

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Demie Kim "8 Works to Collect at Abu Dhabi Art" Artsy. (November 2016).

ARTSY

## 8 Works to Collect at Abu Dhabi Art

The eighth edition of Abu Dhabi Art opens this Wednesday at Manarat Al Saadiyat, an arts and culture venue located at the western end of Saadiyat Island in the United Arab Emirates. Thirty-five exhibitors will make their way to the up-and-coming cultural district—soon to be home to five major museums—in a showcase of emerging and established talent from across the globe. Below, we highlight eight works to collect at the fair, from an intricate kite assemblage by New York-based Jacob Hashimoto to a colorful clay painting by Egyptian artist Ghada Amer.



**Ghada Amer**

*Silenced, 2015*

Leila Heller Gallery

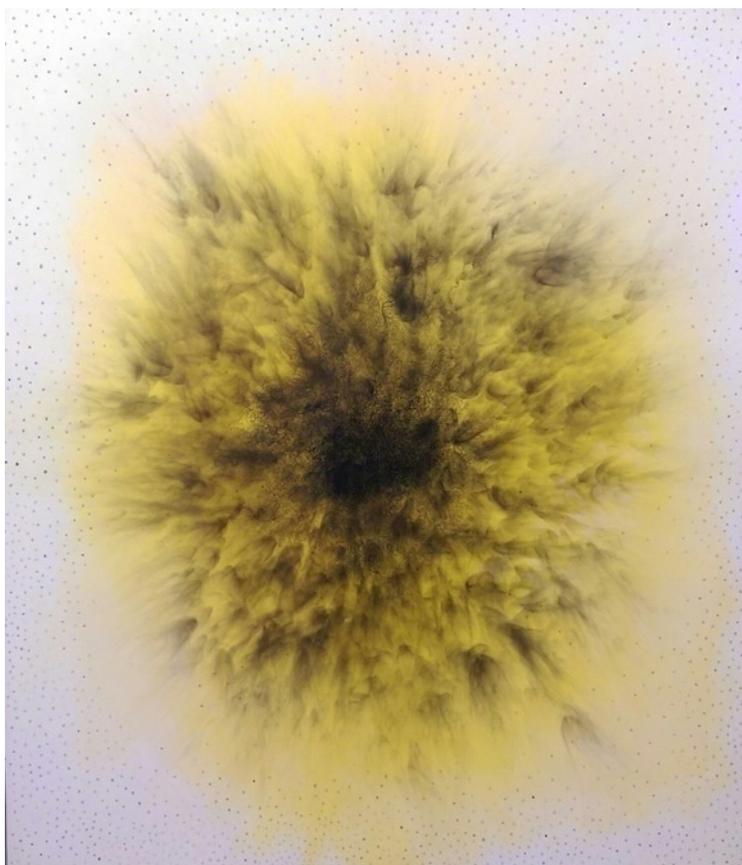
Egyptian artist Amer "paints" women with thread, a material traditionally associated with femininity, to create sensuous embroidered canvases often incorporating images

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from pornographic magazines. Now, in a new body of ceramic work that debuted at Dubai's Leila Heller Gallery, she "paints" women with clay, using her signature bright colors and erotic subjects—as in this woman silenced by a slash of paint across her mouth. In various media, the New York-based artist seeks to obscure traditional boundaries between art and craft while subverting the pigeonholed notions of Eastern versus Western cultural identity. "Everybody loves to see me as a Muslim, but they don't see it's not about Islam, it's about something else," she has said. "I'm not trying to shock, it's not perverse, I'm not doing this with a political agenda. It just happens that I'm Muslim and a woman."



## **Govinda Sah 'Azad'**

*Essence, 2016*

October Gallery

In the spring of 2000, Nepali artist Sah embarked on a cycling journey across his home country. He painted outside amid crowds of onlookers, organizing local exhibitions and

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teaching at art schools along the way. Since then, he has exhibited both in Nepal and abroad, with a solo show of stunning celestial paintings this past summer at London's October Gallery. Depicting turbulent skies and otherworldly explosions, Sah explores the shifting symbolism of the heavens as a symbol of spirituality, hope, and, increasingly, the dangers of climate change.



**Jacob Hashimoto**

*Impossible Barriers to the Cosmos, Logical and Absolute, 2016*

Leila Heller Gallery

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Blurring painting and sculpture, abstraction and figuration, Hashimoto's "tapestries" are assembled from hundreds of handmade bamboo and paper kites, which he threads together on chains and affixes to wall mounts in dense layers. From afar, the works resemble colorful landscapes; up close, they look like mesmerizing mechanical frameworks. Hashimoto and his studio spent months preparing the paper constituents for his four international solo exhibitions this year at Mary Boone in New York, Studio la Città in Milan, Sheehan Gallery at Whitman College in Washington, and Helsinki's Galerie Forsblom.



**Christine Streuli**  
*Warpaintings, 2016*  
Sfeir-Semler

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Berlin-based Swiss painter Streuli describes herself as “an artist grappling with, and engaged in, painting.” Inspired by Christopher Wool, Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Gary Hume, she creates chromatically rich canvases with layered and juxtaposed patterns made using all sorts of tools, including spray cans, stencils, and hairbrushes. At first glance, this so-called “warpainting” reveals a vibrant camo print—its profuse drip marks hint at the action of its making—yet the scene also resembles cartoonish clouds.



## **Wael Shawky**

*La Conquista*, 2015

Lisson Gallery

Last year in a stellar show at MoMa PS1, Shawky made his solo debut at a major American museum with a video trilogy on the history of the Crusades. Drawing from the research of Lebanese historian Amin Maalouf, as well as various primary sources, the Egyptian artist incorporated 200-year-old Italian marionettes and handmade ceramic and glass puppets in violent scenes that relayed history from the oft-ignored Arab perspective. In ongoing solo shows at Lisson Gallery Milan as well as Turin’s Castello di Rivoli and Fondazione Merz, Shawky exhibits various sculptures, video works, and new

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wooden reliefs inspired by the Crusades. The painted side of this 10-panel work reveals a sweeping view of a peaceful citadel; the flip side, charred in smoke, reveals a battle scene evocative of Ancient Roman friezes.



**Ali Banisadr**

*Movement of the People, 2016*

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac

The frenzied, fantastical paintings of New York-based Iranian artist Banisadr are often glimpses into his childhood memories of the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War—recollections he has described as a medley of images, some abstract, others distinct. Often likened to Bosch for his beautiful yet gruesome scenes, Banisadr finds inspiration

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in art-historical sources from both East and West, including Persian miniatures, medieval imagery, Cubism, and Abstract Expressionism, while also drawing from contemporary politics, books, and films. “Words are limiting,” he explained in a 2014 interview. “Visual philosophy is how I deal with questions in life. I can deal with things that I can’t describe in words.”



**Idris Khan**

*Numbers, 2015*

Sean Kelly Gallery

Densely layered tally marks occupy this large-scale work by London-based Khan, who uses repetition and saturation to reference the overflow of information in our digital age. Much of Khan’s work starts with photographs or scans of source material—including sheet music, pages of the Qur’an, and reproduced Old Masters—which he then digitally layers to create intricate, painterly new images. Presented last year in a solo exhibition at Sean Kelly Gallery, this C-print belongs to a recent body of work in which the superimposition and erasure of lines invite a slower, more immersive process

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of looking. Though the image suggests a language of numbers, the cumulation of lines prevents a clear reading.



## **Rasheed Araeen**

*Teen Rungh Upper Nechay (Triptych), 2016*

Aicon Gallery

In the 1980s, London-based Araeen—the legendary Pakistani artist, writer, and curator—founded the influential journal *Third Text*, which combated the Eurocentric limits of art history and criticism and instead created a platform for global modernism. In the early 1960s, while working as a civil engineer—and unaware of Donald Judd and other American minimalists in New York—he began using industrial materials to make architectural, latticed sculptures. Last year, the seminal writer’s long-overlooked art was exhibited at Aicon Gallery, marking his first U.S. solo show.