



*By Selections Magazine Posted 21 March, 2018 In CURATED BY*

Selection being something we specialise in here at Selections, we like to ask those who are best-placed to make choices on our behalf. In this special feature, we ask gallerists at the Art Dubai 2018 to choose a single artwork from their booths and share the story behind it.

## **ART DUBAI CONTEMPORARY**

**Addis Fine Art Gallery**



Wosene Worke Kosrof's work titled, America: The New Alphabet is a dynamic piece that plays an integral role in Addis Fine Art's inaugural participation in Art Dubai. It is a striking painting that shows the melding of art histories. An ambitious work, painted in 2017, this remarkable painting addresses the style of the New York School – a mixture of freedom and disciplined measure, makes it an artwork of distinction. The influence of American abstract expressionism, combined with Wosene's cultural point of departure, the Ethiopian Ge'ez / Amharic script (perhaps one of the only surviving indigenous African writing systems), creates works laden with meaning and speak of the powerful way in which cultures can come together.

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### Agial Art Gallery



“As a little girl, Hala Schoukair would accompany her mother to Madame Salha’s atelier. Madame Salha was a dressmaker – a grand couturière. At every visit, she would hand Hala a bag of fabric cut-ups. Hala inhabited the visually intense world of their textures, colors, and patterns. She observed the women around her; the intricacies of their labor, their gestures, and social practices. Decades later, Hala sutures – one slow step at a time – lines into small rounded circular units. She weaves vast and fantastical worlds out of the minute details that had impressed themselves on her memory. She finds beauty in the quotidian.”

Art Dubai | booth C6

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## Aspan Gallery







Last year Yelena and Viktor Vorobyev exhibited their 1996 installation *The Artist Is Asleep*, which shows a figure of an artist sleeping on a bed at the Venice Biennale. This was their reflection on the role of the artist and a protest against an increasing commercialism of the art world. In their new series *Vintage (Harsh Detention of Protesters)* they took photos of protests around the world and have covered figures of protesters detained by policemen with the same pink cover they used for their 1996 installation. It is as if their artist finally woke up from sleeping and is protesting on the streets now, again questioning the role of the artist today. To emphasize the contrast between street protests and coziness of one's bed the artists asked craftswomen to hand embroider the resulting images on bed sheets.

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### **Ayyam Gallery**



Tammam Azzam – Paper Series | Although having worked with many different media over the last decade, Tammam Azzam's artworks keep circulating back to the same urgent topic; shedding light onto the ongoing political and social upheaval in Syria and the cycles of violence and destruction causing his country to be torn apart. As Azzam's work develops further towards abstraction, one may say so is the Syrian war; appearing more and more distant to the rest of the world while his native homeland continues to be torn apart. Through the use of collage, the artist has found a way to rebuild this country and society, while calling for a peaceful reminder of the conflict at hand.

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**Galerie Michael Sturm**

Mary A. Waters (\*1957, London, GB) is interested in the political and cultural significance of images as a means for power and hegemony, just as the tension between original and reproduction. Growing up in Ireland, a long colonized country, the artist knew most historical paintings from books or postcards. Keeping this in mind her work may be read as the endeavour to claim these images for herself. While the jewellery of the ladies from well-to-do families have an illusionistic air about them, the artist breaks this effect with the monochrome colour beams, standing in the way of the recipients illusion. Mary A. Waters thus draws our attention to what we are actually dealing with □ oil paint on canvas, which she masters in an awe-inspiring manner.

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### Galerie Mitterrand







The joyful sculpture « Back in Town », 2016, by Gary Webb, comes from his Palm Trees series made of multicolored mirrors. Bright and playful, this work is an embodied reminiscence of Gary Webb's happy childhood, spent with his family in a small seaside village in Brazil, Buzios. Vivid colors, varied shapes and gay titles allude to Webb's hometown that he remembers with a joy. We admire these skilfully made palm trees as they create a light and cheerful atmosphere of holidays on the seaside..

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### Galerie Polaris



Born in 1986, lives and works in Marrakech Sara Ouhaddou's forces us to look beyond a regular artist's studio approach. She brings her tools to remote High Atlas Moroccan villages where she meets with those she calls her «outsiders». Sara Ouhaddou salvages rubber strips gathered on markets located on the road to Targa. She reconstructs them until brown bare threads remain, as if they had been bleached. In doing so she obtains the illusion of a painted background on which simple patterns are embroidered, that suggest molecular, mineral, astral shapes... like a geological vocabulary. Light and shadow bring to life the superposition hence achieved. The use of this "arts and crafts" vocabulary helps Sara Ouhaddou to free herself from all kind of frame and opens up beautifully to new shapes. The imperfections of the material are highlighted by the embroideries.

Art Dubai | booth B13

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### Gallery 1957





Modupeola Fadugba, Pink Train | This piece beautifully encapsulates Fadugba's approach, with delicately drawn figures depicted on scorched paper; at first it appears as an abstract geometric pattern, but on further inspection we perceive the forms of female swimmers moving in tandem across the burnt paper. Born in the Togolese Republic, and now currently residing in Nigeria, for Fadugba swimming is a personal metaphor – a representation of her own exploration in the art world as a black female artist. We hope showing her work at Art Dubai will be the next wave for her, navigating yet another growing market for West African artists.

**Gallery One**



**Gallery Wendi Norris**



This year, Gallery Wendi Norris will be presenting a curated booth of three artists working across mediums in realm of abstraction. I wanted to feature here a 1973 painting by Peter Young that will anchor the booth.

"#23-1973" is a canvas from the artist's "Mandala" series, and takes on the rhythmic, spiritual patterning of the Buddhist symbol that permeated Western sensibilities during the time it was painting in 1973. Though, as with all of Young's abstractions through the decades, the process and intent were strictly formal.

Young began his career in New York in the 1960s where he showed alongside artists such as Claes Oldenberg, Dan Christensen and Bruce Nauman in Richard Bellamy's Oil and Steel Gallery, the Green Gallery, as well as Leo Castelli's famed gallery. His rigorously detailed "dot" painting series graced the cover of ArtForum in 1971. The Mandalas were a direct response to this series, a departure from it. Young wished to paint in a way that allowed him more freedom, fun, and wished to "throw down" paint akin to his Expressionist contemporaries. But such lack of structure also left the compositions lacking for the artist, so he began folding his canvases to create some symmetry amongst the chaos. Young landed on the eight-fold symmetry you see in these circular patterns — involving singular vertical, horizontal and diagonal folds. Only after becoming obsessed with this technique did he step back and liken the imagery to the Eastern spiritualism he had been studying, and dub them his "Mandalas".

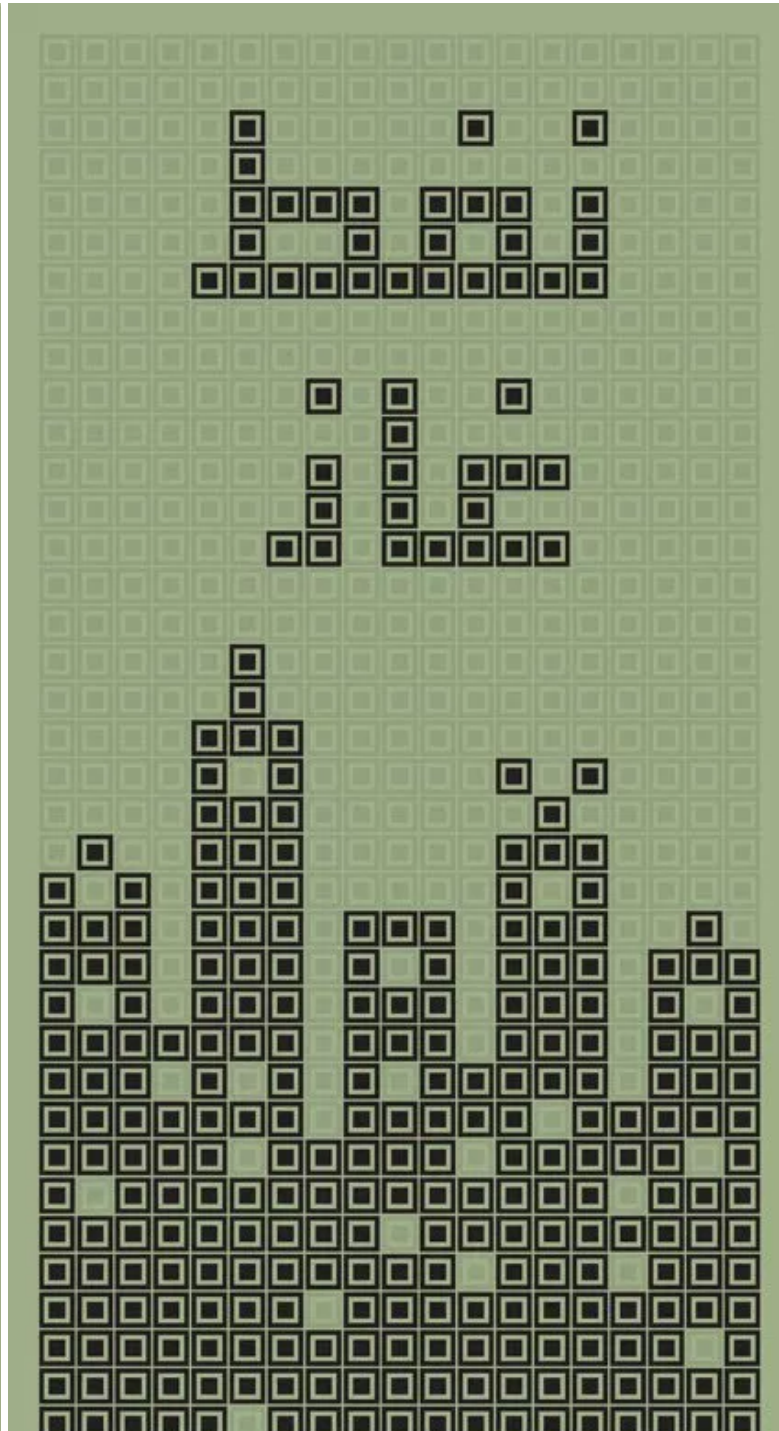
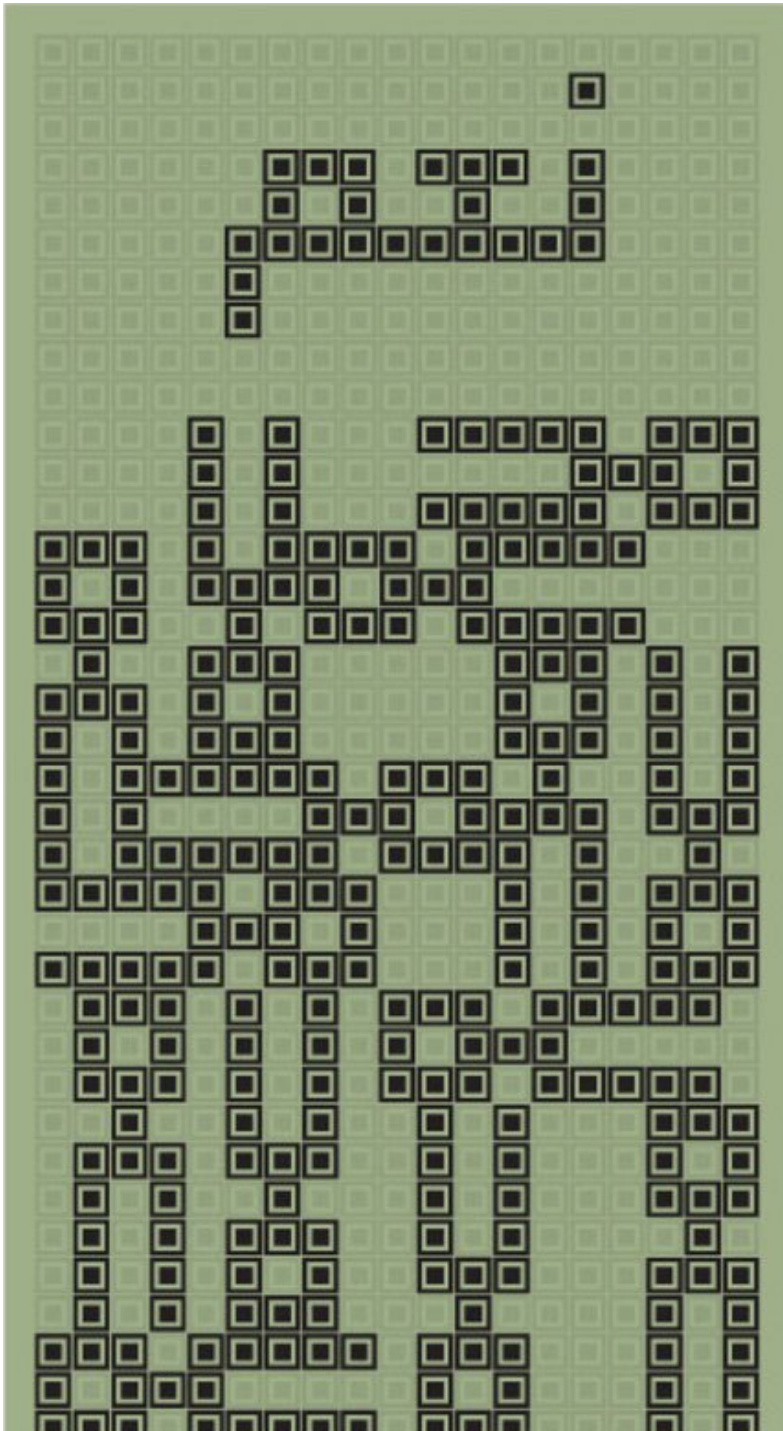
Peter's work, over the decades, has always been grounded in formalism — his strength being as a master colorist. Roberta Smith has written about the work extensively in the New York Times... calling the artist at once "Post-Minimalist", "Autonomist", and "a maverick Zenned-out hedonist who was also a process-oriented formalist with a sharp painterly intelligence, a genius for color and a penchant for the tribal and spiritual" — a mouthful, to be sure!

Also, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that we will also have a site-specific installation in our booth, by artist Val Britton. She will be traveling with us to the fair to install a suspended, immersive sculptural piece made entirely of hand cut paper and string. The effect will be immersive and awe-inspiring. Val's works draw on the universal imagery and language of maps, to render psychological, imagined spaces. Val's sculptural installation will feel as though she has exploded an historical paper record of a place into 3-D for the viewer to explore. Val has done similar commissioned installations at Facebook Headquarters in Menlo Park, CA, the San Jose Institute for Contemporary Art, the Energy Center 5 in Houston, TX., the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Gallery Wendi Norris, and more.

For both Val Britton and Peter Young, this will be their first time showing work in Dubai.

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## Gazelli Art House



Kufic is the oldest calligraphic form of the Arabic scripts. It was developed around the end of the 7th century in Kufa, Iraq, from which it takes its name.

