

daily

canvas



16 MARCH 2010 | ISSUE 1 | ART DUBAI EDITION

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TODAY

- 19:00–21:30 Alex De Fluvia *Under Construction* exhibition opening at Cuadro Fine Art Gallery
- 19:00–20:30 START: AerosolArabic & START public performances Madinat Beach

TOMORROW

- 12:30–13:30 Global Art Forum: *Artists and Mapping Historiographies*
- 13:30–13:45 Global Art Forum: Mapping Presentation, 5000 Friends after the Rolodex
- 13:45–14:00 Global Art Forum: Arts Writing Keynote with Douglas McLennan
- 14:00–15:00 Global Art Forum: Is There a Crisis in Arts Writing?
- 15:00–16:00 Global Art Forum: Building the Tehran Contemporary Art Museum, Depicting Rostam and Piles of Gold Bricks: Tehran in the 1970s
- ALL GLOBAL ART FORUM DISCUSSIONS ARE HAPPENING AT THE MADINAT BEACH**
- 17:00–18:30 Art Park Talk: Conversation with 2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize Recipients Bidoun Lounge
- 17:30–18:15 Artist-led Tour: Khalil Rabah, Fair View (Register and convene at the Arts Projects desk) Madinat Beach
- 17:30–19:00 START: Graffiti wall demonstration with AerosolArabic, START stand Madinat Beach
- 18:00–19:00 Art Park: Video Programme, *Strike a Pose*, followed by a Q&A with curators Özge Ersoy and Sohrab Mohebbi Bidoun Lounge
- 19:00–19:45 Art Park Talk: Archives and the Internet Bidoun Lounge
- 19:00–21:30 Maslen and Mehra *Mirrored* exhibition opening at Cuadro Fine Art Gallery
- 20:00–21:15 The Big Idea Bidoun Lounge

ALSO SHOWING

1x1 Art Gallery: *A Collection of Works*.
Call +971 43483873 or visit www.1x1artgallery.com

Art Couture: *Exhibition by Three 21st Century Artists*.
Call +971 43994331 or visit www.artcoutureuae.com

Artspace: *Laws of Direction* by Zakaria Ramhani.
Call +971 43230820 or visit www.artspace-dubai.com

Art Sawa: *My Home Land* and *Creative Palestinian Art*.
Call +971 43408660 or visit www.artawa.com

Ayyam Gallery: *Moustafa Fathi*.
Call +971 43236242 or visit www.ayyamgallery.com

For a FULL schedule of events and further details please pick up your copy of the fair guide at the Art Dubai information desk or log on to www.artdubai.ae For a complete listing of shows in Dubai, visit the Canvas Booth (D39) to pick up a copy of *Canvas Guide* or visit www.canvasonline.com/images/pdf/atc.pdf

Art Dubai will be open to the public from 18–20 March. Tickets can be purchased for AED 50 through TimeOutTickets or at the door. For more information call +971 4323 3434 or email info@artdubai.ae

ART DUBAI 2010 / CANVAS DAILY 1



Welcome to the fourth edition of Art Dubai and the second incarnation of *Canvas Daily* (which debuted at Abu Dhabi Art 2009), the fair's exclusive supplement providing daily coverage of what's on, reviews, interviews and a host of exciting features. Readers can find *Canvas Daily* around the fair, at five-star hotels throughout the city, at Dubai galleries, on the Arbus and at airline lounges in Dubai International Airport. A PDF of *Canvas Daily* is also available each morning for download at www.canvasonline.com.

In

the weeks leading up to the fourth Art Dubai, *Canvas Daily* staff are happy to report a very clear mood of optimism among the fair's 70 participating galleries, the Art Dubai team, collectors and patrons.

Kicking off Art Dubai week was the annual invitation-only Canvas Collectors Dinner, which took place at Madinat Jumeirah's Pier Chic. Society images can be seen on page 13. *Iran Inside Out* opened yesterday at DIFC's The Farjam Collection and showcases works by 56 Contemporary Iranian artists. Dubai is the exhibition's second stop after it debuted at New York's Chelsea Art Museum last year. Cuadro Fine Art Gallery at DIFC also opened *UAE Art Books*, a double bonanza featuring works by four Contemporary Emirati artists, as well as a bilingual tome on them and their work. In fact, Cuadro is going all out during Art Dubai week with four shows opening on consecutive nights. Last night also saw the opening of Art Dubai's fringe fair, Bastakiya Art Fair, which also celebrates its fourth edition. These and more are just a sample of the

cultural highlights taking place in parallel to Art Dubai. Art lovers can also pick up one of *Canvas* magazine's signature tops for both men and women. If you've ever thought something was 'arrogant' or if the art world has confused you to the point where you ask yourself 'what the kunst?' or if you, like us, believe that 'art > recession' then Booth D39 is where you've got to head. We're also selling a Collector's Voodoo Doll, especially made for a collector's secret evil wishes. And we sell funky notebooks too. For now, enjoy the fair and remember, all for art and art for all.

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"I have never been more excited about Art Dubai. This year, the roster of galleries is inspiring and eclectic."

Kashya Hildebrand, founder of Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Booth B21.

To read a full profile of the gallery, pick up the latest issue of *Canvas* from Booth D39.



CONVEX: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

RASHID AL KHALIFA



MEET THE ARTISTS

As Art Dubai welcomes artists, collectors, curators and art lovers from all over the world, *Canvas Daily* asks leading artists from the Middle East for their thoughts on Dubai, its Contemporary art scene and what's next for it as a centre of the region's cultural renaissance. We interviewed Farhad Ahrarnia (FA), Halim Al-Karim (HK), Lalla Essaydi (LE), Monir Farmanfarmaian (MF), Hakim Ghazali (HG), Khaled Hafez (KH) and Nazif Topçuoğlu (NT).

Q: What is your opinion of Dubai as an artistic and cultural venue?

HG: What Dubai has achieved so far is incredible. It's the only Middle Eastern city that has really been able to put the region's art scene onto the global stage.

HK: Dubai is like a laboratory, filled with artistic experimentation. It's a real focal point, with many people looking at it to see what's happening art-wise in the Middle East.

MF: The Dubai art scene is constantly improving and I find everything very intelligently done here. Why haven't other Middle Eastern countries done the same?

NT: I've only been here once before and it was pouring with rain! I was also rather wary of how my work would be received, but I found the audience very open-minded. They know their stuff, and take their art very seriously.

Q: What do you think Dubai has to offer artists in particular?

LE: Dubai's inspiring and encouraging response to art gives artists the all-important knowledge that they are supported by a wider community. And from my personal point of view, it gives a wider range of Muslim women the opportunity to participate in my work.

KH: As an 'experimental' market I think Dubai has really succeeded in attracting international curators and cultural operators to come and integrate the artists who live and work in the region with the international art market.

FA: Dubai's geographical location is key, as artists from the region really need a platform where we can interact with a global audience. If politics were different it could have been Baghdad, Beirut or Tehran, but it's Dubai.

HK: Government bodies like the DCAA [Dubai Culture & Arts Authority] are very supportive of what's going on here, and that's so important. Artists and galleries cannot create the buzz of a new art scene all on their own.

Q: What do you see as the main value of fairs such as Art Dubai?

MF: Fairs are one of the most useful ways of finding out what's going on in the wider scene, otherwise how would I know what's happening in Turkey, Egypt or wherever? They're invaluable.

FA: Although fairs are mostly commercial of course, they're a great way for people to see a lot of art in one place, regardless of whether those people are buying or not. They're a showcase, effectively.

KH: These fairs always provide 'discoveries' with regard

to art practices. Each gallery brings to the table its own research and propositions, and this is leading to the writing of a proper art history of the region, something our part of the world has been deprived of.

LE: Although the rationale of fairs is solely as economic venues – unlike museums and biennials, where art is put into a much richer and deeper context – they do give both artists and audiences the chance to encounter a greater variety of contemporary work than they may otherwise see.

Q: Has the economic downturn affected you and the way you approach your work?

HK: Yes, but only in a positive way. Dubai may have seen the disappearance of a lot of its commercial art, but the serious collectors and art-lovers have remained, which has helped refine the scene here.

HG: Actually, it's been very positive for my work in the sense that it's enabled me to push my limits further in terms of what I do. I think downturns are times when artists are able to focus more closely on their artistic practices.

NT: Overall I think it's been good for art. In Turkey at least the art market is booming, and in tough economic times people look to invest in either gold or art. Art is cheaper!

LE: It's clearly affected the art sector, but I wouldn't say that it has affected me that much. When I work, I have no audience or market in mind, I am simply responding to something I have to do, something I need to do, and so I do it.

