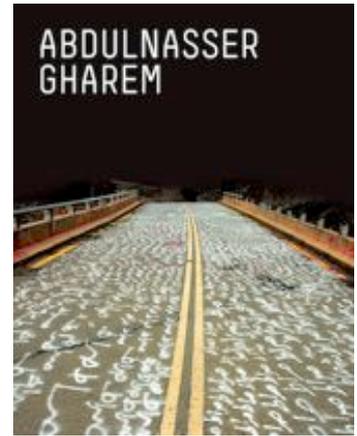


Press Release, 14th September 2011

Saudi's Acclaimed Soldier Artist to Publish First Book

Pioneering art initiative Edge of Arabia and independent publishing house Booth-Clibborn Editions present *Abdulnasser Gharem: Art of Survival* during London Frieze Week in October.



"Every civilization is judged by its art. When we look back on what we have done artistically at this time we will see that there were some people raising their voices. I think that many years from now we will still be reading about Abdulnasser Gharem." Hamza Serafi, Co-founder Athr Gallery

Abdulnasser Gharem: Art of Survival explores the extraordinary life and work of one of the Gulf's most radical young artists. Gharem, who had no formal art training, and whose work is now in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Saudi Arabian Ministry of Culture & Information, is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the Saudi Arabian army. He is widely regarded as a pioneer in the region for his firebrand intellectual courage and innovative use of materials, including rubber stamps, a collapsed bridge, and an invasive tree.

Lavishly illustrated and written by Henry Hemming, the book takes readers on a physical and conceptual journey into Gharem's world. The story begins with a recent Christie's Auction in Dubai and the sale of Message/Messenger which made Gharem the world record breaking living Arab artist and also earned him the label 'the Rock Star of Arab Art'. From the hectic glamour of the international art world, Hemming then travels with Gharem deep into Saudi society and landscape: to Aseer, Jizan, Jeddah, Riyadh and eventually back to Gharem's home tribe in Sadra-Eyt, recounting the artist's break from tradition as well as the stories and inspirations behind key works.

The tale of Gharem's creative journey is not the familiar plod of evolving artistic practice, safe within the hermetic confines of a studio. It couldn't be more different. The story of this man takes us to the very heart of what it is to stand against the tide, to innovate, to do so fearlessly in the streets and amongst the people; and precisely what happens when an artist positions himself both at the heart of society and at the margins. Gharem says, *"I have no studio so my Studio is where I can find people. When I see the opportunity I go."*

Abdulnasser Gharem: Art of Survival is published internationally by Booth-Clibborn Editions and produced by Edge of Arabia. Other books in this series include *Ahmed Mater* (2010) and *Edge of Arabia, Contemporary Art from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (2012).

Abdulnasser Gharem: Art of Survival

Text by Henry Hemming

Edited by Stephen Stapleton & Edward Booth-Clibborn

ISBN: 978-1-86154-324-0

11th October, 7PM – Panel Discussion with Abdulnasser Gharem: Front Line Club, London

For press enquiries and images please contact:

UK, USA and Europe | Klara M. Piza | press@edgeofarabia.com | +41 76 516 4924

Arabic and Gulf | Rania Kfoury | rania@image-nation.ae | +97 150 882 7732

**EDGE
OF
ARABIA**



NOTES TO EDITORS

ABDULNASSER GHAREM

Born 1973 in Khamis Mushait where he lives and works today. In 1992 Gharem graduated from the King Abdulaziz Academy before attending The Leader Institute in Riyadh. In 2003 he studied at the influential Al- Meftaha Arts Village in Abha and in 2004 Gharem and the Al- Meftaha artists staged a group exhibition, Shattah, which challenged existing modes of art practice in Saudi Arabia. Since then Gharem has exhibited in Europe, the Gulf and the USA, including at Martin Gropius-Bau and the Venice, Sharjah and Berlin Biennales, whilst concurrently being promoted from 2nd Lieutenant to Lieutenant Colonel in the Saudi Arabian army. He recently made history when his installation Message/Messenger sold for a world record price at auction in Dubai, establishing Gharem as the highest selling living Gulf artist. Gharem donated the proceeds of this sale to Edge of Arabia's campaign to foster art education in his native country. www.abdulnassergharem.com

UPCOMING PARTICIPATIONS:

UNTIL 20 NOVEMBER: *The Future of a Promise*, Contemporary Art from the Arab World, 54th Venice Biennale, Italy

21 SEPTEMBER: *The State: Social/Antisocial*, The Third Line & Traffic, Dubai. UAE

24-27 NOVEMBER: *Contemporary Istanbul*, Turkey

BOOTH-CLIBBORN EDITIONS

Booth-Clibborn Editions was founded in 1974 as a wholly independent company publishing an outstanding list of books. Titles range from monographs on contemporary artists, books for museums and art galleries worldwide and an eclectic mix of contemporary media, photography and graphics. Booth-Clibborn Editions' books have become a benchmark of quality and originality, recent books include *The History of the Saatchi Gallery*. www.booth-clibborn.com

EDGE OF ARABIA

Edge of Arabia is an independent arts initiative developing the appreciation of contemporary Arab art and culture with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. As a social enterprise (Community Interest Company) Edge of Arabia is committed to reaching new audiences and improving understanding through touring, non-commercial & free exhibitions, through publications, and through education programs targeting schools & universities. Following its launch in London in 2008, this grassroots initiative has travelled to Riyadh, Berlin, Istanbul, Dubai and most recently Venice, where it presented the first pan-Arab exhibition at the 54th Venice Biennale: *The Future of a Promise*. In 2012, Edge of Arabia will travel to London and Beirut before embarking on a tour of the US from 2013. www.edgeofarabia.com

HENRY HEMMING

Henry Hemming is an author and speaker. He has travelled extensively in the Middle East and is the author of books such as *Misadventure in the Middle East* (2007), *OffScreen: Four Young Artists in the Middle East* (2004) and *Together: How Small Groups Achieve Big Things* (2011). Henry also writes for The Times, The Financial Times, The Telegraph, The Sunday Times and more specialist publications such as The Art Newspaper and Canvas. www.henryhemming.com