The geometrical form of this script was widely used in Islamic decorative applied arts and architecture. Development of mathematics and geometry during the Islamic Golden Age allowed artists and calligraphers to transform the script into intricate forms and patterns. The images generated by computer are also based on the same geometry as square Kufic patterns. That reminds us that the modern computers and technology would not be possible without contribution of early Islamic scholars such as Al-Khwarizmi, the father of Algebra and Algorithm.

Art Dubai | booth C5

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### Giorgio Persano Gallery



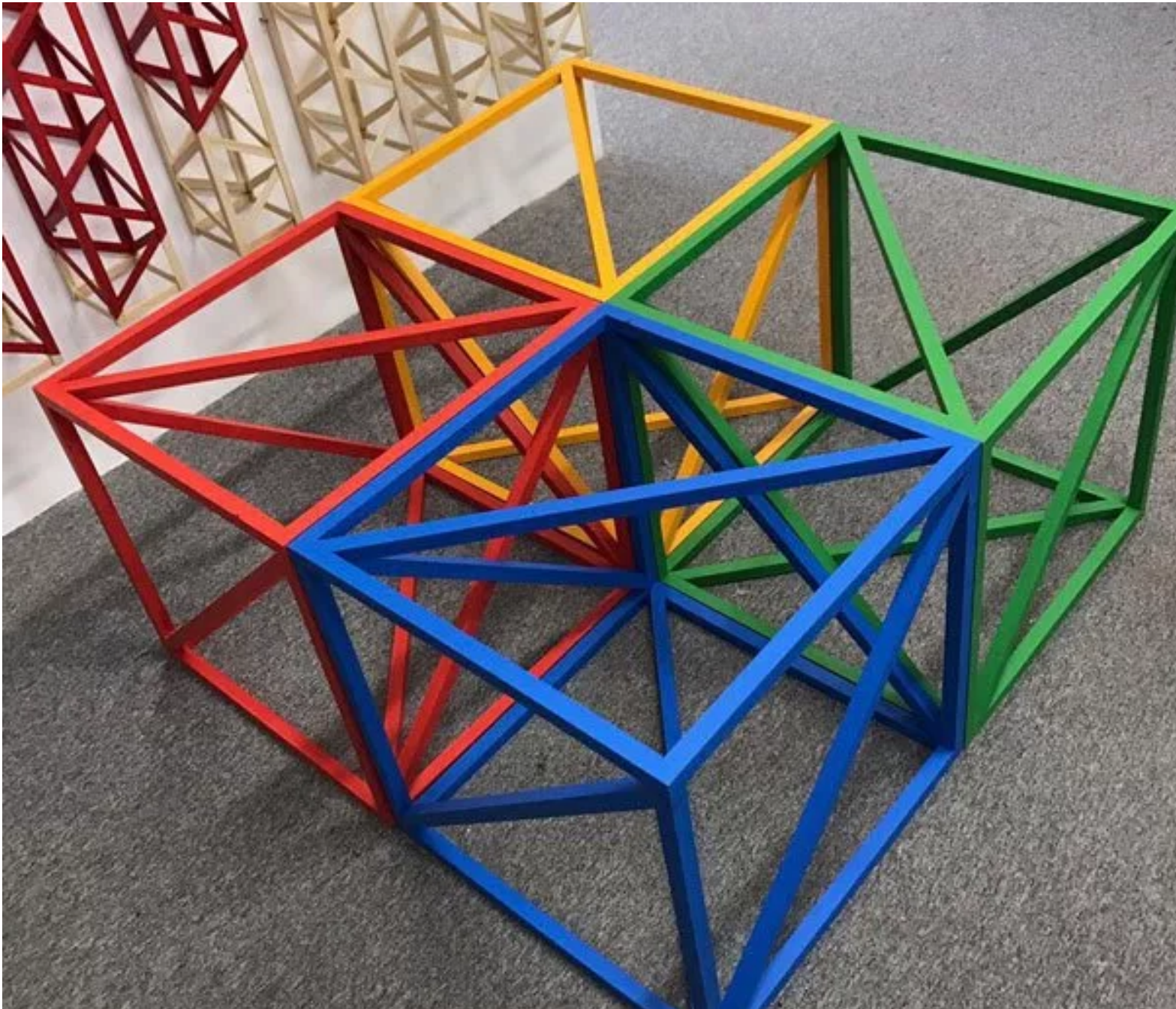


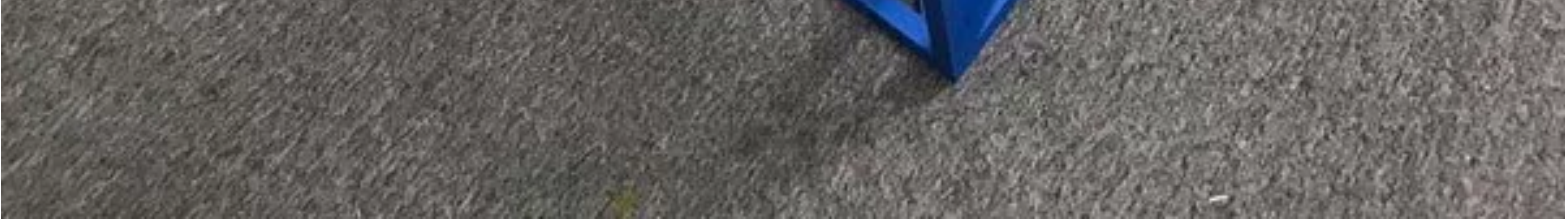


With installations, videos and large canvases, Zena el Khalil (Beirut, 1976) uses her family history to create a more personal understanding of Lebanon. Her recent paintings are the work of five years, during which el Khalil traveled around the country consecrating war-torn buildings with her healing ritual, burning objects to make ink, and painting her abstract expressions of pain and love. Her canvases and sculptures become a sacred utterance, a prayer to all those suffering from the brutality of war, in the hope that art can transmute conflict into peace.

Art Dubai | booth A6

**Grosvenor Gallery**





Rasheed Araeen's playful work 'Mayz' (Table) is a newly created edition, to be presented for the first time at Art Dubai. It references his seminal works 'Chaar Yaar' (Four Friends) and 'Zero to Infinity', an interactive installation, which through involvement of the viewer is created into an assemblage of infinite forms. A blend of his traditional work and his interactive pieces, 'Mayz' is designed to be used in the home, the daily interaction with the piece being a key part of the work and of Rasheed's practice. I love the colours and the combination of strict minimalism with playfulness and interaction. I want one at home!

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### Gypsum Gallery



“Al Samerraei’s swimming pools are objects of anticipation, their temperament is evasive and they invoke a sense of furtiveness in the onlooker. Her compositions tend to stand like film stills, always expecting movement but remain silent. The gallery has been engaging with Al Samerraei’s work for years now, observing as her narratives sprawl into complex and elusive movements of color and structure. We like to believe we’ve gained some access into the artist’s process of rearranging perception.”