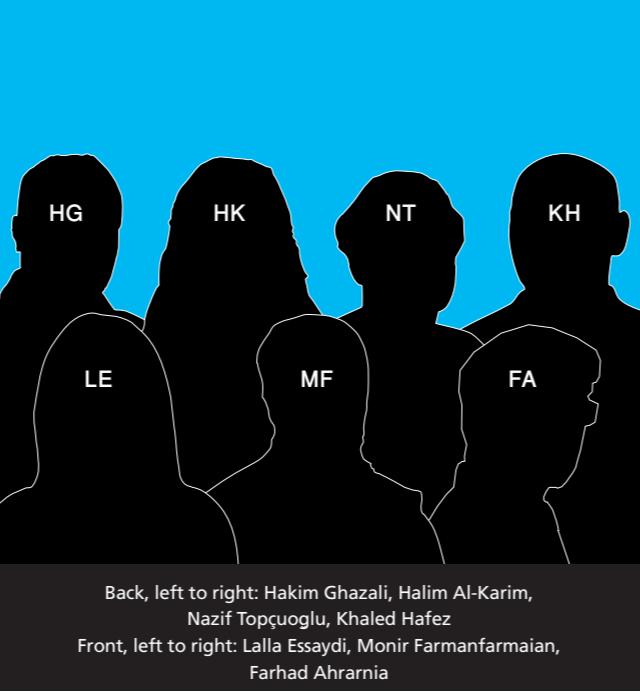
Q: What do you see as the main issues facing artists in/from the Middle East?

FA: Getting a better global platform is a key concern. We are all connected these days; decisions taken in Washington DC affect villagers in Oman, for example.

NT: Freedom of expression remains an ideal in too many countries. I find people are somehow becoming increasingly conservative, and in such a climate things can so easily be misinterpreted. That can lead to self-censorship, which is bad for art.

HG: I don't think the issues facing artists are specific to the Middle East. But I do feel lucky as an artist working in the region right now; it's a very optimistic time for art here.

KH: One of the most important issues remains that of credibility. I know of a show by a curator friend in one of the state museums in the USA that involved artists from the Middle East and got postponed, then cancelled, because of the museum director's disbelief that there is any new proposition in Middle Eastern art.



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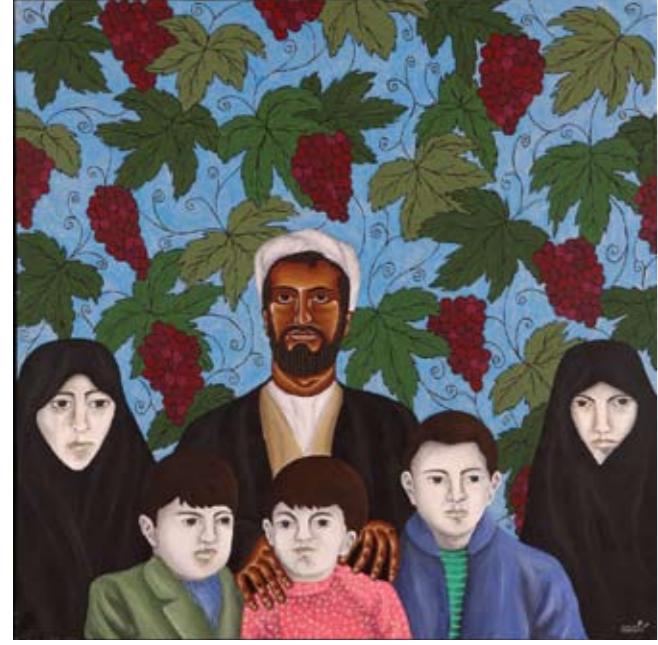
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MIDDLE EAST: BLURRING THE EDGES

The lines between East and West become ever-harder to define as galleries from both inside and outside the region present solo and group shows that explore universal notions and stimulate a dialogue between Occident and Orient.

Cohesion is the name of the game. At **Galerie Chantal Crousel** (A37), a smooth, white porcelain miniature of Beirut's famous Martyr's Monument rests, a half-metre version of the city's most famous war monument given a twist by none other than the relentless, probing high priestess of edgy Contemporary art, **Mona Hatoum**. Part of a carefully selected international stable of artists, Hatoum is among an increasing number who are blurring the boundaries between East and West. Her reproduction – accurate down to the bullet holes that proliferate the original bronze sculpture – harks to 18th-century French table ornamentation, when pieces such as this served as centrepieces for lavish dinner



Rim El-Jundi. Family Vineyard. 2010. Acrylic on canvas. 100 x 100 cm. Courtesy Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Beirut.



Khaled Hafez. The Book of Flight. 2010. Mixed media on canvas. 600 x 250 cm. Courtesy Galerie Caprice Horn, Berlin.

parties. Indeed, *Witness* says a lot about translations of context. "It is my concern to present and promote artistic expressions that relate to the time we live in and stimulate our understanding of the world we live in," explains the gallery's Chantal Crousel.

Literally behind the wall, Beirut's **Agial Art Gallery** (A41) holds an intriguing installation. Entitled *FAIR SKIES®*, Iraqi **Mahmoud Obaidi**'s work includes different coloured vending machines and video animation, which allow 'buyers' the chance to whiten their skin, turn their hair blonde and eyes blue. "The idea is about racial profiling," explains the gallery's Saleh Barakat. "It is a company that 'sells' kits to people coming from the Middle East or the Muslim world and which will allow them to become more acceptable in the eyes of American immigration officials... it's very cynical in this sense, and I thought it was a good time to show this installation and convey this message to the world." The booth also displays a large work by up-and-coming Lebanese **Ayman Baalbaki**, fast on the track to super stardom with his iconic paintings of rundown buildings and *keffiyeh*-clad men.

Bahrain's **Albareh Gallery** (B16) also brings mural paintings by Sudanese **Mohammed Omar Khalil** and Iraqi **Faisal Laibi**. The gallery's Hayfa Aljishi is acutely aware of bringing artists that appeal to buyers during these times. "As a result of the market correction, we have been very selective with the artists we present," she explains. "We want to exhibit masterpieces that give viewers transcendental moments but with some art-historical significance and emotional depth."

Oman's **Bait Muzna Gallery** (B26) are bringing a variety of artists, including up-and-coming Indian/Omani **Radhika Khimji** and established Omani master **Hassan Meer**. "We focus on Contemporary Arab Art, which includes a large variety of Arab nationalities," explains Art Director Ellen Mollet, who is enthusiastic about their first-time participation in Art Dubai. Not quite economically optimistic, though hopeful, is Lebanese **Galerie Janine Rubeiz**'s (A3) Nadine Begdache, who is bringing works by 12 artists to the fair, including **Rim El-Jundi**, **Laure Ghorayeb**, **Joseph Harb**, **Charles Khoury**, **Jamil Molaeb** and **Hanibal Srouji**. A second-timer at Art Dubai, Begdache is a passionate champion of Lebanese art. "We have chosen to return to the fair because we are the face of Lebanon in the art world, since we promote only artists of Lebanese descent," she explains. "This is a vital part of Middle Eastern representation in the global art scene."

Dubai is represented by seven galleries, including **Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde** (B3), formerly known as B21 Gallery, which presents works by the celebrated Iranian **Haerizadeh** brothers, **Rokni** and **Ramin**, as well as **Reza Aramesh**, **Khosrow Hassanzadeh** and



Mona Hatoum. *Witness*. 2009. Porcelain biscuit. 49 x 24.3 x 24.3 cm. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris.

Egyptian **Lara Baladi**, whose *Diary of the Future* series includes a moving documentation of the final seven months of her father's life through coffees drunk over condolences. Fellow Dubai-based **The Third Line** (A28) is also exhibiting a range of artists, including **Farhad Moshiri**, **Golnaz Fathi**, **Lamyia Gargash**, **Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian**, **Pouran Jinchi**, **Susan Hefuna**, **Youssef Nabil** and a unique work by **Hayv Kahraman**. **Artspace** (A14) has chosen to present a solo show of large-scale works by renowned Egyptian artist **Adel El-Siwi**. His *Watermelon Angel* builds on his examination of the present and its interaction with the past. "I tried to touch this relation through the human face for a very long time," explains El-Siwi. "Yes, the face: being old and recent in the same moment, now, perhaps I am haunting the same phantasm through the entire human figure."

Ayyam Gallery (A11) raises the flag for Syrian (and regional) artists and is showcasing some of its younger artists, including **Walid El-Masri**, **Mohannad Orabi** and **Thaier Helal** alongside pieces by Lebanese designer **Nadim Karam**. "I think *New Mona Lisa* by **Oussama Diab** will get the most attention due to its striking symbolism," says the gallery's Hisham Samawi. Depicting Mona Lisa with a gas mask surrounded by various symbols such as bombs and airplanes, the work is part of the young Palestinian painter's preoccupation with global political concerns.

Regular exhibitor **Galerie El-Marsa** (A10) from Tunis is featuring works by **Khaled Ben Slimane**, **Rachid Koraichi**, **Asma M'Naouar** and **Nja Mahdaoui**, among others. The stand features seven cross-generational artists who each explore the rich historical and cultural tapestry of North Africa, as well as aspects of Mediterranean, African and Arab influences.

Western Galleries, such as **Galerie Krinzinger** (A16) from Vienna are also carrying the torch for Middle Eastern art and feature some of the newest works by ABRAAJ winner **Kader Attia**, while Munich-based **Galerie Tanit** (B25) presents a coherent mixture of international

artists. "Since our Beirut branch [Espace Kettaneh Kunigk] opened in 2007, we have increased our efforts in putting Oriental and Occidental positions into a dialogue," explains the gallery's Verena Ferraro. "All of our Middle Eastern artists have kept their national identity but are living and working in various international places." Presenting works by Munich-based Iranian painter **Mojé Assefjeh** and New-York based Lebanese master **Nabil Nahas** alongside international artists such as German Herbert Hamak, the booth is a living, breathing representation of multiculturalism and globalisation.

