

Press Release
Date of issue: March 14, 2017



ART DUBAI 2017 OPENS TOMORROW WITH ITS LARGEST AND MOST INTERNATIONAL EDITION TO DATE

March 14, 2017, Dubai, United Arab Emirates – The eleventh edition of Art Dubai will open its doors to the public tomorrow. Held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and under the new leadership of Fair Director Myrna Ayad and International Director Pablo del Val, this year's fair will be the largest and most international to date, with new galleries and countries participating for the first time, alongside ambitious new elements to the programming.

Featuring 94 galleries from 43 countries, with 27 galleries attending for the first time, Art Dubai continues its mandate to offer unrivaled access to art from across the globe, reinforcing its position as the world's most globally diverse art fair as well as the preeminent platform for the regional art scene.

This year, Art Dubai Contemporary will feature 79 galleries spread across its two gallery halls, including a selection of 30+ galleries focusing on solo or two-artist exhibitions. Art Dubai Modern, now in its fourth edition, continues to be the only platform dedicated to showcasing museum-quality works by Modern masters from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

"Visitors will see more tightly curated exhibitions in the gallery halls this year," said **Art Dubai's International Director Pablo del Val**. "The presentations are split between solo or two-artist exhibitions, allowing a more focused contemplation; and multi-artist shows, enabling an overview of different works. In addition, we are introducing new galleries and countries to the fair this year, with our highest-ever number of galleries from Latin America, and galleries from Algeria, Peru and Uruguay attending for the first time."

Further highlights of this year's programming include the unveiling of **Rana Begum's** winning work for the ninth edition of the **Abraaj Group Art Prize**; the eleventh edition of Art Dubai's critically-acclaimed **Global Art Forum**, titled Trading Places, and exploring the way trade shapes – and reshapes – the world; a Surrealist dining experience realized by Beirut-based art collective **Atfal Ahdath** at **The Room**; an interactive installation by Moroccan-born, Brooklyn-based artist **Meriem Bennani** at the Art Dubai Bar; a **series of specially commissioned performances** taking place during the fair; as well as a **Modern Symposium**, comprising a series of talks celebrating the cultural impact of 20th century Modern masters from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.

"Through its year-round activities, educational initiatives and artist commissions, Art Dubai aims to redefine what an art fair can be," said **Myrna Ayad, Fair Director of Art Dubai**. "In addition to welcoming new galleries and representative countries in our gallery halls this year, we continuously grow our programming, reflecting the diversity and dynamism of our hometown Dubai, and contributing to its cultural landscape."

Art Dubai is held in partnership with **The Abraaj Group**. The fair is sponsored by **Julius Baer, Meraas** and **Piaget**. **Madinat Jumeirah** is home to the event. The **Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (Dubai Culture)** is a strategic partner of Art Dubai and supports the fair's year-round education programme.

Art Dubai 2017 Programming

The Abraaj Group Art Prize

Each year, Art Dubai unveils the **Abraaj Group Art Prize**, the region's most important prize for artists from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. The 2017 prize is curated by **Omar Berrada** and the winner, London-based Bangladeshi artist **Rana Begum**, will unveil her commissioned work alongside an exhibition of works by shortlisted artists **Doa Aly, Sarah Abu Abdallah** and **Raha Raissnia**. Now in its ninth edition, the aim of the prize is to empower potential and give often under-represented contemporary artists the resources to further develop their talent.

Art Dubai Commissions

Focusing exclusively on performance art in 2017, the programme includes a series of five specially commissioned performances, curated by guest curator **Yasmina Reggad**, and presented by international artists, **Manuel Pelmus, Lana Fahmi, Egle Budvytyte, Iván Argote** and **Pauline Bastard**. In addition to the Commissions programme, visitors will be able to experience a dance piece, created in homage to recently deceased **Emirati artist Hassan Sharif** and based on his diagrams, instructions and performance archive.

Art Dubai Projects: 'The Room: *Cooking Liberty*'

Hosted in Art Dubai's **The Room**, *Cooking Liberty* is a visual and gastronomic experience presented by Beirut-based art collective **Atfal Ahdath**, whose founding members are Vartan Avakian, Hatem Imam and Raed Yassin. Taking cues from **Salvador Dali's** cookbook, *Les Diners de Gala*, and through exaggeration and repetition, Atfal Ahdath invites guests to experience their new, live visceral installation by day. By night, the collective will welcome guests with edible dreams in an immersive setting reminiscent of a grandiose banquet, a truly Surrealist experience that plays with familiarity and expectation.

Art Dubai Projects: 'Ghariba/Stranger'

Art Dubai has commissioned Moroccan-born, Brooklyn-based artist **Meriem Bennani**, to create an interactive bar installation, borrowing from playful strategies and designs that beauty salons or entertainment parks use to encourage social interaction among strangers. Titled *Ghariba/Stranger*, Bennani's installation includes viewing stations for videos showing film portraits of Moroccan women.

Global Art Forum

Titled *Trading Places*, the eleventh edition of the **Global Art Forum** will explore how the trade of goods and ideas shapes the world we live in. Recognized as the leading talks programme in the Middle East and Asia, this year's edition will feature speakers from all over the world, including musician and CEO of Dubai Airports Paul Griffiths, exploring connections between

plane schedules and the musical score, as well as artist Christo giving a personal illustrated overview of his and Jeanne-Claude's works and insights into the creative and technical challenges of creating such large pieces. Conceived by **Shumon Basar** as Commissioner, with **Antonia Carver** and **Oscar Guardiola-Rivera** as Co-Directors, the Global Art Forum will take place at the fair on March 15-17. Art Dubai partners with the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and Dubai Design District (d3) to present the Global Art Forum.

