

Art Dubai 2018: Must-Visit Booths

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As the 2018 edition of Art Dubai enters full swing, here are six showcases that have taken a different, more experimental approach, in their design in the fair's two Contemporary halls

While adopting a less than white cube visual backdrop may be a risk, there are times when a little out-of-the-box thinking provides more curb appeal to those passing through the fair. This year's selection committee saw Isabelle van den Eynde (Gallery IVDE, Dubai); Ursula Krinzinger (Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna); Glenn Scott Wright (Victoria Miro, London); Andree-Sfeir-Semler (Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Hamburg/Beirut); and guest curators Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath bring together the Contemporary section from the 105 participants from 48 countries throughout the fair. The two main Contemporary halls feature a range of artworks from installations through to paintings, but here are a few taking a slightly unconventional approach.

Kristin Hjellegjerde

London/Berlin

Booth F5

The UK and Germany-based gallery is showing a series of smaller framed works by Iranian-born UK multimedia artist Soheila Sokhanvari. While the pieces themselves feature largely monochromatic portraiture with atypical narratives and a political bent, it is their shared approach to a resistance towards conventional representation that comes through in this booth. With sea foam green and teal geometric wallpaper and a retro-modern baby pink couch, the booth appears more like a living room interior, asserting a strong aesthetic vision and backdrop that adds multiple sensorial layers to the experience of artistic representation. The immersive, engaging booth is a highly communicative space that draws you right in.

Gallery Wendi Norris

San Francisco

Booth D9

The Californian gallery showcases a range of media across the booth, the right wall dominated by framed prints, but the minimal presentation featuring works by Yamini Nayar, Peter Young and Val Britton is dominated by Britton's whimsical, airy hanging installation. The gallery has a focus on recontextualising Modern artists and art education, and Britton's *Deluge*, a site-specific creation consisting of neutrally-hued hand and laser cut paper, is a sensitive and discreetly imposing piece that is hard to overlook. Aiming to instigate questioning, the fragile appearance belies a firm statement on current tech and salary trends, using data translated into visual form to occupy space and gently insist upon reevaluating socio-economic environments.

Galerie Imane Fares

Paris

Booth D1

Showcasing Ali Cherri and Basma Alsharif's geopolitical, heavily contextual and intellectually sharp works, this booth is less off-piste in its presentation, opting to align itself with more curated institutional offerings. With figurative/mask sculptures and ceramic works on staggered and varying-height pedestals, there is also a narrow display table at above-average height that provides a display more akin to a museum. A concise, clean line of clustered photograph groupings at eye level surrounds the platforms. An elegant, elevated and pristine booth, Galerie Imane Fares's dual artist presentation – a growing trend at Art Dubai – is a soothing and crisp palette cleanser before moving onto the next hall.

Dastan's Basement

Tehran

Booth C2

Dastan's Basement's booth is always a wacky treat. The gallery, which has an extensive and experimental programme, focuses on Iranian Modern and contemporary art through its channels of the main gallery, Dastan+2 and Dastan:Outside. This year, it has overwhelmed its booth with a non-traditional installation of oversized wooden boards bearing artworks that can be turned like pages, as well as wooden flooring. By segmenting and creating nooks and crannies throughout the booth, the gallery has produced a micro-landscape that reads industrial and rugged, with endless surfaces to explore intricate works, including a video piece in the far left corner which plays a soundtrack only audible once nearby. Works on show are by Pouya Afshar, Shahriar Ahmadi, Fereydoun Ave, Farshid Maleki, Ardeshtir Mohassess, Amin Montazeri, Farah Ossouli, Kour Pour, Iman Raad and Ali Akbar Sadeghi.

Galerist

Istanbul

Booth D2

Displaying an array of ceramic works with patterning referential of Islamic geometrics with a twist by Elif Uras – not unexpected of a Turkish gallery – Galerist gets a special nod for Uras's water installation. The centrally placed work, consisting of a fountain in soothing blue and white Arabesque-adjacent patterns, is a surprising and sensorially jarring presentation where boundaries between indoor and outdoor features come together.

ARTSIDE Gallery

Seoul

Booth A15

This Korean gallery strives to explore new artistic fields. With works on display by Seontae Hwang, Myoungjo Jeon, Jaeyong Kim and Changmin Lim, this gallery gets a shout-out for Lim's interior pigment prints on LED monitors animated with 'filmed' snowfall or rain through the windows – a subtle and potentially overlooked delicate detail if roving around too quickly – and Kim's wall of glazed donuts, including an homage to Andy Warhol's iconic soup can. A clear Instagram winner as per the crowd clustering – and the gallerists are savvy to this – the team is thoughtfully alert, offering "Care for a sticker?" with a picture of a donut and the appropriate hash-tags listed making for a winning, and mutually beneficial, giveaway.

Art Dubai runs until 24 March at Madinat Jumeirah. Artdubai.ae



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