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i8 Gallery



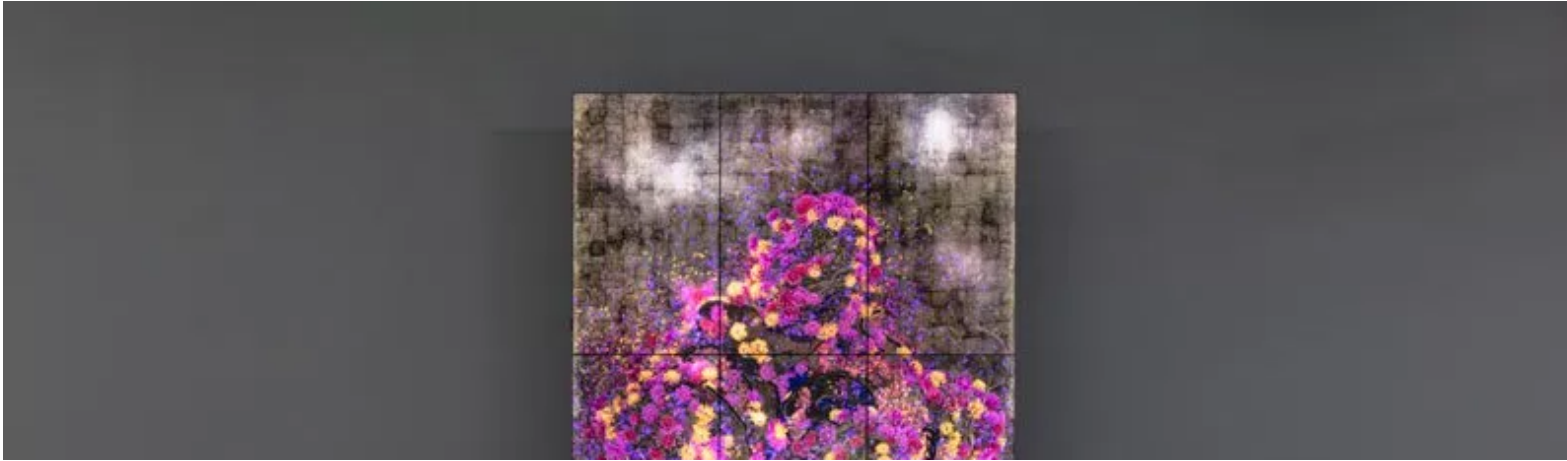




Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967), is without doubt one of the most important artists of our times. Like no other, he captures the imagination of people around the globe – also outside the museum world –with his large art projects. His drawings are still of central importance to his work that encompasses all other media. Initial ideas are formulated in drawings that the artist refers to time and again in the course of a project. The impression is given that Eliasson's thought process is recorded in such drawings, as can be seen in the work, *The shadow star* (2017), exhibited in Art Dubai. Here the artist dissolves the pigment with chunks of ancient glacial ice, creating organic swells and fades within the established tone.

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### **Ikkan Art Gallery**



Continuous Life and Death at the Now of Eternity is a 9-channel vertical tableau that illustrates the passing of time with the budding and blossoming of flowers till their withering ends, with different flowers blooming over the course of a year. The work is synchronised with the actual sunrise and sunset timings of where it is located at, the scene growing bright as the sun rises before darkness sets in over the sunset. Rendered in real time by a computer program, the image on view never repeats itself whilst continuing into eternity.

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**INDA Gallery**



*"Have you ever dreamt of travelling in time? I certainly have. But what is just a kind of daydreaming for us and an experiment for scientists, becomes an intimate and personal desire, imbued with emotions in Marianne Csaky's Time Tunnel.*

*Drawn into her world through this artwork's extraordinary visual appeal and craftsmanship in execution, I am fascinated with the way Csáky leads the viewer to experience how moving across time or looking at the flow of time from outside could perhaps make it possible for us to find the moments in the past where we can change the course of our present life."*

Zsolt Kozma, Artistic Director, INDA Gallery

## Kalfayan Galleries

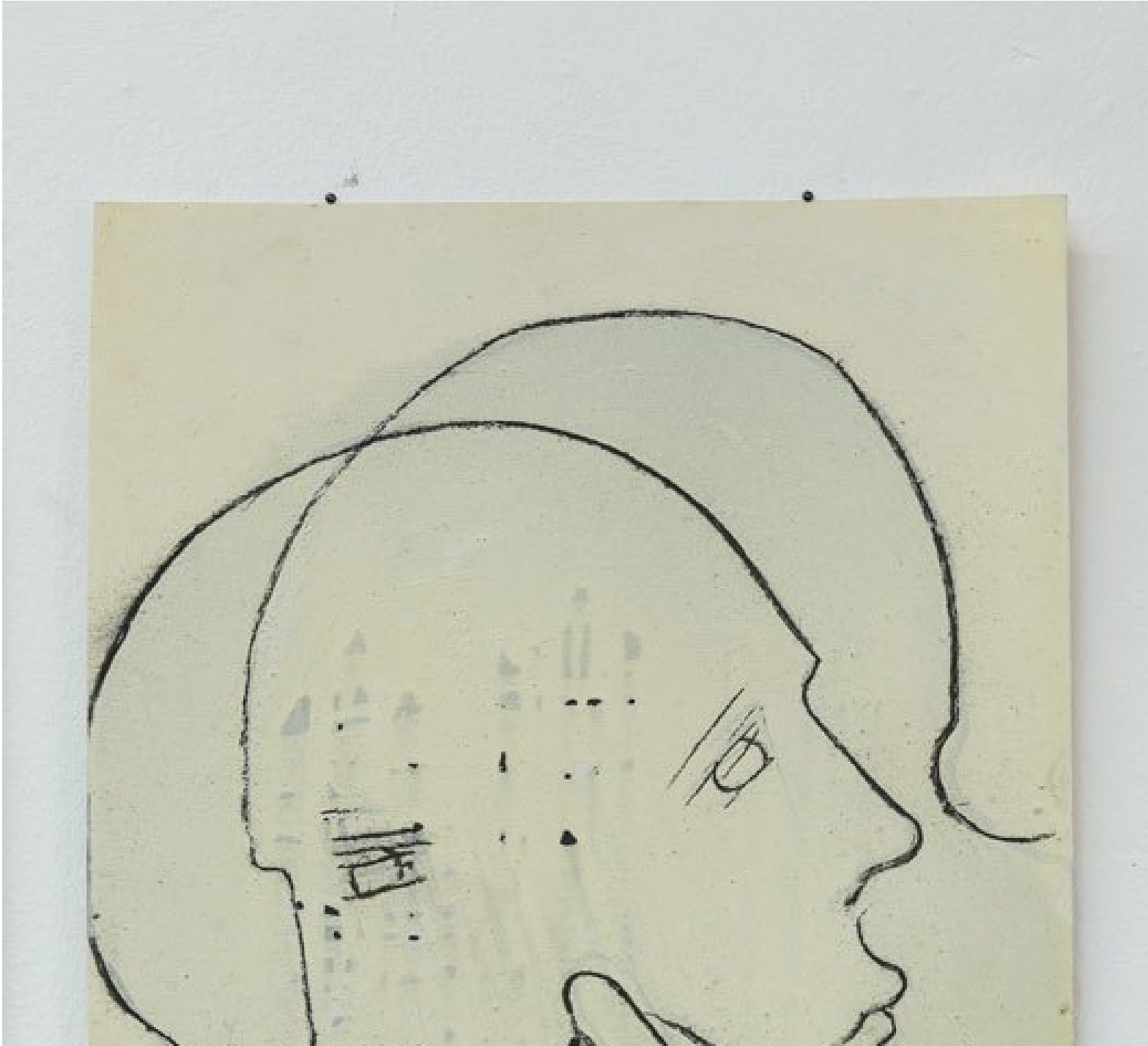






One of twelve works by the artistic duo Kalos&Klio from their 'Violent Silk' Series, which follows the controversial manufacture of silk. A traditional process for producing high quality silk by boiling and killing the silkworm. The artworks printed on organic silk fabric and presented as mourning veils, comment on violence around the world both symbolically and metaphorically. The shimmering quality of silk is juxtaposed to the dark themes of violence depicted on the veils, in order to emphasize the close link between our advanced culture and violence over time.

