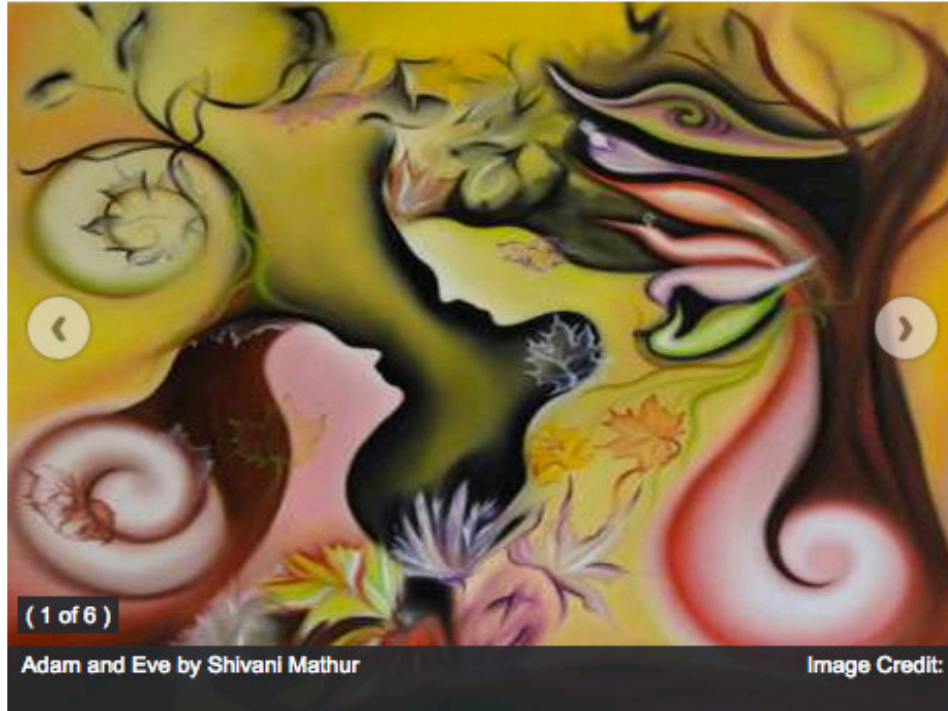


A dynamic new art season in Dubai

Art Dubai, Design Days Dubai and SIKKA Art Fair will showcase myriad works with a particular emphasis on diversity and quality



BY JYOTI KALSI MARCH 18, 2015

Art lovers have plenty to look forward to in the Dubai Art Season that runs through March and April. The art season, an initiative by The Dubai Culture & Arts Authority, kicks off March 14 with Art Week, a week-long celebration of arts and culture, featuring key events in Dubai's cultural calendar such as Art Dubai, Design Days Dubai and SIKKA Art Fair, as well as opening of new shows at galleries around the city, and public art activations at various locations around Dubai.

Other cultural events happening in the UAE during this season include the Sharjah Biennial and Abu Dhabi Festival.

Art Dubai is the region's oldest and largest art fair. The 9th edition of Art Dubai will be held at Madinat Jumeirah from March 18 to March 21. Ninety-two galleries from 40 countries are showcasing works by over 500 local and international artists, making it the world's most global art fair. The fair also hosts a diverse non-commercial programme, ranging from the Global Art Forum and commissioned site-specific artworks to art workshops for children and tours for new collectors.

"Over the past nine years, Art Dubai has evolved into an extraordinarily dynamic art fair, with a particular emphasis on diversity and quality, echoing the expansion of the arts infrastructure in the UAE and the region. We are proud to be the largest showcase of contemporary Arab art in the world, and the world's most diverse fair.

"We also have the largest non-commercial programme of any fair in the world, which reflects Dubai's identity as a major cultural city. Keeping in mind the Dubai government's announcement of 2015 as the Year of Innovation, this edition of the Global Art Forum focuses on the theme of technologies, which is also reflected in the many technology-based artworks and commissioned projects displayed at the fair.

"I would like to reiterate that the fair's contribution in building the local art scene extends beyond this week through our three-month residency programme and year-round education programmes," says fair director Antonia Carver.

Highlights of Art Dubai

The Art Dubai Contemporary segment features 72 galleries, many presenting solo and two-person shows by established and emerging contemporary artists. Watch out for the interactive installation "Pulse Index" by Rafael Lozano Hemmer at the Carroll/Fletcher, London booth. The technology-based work features a sensor that reads visitors' fingerprints and the electrical activity of their heart, exhibiting the pulsating fingerprints on LED screens.

The Modern section, unique to Art Dubai, features the work of influential artists of the 20th century, especially from the 1940s to the 1980s. This year, 15 galleries are displaying solo or two-person shows by Modern masters from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia such as Shafic Aboud, Mahmoud Hammad and Fareed Bel Kahia.

