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# THE ART NEWSPAPER

*Art Dubai: 17-18/03/2017*

## Etihad Museum

A presentation of the UAE's heritage through personal stories, archives and events at the revamped Union House

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## Sharjah Biennial

Curator Christine Tohmé changes this biennial's format with year-long programming and off-site projects that consider crops, earth, water and cooking

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We talk to the Dubai-based artist slated for the UAE National Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale this year

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## By the Creek

A look at SIKKA Art Fair and its artistic interventions in the houses and streets of Dubai's waterside old town

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## Dubai attracts auction players



Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development with Tad Smith, Sotheby's President and CEO

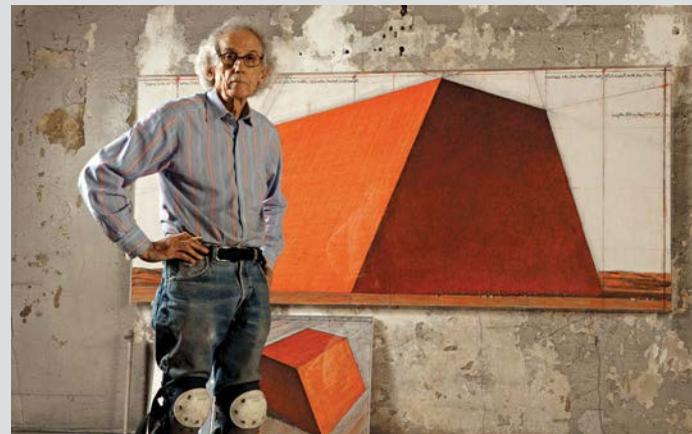
follows an increase in the number of Middle Eastern clients participating in the company's global sales, resulting in a 30% rise in the number of buyers from the region over the last five years, he adds.

The plan is to host talks, selling and non-selling exhibitions, gallery tours and educational events in the new base. "One priority is to make sure that our international specialists can use this space. As to whether we'll hold sales, we'll assess our clients' needs as we go," he says.

After launching its first sale on 24 May 2006 in Dubai, Christie's is celebrating its 11th anniversary with a Modern and contemporary sale totalling 163 lots, 18 of them with a low estimate of US\$100,000 (AED370,000).

The Christie's auction, which is due to take place 18 March, includes works by Arab, Iranian and Turkish artists. Six works by Mahmoud Saïd go on the block, including the Portrait of Mohamed Pacha Saïd (late 1920s; estimate US\$25,000-US\$30,000/AED91,000-AED110,000), the artist's father who was Egypt's Prime Minister from 1910 to 1914. Valérie Didier Hess, director of business development at Christie's Dubai, has co-authored a catalogue raisonné of Saïd's work.

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The artist with a rendering of his planned project

## When will Christo's 40-year old Mastaba happen?

The artist, known for his monumental sculptural projects, makes major push for his desert project in the UAE

The artist Christo tells The Art Newspaper at Art Dubai that his long awaited project in the desert, The Mastaba, is still on track. For 40 years, Christo has been planning the structure. Comprising 410,000 multi-coloured aluminium barrels, it would be the largest sculpture in the world, and, unlike many of Christo's projects, permanent.

Christo says preparation will take three years, but once greenlit, the colossal structure itself can be elevated in a matter of weeks, and will stand at 150m high, 225m deep (at the 60 degree slanted walls) and 300m wide at the vertical walls.

The barrels will be set in an ascending form reaching a plateau of 126.8m wide, which, when viewed from a distance, will recall Islamic geometric patterns. Christo and his late wife Jeanne-Claude selected a site for the work after reconnaissance trips to the region, south of Abu Dhabi. "We love that area. We found that site, we wanted to have this space for us," says Christo.

To read the full interview, see [theartnewspaper.com](http://theartnewspaper.com). A.M.

## Sotheby's advances, Christie's consolidates

It is an important week for Christie's and Sotheby's in Dubai. Sotheby's opened a gallery space and office on Tuesday (14 March) in the Dubai International Financial Centre which, says Edward Gibbs, the chairman for the Middle East and India, will "bring together the best of our global busi-

ness in one hub". Crucially, Sotheby's could "potentially schedule sales" in the new venue, he adds.

"Dubai is an important regional hub and we know that it will continue to be important; it's key to our business as we expand," says Gibbs. The launch of Sotheby's Dubai

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## NEWS

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## Visualising Abu Dhabi Art



Tarek Al Ghousein, (In) Consideration of Myths (2012-13)

A series of images by the Kuwaiti photographer Tarek Al Ghousein, which document the development of the Saadiyat Cultural District in Abu Dhabi over the past seven years, will be used by the Abu Dhabi Art fair for its advertising and branding campaigns this year. The ninth edition of the Modern and contemporary art fair launches at Manarat Al Saadiyat (8-11 November).

Seven of Al Ghousein's works will be used on the fair website, and as part of its advertising campaign across print and digital platforms; the photographs will also be displayed at the fair. The artist began photographing sites on Saadiyat Cultural District in 2010, capturing the early and later phases of the new culture hub where the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are located (the former is scheduled to launch later this year; an opening date is to be confirmed for the latter).

"The cultural scene here is about to change significantly; the fair, through its wider programme of exhibitions and talks, will explore

the specificity of place and will highlight different histories that have impacted the local art ecosystem," says the fair director Dyala Nusseibeh, who was appointed last November.

"The selected works fit incredibly well with this perspective as Tarek was on the one hand exploring how identity is forged through landscape and on the other,

documenting an important period of change on the island, the dynamic between the natural environment and the transformative impact of urban development and cultural ambition on this habitat," she adds.