**Katharina Maria Raab**

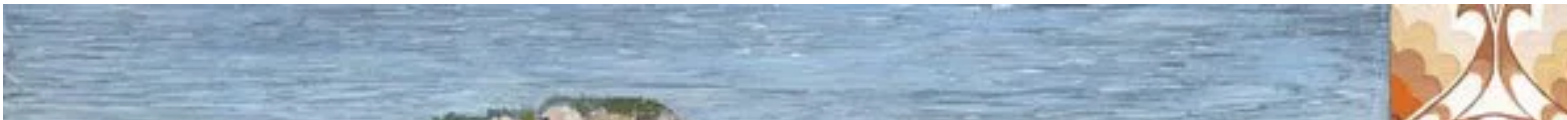




When I first met the artist, Mahi Binebine, I knew of him only as a writer, the author of “Welcome to Paradise.” His book had given me such a strong impression of the ways refugees, waiting for their lives to continue, build relationships. There is an inevitability to both deep conflict and deep connection, the latter of which struck me in this artwork. What Mahi does exceptionally well is that he uses androgynous outlines and classical features to take an experience that seems so specific and make it almost universal, something we can each see hints of in ourselves.

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### Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery







We will be showing a solo booth with Soheila Sokhanvari and I would choose the piece "Black Horse".

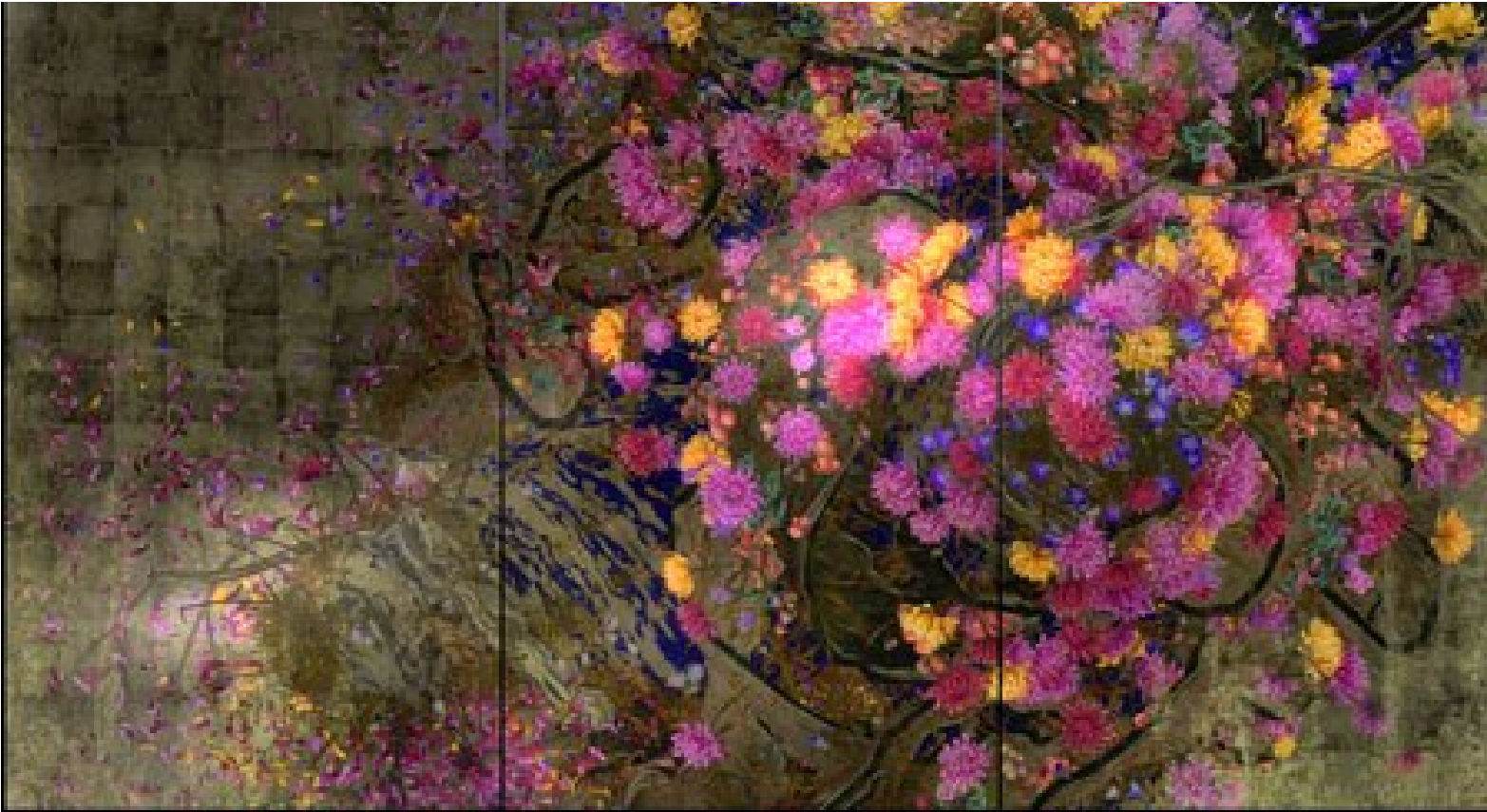
Its based on the saying in English a Dzdark horsedz meaning a person who has surprising abilities or skills but keeps their ideas secret, as well as the symbolism of horses in both Eastern and Western cultures. Horses symbolise status, courtly ideology and represented a model warrior image. Here the horse connects the sitter to the painting behind her allowing multiple narratives, which is open to viewer's own interpretation. The beauty and the mystique in this miniature painting is breathtaking and impossible to forget.

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### **Martin Browne Contemporary Gallery**







*In the extraordinary Continuous Life and Death at the Now of Eternity, 2017, the Japanese new media artists teamLab have again succeeded in introducing the dimension of time to an artwork – in this case the whole 365 days of a calendar year. Throughout this time period different flowers are born, bud, bloom and then wither on screen in synchronicity with what is happening in a Japanese garden in the real world and in real time. So that during the month of March, when the artwork will be showing at Art Dubai, the flowers that continuously boom and die on the screens of the artwork are the same ones that will be appearing in a garden in Kyoto. Soon after, in April, the flowers of the sakura (cherry blossom) will appear on the screens over a two week period – just as they will in the gardens of Japan. I am in awe of the creativity that has conceptualized how to recreate the real world through digital means in a way that is so beautiful and mesmerizing. Knowing that as the artwork is neither a pre-recorded animation nor a loop, it is continuously changing and previous visual states will never be replicated, prompts again to think of both the wonders of the natural world and our need to preserve them.*

Martin Browne, February 2018

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## Meem Gallery







*"This year at Art Dubai Meem Gallery is pleased to exhibit a solo presentation of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata. Angelus is Boullata's most recent body of work, and acts as a culmination to his last five years of art making. Boullata's careful and precise approach creates intricate, geometric works that fill your field of vision, encouraging you to stop and reflect. Boullata's preoccupation with time has long been part of his art-making, and the Angelus series evokes natural light at dawn, noon and sunset □ the series taking its name from the cardinal times of daily devotion."*

Meagan Kelly Horsman (Meem Gallery, Director of Business Development)

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## **Mohsen Gallery**









The impact of war is not limited to post-war traumas. It comes, rather, from a relationship between the damages of war, and its subsequent sickness and weakness. War destroys thought and distorts man's perception of reality. These destructive effects are not merely psychological, cultural, and social: they change man's view of the self, nature, and the other, as if they are left alone on a road. In the worst-case, one can go mad. The world today is plagued with war. The saprozoic are everywhere, making it increasingly difficult and complicated for man to live. The saprozoic make a world of their own: a world in which they now rule.