The Marker section focuses on Latin America this year. Curator Luiza Teixeira de Freitas has explored the intersections between Latin America and the Arab world through a programme that includes a group show featuring 35 artists from across Latin America; a publishing section devoted to artists' books, co-presented by Tijuana, Sao Paulo, and The State, UAE; performances curated by Colombian artiste Maria Jose Arjona; a film programme curated by Videobrasil; and sound art projects by Maria Quiroga and Marina Buendia.

The Global Art Forum, which features live talks, presentations, commissioned research and projects, will begin in Kuwait on March 14, and then move to Art Dubai from March 18 to March 20. Titled "Download Update?" the Forum deals with the theme of technologies, and their impact on the world of art, culture and beyond. With media entrepreneur Turi Munthe and socio-political commentator Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi as co-directors and Shumon Basar as director-at-large, the Forum will discuss how technologies have transformed the way we work, think, interact, learn and create.

Participants include Jawbone founder Alexander Asseily, Google Cultural Project director Amit Sood, Dr Saoud Al Mulla director of Dubai's Higher Colleges of Technology, and Kuwaiti writers and academics Al Anoud Al Sharekh and Mai Al Nakib.

Art Dubai Projects features live radio, films, commissioned works and innovative site-specific projects created by artists-in-residence Rheim Al Kadhi, Mehraneh Atashi, Mohammad Ahmad Ebrahim, Jessica Mein, Hind Mezaina and Sharmeen Syed in collaboration with curator Lara Khaldi. The projects include Mezaina's film on Deira and Bur Dubai; and Atashi's transformation of a fountain at Madinat Jumeirah into a bird table.

The Abraaj Group Art Prize exhibition, curated by Omar Kholeif, unveils new work by the 2015 winner Yto Barrada and works by the other shortlisted artists Sarnath Banerjee, Setareh Shahbazi and Mounira Al Solh.

The Art Dubai Education programme includes the Shaikha Manal Little Artists Program comprising artist-led workshops and tours for children and teenagers; specialist tours in collaboration with local colleges; a series of intensive workshops for upcoming writers from the region; and Campus Art Dubai, a year-round art school for artists, curators and writers, which also conducts free public talks and seminars.

What's new at Art Dubai 2015

Art Dubai Commissions — It features commissioned works by mid-career artists. Projects include sound-based works by Umashankar and the Earchaeologists; and a garden in Al Serkal Avenue developed from reclaimed dormant seeds in the UAE by Maria Thereza Alves.

RCA Secret Dubai — It is the first showing outside London of “RCA Secret”, the Royal College of Art’s popular, anonymous postcard exhibition. The show features postcard-sized artworks, created by well-known alumni and present students of the prestigious institution. But the works are exhibited anonymously, and the identity of the artists is revealed to buyers only after the purchase. “RCA Secret Dubai” will feature 1000 works by established and emerging artists and designers from the region and around the world, each priced at Dh500. The postcards will be on display from March 18 to March 21 at Art Dubai, and sold on March 21, from 12 noon to 6pm.

The sale proceeds will be used to support talented students at the RCA and to fund courses run by the RCA in Dubai. This is a fun and affordable way for art lovers to discover new artists, help the local arts community, and have an opportunity to own works by famous artists and designers.

Art Week guides — To help visitors navigate the plethora of cultural activities in the city, Art Week has launched a new website, interactive mobile app and social media channels on Instagram and Facebook (@ArtWeekDubai), which complement the free Art Week guide available at all event venues.

Partnership with 89plus: In Dubai, The Global Art Forum will launch a two-year partnership with 89plus, a global, multiplatform research project based in London that is focused on the tech savvy generation of innovators born in or after 1989. Co-founders Simon Castets and Hans Ulrich Obrist will be in Dubai to make presentations and conduct workshops with the aim of developing the first collaborative project in the region, to be showcased next year at Art Dubai.

The Global Art Forum will be held in Kuwait for the first time. The programme, to be held at Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Amricani Cultural Centre, includes a two-day workshop on digitising archives.

Tips for visitors

-Wear comfortable shoes.

-Parking at Souk Madinat is limited, so consider taking a taxi to the fair

-The fair is open to the public from 4pm to 9.30pm on March 19; from 2pm to 9.30pm on March 20; and from 12 noon to 6.30pm on March 21. Tickets cost Dh50 for a day pass and Dh80 for a three-day pass. Free entry for children up to 8 years, and university students with valid ID cards.

-The Ladies preview is on March 18, from 1pm to 4pm with free entry to all women.

