

Press Release
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ART DUBAI REVEALS PROGRAMME FOR ITS ELEVENTH EDITION



Installation Shot of Art Dubai 2016. Courtesy of The Studio Dubai.

February 15, 2017, Dubai, United Arab Emirates – 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, the eleventh edition of Art Dubai will be the most international to date, welcoming new galleries and representative countries to the fair for the first time, alongside ambitious new elements to the programming.

Highlights of the fair's growing offering include Art Dubai's inaugural Modern Symposium, initiated to celebrate the cultural impact of 20th century masters from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia; a visual, sensory and gastronomic experience for visitors realised by Beirut-based artist collective Atfal Ahdath at *'The Room'*; and a series of commissioned performances that will take place during the fair.

"Over the years and through its programming, Art Dubai has become one of the world's most dynamic art fairs," said Myrna Ayad, Fair Director of Art Dubai. "Through its year-round activities, educational initiatives and artistic commissions, Art Dubai redefines what an art fair can be and I am delighted that this year with new initiatives such as the Modern Symposium and our largest performance art programme to date, we will be able to offer further insights into the regional art scene with an increased programme to engage our visitors outside the gallery halls".

Art Dubai 2017 will feature 94 galleries from 43 countries, continuing its mandate to offer unrivalled access to art from across the globe, and reinforcing its position as the world's most globally diverse art fair and the preeminent platform for the regional art scene.

“We are offering visitors a new experience in the gallery halls, with more tightly curated presentations this year”, said Art Dubai’s International Director Pablo del Val. “The exhibitions will be 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 showing new galleries and countries for the first time, with a particularly strong contingent of Iranian galleries as well as our highest-ever number of galleries from Latin America.”

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 Programme

Modern Symposium

For its eleventh edition and to complement the fair’s Modern hall, Art Dubai will introduce the inaugural Modern Symposium, which, with the support of Alserkal Avenue, will take place [on Friday 17 March](#) at Art Dubai Modern and [on Saturday 18 March](#) 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, South Asia and Africa. Renowned curators, scholars and patrons will lead the sessions that will delve into the styles, influences and practices of artists whose work contributes to the history of art produced between the 1940s and 1980s.

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 Dinners 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 sensorial experience that flirts with familiarity and expectation.

Art Dubai Projects: “*Ghariba/Stranger*”

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

The Abraaj Group Art Prize

Each year, Art Dubai unveils the Abraaj Group Art Prize, the region’s most important art prize. 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.

Art Dubai Commissions

Focusing exclusively on performance art in 2017, the programme will include a series of five specially commissioned performances, curated by guest curator Yasmina Reggad, and presented by international artists, Manuel Pelmuş, Lana Fahmi, Eglė Budvytė, Iván Argote and Pauline Bastard.

In addition to the Commissions programme, Yasmina Reggad and Lana Fahmi will perform a dance piece, created in homage to recently deceased Emirati artist Hassan Sharif, based on his diagrams, instructions and performance archive.

Global Art Forum

The fair's critically acclaimed Global Art Forum is the largest talks programme in the Middle East and Asia, and is recognised as a leading international platform for engaging cultural debate. Featuring around 50 speakers from around the world, the forum returns in 2017 under the theme *Trading Places*, with a focus on the trade of goods and ideas that shape – and reshape – the world. 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.

Sheikha Manal Little Artists Program

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 Culture Office. The program offers a unique opportunity for UAE-based children and teenagers, encouraging them to engage in the arts and 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. The program's popular Discovery Tours, enabling young children to discover key pieces around the fair, will be complemented by the Artists in Schools Initiative, giving the exclusive opportunity to selected schools to experience workshops on campus.

About Art Dubai

The preeminent platform to interact with art from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, 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 at the Madinat Jumeirah.

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