

# Alexander Gray Associates

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## Hassan Sharif

January 5 – February 11, 2012



*Ruler*, photographs on paperboard, 1981; *Shadows of Al Loz*, photographs on paperboard, 1983; *Paper, Cardboards and Glue 2*, mixed media, 1996; *Wave-like and Straight Horizontal No. 1-3*, ink on paper, 2007

Alexander Gray Associates is pleased to present Emirati artist Hassan Sharif's first solo exhibition in the United States. To introduce his work to a New York audience, the Gallery has organized a micro-retrospective of works spanning 30 years, including rare photo-documentation of early performance- and process-based projects, experimental works on paper, and two sculptural installations. Of note are photo-documents of the artist's 1983 durational work, performed in the Hatta Mountain desert in Dubai.

Recognized as a pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East, Sharif's artworks move beyond the limits of discipline or singular approach, encompassing performance, installation, drawing, painting and assemblage. Since the late 1970s, he has maintained a practice as a cultural producer and facilitator, moving between roles as artist, educator, critic, activist and mentor to contemporary artists in the United Arab Emirates and the broader MENASA (Middle East-North Africa-South Asia) region.

In her analysis of the cultural context for Sharif's artistic practice, curator Catherine David notes, "...the overdue recognition of Hassan Sharif's body of work is not lacking in ironies and misconstructions, especially given the different ways—the local and the international—in which the processes and the stakes involved in his oeuvre were met...if some think of Sharif today as 'the father' of modern art in the U.A.E., it is certainly from a viewpoint that takes into account the pioneering artistic experience and process that the artist developed amid (or, more accurately, on the margin of) a society where the conditions for the production and exposure of 'modern art' were not there."

To underscore the gallery's interest in Conceptual Art's global influences, Alexander Gray Associates will make its debut at Art Dubai in March 2012, pairing Sharif's text-based works with those of Luis Camnitzer.

Hassan Sharif (b. 1951, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) lives and works in Dubai. 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. during its first national pavilion 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 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; and the Sittard Center, The Netherlands.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery based in New York. The gallery has established a profile for high-quality exhibitions focused on mid-career artists who emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM.