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PRESS RELEASE

ISHMAEL RANDALL-WEEKS

Desert Displacements

Opening Reception: Monday, 11 January 2024 | 6 – 9 PM

On View: 11 January – 9 February 2024

[Dubai, UAE] – [21 December, 2023] – Lawrie Shabibi is thrilled to announce the second solo exhibition by Peruvian artist Ishmael Randall-Weeks at the gallery. The exhibition, which runs from 11 January – 9 February 2024, transforms fundamental geometric models into objects echoing the poetry of utility. Each of the artworks showcased weaves through the domains of architecture and design, anchoring themselves within social and spiritual contexts from both Peruvian and Arab cultures.

In *Desert Displacements* geometric forms converge with elements rich with history and metaphors—walking sticks, stones, rulers, an olive branch or the figure of a falcon—all interwoven into a tapestry of historical references. From the architectural legacies of Bauhaus to the artistic symbols of pre-Columbian cultures, Ishmael's pieces refract visions of past and future, highlighting a shared human experience across time and space. Through these narratives lies an exploration of construction processes and their societal resonance, connecting the artist's personal inquiry with perspectives on the sacred and the ritualistic. The artworks become a contemplation on how physical structures shape our movements, emotions, communications, and dreams—an invitation to ponder the impact of form and functionality on our daily existence.

This journey began amidst the barren expanse of the Peruvian desert—a place teeming with life, whispers of history, and the solitude of wind-carved landscapes. In the valley of Samaca, amidst the resting winds, parabolic shapes sculpted by nature's hand became an inspiration, mirroring the unity of form in both the natural and constructed worlds. The sight of parabolic antennas in the distance connected disparate deserts, forging a metaphorical bridge between the sands of Perú and the Arabian dunes.

Venturing the coastal landscape, the artist noticed the coexistence of thriving olive trees amid ancient archaeological ruins, echoing a continuity between the two cultures. These Peruvian olive trees have successfully adapted to their surroundings, after being introduced by the Phoenicians, developed in the Al Andalus and arriving with the Spanish. The olive tree, an enduring symbol of peace and unity, stands as a testament to cultural exchange. Yet, its significance is tarnished by conflict—a reminder of the struggle for peace amidst tumultuous histories. Ishmael's pursuit of material and spiritual form, as a testament to time's passage, explores the essence of guidance and displacement.

Symbolic connections emerge between ancient cultures, migratory paths, and the contemporary worlds where the artist's work finds its stage. Ishmael Randall-Weeks equally ponders the significance of the Peregrine falcon, revered for its representation of freedom and power. A recurrent visual motif in the exhibition, it weaves together the tales of both Incan mythology and Bedouin heritage. In Perú, '*Sacsayhuaman*,' Cusco's sacred site, meaning "the place the Falcon is Satiated," holds deep significance for the Incas, tying the falcon's symbolism to the sun in their beliefs. This narrative coincides with the crucial role falcons played in Bedouin culture as means of survival and guidance, shaping distinct identities of the people of the Arabian Gulf.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ishmael Randall-Weeks graduated from Bard College in 2000 and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2007.

His work has been exhibited in various galleries and museums both in Perú and internationally, including Middlesbrough Institute of Modern of Art, England, United Kingdom; MoMA P.S.1, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Lima, Perú; Spanish Culture Center of Buenos Aires (CCBBA), Buenos Aires, Argentina; The Drawing Center, New York, United States; Museum of Art of Lima (MALI), Lima, Perú; Macro Museum| Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome, Italy; National Museum, Lima, Perú; The Museum of Arts and Design, New York, United States; Museum of the Bank of the Republic, Bogotá, Colombia; The Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena, Bologna, Italy; The Drawing Room, London, United Kingdom; Museum of Fine Arts, Mexico City, Mexico; the Bronx Museum, New York, United States; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, United States. His work has also been included in the Havana Biennial, the IX and the XIV Bienials de Cuenca, the 6th edition of (S) Files Biennial in El Museo del Barrio, New York and 2010 Greater New York and MoMa P.S.1, amongst others.

He has received numerous residencies grants and awards from various institutions, including the Rockefeller Foundation, the MACRO Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rome, Italy; the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, New York;

NYFA, New York; Art Matters, New York; Kiosko, Santa Cruz, Bolivia; La Curtiduria art center in Oaxaca, Mexico and Ministerio de Cultura del Perú, Lima, Perú..

His work is in several public collections including: Lima Art Museum (MALI), Perú; Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA), UK; Museo d'Arte Contemporaneo (MACRO), Italy; Madeira Corporate Services Collection, Portugal; Albright-Knox Gallery, USA; Deutsche Bank Collection, UK; LARA Asiatic Trust Group, Singapore; Museo Jumex, Mexico; Fondazione Giuliani, Italy; Mario Testino Art Foundation (MATE), Italy; Collection Fondazione Fotografia, Italy; SPACE Collection, USA; The Perez Collection, USA; Colección Ca.Sa, Chile; Porcel Collection, Argentina; Bulgari Collection, Italy; ICPNA Collection, Perú; A.R.M. Holding Art Collection / Art Dubai, UAE, among others.

Ishmael Randall-Weeks lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and Lima, Perú.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Lawrie Shabibi is a contemporary art gallery housed in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa. The gallery also organises art historical exhibitions working with an older generation of artists from the region. Liaising with curators, institutions, museums and collectors the gallery has successfully introduced international artists to the region whilst at the same time presenting Middle Eastern artists to the international contemporary art community. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, Lawrie Shabibi has been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai.

For more information on Lawrie Shabibi please visit:

www.lawrieshabibi.com

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