Similarly, third-timers Thessaloniki-based **Kalfayan Galleries** (A8), are showcasing works by Damascus-based **Hraig Sarkissian** and Egyptian **Anna Boghiguian**, amongst a stable of Greek artists. "In the last few years, we have broadened our focus to include an emphasis on artists from the Middle East – Greece's near neighbours to the East," explains gallery owner and director Roupen Kalfayan. The gallery is also exhibiting works by Cairo-born Greek artist **Constantin Xenakis**, whose pieces, created specially for Art Dubai, draw on old Arabic books and encyclopaedias. "We have selected

works that reflect the artist's unique visual language, borrowing from omnipresent symbols and codes of everyday life, from alchemy and the zodiac to Egyptian hieroglyphics," explains Kalfayan. A parallel could be drawn to the works of Egyptian **Khaled Hafez**, showing at Berlin-based **Galerie Caprice**.

Horn (B19), whose large-scale *The Book of Flight* is an amalgamation of inspirations, from hieroglyph-like alphabets to snipers, tanks and helicopters. Other Western galleries that are regulars on the fair circuit, such as **Selma Feriani** (A2), **Priska C Juschka Fine Art** (B27), and **Paradise Row** (B12) feature a Middle Eastern roster. Iran comes in strongly with New York's **Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller** (B7) bringing **Reza Derakshani**, **Shiva Ahmadi**, **Shoja Azari**, **Shirin Neshat** and **Parviz Tanavoli**, to name a few, while Tehran-based **Aaran Gallery** (A9) and **Assar Art Gallery** (B8) are showing a host of artists.

"The works we present are very 'Contemporary Iranian,'" explains Assar's Maryam Majd, "yet well-received by an international audience." So, an impressive roster of Middle Eastern talent, and one that is far from random. The tightly curated shows are a sign of an increasingly globalised world, in which East and West become



Adel El-Siwi. *Watermelon Angel*. 2009. Mixed media on canvas. Diameter 253 cm. Courtesy Artspace, Dubai.



Lara Baladi. *La Mere Noire*. 2010. Digital collage, permanent pigment print on Somerset paper or gesso. 110 x 110 cm. Edition of eight. Courtesy Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde.

harder to separate. As Crousel succinctly puts it: "The artists I am interested in – of whatever origin they might be – explore the universal values of life, love and death, and all aim at transcending the trivial to approach the sublime." [Anna Wallace-Thompson, *Canvas*](#)



Oussama Diab. (Detail) *New Mona Lisa*. 2009. Mixed media on canvas. 180 x 180 cm. Courtesy Ayyam Gallery, Beirut/Damascus/Dubai.



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INTERNATIONAL: PACKING A PUNCH

International highlights make a bang with a seamless blend of artistic voices from different backgrounds, generations and cultures. Whether cutting-edge Contemporary or Australian Aboriginal, the works on show fearlessly examine the world we live in.

As visitors to the 52nd Venice Biennale walked into the Arsenale, they were presented with a great wall that appeared to be draped with a tapestry. Far from being fabric, the work, by Ghanaian artist **El Anatsui**, was instead comprised entirely of bottle caps, labels and recycled materials. This year at Art Dubai, visitors have the chance to see his stunning *In the World, But Don't Know the World* at London's **October Gallery** (B22), a mammoth 10-metre wide piece originally created for the Third Moscow Biennal and made from of thousands of aluminium bottle tops which are flattened, cut and sewn together with copper wire. Born in Ghana but based in Nigeria, Anatsui has become known for his iconic works resembling woven cloths and which are partly based on traditional Ghanaian beliefs. "The work references the new developments, events and phenomena that continue to be revealed in the lives of humanity as it strives towards 'better living standards, lifestyles' etc, ironically arriving at positions which show we do not have such a grip on things as we think we have," explains the gallery's Rosalind King.

Next door, such issues of commodity can also be found in the works of another ex-Venice Biennale participant,



El Anatsui. (Detail) *In the World, But Don't Know the World.* 2009. Aluminium and copper wire. 5.6 x 10 metres. Photo by Jonathan Greet. Image courtesy October Gallery, London.

Russian **Andrei Molodkin**, who made waves at last year's Russian Pavilion. Showing at **Galerie Kashya Hildebrand** (B21), he is famous for creating word sculptures filled with crude oil. Pieces such as *Democracy* make a strong statement about how "our need for oil suggests a substitution of economy over culture," explains gallery owner Kashya Hildebrand. And why bring Molodkin to Art Dubai? "The UAE remains a big producer of oil and given the growing sophistication of collectors in the region, the conceptual intent of the artist is powerful," says Hildebrand.

Similarly strong statements can be found in the works of Swiss artist **Sylvie Fleury**, who made an appearance at last year's Art Dubai at **Almine Rech Gallery** (A6). This year, the gallery has brought three sculptures by the quirky artist: a bronze saddle, a revolver and a pair of untitled chrome Dior shoes. "The works are



Tommy Watson. Walu. 2009. Acrylic on canvas. 120 x 200 cm. Courtesy Agathon Galleries, Sydney.

very emblematic of Fleury's vision of femininity and our society," explains the gallery's Almine Rech-Picasso.

Some works by the art world's greats, such as **Meret Oppenheim** are also at Art Dubai. Showing at **Galerie Krinzinger** (A16), the German-born Swiss Surrealist artist and photographer (1913-85) is best known for her fur teacup and spoon, and perhaps less so to the general public for works such as the oil on canvas painting, *Pflanzen* (Plants). It is, explains the gallery's Manfred Wiplinger, "a rare opportunity" for visitors to the art fair to see works by Oppenheim. "Excellent pieces are hard to find and we are really proud to show a masterpiece



Meret Oppenheim. Pflanzen. 1954. Oil on canvas. 100 x 73 cm. Courtesy Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna.



Sylvie Fleury. (Detail) Untitled. 2008. Chromed bronze. 20 x 20 x 9 cm. Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels.

like this at Art Dubai." Other big players, such as **Daniel Buren**, can be found at **Kamel Mennour** (A37) which is sharing a booth with Paris-based **Galerie Chantal Crousel**. Mennour will present works from Buren's *Corridoscope* series, originally shown at the Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1983 and Crousel will show **Andy Warhol** with his 1985 screen-print entitled *Truck*.

At Mexican **Galeria OMR** (A39), pieces by Peruvian-born **Aldo Chaparro Winder** fill the booth in a solo show. Looking like large, crumpled pieces of metallic paper, Chaparro Winder is known for his edgy, probing works. "The immediacy of wrinkling a piece of paper and the use of physical force implied by his body; transform, crush and shape the steel," explains gallery director Cristobel Riestra.

At Italian **Galleria Continua** (A21), a selection of Indian (Subodh Gupta), Middle Eastern (Mona Hatoum) and European artists are on show, including Bulgarian **Nedko Solakov** and Italian **Michelangelo Pistoletto**. Musing on the Western art world and its key figures, the works of Solakov question and explore the very language of art and our artistic expression. In the works of Pistoletto, on the other hand, *Fractal Black and Light*, made of black and silver mirror on wood, one finds an exploration of globalisation, ethics and everyday life.

The Southern Hemisphere is represented by **Agathon Galleries** (A1) from Sydney, which has brought a selection of works by Australian Aboriginal artists. With artists such as **Kuntjil Cooper**, **Wingu Tingima** and **Yannima Tommy Watson**, the works on show were chosen for their resonance with the Arabian Desert. "Watson's selection for this show was based on his preeminence within Aboriginal art, not only as a pioneer of Abstraction in Western terms, but as an art practitioner who has had a profound impact on his audiences because of the power of his works," explains Agathon Galleries Sydney Director Marie Geissler.

With such a multicultural array of artists, works and voices on display, melded together to create dialogues that cross generations, beliefs and backgrounds in a bid to better understand the world that we live in, the international representation at Art Dubai, whether established or emerging, tribal, Surrealist or Contemporary, proves that art is a language that knows no boundaries. ■ Anna Wallace-Thompson, *Canvas*

Van Cleef & Arpels



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ASIA: FUSION OF OLD AND NEW

Asian artists give a new twist to traditional Eastern aesthetics.

When looking at the works of Korean artist **Ran Hwang** at **Galerie Kashya Hildebrand** (B21), with their cornucopia of red, black and silver buttons and the appearance of the urn shape, one could be forgiven for drawing a parallel to the works of Iranian Farhad Moshiri (also represented by the Zurich-based gallery). The difference between the two, however, could not be greater. Whereas Moshiri plays on Iranian popular culture through social commentary, Hwang dwells on metaphors of emptiness and the human condition. "In a nutshell, her urns are a global metaphor for impermanence and mortality," explains gallery founder, Kashya Hildebrand. "She is a Buddhist who worked in the fashion industry for years and the use of buttons, pins and threads are a reminder of the mundane objects that connect us all: for Hwang, the vessel – or urn – is a universal object. In Taoism, there is a theory that by emptying, one is actually filling or enriching." In pieces such as *Button Urn*, Hwang plays with concepts of space and its absence – some works show urns, others simply show the space where the urn should be. "One way to approach Hwang's work is by considering the Buddhist ideas of the interdependence of emptiness and form," says Hildebrand. "In other words, form is emptiness and emptiness is nothing other than form. In the case of Hwang, this concept can be seen in the interdependence of negative and positive space."