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### Ota Fine Arts

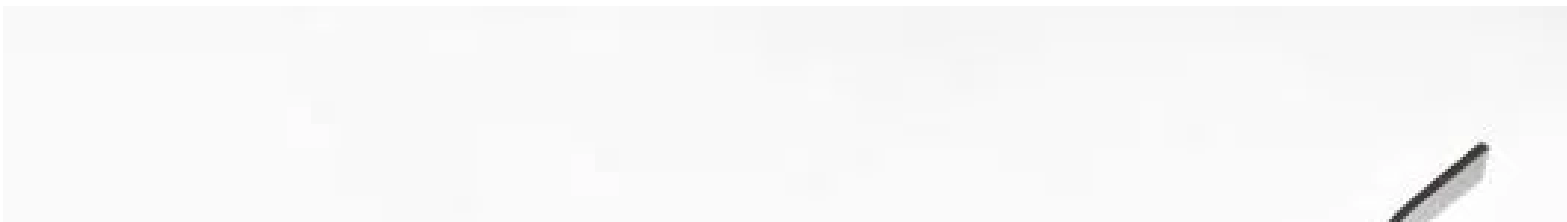




Ota Fine Arts is pleased to present the recent works of Masanori Handa (b.1979, Japan) at Art Dubai 2018. Following the overwhelming response to his work in previous years at the fair, the gallery is excited to share his latest creations with the Dubai audience this year. Handa's nakakiyono series of drawings are inspired by a traditional Japanese poem, hence many motifs found in his drawings have a distinct Japanese style. Yet, his playful visual language and vivid colours connect with his audience universally. Ota Fine Arts hopes to introduce the works of Handa and our other featured artists at Art Dubai 2018.

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Rosenfeld Porcini







The works of Roberto Almagno seem to hover in space, defying the laws of gravity. Working exclusively with wood, the artist is responsible for the complete time-consuming process from collecting the pieces of his raw material from the forests outside his native city of Rome, transporting them to his studio and painstakingly giving their form a more organic feel, before using moisture and heat, like an ancient craftsman, to bend the wood into his desired shape. Once complete he coats them in black to give them a uniformity, before assembling the final work. 'Culla' (cot) refers to the sleeping home of a newly born baby, yet Almagno's sculpture is all about flight, the piece stretching out to the skies as if it was a metaphor for a baby's journey from total dependence on others to its affirmation as a free-thinking and free-acting human being. The artist's Brancusian search for the perfection of form and contemporaneously a presence suspended in space has made his language a unique one in the plethora of contemporary sculptors.

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### Sanat Gallery

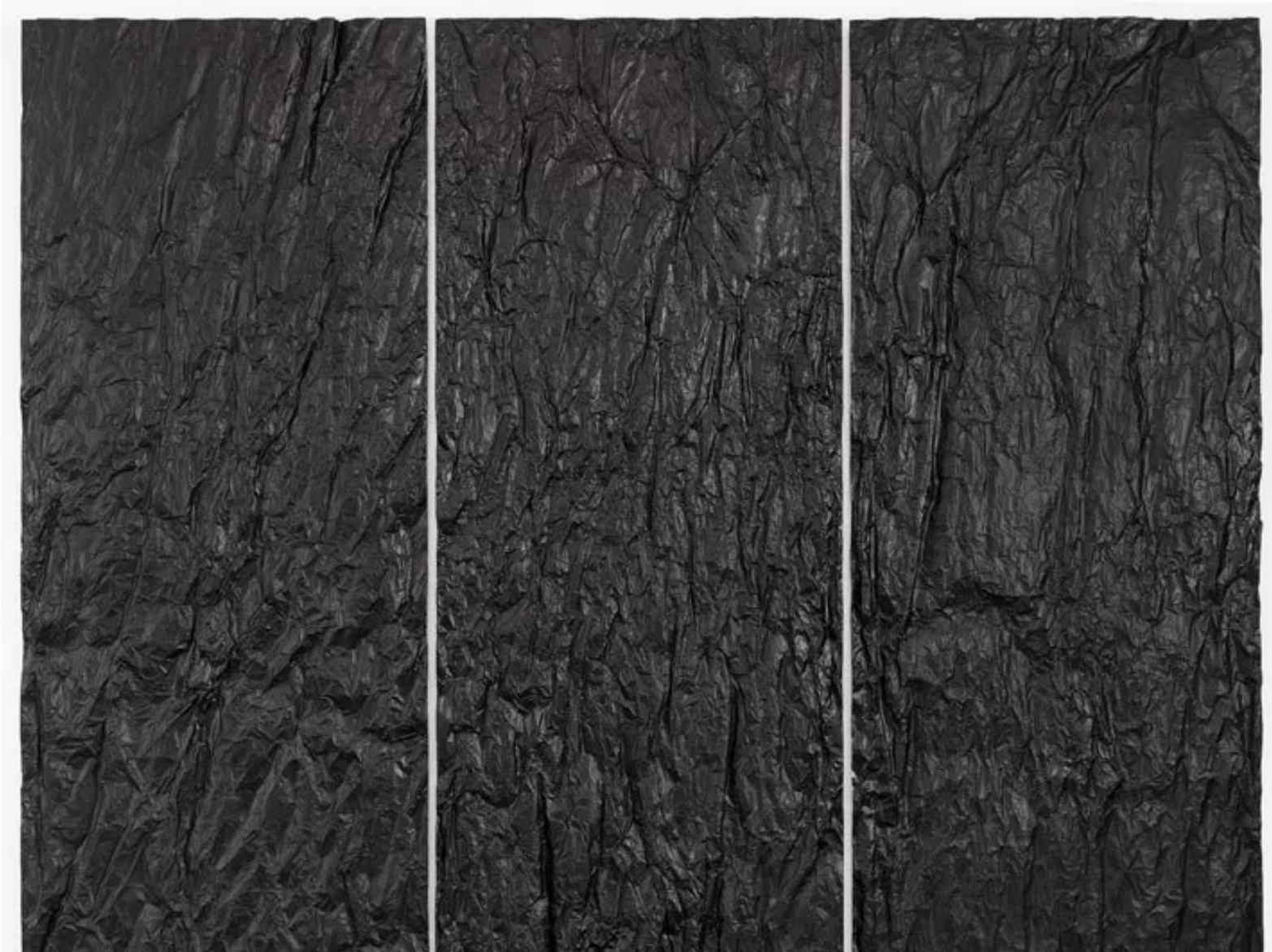


In “Dying Miniature – Original”, Muhammad Zeeshan has swapped the smooth burnished surface of the wasli for the coarse ground of an industrial sandpaper by rubbing layer upon layer of graphite, alternated with fixative, onto its surface. A meticulous and vigorous process that creates something akin to the anti-miniature is an institutional critique of miniature painting by reversing its process to create a ‘situation’ where there is a continuum of ‘vs.’ regarding what Zeeshan knows the miniature technique to be. This locates a field where Zeeshan’s curiosity of ‘what ifs’ regarding soft and harsh; white with black; burnished with abrasive; detail with silhouette; small vs. large; private vs. industrial institute themselves. These questions have allowed an investigation of probabilities and possibilities where Zeeshan achieved to burnish the work on a coarse surface as opposed to using the traditional method of using a burnished surface to create work.

