

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

The Poetry of Water

By

Maxi Cohen



Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Abu Dhabi, Acrylic on inkjet print, 200 x 76cm

Dubai, UAE: Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce award-winning artist Maxi Cohen's first solo show in the UAE, titled 'The Poetry of Water', opening in November 2023.

This exhibition, a collection of water art captured in the UAE, includes paintings, large format photographs, multimedia works, immersive installations, mixed-reality, and video furniture.

Maxi's engagement with water, as a medium, began in the hot springs in the desert of California, where she became mesmerized by the lush visual abstractions within the water. Thus began a twenty-five year pursuit, filming and photographing rivers, oceans, springs, and waterfalls all around the world...from Argentina to Zambia, Iceland to Antarctica.

Maxi came to Dubai, during Expo 2020, to learn more about current climate change innovations and issues of global sustainability. In this time of climate change, deserts are expanding all over the globe. As the UAE is 80% desert, innovation in food and water security is crucial. Maxi discovered that the bodies of water in the UAE were none like she had experienced elsewhere in the world. That moment of epiphany presented an irresistible challenge for her as an artist. As she looked and studied, the water showed its beauty in unexpected ways. Maxi states, "*the greatest wonder was photographing in the Jubail Mangrove Park, where, when I arrived, there was no water and hours later, it flooded; an ever-changing landscape devoid of lushness, weirdly different, and ultimately inspiring. As I looked through my camera, the vegetation reminded me of Arabic calligraphy in the fluid way it curved and danced. When I saw the*

large-scale prints I had made from my photographs, I started to paint on their surfaces, calling on the spirit of water to speak through the art."

As part of her ongoing research into the majesty of water, Maxi is also creating art that shifts people's consciousness regarding the water in our bodies. Our bodies are about 65% water. To create Bio-Resonant art works, Maxi is collaborating with the renowned team from dArt NYC, founded by William Wong. dArt NYC's mission is to create a deeper emotional connection with art by engaging all five senses through mixed reality, sound, haptics, scent and taste. Wearing an EEG headband, a haptic vest, and an MR headset, viewers will be able to see their own brain activity translated in water. This is the first Bio-Resonant art experience stored and verified on the Blockchain.

This breakthrough in art and science enables viewers to experience their own thoughts, demonstrating that our thoughts impact our biology. Translated through electromagnetism, the water in us carries information, affecting our cellular biology – our thoughts altering the gallery of our own body's cells.

Inspiring in us the possibility of being personally resonant, it is Maxi's hope that her work not only brings beauty and serenity to people's environments, but will also enrich the health and well-being of the people and the land of the UAE and beyond.

In Maxi's own words, *"Water recovers me. It is where I dive deep, free the mind, and let go of my body. It is the element of creativity, a womb-like return... inner peace, free flowing. May this work be my prayer for peace, for clean water for all. May it bring beauty, calm, and uplift the spirit."*

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maxi Cohen is an award-winning artist and filmmaker based in New York City. Her films, photographs, and multimedia installations have been exhibited internationally and are in the permanent collections of numerous museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Her films have influenced two generations of filmmakers, having played in movie theaters, film festivals and on televisions around the world. As a media activist, her film and television work has had significant influence in creating visible social change. Maxi has been supported by grants and awards from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Annenberg Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts, The Karan-Weiss Foundation, and most recently The Buckminster Fuller Institute's Design Science Studio, among others. (<https://www.maxicohenstudio.com/biography>)

For twenty-five years, Maxi has been traveling the world, filming and photographing bodies of water. From these documented images and film footage, she has created and exhibited multi-media works and installations. The latest evolution of Maxi's reverence for water is *A Movement in Water™* an interactive

traveling “living museum” of water, intended to increase one’s reverence for water, both within oneself and in nature.

Maxi, in collaboration with Gina Bria, founder of the Hydration Foundation, is a knowledge partner for better water practices for the Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM), a joint venture of the US Department of State and the UAE.

Maxi has taught at the NYU Graduate School of Education, the New School, and at Pratt Institute and has lectured around the world, including at MIT and DIDI.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. The Gallery has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists, leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai’s Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE, showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work for the first time in the Middle East.

In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogues and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in the major international art fairs and stages off-site projects, as a platform for exploring new conversations, within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.