Art Dubai Portraits

With digital media playing an increasingly important role in the artworld, from artistic creation to the presentation of works, Art Dubai has launched **Art Dubai Portraits**, a new film series that provides a short perspective into the lives and workspaces of artists that are connected to the fair through its programming or participating galleries, thus acting as a digital extension of Art Dubai's offering. The films are available on Art Dubai's website.

A.i.R Dubai

Continuing its mandate to foster and develop Dubai's artistic community, Art Dubai sees the sixth edition of **A.i.R Dubai** develop beyond being a residency programme. For the first time, the commissions will become permanent public works, thus making a lasting imprint on the city of Dubai. Held in partnership with Tashkeel and the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, and curated by **Amanda Abi Khalil**, A.i.R Dubai 2017 features commissions by **Zeinab Alhashemi** at Dubai Design District and **Chafa Ghaddar** at Al Safa Library, as well as a work by **Shaikha Al Mazrou**, whose location will be announced soon.

Further Talks Series at Art Dubai

For its eleventh edition and to complement the fair's Modern hall, Art Dubai is holding a **Modern Symposium**, which, with the support of Alserkal Avenue, will take place on Friday 17 March at Art Dubai Modern and on Saturday, March 18 at Alserkal Avenue. Comprising a series of talks and presentations focused on the life, work and cultural impact of 20th century Modern masters from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, renowned curators, scholars and patrons are leading sessions that delve into the styles, influences and practices of artists whose work contributes to the history of art produced between the 1940s and 1980s.

Part of Art Dubai's VIP programme, the **Abraaj Terrace Talks** take place on the terrace of The Abraaj Group Lounge, and feature leaders and innovators from the worlds of art, business and philanthropy, exploring the latest global trends. Spanning a wide range of topics, the conversations will feature highlights such as a discussion between **Omar Berrada** and Abraaj Group Art Prize winner **Rana Begum**, discussing the thoughts behind her winning work; and a talk by **André Borschberg**, who in 2015 completed the world's first round-the-world solar flight, which started from the UAE.

Education at Art Dubai

Held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the **Sheikha Manal Little Artists Program**, now in its fifth edition, is held in partnership between Art Dubai and The Cultural Office. The program offers a unique opportunity for UAE-based children and teenagers, encouraging them to engage in the arts. Due to the success of last year's edition, this year's program will grow to accommodate more than double the number of participants it had last year, increase the number of its **Discovery**

Tours, as well as include, for the first time, drop-in workshops. The 2017 edition will feature Expanding Treasures, a project by lead artist **Suzan Drummen**, seeing families and children work together to create a large-scale temporary installation on-site at the fair.

Held throughout the year, **Campus Art Dubai** is a school for artists, curators, writers, designers and cultural producers based in the UAE, featuring courses, talks and workshops, taught and led by a local and international cast of academics, critics, curators and artists. CAD 5.0 is led by **Murtaza Vali**, **Uzma Rizvi** and **Lantian Xie** and focuses on the theme On Engagement: Rethinking Investment. Campus Art Dubai is held in partnership with the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) and supported by Dubai Design District (d3).

The **Art Dubai Fellowship** is a programme for exceptional artists, curators and writers working in the Arab world and beyond, coming together for a week-long series of intensive workshops during Art Dubai. Twenty-six fellows have participated since 2011; together, they form a dynamic alumni group, with several continuing to collaborate and support each other, beyond their experiences on the programme. Led by writer and curator **Tirdad Zolghadr**, the 2017 programme has two new developments: the fellowship is now programmed over two years, and it will focus on artists as writers. The Art Dubai fellowship is supported by Julius Baer.

Partner Exhibitions

Homage Without An Homage is presented by **Julius Baer**. The exhibition curated by **Cristiana de Marchi** features works by artists from different generations who have been mentored, influenced or inspired by the late **Hassan Sharif**'s practice and teaching. Homage Without An Homage is accompanied by video screenings as well as a series of talks.

Leading the way for public art in Dubai, **Meraas**' street art initiative Dubai Walls sees works by some of the world's top street artists transforming Dubai's City Walk into a unique art destination.

For its second year at Art Dubai, **Piaget** exhibits its new High Jewellery collection Sunny Side of Life. Articulated around three environments Sunset, Pool Side and Lush Nature, Piaget's presentation at Art Dubai will be the first time the collection is shown in the region.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Art Dubai

The preeminent platform to interact with art from the Middle East and North Africa, Art Dubai is a leading international art fair. Mirroring the cosmopolitanism and diversity of its hometown Dubai, it is the most globally diverse art fair, which in 2017 will present galleries from 43 countries. Through the fair and its year-round activities, Art Dubai also plays a leading role for the cultural development of Dubai, thus redefining the role an art fair can play; its year-round thought leadership, education and commissioning programming activities such as the Global Art Forum, Campus Art Dubai and Art Dubai Projects have been instrumental in building the framework for supporting artistic talent in the city and beyond.

The eleventh edition of Art Dubai takes place March 15-18, 2017.

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