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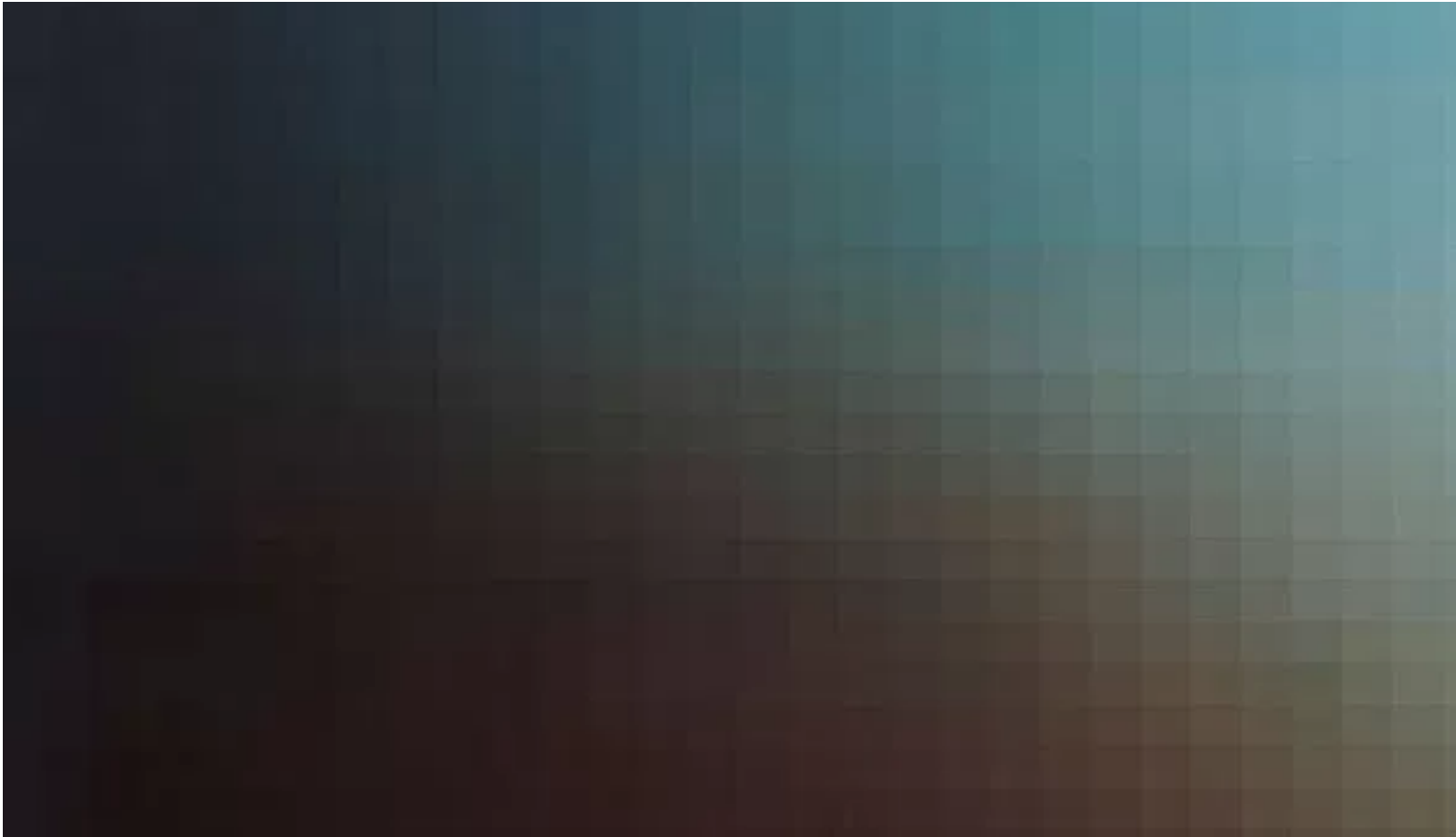
### Sanatorium Gallery





Ali İbrahim Öcal's work, which includes painting, installation, and photography, looks into not images themselves but human-kind's image of themselves. His visual language is an ode to the relationship between humans, animals, and nature; and to the rural and the urban, and the dichotomies in the daily life and perception of the two. Öcal's works are lush in detail, and they necessitate patience and practice to execute. There is no hierarchy of species or thing in his work. He renders the hair of a wolf as finely and meticulously as he does the surface of the sea, or a rendering of a tree bark, and his work insists on closer inspection despite their photorealistic legibility. Instead of an investigation into image-making, seeing and consuming in the digital age (as in Özgen's and Şehitoğlu's works) Öcal's work is a symbolic deconstruction of the natural things, or even of manual labor, forgotten and destroyed in the wake of modern and fast-paced digital lives.





Yagiz Özgen's practice is largely defined by contemplations on the image itself, its meanings and its sensory triggers. Mostly working with paint on canvas, a classic medium, Özgen's process begins well before painting begins. He questions the authenticity of images and representation, specifically those in the digital realm, and he masterfully strips down images into data that reflects the bones of what is seen. A landscape, in Özgen's work, is 392 different colors. But, even color, for Özgen, is to be questioned and probed. After all, light is constantly changing, and color is all about light and our perception of it. His focus is therefore on varied minimal and abstract color studies – what the artist considers to be the most pure and most basic form of representation – which he then ironically paints, so as to simultaneously answer for and critique his own image-making at once.

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**Selma Feriani Gallery**



Selma Feriani Gallery presents the most recent work by Lina Ben Rejeb entitled *Tel Quel, Nous Sommes de Cette Étoffe Dont Les Rêves Son Faits and Copie à Revoir*. This work was conceived as a homage to Modern Tunisian artist Hedi Turki. Lina Ben Rejeb met with Hedi Turki few years ago and has ever since been gracefully influenced by his practice, sharing an equal interest in the matter of painting as well as its deconstruction. For Art Dubai we present the before-mentioned Lina Ben Rejeb pieces in dialogue with three abstract oil and acrylic on canvas paintings by Hedi Turki, namely *Souvenirs confus, Bal des Orques and Lumière Rose*.

Art Dubai | booth B2

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## TAFETA





At this year's Art Dubai Contemporary, we will be showing artworks from US-based Nigerian artist Victor Ekpuk. This will not only be the first time that Ekpuk's work is shown in the Middle East, but also the first exhibition of his latest sculptures. The artist chose to highlight the work "Dancer", made of painted steel, in particular as he is interested in exploring drawing as sculpture. In this new body of work, my lines and brush gestures are pulled out from two-dimensional into three-dimensional space.