Contrasts Gallery (A34), with branches in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing, presents a selection of works from its stable of multidisciplinary Chinese artists, who draw on 5000 years of Chinese tradition. **Wang Tiande's** mixed-media works, inspired by traditional Chinese landscapes, are adorned with modern elements such as burn marks, for example, using incense or cigarettes instead of a brush, a commentary on "the loss of tradition in China's rapidly modernising society," explains the gallery's Harriet Onslow. **Wei Ligang**, on the other hand, works in Abstract calligraphy while **Shao Yan** has given traditional ink brush painting a modern twist. Combining freehand painting with formal calligraphy, and "by deconstructing and reassembling Chinese characters beyond recognition, Yan creates works that are freely expressed and irreverent any particular artistic school or set of rules," says Onslow.

THE THIRD LINE

Shirin Aliabadi's first solo show, *Eye Love You*, debuted at The Third Line on 14 March. Running until 22 April, the exhibition features various portrayals of eyes adorned with a variety of colours, shapes and animated forms. A selection of large-scale canvases as well as works on paper explore the emotions of young Iranian girls. Aliabadi empathises with them via embellishment of makeup in a quest to define identity and aspirations. For more information call +971 43411367 or visit www.thethirdline.com



Laila Al-Masri.

Marc Leher, Lea Widemann and Barbara Grubel.

TAREK AL-GHOUSSEIN



Rana Sadek and Tarek Al-Ghoussein.

Running for two months (13 March–13 May) at the Sharjah Art Museum, Tarek Al-Ghoussein's exhibition *A Retrospective—Works From 2001–2010* was curated by Sharjah Art Foundation Director, Jack Perseckian. The show featured an array of Al-Ghoussein's photographs including his *Self-Portrait* presented in luminous light boxes. For more information call +971 65685050 or visit: www.sharjahart.org

Shahbano Lodhi, Fatma Shah and Irani Naqvi.

Peter di Sabatino (right) and guests.

Dr Zaki Nusseibeh (right) with guest.

ART SAWA

Running from 15 March–16 April at Art Sawa, Creative Palestinian Art, in partnership with the Welfare Association, is an exhibition and competition. Guests at the 14 March opening saw works by 45 established Palestinian artists showcasing alongside 11 emerging artists including winners Mohammed Fadel, Sama Al-Shaibi, Raeda Saa'deh and Munir Alawi. For more information call +971 43408660 or visit: www.artawa.com



His Highness Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al-Nahyan, Ferial Kamal.



Art Sawa's Amer Makkawi, His Highness Sheikh Mubarak Al-Nahyan and Munir Alawi.

GALLERY ISABELLE VAN DEN EYNDE



Ramin Haerizadeh's *I'll Huff and I'll Puff* private preview, on 14 March, featured photo-collages that focus on complex Iranian politics and contradicting identities that hit on the Qajar Dynasty, Pahlavi monarchy and existing Islamic regime. Showing until 16 April, the exhibition features large scale works as well as smaller versions. For more information, call +971 43403965 or visit: www.idve.net

Emad Odeh and Ziad Makkawi.

Ramin Haerizadeh and Daveeda Asa-shaheen.

Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller, Nazy Nazhand and Mohammed Afkhami.

Francesco Ferrari, Tessa de Caters and Monica Giudice.

IRAN INSIDE OUT

The Farjam Collection @ DIFC presented *Iran Inside Out*, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath of Art Reoriented. The exhibition surveyed an array of art pieces by various Contemporary Iranian artists that include Shirin Neshat, Shahriar Ahmadi and Parviz Tanavoli, among others. The travelling exhibit runs from 16 March until 15 June. For more information, call +971 43230303 or visit www.farjamcollection.com



Maria Baibakova, Victoria Gelfand and Mareli Keyavoussi.



Dr Karim Fekih.



Bita Fayazi.

CANVAS COLLECTORS DINNER

Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah, Ali Khadra, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *Canvas and Art Dubai* Co-Founder John Martin.



HRH Wijdan Al-Hashemi, Jordan's Ambassador to Rome toasts Art Dubai and the 30th anniversary of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts.



Victoria Gelfand.



Ali Khadra and Pia Getty.



Artist Hanibal Soujji with Galerie Janine Rubel's Nadine Begdache.



Iranian artist Reza Derakshani.

The annual Canvas Collectors Dinner took place at Madinat Jumeirah's floating restaurant, Pier Chic, on the eve of 15 March. Kickstarting Art Dubai, the invitation-only event gathered together some of the art world's names and key players, including Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah of Kuwait, HRH Princess Wijdan Al-Hashemi of Jordan who is also Jordan's Ambassador to Rome and HE Sheikh Rashid Al-Khalifa of Bahrain.



Ran Hwang. (Detail) *Button Urn*. 2008. Shell buttons, crystals, pins and panel. 160 x 160 cm. Courtesy Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Zurich.



Mr and Mrs Amer Huneidi and Mr and Mrs Rafiq Fakih.



Van Cleef & Arpels' Stephanie de Panas and Carter's Aurély La Fontaine.



Christie's Director of Business Development, Paul Hewitt.

FRESHMEN ON THE ART DUBAI FLOOR

Of the 70 international galleries participating in this year's Art Dubai, there are no fewer than 24 newcomers.



Jakub Spanhel. (Detail) *Roses*. 2010. Mixed media on canvas. 105 x 160 cm. Courtesy Dea Orh, Prague.

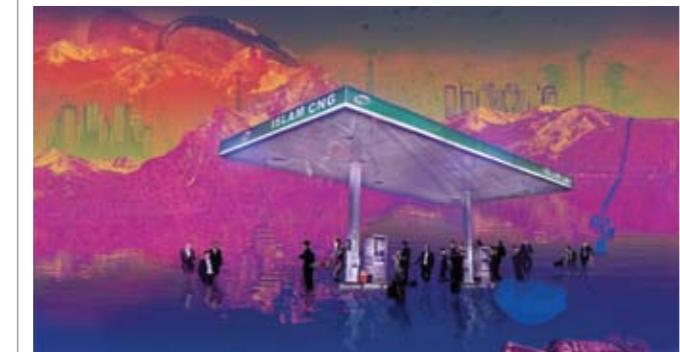
Art Dubai 2010 is the first fair that Czech gallery, **Dea Orh** (B28) is attending and next on their list are Art Amsterdam in May and Art London in October. Why Dubai? "It's a challenge and we like challenges!" laughs Marko Brdarski, gallery Director and Co-Founder (along with Orhideja Vojnoviá-Škrbiá). Established in May 2009, the "baby gallery" as Brdarski puts it, is keen on widening exposure for its Czech artists and believes that Dubai is an "interesting market". Incidentally, it was a chance encounter in Prague with Malek Atassi, son of Atassi Gallery's (A4) Mona Atassi who encouraged Brdarski to take part in Art Dubai. Having missed the application deadline, Brdarski got in touch with Art Dubai Director and Co-Founder John Martin; Dea Orh was on the fair waiting list until 2 February. "We are the first and only Czech gallery participating at Art Dubai," says Brdarski, "and it was after we were allocated more space that we decided to show more than one artist, as opposed to initially focusing on one." Works by four Czech artists – Jakub Spanhel, Juraj Kollar, Petr Pastrnak and Stefan Toth – will be displayed alongside works by two Montenegrin painters, Vojo Stanic and Ratko Odalovic. "I really wanted to come here," says Brdarski, "and all I want is to have a wonderful experience."



Leonid Tishkov. (Detail) *Private Moon*. 2003. C-print. 120 x 75 cm, 100 x 90 cm. Edition of 10. Courtesy Barbarian Art Gallery, Zurich/Moscow.

With branches in Zurich and Moscow, **Barbarian Art Gallery** (B14) aims to promote emerging and mid-career artists from Russia and post-Soviet nations as well as select non-Russian artists. Gallery Director Natasha Akhmerova believes in Art Dubai's positioning as a "gathering spot for innovative artists", adding that the fair is where "one can come across Contemporary art that is different from that seen in Europe or the US." Barbarian's freshman participation at Art Dubai is their way of 'scoping the scene' so to speak; "it's going to be exciting for us to present ourselves," adds Akhmerova, "but also to get an understanding of the domestic clientele and the exchange of ideas."

