

Press Release

**WINNER AND SHORTLISTED ARTISTS ANNOUNCED
FOR 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABRAAJ GROUP ART PRIZE**



Abraaj Group Art Prize 2018 Winner Lawrence Abu Hamdan.
Photo Eric T. White. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London.

- ***Lawrence Abu Hamdan is the winner of the 2018 Abraaj Group Art Prize***
- ***Marks the 10th anniversary of the Prize, having propelled 44 artists to the global stage in the past decade***
- ***Winners from Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Algeria***

Dubai, UAE, October 4, 2017 – The Abraaj Group, a leading investor in growth markets, today announced **Lawrence Abu Hamdan as the winner**, as well as **Basma Alsharif, Neil Beloufa and Ali Cherri as the shortlisted artists** for the upcoming edition of the Abraaj Group Art Prize, which will be exhibited at the next edition of Art Dubai (March 21-24, 2018).

Each year, The Abraaj Group awards US\$100,000 to a winning artist to realise a ‘dream project’ and US\$10,000 each to three shortlisted artists to support their artistic practice, with the 2018 edition having seen applications from a record number of 65 countries.

This upcoming iteration marks the 10th anniversary of the Prize, an institution which, over the years, has become a cornerstone of the art scene in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, as well as a stepping stone for mid-career artists, many of whom have become well-known names in the international art world.

Winning artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan commented: “I am delighted to be chosen as the winner of the Abraaj Group Art Prize, especially in light of this being the 10th anniversary of an award that has been granted to many excellent artists over the years. The Prize allows me to produce and conceive a work using materials and technologies previously unavailable to me, and in doing so enables me to deepen my exploration of the most contemporary ways of seeing and hearing our world. I very much appreciate this generous opportunity and I am honoured by the jury’s selection to support the production of an ambitious new artwork.”

Chair of the Abraaj Group Art Prize Dana Farouki added: “It is remarkable to see how far the Prize has come in the last 10 years and the role it has played for the development of the art scene as well as the careers of the many talented artists and curators who have been a part of it over the years.”

Myriam Ben Salah, Curator for the 2018 edition commented: “The selection process for this 10th edition of the Abraaj Prize has been challenging as the number and quality of applications was outstanding. The last steps were particularly tricky as we had to choose among great artists and very appealing proposals. I am very excited by the jury’s final selection, as I think Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Basma Alsharif, Neil Beloufa and Ali Cherri are four exceptional artists, and figures whose work is important in today’s world. Although their practices are very different, they share a certain number of interests and interrogations which I look forward to exploring while working with them on the exhibition.”

Marking the occasion, Frederic Sicre, Managing Director of The Abraaj Group said: “Being part of the art scene in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia this last decade has been an incredibly creative and inspiring journey for us. As investors in these markets, it is our responsibility to positively impact communities, be it through business, entrepreneurship or innovation and the arts. Ten years ago, the Prize was established with the aim of nurturing homegrown artistic talent. Today, the Prize is a platform for artists to shine and leave their footprint on a global stage. We’ve seen lives transformed and careers catapulted. We are proud to help these gifted artists to flourish and make their mark in the art world. This is a success story we couldn’t be happier to be part of.”

For further information on the Prize please visit:

[The Abraaj Group Art Prize](#)
[Art Dubai](#)
[The Abraaj Group](#)

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About The Abraaj Group Art Prize

The Abraaj Group is a leading investor, purpose-built for operating in the growth markets of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Turkey. Through its Stakeholder and Strategic Partnerships programmes, the Group supports art and innovation, aiming to have a deep-rooted and sustainable impact across growth markets.

The Abraaj Group Art Prize was founded in 2008 and is now in its tenth edition. The aim of the Prize is to empower potential and give often under-represented contemporary artists the resources to further develop their talent. Following the application and jury process, four artists are shortlisted for the Prize and one (of the four) artists awarded the US\$100,000 commission. The three shortlisted artists receive a cash prize and are represented in a group exhibition at Art Dubai (March 21-24, 2018) through previous works, which are selected by the Guest Curator in collaboration with the artist. The Prize reflects Abraaj’s own investment philosophy, which is to take viable businesses with great potential,

and create regional and global champions. To date, the winning works were presented at Art Dubai every year and have then gone on loan to exhibitions at Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, Sharjah Biennale 11, Sharjah, the 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, the 18th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, V&A, London, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, Zhejiang, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Tensta Konstall, Stockholm, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Glasgow, 10th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju as well as the New Museum, New York.

About the Artists and the Curator:

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Winner

Lawrence Abu Hamdan is an artist, "private ear" and fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, New York. His projects have taken the form of audiovisual installations, performances, graphic works, photography, Islamic sermons, cassette tape compositions, potato chip packets, essays, and lectures. Abu Hamdan's interest with sound and its intersection with politics originate from his background in DIY music. He has made audio analyses for legal investigations at the UK Asylum Tribunal and advocacy for organisations such as Amnesty International and Defence for Children International. The artist's forensic audio investigations are conducted as part of his research for Forensic Architecture at Goldsmiths College, London, where he is also a PhD candidate.