-You can get complimentary access on March 21 by registering on the Art Week website (artweek.ae)

-The contemporary galleries, Marker section, Abraaj Art Prize exhibition and art workshops are located in Madinat Arena; but don't forget to visit the Modern art displays and the Global Art Forum in Mina A'Salam Hotel.

-The fair offers artworks ranging in price from \$1000 (Dh3,670) to more than \$1 million; but you can buy the “RCA Secret Dubai” postcards for just Dh500.

-For a quick overview of the fair, register for curator- and artist-led tours happening throughout the day, every day

-Artist Yael Hattar runs special tours for new collectors, with focus on artworks under \$5,000.

-The gallerists and artists look forward to interacting with visitors, so do not hesitate to ask questions about the artworks.

For more information visit www.artdubai.ae

Design Days Dubai

Design Days Dubai is the leading fair in the Middle East and South Asia dedicated to collectible and limited edition furniture and design objects. The fourth edition of the fair will take place from March 16 to March 20 at The Venue, next to the Burj Khalifa on Mohammad Bin Rashid Boulevard in Downtown Dubai. It will feature 44 exhibitors from 20 countries, ranging from

established and upcoming design galleries to leading design organisations such as Beijing Design Week and World Design Capital — Taipei 2016.

On display will be large-scale sculptures, conceptual installations and limited edition design pieces by well-known and emerging designers from around the globe.

The fair also hosts a non-commercial programme comprising free hands on workshops, conversations with well-known designers, demonstration of latest design processes and trends, installations and live performances.

Highlights of Design Days Dubai 2015

-The world premiere of "Cloud", a large-scale installation created by Commonplace Studio (Netherlands) and showcased by Victor Hunt Design Art Dealer (Brussels). The cloud-like installation is made up of 28 suspended pendant lamps with moving images projected on to their inner surfaces.

-Canadian designer Andreas von Zadora-Gerloff, who is known for his work in the ancient carved craft of glyptics, will unveil 10 large-scale sculptural works inspired by the work of Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher and created especially for Dubai.

-Preciosa (Prague) will exhibit lighting sculptures created in collaboration with famous glass artist René Roubíček.

-Lebanese designer Nada Debs is celebrating the 10th anniversary of her creative journey with a retrospective of her iconic designs presented in collaboration with photographer Gilbert Hage, and the unveiling of a limited edition piece — "Distorted Arabesque Chair".

-A new series of silver vases by Zaha Hadid will be presented for the first time in this region by Wiener Silber Manufactur. The Iraqi-British architect and designer's distinct "liquid" table works will also be displayed by David Gill Galleries (London).

-The Fatima Bint Mohammad Bin Zayed Initiative (FBMI) is presenting a collection of carpets designed by New York-based fashion designer Norma Kamali, and a range of Stonewash carpets, hand-woven by Afghan women using local wool and natural dyes. This UAE-based humanitarian initiative provides training, livelihood, healthcare and education to 4,000 people in Afghanistan. The FBMI has also organised carpet weaving demonstrations and opportunities for visitors to try their hand on the loom.

-Design Days Dubai is open to the public from 4pm to 10pm, from March 16 to March 19; and from 1pm to 7pm on March 20. The Ladies Preview will be on March 16 from 1pm to 4pm. Tickets are priced at Dh50. Register on artweek.ae for free entry on March 20.

For more information visit www.designdaysdubai.ae

SIKKA Art Fair

SIKKA Art Fair is an initiative by Dubai Culture & Arts Authority that presents commissioned works by emerging Emirati and UAE-based artists. It will take place from March 14 to March 24 in the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood.

Global Art Fair

The inaugural edition of the Global Art Fair (GAF) in Dubai, organised by Mumbai-based art space Artland India, will run until March 15 at The Oberoi Hotel in Business Bay, from 11am to 9pm. The fair features well-known Indian and local galleries, showcasing works by over 50 established and emerging Indian artists including UAE-based Indian artist Shivani Mathur. The fair also features works by modern Indian masters such as M.F. Husain and Akbar Padamsee, and works by contemporary artists from Taiwan, Myanmar and other countries.

The Mural for The Peace

Alliance Francaise Dubai is hosting an exhibition of "The Mural for The Peace", from March 16 to March 19 at its Oud Metha location. The mural comprises 108 small-size artworks created by artists from 40 countries. The project was initiated by Dr Raul Oyuela, director of the Museum of the Americas in Doral,

Florida, after he visited Art Dubai 2014 and got inspired by multicultural ethos of the fair and the city.

Over 3,000 artists from around the world were invited to participate in the project; and their contributions include photography, digital art, textiles, sculptures and graphic art. The show, which opened in Houston, Texas, has now travelled to Dubai; and the museum plans to take it to as many countries as possible to promote cross-cultural dialogue, which is essential for peace in the world.