Umer Butt, founder and creative director of Lahore-based **Grey Noise** (A19), grew up in Dubai and moved to Lahore in 1996. Butt initially launched Grey Noise as an online gallery and in November 2008, the gallery opened its doors in Lahore with the aim of outlining clear curatorial practices – something, Butt adds, is lacking in the Pakistani art scene. The first Pakistani gallery to partake at Art Dubai, Butt collaborated with Dubai's thejamjar in October 2008 and also showed eight Pakistani artists in New York through collaboration with the Thomas Erban Gallery in January 2010. "Art Dubai knew about the collaborations and that Pakistani art was becoming more internationally viable," he says. Participation at Art Dubai was made possible with the help of Pakistan Rising, a non-profit organisation that focuses on humanitarian, social and cultural projects. "The quality of work I am showing is an interesting approach to Pakistani art," says Butt, "and I am coming with very positive energy, thanks to the line-up of artists I have, although this is my first ever fair!"



Mehreen Murtaza. (Detail) *God Bless the Institute of Probably Asleep, Blissfully Asleep (PABA)*. 2010. Ink-jet print on archival lustre paper, magnifying glass, aluminium frame. 41 x 61 cm. Courtesy Grey Noise.

No stranger to Dubai Christie's auctions, Egyptian-Armenian artist Chant Avedessian takes up the London-based **Rose Issa Projects** booth (A15). Preferring "solo or thematic shows", gallery Founder Rose Issa opted to show Avedessian's work at Art Dubai "because it's a good opportunity to show to an interested audience, especially as Avedessian has rarely been seen in public in the Arab world." As far as news of Dubai being hit by the worldwide recession, Issa admits, "we have not been hit by the financial crisis nor the financial boom and that is because we do not work with speculators but loyal and serious collectors and art lovers." Showing three 250 x 300 cm pieces, *Al-Intaj Al-Arabi* (the Arab production), *Al-Watan Al-Arabi* (the Arab nation) and *Al-Sumud Al-Arabi* (the Arab resistance), the works are done in Avedessian's trademark stencil and hand-painted technique, and hark back to Egypt's mid-20th-century political, economic and cultural scenes.



Chant Avedessian. (Detail) *Al-Watan Al-Arabi (The Arab Nation)*. 2008. Colour pigment and gum Arabic on corrugated cardboard. 250 x 300 cm. Courtesy Rose Issa Projects, London.

Other first-time participating galleries include Aaran Gallery (A9), Agathon Galleries (A1), Art Lounge Gallery (A40), Carbon 12 (A38), Cardi Black Box (A29), Galeria Murilo Castro (A24), Galerie Christian Hosp (A23), Galeria Dorothea van der Koelen (A42), Gandhara-art (A36), Laleh June Gallery (A31), OMR Gallery (A39), Peres Projects (A35), The Guild (A5), Assar Art Gallery (B8), Bait Muzna Gallery (B26), Galeria Animal (B1), Koraalberg (B18), Lee Hwaik Gallery (B2) and Priska C Juschka Fine Art (B27).



Szilagi Lenke. *Night in the Bath*. 2004. Archive pigment print. 42 x 93 cm. Courtesy Nessim Gallery, Budapest.

Mihály Surányi, Director of Budapest-based **Nessim Gallery** (A18) once watched a documentary on Iran that prompted his interest in Iranian photography. After a six-week trip to Isfahan, Tehran, Yazd and other Iranian cities, his orientation to Iranian photography intensified. In collaboration with Tehran-based Silk Road Gallery, Surányi held an exhibition at Nessim Gallery in 2006 that showcased the works of Iranian photographers Shadi Ghadirian and Bahman Jalali, among others. "Iranian photography is unlike the European development of photography because they work with full spiritual intentions," he says, "Eastern Europe was very closed and there was no intensive connection with the rest of the world for 50 years." The gallery's premier participation at Art Dubai is Surányi's way of hitting two birds with one stone – "on the one hand, I want to see the reflections of all the Iranian artists, and on the other, I want to generate a reputation for our artists." Six photographers will showcase their works at Nessim Gallery, among them Czech Ladislav Postup and Hungarians Ildikó Péter and Gábor Kerekes. "The quality of works," adds Surányi, "is really, really, really very good."

SHOWS IN DUBAI

Art Dubai week sees plenty of exhibitions around town.



Green Art Gallery celebrates its 15-year anniversary in March and chose to showcase famed Moroccan artist Hakim Ghazali's latest works, *For the Love of Noon*. Ghazali, who has been represented by the gallery since 1996, takes on the Arabic letter *noon* in a body of work that includes metal, wood and paintings and likens the letter to a woman's womb. "All her life, the woman is the caregiver," says gallery director Yasmin Atassi. Through his infusion of Sufi spirituality and philosophy, Ghazali, whose work can also be found in the British Museum, celebrates womanhood and femininity with his latest series. For more information call +9714 3411367 or visit www.gagallery.com



While works from her *Miss Hybrid* series have appeared at Dubai Christie's auctions, Iranian artist Shirin Aliabadi holds her first major solo show at **The Third Line**. *Eye Love You* is a series of paintings and drawings of excessively made-up, embellished eyes that takes its inspiration from the Iranian marital custom of brides getting heavily made-up for their weddings. While the series alludes at contemporary aspirations for girls in Iran, gallery co-founder Sunny Rahbar adds, "Aliabadi highlights the warped aspect of this and approached it like she was in the mind of a young girl." For more information call +9714 3449888 or visit www.thethirdline.com



For a full list of gallery shows in Dubai, log on to www.canvasonline.com/images/pdf/atc.pdf or visit the Canvas booth (D39) to pick up a copy of *Canvas Guide*.

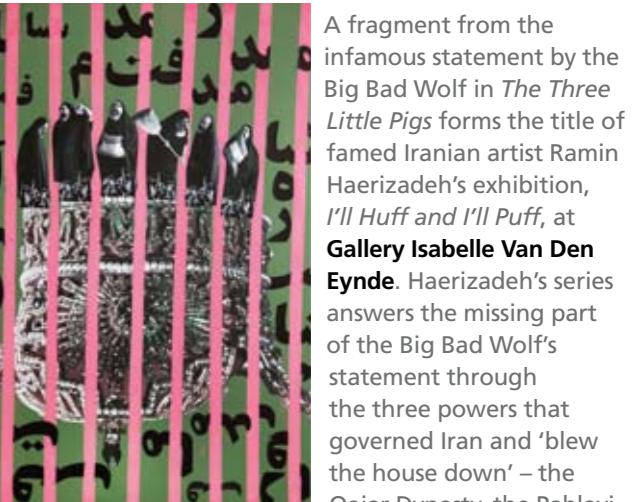


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A fragment from the infamous statement by the Big Bad Wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* forms the title of famed Iranian artist Ramin Haerizadeh's exhibition, *I'll Huff and I'll Puff*, at **Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde**. Haerizadeh's series answers the missing part of the Big Bad Wolf's statement through the three powers that governed Iran and 'blew the house down' – the Qajar Dynasty, the Pahlavi monarchy and the existing Islamic regime. Through this tri-angled reign, Haerizadeh puts forth the notion of identity – what understanding of the self can an Iranian person have, given three recent governments and the current Green Movement? "He's showing the absurd way that history repeats itself," says gallery founder Isabelle van den Eynde, "and this really is a unique mind at work." For more information call +97143403965 or visit www.ivde.net



U5. Fire Extinguisher, from the series A Selection of the U5 Archive. 2010. Print. 30 x 40 cm. Courtesy the artists.



Iman Issa. Triptych #5. 2009. (Installation detail) Photographs on C-print, flashing light bulb, timer, metronome. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist.

BIDOUN INTERACTIVE

Supported by the Emirates Foundation, Bidoun Projects presents a diverse schedule of presentations, panel discussions, cutting-edge art and the Art Park at Art Dubai 2010.

Back in June last year, when Art Dubai invited Bidoun Projects to become its curatorial partner for 2010, we began thinking about the particular, perhaps peculiar, nature of art fairs. Even within the theatrical world of contemporary art bonanzas (biennials, large touring shows, auctions and so on), fairs stand out as fantastic stage sets: the gallerist, the artist, the critic and the visitor all have their role, and many play it with gusto. The group of artists, editors and curators that make up Bidoun, of which I am a part, began talking to artists and artists' groups about how they might intervene by producing new work that engaged with the fabric of the fair. Even those we know well, such as *Bidoun* magazine contributing editor Sophia Al-Maria, surprised us with their dedication to the challenge.

At Art Dubai 2010, Qatari artist Sophia is SciFi Wahabi, a character who promises to take fair visitors on a tour from the future. She is one of three artists commissioned to act as tour guides, joined by Ramallah-based Khalil Rabah, who turns the viewer into the subject via trips on a sedan chair, and Daniel Bozhkov, who leads the *Fastest Tour of Art Dubai* (run through 10,000 square

metres of creative production in 35 minutes without missing a significant gallery or work of art). As part of our annual programmes of Bidoun Video in the Art Park, guest curators Sohrab Mohebbi and Özge Ersoy examine the ways in which large-scale arts events engage with mass media through a dynamic video programme; outside on the terrace, iconic practitioner Farhad Moshiri retells the story of the *Ugly Duckling* in ice – for one night only, before the work melts.