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## Voice Gallery



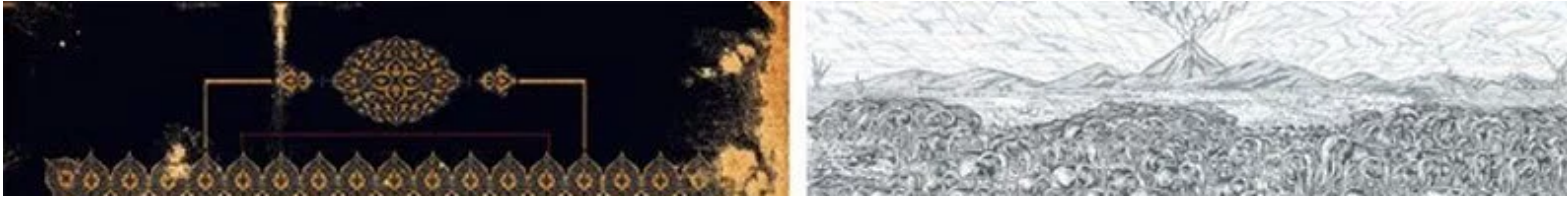
*"In Ciacciofera's practice, the process of unraveling plural temporalities starts from the peculiarities of a particular geophysical and social space—the Mediterranean Basin. More specially, it takes the cue from objects, occurrences, natural resources and processes, and cultures of the island of Sardinia as basic elements of human history. One cannot speak about the Mediterranean Sea without considering that, from time immemorial, its basin has been a point of intersection between Africa, Europe, and Asia. It is impossible to speak about the Mediterranean Basin without considering it as the geographical context in which Abrahamic religions and many other faiths arose. Without considering that the histories of the Byzantine, Carthaginian, Phoenician, Roman, and Greek civilizations as well as many others are deeply embedded in the Mediterranean history. In his works, Ciacciofera seeks to find in very particular spaces evidences that narrate wider histories of both the Mediterranean and the world at large, opting for the perspective of the longue durée."*

From the text Sneaking into the limbo of time, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung, 2018

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**X-Ist**





Emin Mete Erdoğan's works, which are a continuation of his selection in his second solo exhibition "The Flood" coinciding with the dates of Art Dubai, depict today's chaos as the artist was influenced by the fact that the Great Flood contains annihilation and rebirth. Emphasizing in his works that as all the living beings on earth we are in a pre-apocalyptic scenario similar to the Great Flood due to the global warming and the rising ocean level, the artist will exhibit in the fair his works produced with acrylic ink on canvas and aluminium plate as well as his reliefs included for the first time in his artistic production.

As for Murat Palta, in his previous solo exhibitions held in Turkey, Russia and France, he had brought together cult movies and works of literature with elements of popular culture to break the perception of classical miniature and applied his original style on productions belonging to different traditional arts. The young artist who has gained international success presents with his original style to the audience at the Art Dubai fair 11 movies that influenced him.

Art Dubai | booth E7

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**Zawyeh Gallery**



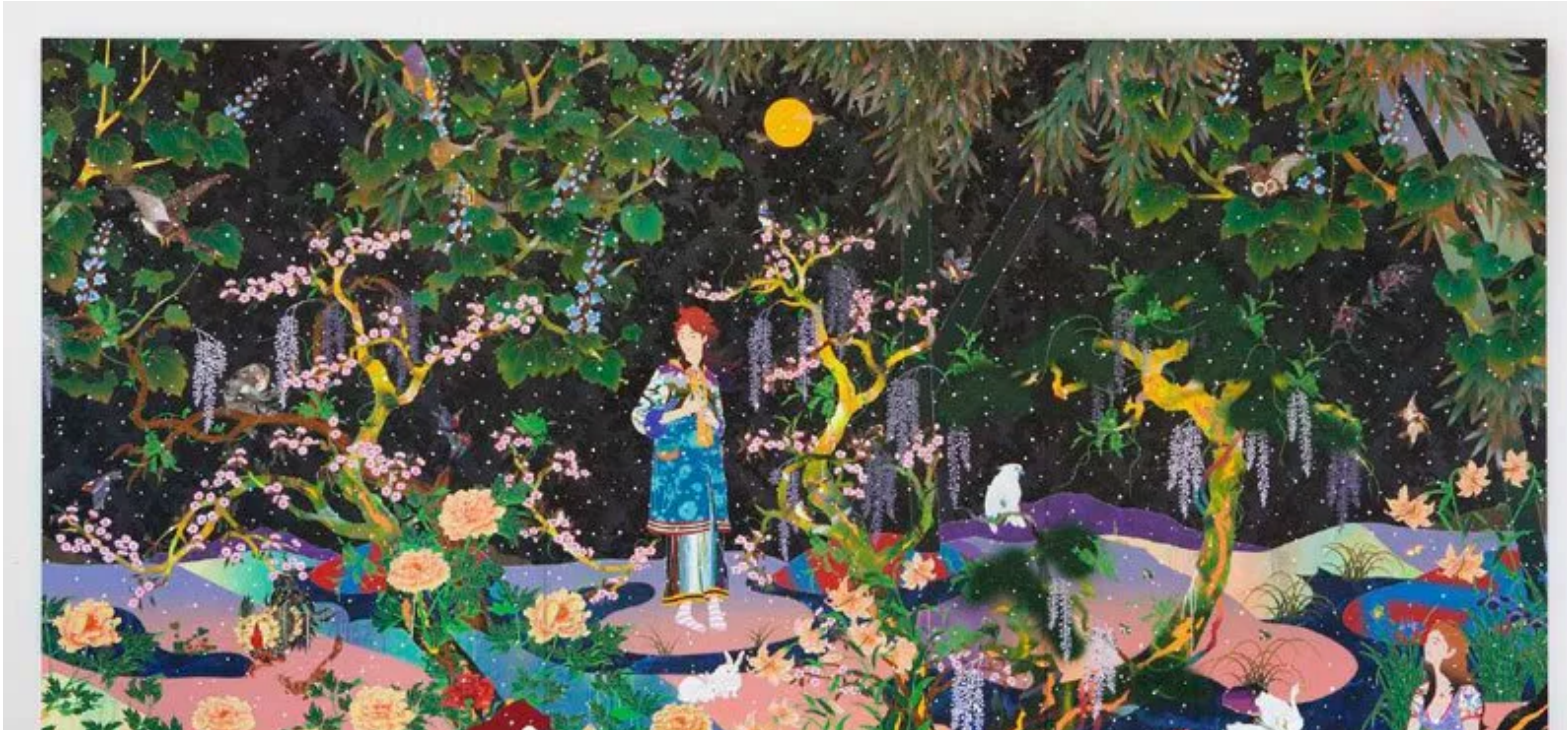
Cactus Harvest, is a project of ten charcoal on paper drawings finely crafted by the young Palestinian artist, Samah Shihadi, in which she explores the distant and complex relationship with home. Shihadi's family village of Mi'ar was ethnically cleansed and destroyed in 1948, yet the family often go back to pick cactus, reminisce and recall former times. Hedgerows of cactus trees are the only visible signs of the many hundreds of villages they were destroyed during the Nakbah. Harvest Break #2 personifies much of Samah's work and the broader narrative of dispossession and pain experienced by the displaced . Her father whose faces tells a thousand stories sits peacefully and contemplates what was lost and what little remains.

Sulieman Meahat, Zawyeh Gallery, Ramallah

Art Dubai | booth E9

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**Zidoun Bossuyt Gallery**



*"The idea came about being inspired by Henri Rousseau's forest paintings. I decided to give homage to the fauvist masterpiece with my own commentary thru appropriation of Asian traditional works such as Kano school and Hokusai, yeah and mega more".*

Tomokazu Matsuyama

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**Zilberman Gallery**



At the first glimpse, I thought of a destroyed part of a construction pillar, obviously the title "Pillar III" enhances this vision. Metal rods, broken off concrete pieces, the work is massive and unmissable. Then you see the top, looks like a back, a huge middle part, maybe a belly? Oh yes, this could be a horse. Or let's say the sketch of a horse, similar as in classical sculptures. Now after talking to the artist, the concept evolves that he is passionate about animals, perhaps particularly in horses; but no: he is not even interested in them. But this is the beauty of art, unpredictability.

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