

Hassan Sharif

from October 27 to December 21, 2012

Level One presents a solo show by Hassan Sharif, tracing 40 years of the artist's creation: from his early works as a caricaturist to his performances and experiments on his London years, the Semi-System series with a set of drawings and his installations around the consumer society.

In the 1970s, Sharif published satirical drawings and caricatures in the newspaper Akhbar Dubai. Following the propitious discovery of oil in 1966 in the Gulf region, the city is in the midst of a transition, and the artist can thus observe how strikingly the traditional Arabia is being transformed. When the United Arab Emirates are established on December 2, 1971, he starts to comment on the changes around him, humourously and perceptively.

In the early 1980s, during the years he spent in London at the Byam Shaw School of Art, Sharif develops experiments using simple objects. He understands the importance of the use of an object as a base for further construction and made his first attempts to build a two-dimensional field (the grid) with the purpose of revamping the framework of his artwork. For example, in 1982, he photographs, one by one, a shoe, a ping-pong palette, a tin of paint, that he associates afterwards within a collage. The word "experiment" has a major significance because from now on "experimental activity" would become an integral part of his creativity. Sharif seeks to reframe a tri-dimensional structure as if he looked at it as a bi-dimensional one, inside of a grid. He develops a systematic approach of his environment.

While he keeps on working on this series, Sharif wants to extend the scope of his activity into other artistic media. He makes performances, combining the systematic approach with a form of art which involves his physical participation.

From 1982, Hassan Sharif develops the 'Objects' series. Using simple materials, like newspaper or jute, he makes sculptures which are sometimes autobiographical but mostly result of simple, repetitive actions and gestures of transformation. If this laborious and boring work is a form of resistance to economic dynamics, other influences like Duchamp or Fluxus are very important : Hassan Sharif's work is part of a parallel history to ours, and this distancing within the exhibition attempts to highlight the constant interplays with our modernity.

This exhibition received the support of the Mairie de Paris - Département de l'Art dans la Ville
We would like to thank Catherine David, Cécile Zoonens and Abdulraheem Sharif