Forms of Compensation again examines our quixotic relationship with the world of icons; this exhibition, situated amid the galleries, comprises reproductions of renowned Modern and Contemporary artworks, with an emphasis on sculptures, paintings and prints by Arab and Iranian artists. The series was produced in Cairo by craftspeople and car mechanics in the neighbourhood around Townhouse Gallery. It was overseen by artists Babak Radboy and Ayman Ramadan, working from installation shots of the original artworks, along with the instruction that each copy should differ in one small way from its referent.

Other new commissions also dwell on the spectacular, temporal nature of an art fair. Lebanese Vartan Avakian

scoured the malls and souks for products that are seen as typically Dubai yet are made in Asia, and displays their textural make-up on a rotating billboard. Ebtilas Abdul-Aziz's major new work, (*Re-Mapping*), reshapes a map of the Middle East according to a strict numerical code and the arbitrary world of art market statistics. New Yorkers Nikolas Gambaroff and Matt Sheridan Smith intervene at Madinat Jumeirah with *Nowhere for Nothing*, a stoop designed to encourage fairgoers to stop for a chat and exchange some gossip.

The Art Park returns for the third year at Art Dubai, and is once again host to a range of film screenings, talks and performances. Besides Mohebbi and Ersoy's endeavour, this year's Bidoun Video includes programmes curated by Masoud Amralla Al-Ali and myself (*Exploding Nostalgia*, a collection of UAE experimental film), LA><ART curator Aram Moshayedi (*Hollywood Elegies*), and Bidoun (*Cloudy Head*), shown in daily screenings hosted by the curators and in a screening room and video bar. A dynamic discussion programme includes talks and performances looking at the relationship between archives, art, music and film, in collaboration with the cult Avant-garde archiving site UbuWeb.

We're also dwelling this year on the nature of documentation. Writer Shumon Basar and artist Haig Aivazian are 'in residence' at the Global Art Forum, mapping the (naturally contested) conversations and moments – both those remembered and in real time. The Forum takes 'Crucial Moments' as its theme; over the past few weeks, we've been building bespoke fans and sourcing fine desert sand for a recreation of Alice Aycock's seminal 1971 installation *Sand/Fans*. Aycock also appears in conversation with Dennis Oppenheim and Vito Acconci at the Forum.

Finally, *A New Formalism*, a group exhibition including four precise bodies of work by Hazem El-Mestikawy, Iman Issa, Mahmoud Khalid and U5 that, together, pose an expanded understanding of formalism. The exhibition design – a room within a room at Madinat Jumeirah – again references the art fair context, but this is a formalism that takes as its raw material everything from personal and social references, theoretical concerns, the imaginary and abstract understandings of object-hood,

tend to defy such categorisation: resistant to easy explanations yet invested in the world, this is work that manages to posit formal concerns through a direct and powerful engagement with personal associations, social landscapes, or even the history of forms themselves.

Overall, we hope the projects will add to the fair experience a certain pause – whether one for reflection via a stoop, or for a smile courtesy of some melting ice or remembered icons, or for thought, thanks to a range of video, installation and exhibition projects.

 Antonia Carver, Director of Bidoun Projects

For more information visit www.bidoun.com



Farhad Moshiri. Living Room Ultra Mega X. 2003. Dimensions variable. Courtesy Gouda Mohamed Gouda, 2010.

to a deep and profound interest in how an artwork articulates itself in space. In part, the show is an antidote to how both the market place and the museum have tended to promote exhibitions – invariably according to a set of codes that render the work either easily and superficially political, or increasingly decorative and exotic. The bodies of work in this exhibition



Dan Flavin. Untitled (To SA Lovingly). 1987. Dimensions variable. Courtesy Gouda Mohamed Gouda, 2010.



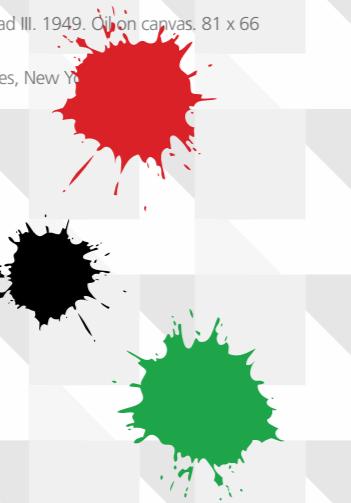
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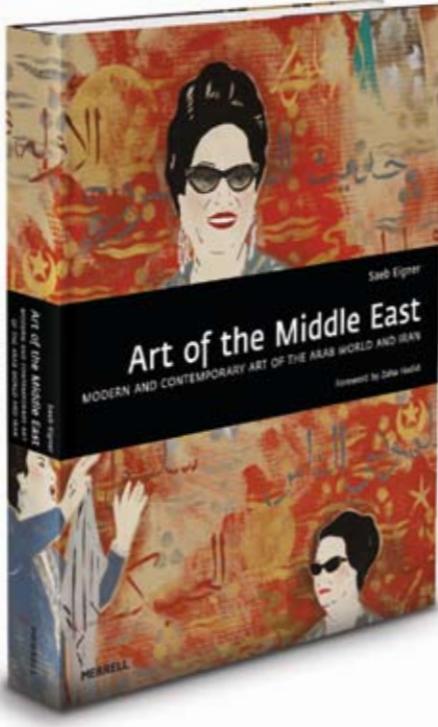
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Francis Bacon. Head III. 1949. Oil on canvas. 81 x 66 cm. Courtesy Acquavella Galleries, New York



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Meera Huraiz, Metamorphosis 1, 2009, photograph

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Only in its second year, the ABRAAJ Capital Art Prize has firmly established itself in the art world, largely due to its unique concept: the generous prize is awarded to curator-led project proposals.

The ABRAAJ Capital Art Prize award allows three winning teams of artist and curator to translate their vision into reality. This is especially pertinent to the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) region where artistic creativity has too often been curtailed by the constraints of commercial gallery space. By fostering a dialogue between regional artists and international curators, the prize has provided an unparalleled opportunity for the globalisation of cultural engagement. This has been further augmented by an evolving programme of regional and international exhibitions which serve to underline multiple loci of artistic production in the MENASA region.

Selected by an international jury comprising Ali Khadra, Antonia Carver, Elaine Ng, Daniela da Prato, Lowery Sims, Maya Rasamny, Frederic Sicre and John Martin, this year's winners Hala Elkoussy and Jelle Bouwhuis, Marwan Sahmarani and Mahita Urieta El-Bacha and Kader Attia and Laurie Farrell will unveil their works at Art Dubai 2010. In each case, it was their integrity, authenticity and rootedness in their own culture which made them the obvious choices for the selection committee. What

distinguishes the 2010 winners is their engagement with mythology. Attia's *The History of a Myth: The Small Dome of the Rock* directly addresses the issue of the creation and dismantling of myths in contemporary society. Elkoussy's *Myths & Legends Room: Mural* references contemporary signs and symbols which transcend the everyday and attain mythological status, whereas Sahmarani's *The Feast of the Damned* installation, incorporating painting, drawing, ceramics and film, is inspired by mythology. [\[1\]](#)

Savita Apte, Director of Art Dubai and Chair of ABRAAJ Capital Art Prize

The Abraaj Capital Art Prize 2010 will be unveiled today at Madinat Jumeirah's Johara Foyer (by invitation only).



Hala Elkoussy. *The Myths and Legends Room, The Mural*. 2009–10. 48 framed colour photographs. 9 x 3 metres. Image courtesy the artist.



Marwan Sahmarani. *The Embrace*. 2009. Watercolour on paper. 140 x 185 cm. Image courtesy the artist.

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ART PATRONAGE IN DUBAI GETS RECOGNITION

Patrons to be honoured by the Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Patrons of the Arts Awards during Art Dubai.



General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai and Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE. Photo courtesy Canvas.

The first annual Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Patrons of the Arts Awards will take place on 18 March at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre at the Dubai World Trade Centre (by invitation only). In collaboration with Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (DCCA), awards will be bestowed upon much-deserving recipients who have financially supported the growth of the arts in the city. Eligibility for these prestigious honours includes individuals, organisations, businesses and government institutions that have made contributions in film, literature, visual arts or performing arts from 2007–9. Categories include 'Distinguished Patrons of the Arts' to 'Patrons of the Arts', 'Supporters of the Arts', and 'Friends of the Arts'.

"Dubai has a legacy as a place where people come to produce, whether it is a business, or media or the arts. The [Dubai] government does not get as involved [in the arts] as other emirates do. The art scene is clearly dependent on patrons," explains Mishal Al-Gergawi, Projects and Events Manager at DCCA. These awards are significant as the responsibility carried by the art patrons is indispensable for the city's cultural undertakings.

By shedding light on the entities that have helped build the burgeoning art scene that exists today in Dubai, these awards will also instigate an ambiance of artistic production in the emirate. "What we are working on is content creation in Dubai. An art scene

is a set of endeavours where you produce, not just where you exhibit what has been created. The award aims to stimulate the emergence of a new generation of patrons, who will understand the crucial role they play in supporting artists and view that as a testimony of the civility of society," says Al-Gergawi.

The Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Patrons of the Arts Awards will also reflect the mindset and intellectual perceptions of art patrons. "They are role models, who appreciate art as an asset and not a liability. We would like to push the idea of 'patron'. This is someone who has a vision. It is not just a business, but also an evolution of humanity. The awards are developing alternative plans that will do nothing short of 'democratising' patronage in the region," affirms Al-Gergawi. [\[2\]](#)

For more information visit www.dubaiculture.ae

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Image: Installation view, Yang Fudong, *No Snow on the Broken Bridge*, Parasol unit 2006, Photograph by Hugo Glendinning

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OPINION



Sharjah Biennial Artistic Director, Jack Persekian

Deputy Editor], this opinion piece on time. As the MS Word page was still where I left it before going to sleep, I read it through and wondered what on earth I had in mind when I wrote: "My opinion counts, time to tell them what you think"? Why did Myrna tell me on the phone that my opinion is important? Was she just trying to rope me into contributing to her *Canvas Daily* paper in order to fill in that still-empty spot on the page?

Or isn't it really time – in fact aren't we really overdue – for a concerted effort to start unpacking the issues that keep bogging down this developing art scene of ours? Can it be possible that we have actually reached a moment when – perhaps thanks to the reality check of the regional economic slowdown – we can all stop long enough to think about streamlining our efforts, to consider working in parallel and complementary ways, and benefit from the resulting boost in efficiency, productivity and professionalism?

It is taken for granted in the arts that the results of our current work can only be meaningfully gauged over a long period of time, and change recognised only with the passing of a generation or two. So when we work on the development of new projects or the building of foundations for our art infrastructure, it is critical that we engage with people who, first and foremost, are prepared to commit to their work for the long term; individuals who are willing and excited to see through the shaping and evolving of projects; who understand that professionalism comes from commitment to follow

through with a course of action, not from succumbing to the temptations of better titles or higher financial rewards offered by the multitude of new opportunities that are proliferating in this region.

But it is really with the institutions, the entities and the organisations that the onus of responsibility lies to develop a vision and create a master plan for the region that recognises our individual strengths and uses this diversity to build the foundations for a vibrant cultural landscape. This is a call for the establishment of an informal committee whose main task would be to define priorities and eliminate redundancy and waste, to map out the various plans and projects, to recognise overlap, deficiencies and gaps, to identify strategies that streamline efforts and maximise results.

I recognise that most of these regional entities are somewhere in the nascent stages of defining their identities and demarcating their territories, yet it's absolutely necessary to capitalise on the available resources of each (and I'm thinking of the know-how and expertise, ie the human resource, and not only the financial) with an eye on the possibilities for collaboration, cooperation and synthesis, in light of the abundant opportunities coming our way from the outside, which sadly ebb and flow with the vicissitudes of the economy. All I'm calling for is an environment of open communication, constructive criticism, healthy competition and the recognition of, and respect for, the efforts and achievements of each other. ■

I woke up quite late in the morning and immediately went to my desk and computer feeling guilty that I hadn't delivered on my promise and absolutely determined to send Myrna Ayad, [Canvas magazine's

art > recession

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5 MINUTES WITH...



JOHN MARTIN,
ART DUBAI DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER

FIVE PREREQUISITES FOR SURVIVAL IN THE ART WORLD: Having friends outside the art world, trusting your instincts, avoiding trends, not doing things for the money and remembering why you got involved in the first place.

MY BIGGEST ART WORLD GOOF WAS: Putting on an 80th birthday exhibition for an artist who was only 78 at the time.

IN THE ART WORLD, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO: Have lunch.

I WAS LOST FOR WORDS WHEN: Standing behind Francis Bacon at a supermarket checkout.

YOU WOULD BE SHOCKED TO KNOW THAT I: Knit.

IT WOULD MAKE MY MOTHER PROUD TO KNOW THAT: I still knit.

AT ART FAIRS, I WISH THEY WOULD SERVE: Bowls of strawberries.

THE MOST THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUESTION I HAVE EVER BEEN ASKED IS: List all the countries that begin with A but don't end in A.

IF I HAD TO SUMMARISE IN ONE WORD, I WOULD SAY THAT ART IS: Communication.

THE WORLD WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE IF: There were no visa restrictions.

FOR INSPIRATION, I GO TO: The airport.

LIFE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT: Books.

I OWE MY SUCCESS TO: Delegation.

THE THREE THINGS I LOOK FOR IN AN ARTWORK ARE: Confidence, truthfulness and offering no answers.

MY BEST INVESTMENT IS: My business.

I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO BE A FLY ON THE WALL WHEN: Diego Velázquez painted Las Meninas.

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND: Patriotism.

THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE I WAS EVER GIVEN WAS: Don't get involved with lawyers.

THE WORST PIECE OF ADVICE I WAS EVER GIVEN WAS: First write a business plan.

IF I WEREN'T DOING WHAT I DO, I WOULD HAVE BEEN A: Vagrant.



SHEIKH SULTAN SOOOD AL-QASSEMI,
COLLECTOR

THE ARTWORK I WOULD ROB A BANK FOR IS: A work by Jordanian artist, Ali Jabri.

ARTISTS I'D LOVE TO HAVE LUNCH AND DINNER WITH: Salvador Dalí and Jackson Pollock.

FIVE PREREQUISITES FOR SURVIVAL IN THE ART WORLD: Patience, perseverance, pricing, publicity and reinvention.

LOOKING BACK AT MY CAREER IN THE ART WORLD, I WISH I HAD: Started collecting earlier.

IN THE ART WORLD, IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO: Declare that a popular artwork is rubbish.

THE ART WORLD'S BIGGEST CRIME IS: Forcing ugly artworks in public spaces.

ONE OF THE ART WORLD'S GREATEST UNSUNG HEROES WAS: Prince Yusuf Kamal of Egypt, who founded the School of Fine Arts in Cairo in 1908.

IF THERE IS ONE ERA I WOULD GO BACK TO, IT WOULD BE: Impressionism.

YOU WOULD BE SHOCKED TO KNOW THAT I: Don't have a repertoire of my artworks.

IF I HAD TO SUMMARISE IN ONE WORD, I WOULD SAY THAT ART IS: Human.

I AM HAPPIEST WHEN: I feel that I've made a difference.

IT MAKES ME UNHAPPY TO KNOW THAT: So many Arab artists are passing away without having their work recognised and documented.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY WAS: A 2005 49.9 x 70 cm digital photograph by Lamya Gargash Salim.

FOR INSPIRATION, I GO TO: My library.

I OWE MY SUCCESS TO: My time in Paris.

THE THREE THINGS I LOOK FOR IN AN ARTWORK ARE: Story, composition and relevance to the region.

MY BEST INVESTMENT WAS: My university degree.

THE EXHIBITION THAT LEFT A BIG IMPACT ON ME WAS: *Word into Art* at DIFC.

I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND: How some art is priced.

THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE I WAS EVER GIVEN WAS: Buy less, buy better.



