

Ayan Farah

2/9 – 15/10/2016

Ayan Farah combines aspects of abstract painting and Land Art with the specific history of different places and cultures in a very extraordinary way. Her “paintings” are not painting in the classical sense, but object-like “receptacles” of certain places and periods of time. Ayan Farah collects minerals from the most various geographic locations: soil from the Dead Sea in Israel, terracotta from Mexico, copper from Somalia, clay from Iceland, or rain water from Abu Dhabi, Doha, and China. She mixes these “ingredients” with self-produced pigments, such as indigo or marigold, and soaks fabrics from the 18th and 19th century in them. Partially cut to pieces, Ayan Farah sews these “memory fragments” to a geometric grid reminiscent of the basic structure of a map. Other fabrics are folded to certain patterns and exposed for months or years to the sunlight at specific sites, where they then bleach out, until Farah halts the process and fixates it with a method borrowed from photography. Ayan Farah’s oeuvre resem-



Artemis, 2015
clay, mud, ink and vegetable dye on linen, hemp and canvas
220×170 cm



Sol – Hilda, 2014
indigo dyed sun faded linen and embroidery
200×120 cm

bles a poetic allegory of the political and social reality of our times, in which worldviews merge, reject each other, or coexist, but no longer follow a linear logic. This complexity arises from the artist’s own biography. As the daughter of Somali parents who was born in the United Arab Emirates, grew up in Finland and Sweden, and currently lives in London, where she first studied fashion design at the Central St. Martin College and then painting at the Royal College of Art, Farah combines the most various cultural views. What therefore plays a role in her work processes are notions of sustainability and mobility, the possibility of transferring everyday linen fabrics—often bedsheets from earlier centuries—to the here and now of art and taking them along “everywhere,” as opposed to classical painting. At the same time, aspects of African weaving and textile art appear in Farah’s work, for example, the

Bogolan mud cloth dye or the Ashanti Kente cloth, which both belong to Africa's "high art." Ayan Farah always focuses on grasping the essence of a situation or place, or in her words: "Land is the medium to me and also the subject."



Biographical note

Ayan Farah was born in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates to Somali parents and grew up in Stockholm, Sweden. Currently she lives and works in London. Until 2003 she studied Fashion Design at Middlesex University, followed by a Postgraduate Degree in Fashion Design from Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design in 2006 and a MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London in 2012. Her works were shown in international exhibitions like "Maps", Pippy Houldsworth Gallery London (2016); "Notes on running water", Almine Rech Gallery Brussels (2014); "Le musée d'une nuit (script for leaving traces)", David Roberts Art Foundation, Fondation Hippocrène, Paris (2014); "PROXIMA", Museo Británico Americano, Mexico City (2014); "Xtraction", The Hole, New York (2013); "Alchemy", The Arts Club, London (2013); "Wanderlust", Contemporary Art Society, London (2013); "Girlfriend material", The Standard, Los Angeles (2013).

Kadel Willborn
Birkenstraße 3
D-40233 Düsseldorf

info@kadel-willborn.de
www.kadel-willborn.de