Home Works 6 at Ashkal Alwan in Beirut (2013), and Galleria Continua's Le Moulin, Paris (2013).

He was invited to participate in a number of panels and talks: The Louvre (2010), Berlin Akademie der Kunst (2010), The Armory Show New York (2011), Art Basel Miami (2012), Leiden Museum Amsterdam (2013).

His work is in the collection of the British Museum (London), Victoria & Albert Museum (London), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles), The Museum of Islamic Art (Doha) and Centre Pompidou (Paris).

Eduard Puterbrot

Highly influenced by his home country of Dagestan and its traditions, mythology and culture, Eduard Puterbrot's work encompasses the realm of Dagestani fairy tales, legends and traditions. Not afraid of exploration and experimentation, Puterbrot delved into everything from painting to writing and theatre. He served as Chief Designer at the AP Salavatov Kumyk Music and Drama Theatre and Dagestan State Russian Gorki Drama Theatre for almost two decades. Even though he developed his own personal artistic style by translating the symbols of ancient rituals into modern art, Puterbrot painted for his viewers. He wanted his work to 'intoxicate' them, touching them on a raw and personal level.

Puterbrot's work has been exhibited widely at institutions including, First Gallery, Makhachkala, Dagestan (2010), Central House of Artists, Moscow, Russia (2000), International Exhibition of Theatre Decorators/Designers Quadriennale-83, Prague, Czech Republic (1984), Central House of Actors, Moscow (1982), and Moscow Manege, Moscow (1978). His work can be found in the collections of AA Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow, Tretyakov State Gallery, Moscow, Dagestan Museum of Fine Art, Makhachkala, as well as private collections in Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and USA.

About Sharjah Art Foundation:

Sharjah Art Foundation brings a broad range of contemporary art and cultural programmes to the communities of Sharjah, the UAE and the region. Since 2009 SAF has built on the history of cultural collaboration and exchange that began with the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993. Working with local and

international partners, we create opportunities for artists and artistic production through our core initiatives that include the Sharjah Biennial, the annual March Meeting, residencies, production grants, commissions, exhibitions, research, publications and a growing collection. Our education and public programmes focus on building recognition of the central role art can play in the life of a community by promoting public learning and a participatory approach to art. All our events are free and open to the public. Sharjah Art Foundation is funded by the Department of Culture and Information, Government of Sharjah.

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