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ATELIER SWAROVSKI



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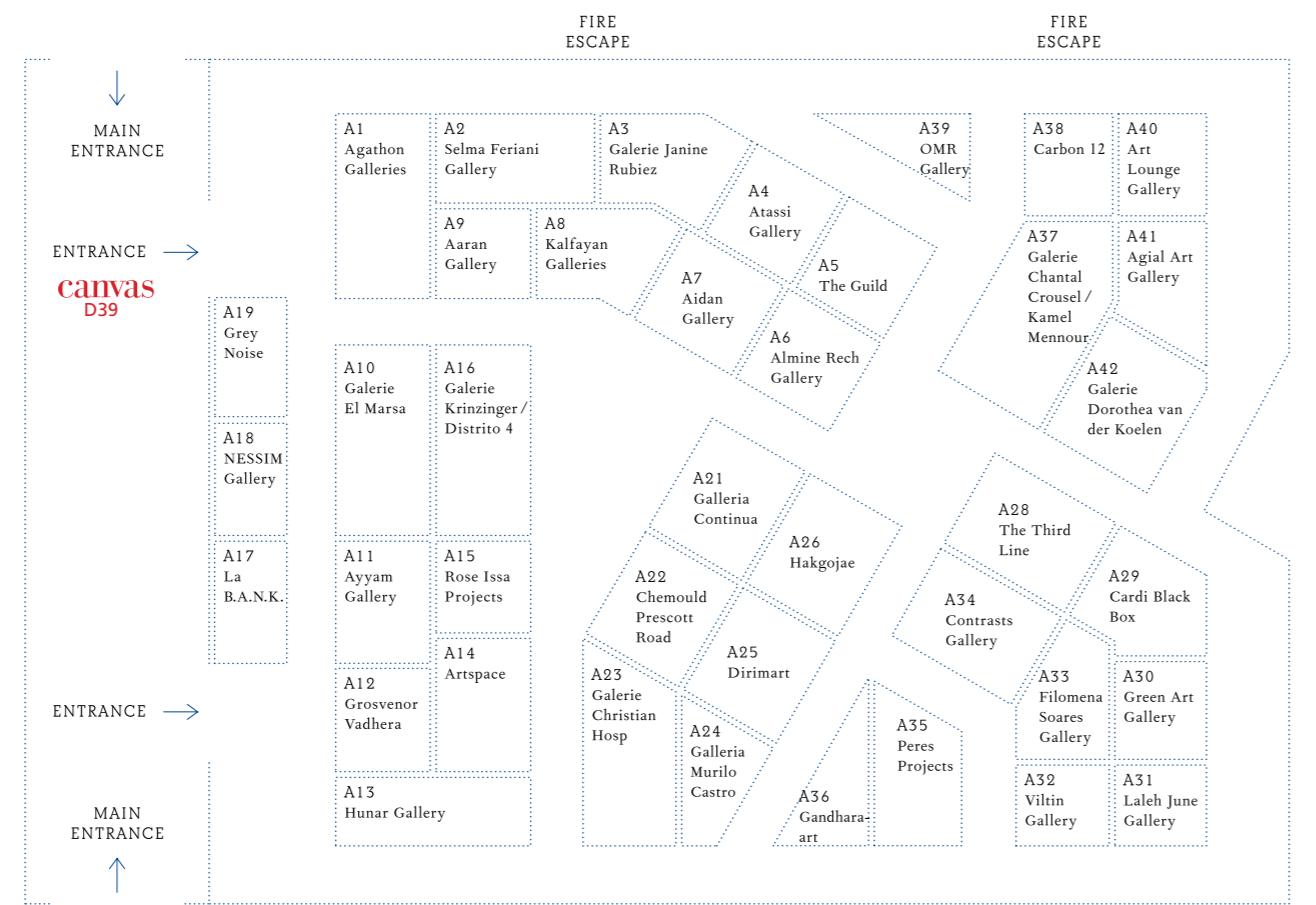
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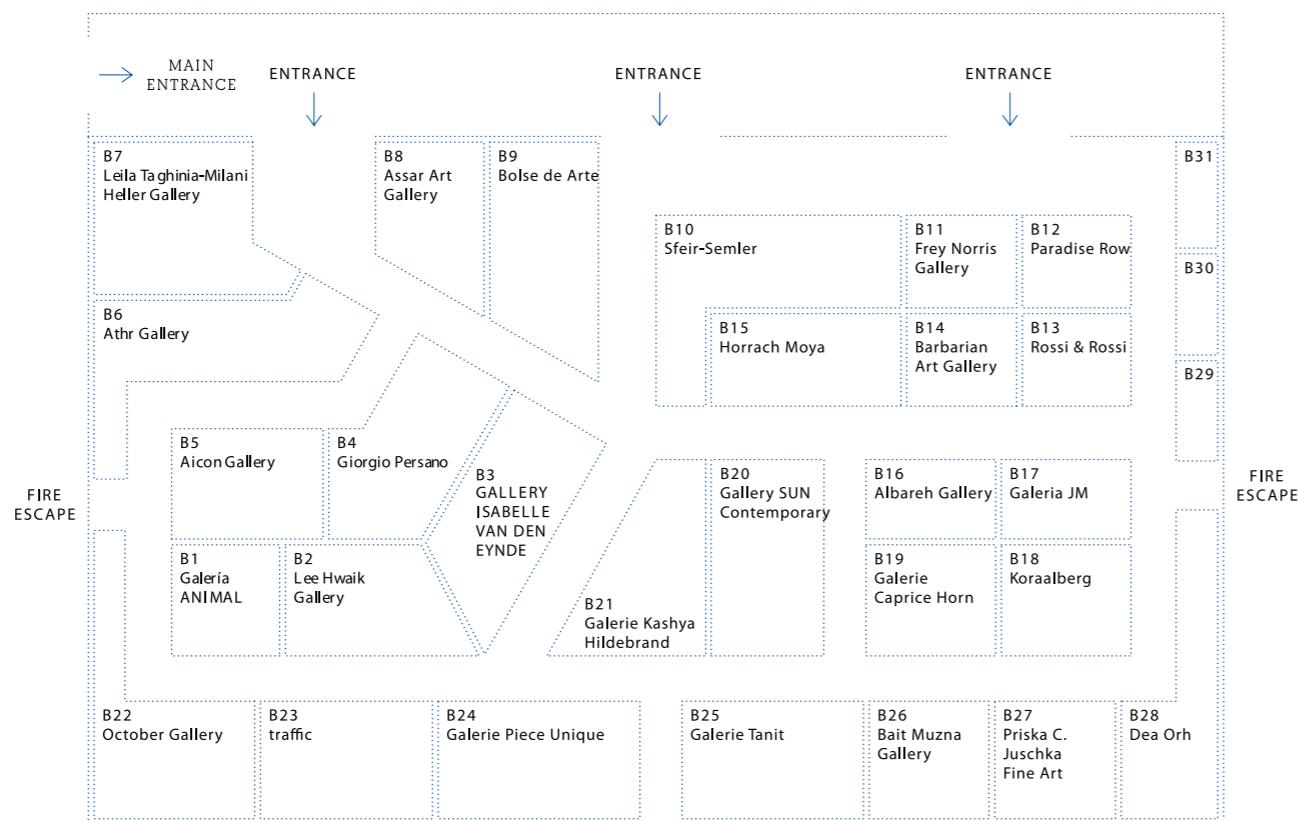
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B30 Edge of Arabia
B31 Sheikha Manal Young Artist Award



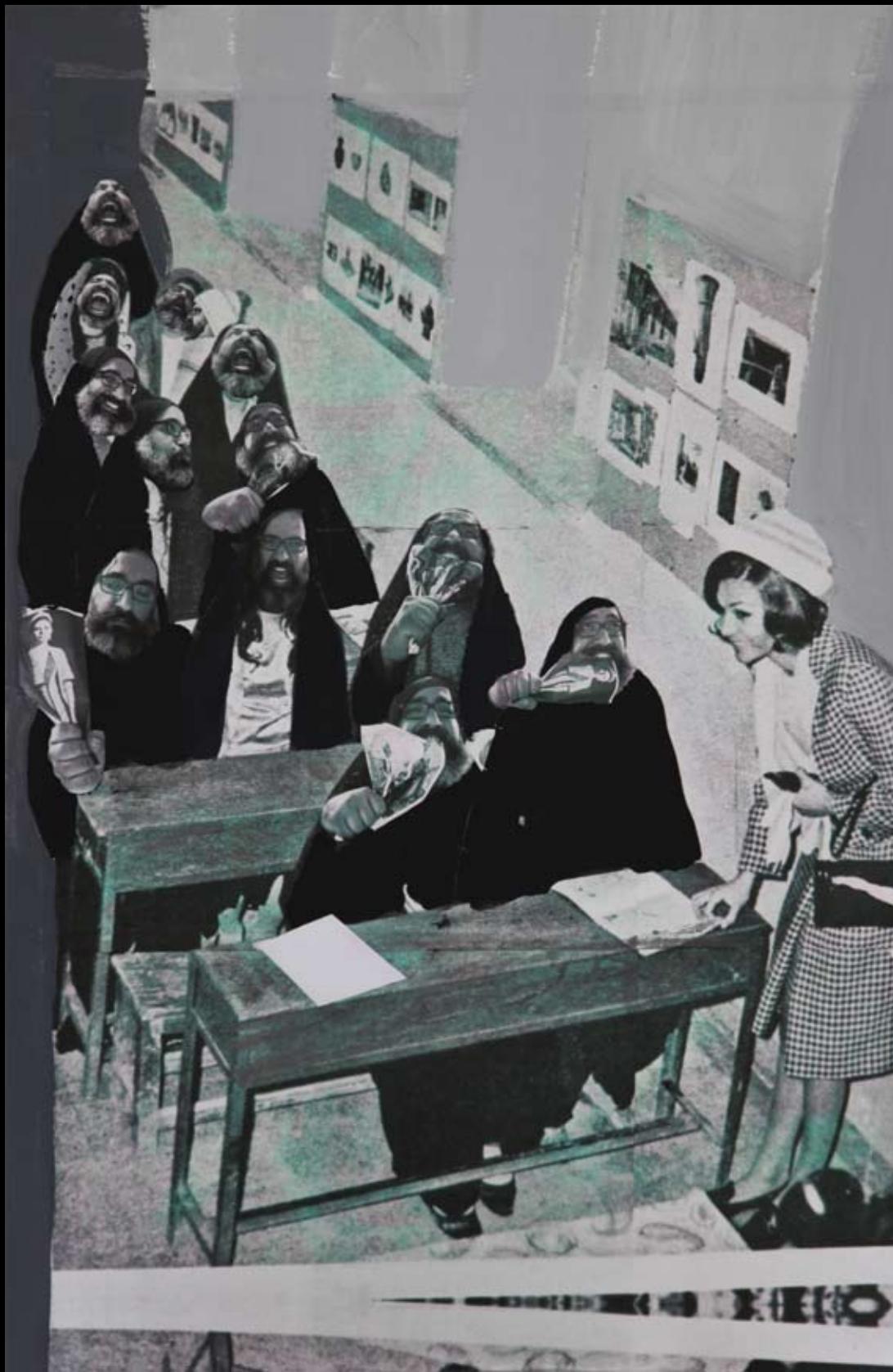
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شیخ خلیفہ بزرگ میدانی میسر



Ramin Haerizadeh

Untitled

2010, collage on canvas board, 61x91cm

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