The images used for the Abu Dhabi Art campaign come from two series of works: (In) Beautification (2011) and (In) Consideration of Myths (2012-13). "(In)Beautification documents processes associated with landscapes in transition. Relying on light interventions and non-invasive interactions, the images explore how the identity of a place is transformed through constructed landscapes that displace native plants," says Al Ghousein, who is professor of visual art at New York University Abu Dhabi.

A separate series of photographs called (In) Situ focuses specifically on the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi site; a selection of these works is on show in The Creative Act: Performance, Process, Presence at Manarat Al Saadiyat (until 29 July), which includes works drawn from the collection of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. G.H.

## Lebanese duo in the running for top French art prize

Lebanese artist duo Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige have been nominated for the 2017 Marcel Duchamp Art Prize, alongside Maja Bajevic, Charlotte Moth and Vittorio Santoro. With a €35,000 cash prize, the prestigious award will be announced on 16 October at the Centre Pompidou, with an exhibition of the nominees' work opening at the venue on 3 October.

Last year the Algerian artist Kader Attia received the accolade, following in the footsteps of previous winners Thomas Hirschhorn, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Tatiana Trouvé, Cyprien Gaillard, Latifa Echakhch, Julien Prévieux and Melik Ohanian. "After their travelling show Two Suns in a Sunset, which has been displayed at important institutions such as the Jeu de Paume and Haus Der Kunst, the nomination of the Marcel Duchamp Prize comes at a timely moment in their career," says Sunny Rahbar, co-founder of The Third Line gallery, which represents Hadjithomas and Joreige in Dubai. "Given that this is a France-based prize, and the artists live between Paris and Beirut, it makes the recognition even more relevant to them and their practice." A.W-T.



The Etihad Museum in Dubai

## State of the Union

A new museum seeks to bring the personal stories and events revolving around the UAE's independence to the fore. The Etihad Museum, inaugurated on 2 December last year, presents an archive of photographs, film and documents spanning the period 1968-74. Managed by Dubai Culture, the museum, designed by Moriyma and Teshima Architects, is in the shape of a manuscript with seven columns (symbolising the UAE's seven emirates), and stands alongside the original Union House (Dar Al Etihad), in which the UAE federation was formed in 1971. "Permanent exhibitions will be complemented by a series of educational and public programmes, as well as rolling temporary exhibitions accompanied by lectures, workshops and many other activities," Abdulla Bin Massam Al Falasi, the director of Etihad Museum, tells The Art Newspaper. "These are all designed to create a living and welcoming museum experience that heightens audience engagement and encourages repeat visits. We have been delighted to see the museum bringing the community together." A.W-T.

## Calling all artists: apply for Alserkal residencies

Dubai mega arts district, Alserkal Avenue, rounds off a season of expansions and additions with the announcement of its inaugural residency programme, slated to open in the autumn. Running for three cycles each year, emerging and mid-career artists are encouraged to apply with "socially engaged and research-based practices," according to the official announcement. With a focus on connecting local and regional platforms, the residency's 6,000 sq. ft space will be designed by Dubai-based architecture collective, a hypothetical office. The programme hopes to "make interdisciplinary dialogue part of the fabric of the UAE, and the regional arts and culture scene," according to Abdelmonem Bin Eisa Alserkal, founder and patron of Alserkal Avenue and Alserkal Residency. The inaugural cycle will feature four artists - Mona Ayyash (Dubai), Ali El Darsa (Berlin and Montreal), Franziska Pierwoss (Berlin and Beirut) and Janet Varda (New York, Toronto and India), chosen by the first of a rotating selection committee. A.W-T.

**Clarification:** Earlier this week we reported that Iftikhar Dadi, associate professor, history of art and visual studies at Cornell University, has joined the Art Dubai Modern advisory committee (2016-17). The other members are Catherine David, the deputy director of the Museum of Modern Art at Paris's Centre Pompidou; the Beirut-based writer Kristine Khouri; Nada Shabout, professor of art history and the director of the contemporary Arab and Muslim Studies initiative at the University of North Texas; and the art historian Savita Apte.

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The collector Mohammed Afkhami, an official patron of Art Dubai, says "Christie's has picked a very strong subsection of most of the notable artists across Iran, the Arab world, and Turkey. Christie's has also attempted to bring some lesser known artists at more affordable price points so as to broaden the collector base."

When Christie's held its first sale in Dubai, it was considered a game-changer, making \$8,489,400. "We are about to hold our 22nd consecutive sale season in Dubai; over the years we have had 20 to 25 countries participating in each sale season, with sell-through rates at around 85% and a very high bidding participation via Christie's Live at about 30%," says a Christie's spokeswoman. Last March, Christie's Now and Ten Modern and contemporary sales in Dubai made a total of \$11.9m with buyer's premium (80% sold by lot; 89% sold by value).

Eleven years on and post-financial crisis, Dubai is less exuberant. Since 2008, Christie's has held two sale seasons in Dubai in March and October, but the autumn season has been cancelled, reflecting global market stagnation. "Going forward one season in March in Dubai and a larger selection of Middle Eastern works of art to be offered in London during the autumn season, is the new strategy," the spokeswoman says.

Christie's has made its mark on the cultural and commercial scene nonetheless. Hisham Samawi of Ayyam Gallery in Dubai, says that when "Christie's first started, it was indeed a regional centre as the market was still under developed; many of the lots were primary works coming from the galleries. Today, Dubai has graduated to being an important global art centre." There is now a strong secondary market in the region which is well supported by the auctions, he adds.

Gareth Harris and Aimee Dawson

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