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Press Release - AB Gallery Lucerne **August 2014**

Gabriela von Habsburg & Lulwah Al Homoud

In our upcoming exhibition we are pleased to present two internationally renowned representatives of Concrete Art: Gabriela von Habsburg (Germany / Georgia) und Lulwah Al Homoud (Saudi-Arabia). In an exciting encounter the latest stainless steel sculptures by Gabriela von Habsburg and selected paper works by Lulwah Al Hamoud meet in the gallery. The works invite visitors to take a look behind the surface of the concrete and to approach spaces differently.

„Just as in music the pause intensifies the expression. Sculpture also makes its impact through deliberately-created empty spaces. A sculpture is an engagement with space.“
(Gabriela von Habsburg)

Gabriela von Habsburg is a sculptor. She has faith in the equal partnership between architecture and sculpture. As former student of Professor Robert Jacobson at the Munich Academy of Arts she belongs, similar to her teacher, to the constructivist-geometrical tradition – a movement very beginning of modernism, which practised the reduction of means to geometrical elements and mostly primary colours. It was based on the conviction that this was only feasible way to create an art free of any relation to actual objects and thus totally individual, following its own laws. In this respect, we refer to early masters such as Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner, whose „oeuvre“ combined the concept of autonomy with quite a strong link to optimism regarding the future, society, and technology. Much like the constructivists, Gabriela von Habsburg almost exclusively works with primary forms, relating them in the most varied ways to one another. Of course, the occasionally unlimited confidence that accompanied the pure principle of construction during early modern times has now been lost. In its place, Gabriela von Habsburg's works shown an alternation between strictness and gracefulness, construction and lyricism established within the domain of aesthetics. Commissions for big sculptures in public spaces distinguish the consistent creation and consistency of the artist Gabriela von Habsburg. Mainly small and medium size sculptures will be presented in the exhibition; their presence and impact in the "small" interior are just as intense as the sculptures in the public space.

„My work is abstract and spiritual. It belies universal philosophies and visions that surpass time and place. The letter and the simple geometric shape have deep meanings that express faith as well as the relationship between creature and creator“ (Lulwah Al Homoud)

Lulwah Al Homoud's style relies on combining and creating a net of forms, lines, Arabic letters, rich colors, and sensory material using bright esthetics. To this end, she uses mixed media and geometric shapes as tools to accentuate her purpose. One can notice in her work an obvious bias to linear and spatial geometry, something that owes itself to the fact that she views it as a fertile source from which to renew her abstract visual vocabulary, and to turn it into a net of complex structures hinting to immortality and providing a feeling of stable equilibrium. She also uses mathematics, both Islamic and Western, to activate the language of audiovisual communication and to deconstruct Islamic ornament into new, stimulating, and visually exciting patterns. Insofar as Arabic letters are concerned, she takes the liberty of deconstructing them, deriving their symbolic dimensions, and then using these symbols into simple lines that serve as raw material for new designs.

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Her abstract paintings in Arabic calligraphy thus undulate between religious traditions and artistic vision, and cannot be clearly defined as belonging to either camp; Arabic calligraphy, after all, has already undergone the transformation from Qoranic writing material to secular contemporary art, and it is by this rationale that she works; after all, she views calligraphy as an art that expresses spiritual life but rather an internal hum, which is why she believes in the art of calligraphy as a being through which one can open onto the entire world.

Short biographies

Gabriela von Habsburg studied philosophy at the University of Munich and took a second degree in sculpting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich with Robert Jacobson and Eduardo Paolozzi. She received art awards for her sculptures already at an early stage, such as an award from the Masaryk Academy of Fine Arts Prague and the European Union. Habsburg has been teaching as a professor at the Art Academy Tbilisi, Georgia, since 2001. In 2007 at the occasion of the inauguration of the "Rose Revolution Monument", a sculpture created by von Habsburg, she was awarded the Georgian citizenship by President Mikheil Saakashvili. She acted as the Georgian ambassador in Germany from 2009 till 2013. In 2007 President Mikheil Saakashvili awarded her the Georgian citizenship during the inauguration of her created sculpture "Rose Revolution Monument".

Gabriela von Habsburg's sculptures were included in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Europe, USA and Asia, including the Kamitori Gallery, Kumamoto, Japan, the artists' house Lenbachplatz Munich, the Biennale del Ferro in Gubbio, Italy, the Akhmatova Museum in St. Petersburg , the Museum of Modern Art in La Valetta, Malta, the Kunsthalle Sopron, Hungary, the Academy of Fine Arts, Moscow, the Museum of Modern Art in Tbilisi, Georgia, the Art Museum Yerevan, Armenia, and the Art Museum Aalborg, Denmark and the Art Museum Stawanger, Norway. Her sculptures are owned by major museums, corporations and cities (1985 until today), including the Franke Holding AG, Aarburg, Switzerland, city of Astana, Kazakhstan, Art Museum Sophia, Bulgaria, Franke GmbH Hard, Austria, city Tbilisi, Georgia, Hildon Water, Brighton, City of Bethlehem, Palestine, city Museum of Skopje, Macedonia, Museum Würth, Künzelsau, Germany, Ernst Museum, Budapest, Hungary, Akhmatova Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia, Voest Alpine MCE, Linz Austria, Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Austria and much more.

Lulwah Al Homoud studied sociology at King Saud University and was the first Saudi to complete a MA at Central St Martins College of Art and Design in London. She has had lessons in calligraphy from Rashid Butt and was inspired by Ahmed Moustafa to learn about a 10th century theoretical system of calligraphy. In 2006 she participated in a British Museum managed project to have Arab artists work in schools. She spent six weeks at a school in London 'Exploring Calligraphy and Arab design.' She has participated in and co-curated the 2008 *Edge of Arabia* exhibition in SOAS Brunei Gallery. Al Homoud has participated and co-curated several international exhibitions, among them the 2008 *Edge of Arabia* exhibition in SOAS Brunei Gallery as well as other renowed shows in the Middle East. The artist lives and works in UK today.

We would like to invite you to the Open Sunday, October 5, 2014, from 11 am to 4 pm. The exhibition runs from October 5 to November 11, 2014 at AB Gallery Lucerne.

For more information please give us a call: + 41 41 982 08 80, write us an email:: office@ab-gallery.com or visit our website: www.ab-gallery.com.