

Susan Hefuna

Susan Hefuna is working with abstract forms that make up the structures of life. Micro details like those seen in scientific compositions of molecules and DNA, give a breakdown of how we see space all around us. Hefuna's work is a response to space, how we see ourselves when inside looking out and outside looking in. She explores the shapes of mashrabiya screens, windows, blinds and various forms that pertain to Cairo's architectural habits.

Gridded screens of old Islamic Cairo remind her of molecular structures. Architectural structures made to protect the inside world from the outside; filtering the light and cooling the inside space; allowing one to observe without being seen. Mashrabiya became her abstract symbol that operates in two directions; it separates, but also filters and joins.

In Seville and Granada, Susan Hefuna chose to install wooden screens in outdoor settings; the courtyard and abandoned windows of a former monastery. Inscribed with faintly visible words of "ANA" ("I" in Arabic), "U" and "Enta" ("You" in Arabic), combined with the Gregorian and Lunar year 2008/1429, the screens intervene between the city's religious history and its contemporary absence.

The words act differently depending on who is reading them and in which cultural context. It can be seen as an abstract image, a pattern, or simply "ANA", "YOU" and so on. The works begin to take on a bilingual affirmation, a codified representation of different cultural contexts.

The in-between-ness of being in two cultures at the same time, reflect personal experiences when dealing with cross-cultural codes. The visitor, the observer in his or her personal "Universe" will read the work differently depending on his/her knowledge and depth of understanding. They see what they know through a screen of social and cultural predictions.

For the first time Hefuna applies her woodworks onto bronze, giving a whole new meaning to this heavy ode of identity.

Her work can be seen at this year's Venice Biennial, and her upcoming exhibition this October entitled *Golden Gates* (Paris), curated by Daniela da Prato.

Text taken from original format: Cat. text for the Seville Biennial 2008/2009
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Bronze works, exhibited at the Galerie Volker Diehl (2009)
Images courtesy of the artist and Galerie Volker Diehl, 2009
www.susanhefuna.com



ANA (Myself) 2009. Casted bronze (new silver)
3 elements, 30 x 90 x 4 cm. Edition of 3



Drawing 2009. Casted bronze (new silver), 50.5 x 70 x 4 cm. Edition of 3



Dream 2009. Casted bronze (new silver), 50.5 x 70 x 4 cm. Edition of 3