Abu Hamdan's Rubber Coated Steel, 2016, won the short film award at the Rotterdam International Film Festival 2017 and his exhibition Earshot at Portikus Frankfurt, 2016, was the recipient of the 2016 Nam June Paik Award. Other solo exhibitions include Taqiyya, 2015, at Kunsthalle St Gallen, Tape Echo, 2013, at Beirut in Cairo and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Freedom Of Speech Itself, 2012, at Showroom, London, and The Whole Truth, 2012, at Casco, Utrecht. Additionally, his works have been presented in Tamawuj, Sharjah Biennial 13, Sharjah, 2017, Contour Biennale 8: Polyphonic Worlds: Justice as Medium, Mechelen, Belgium, 2017, 11th Gwangju Biennial, South Korea, 2016, the 9th Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, 2016, The Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai, 2014, The Whitechapel Gallery, London, MACBA, Barcelona, Tate Modern, London, The Beirut Art Center and The Taipei Biennial, all in 2012. Abu Hamdan's writing can be found in Forensis Sternberg Press, Manifesta Journal and Cabinet Magazine. His works are part of collections at MoMA, New York, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Centre Pompidou, Paris and the Arts Council England. Lawrence Abu Hamdan was born in 1985 in Amman, Jordan. He currently lives and works in Beirut, Lebanon.

Basma Alsharif, Shortlisted Artist

Basma Alsharif is an artist and filmmaker born in Kuwait of Palestinian origin, raised between France, the US and the Gaza Strip. She has a BFA and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Basma developed her practice nomadically and works between cinema and installation, centering on the human condition in relation to shifting geopolitical landscapes and natural environments. Major exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, Les Rencontres d'Arles, Les Modules at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 25 Years of Arabic Creativity, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, Here and Elsewhere at the New Museum, New York, the Al Riwaq Biennial, Palestine, the Berlin Documentary Forum, the Sharjah Biennial and Manifesta 8. She received a jury prize at the Sharjah Biennial 9 and was awarded the Marcelino Botin Visual Arts grant. Basma is represented by Galerie Imane Farès in Paris.

Neil Beloufa, Shortlisted Artist

Neil Beloufa is a Franco-Algerian artist, who lives and works in Paris. He was a student at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, Cooper Union, New York and Fresnoy - National Contemporary Arts Studio, Tourcoing. His work has been the subject of monographic exhibitions in France and abroad, notably at K11, Shanghai, 2016, MoMA, New York, 2016, Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin, 2015, the ICA, London, 2014, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2013, and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2013. Neil Beloufa also took part in the Biennale of Contemporary Art in Shanghai in 2014, the 55th International Contemporary Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, 2013, and the Biennial of Contemporary Art in Lyon, also in 2013. His work is present in numerous prestigious collections, including the Centre Pompidou, the MoMA, New York as well as the Sammlung Goetz and the collection of Julia Stoschek.

Ali Cherri, Shortlisted Artist

Ali Cherri is a filmmaker and visual artist living in Beirut and Paris. His recent solo exhibitions include *Somniculus* at Jeu de Paume, Paris and CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 2017, *Dénaturé* at Galerie Imane Farès, 2017, *From Fragment to Whole* at Jönköpings läns museum, Sweden, 2017, *Taxonomy of Fallacies* at Sursock Museum, Beirut, 2016. His work has been exhibited in several international venues among them the Centre Pompidou, 2017, the Lyon Biennial, 2017, MAXXI, Rome, 2017, Le MACVAL, 2017, the Guggenheim New York, 2016, the Aichi Triennale, Japan, 2016, Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Italy, 2016, Le Centquatre Paris, 2016, the Sharjah Art Foundation, 2016, MACBA, Spain, 2015, the Warsaw Museum of Modern Art, 2015, Es Baluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Palma, Spain, 2015, the Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea, 2014. He's the recipient of Harvard University's Robert E. Fulton Fellowship, 2016, and the Rockefeller Foundation Award, 2017.

Myriam Ben Salah, Curator

Myriam Ben Salah is a curator and writer based in Paris, where she has been coordinating special projects and public programmes at the Palais de Tokyo since 2009, focusing particularly on performance art, video and publishing initiatives. She is the Editor-in-Chief of KALEIDOSCOPE Magazine's international edition and co-edits F.A.Q., a periodical image-only magazine with artist Maurizio Cattelan, as well as Feb (Mag), the publication of the Underground Museum in Los Angeles. Her writings have appeared in numerous international art publications. Her latest curatorial projects include *We Dance, We Smoke, We Kiss, Fahrenheit*, Los Angeles, 2016, *Cool Memories, Occidental Temporary*, Paris, 2016, *Like the Desert Miss the Real*, Galerie Steinek as part of Curated-by, Vienna, 2015, *Dirty Linen*, DESTE Foundation at the Benaki Museum, Athens, 2015, *Shit and Die*, Palazzo Cavour as part of Artissima collateral program, Turin, 2014.

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 fair, which, through its year-round activities, also plays a leading role for the cultural development of Dubai, thus redefining the role an art fair can play; its year-long 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.

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.

The twelfth edition of Art Dubai takes place March 21-24, 2018.

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