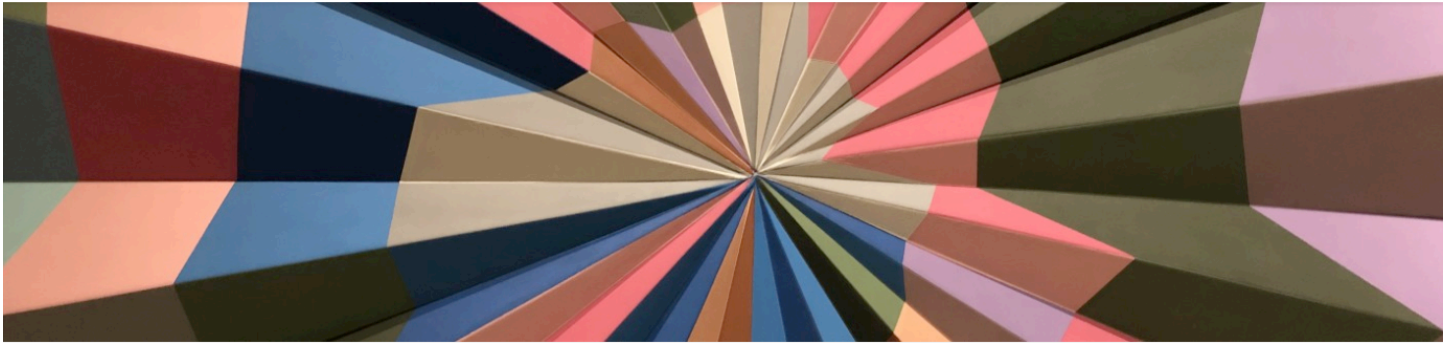


LEILA HELLER.

Zand, Roxane. "Abu Dhabi Art Triumphs." Sotheby's. (November 20, 2019).



Cultural Crossroads | Nov 20, 2019



Abu Dhabi Art Triumphs

By Roxane Zand

The UAE has made much of its geographical position at the crossroads of cultures and the East-West axis. The latest edition of Abu Dhabi Art testifies to this pivotal role by offering multiple perspectives throughout its curated sections.

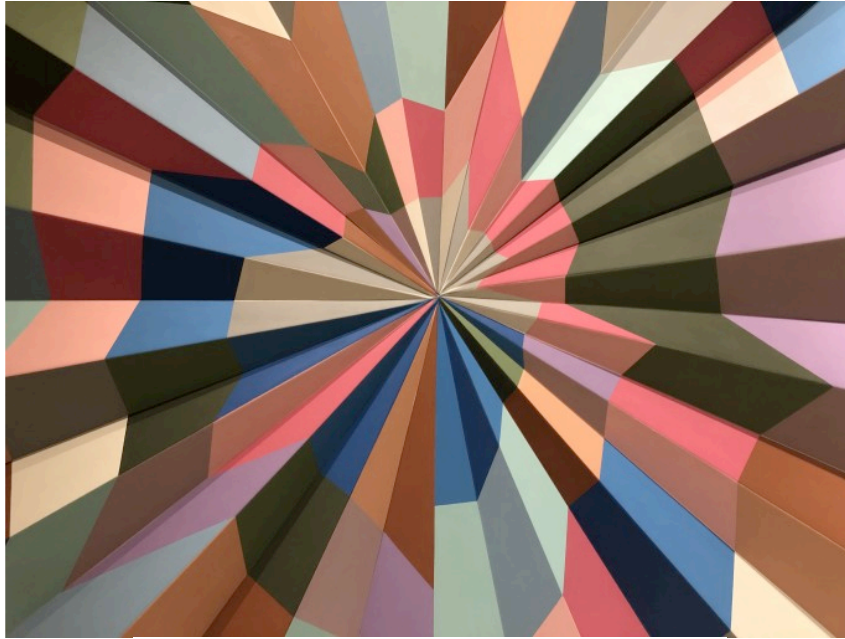


LEFT TO RIGHT: GALLERIST LEILA HELLER, COLLECTOR LUBNA ALLANA, FAIR VIP MANAGER MARYAM AL MAZROUI & ARTIST MARC QUINN.

This 11th incarnation brings in big curatorial names such as Jerome Sans (co-founder of Paris' Palais de Tokyo), and Omar Kholeif (Director of Collections and Senior Curator at Sharjah Foundation), offering a platform for four curated sections, and featuring 53 galleries from 21 countries. Curated programmes and initiatives have historically proven successful in the fair context, and this year is no exception. The emerging

LEILA HELLER.

markets of India and China were highlighted through ‘New Horizons’ (curated by Jerome Sans and Ashwin Thadani), a choice partly prompted by recent bilateral agreements in the case of China - bringing in prominent collectors, philanthropists and the general public to the city for a worthy cause - namely that of exchanging cultural currency.



EBTISAM ABDULAZIZ, *FOCAL ILLUSION*, 2019.

One third of the galleries are newcomers this time, although established names such as Continua, October, and **Leila Heller show their loyalty by appearing year after year**. Lehman Maupin, another blue chip gallery, draws its own loyal following - a superb work by Shirazeh Houshiary for example demonstrates the faith in top international artists receiving the attention they deserve. “It is important that the research and context driving curatorial perspectives also inform the recognition that artists receive in the market and that this takes precedence over market hype,” says three-time Fair Director Dyala Nusseibeh.

Given the timing of inclement weather and the tragic passing of His Highness Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi rose magnificently to the occasion and with usual grace addressed these unforeseen circumstances. The Fair opening, without customary music and festivities, marked the solemnity of the day but honoured the presence of its international visitors (some as far away as Honolulu that sent representatives of its Biennial) by proceeding as planned, and the annual Sotheby’s Collectors Lunch hosted generously by His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan at his Majlis, took place despite the declared mourning period.

LEILA HELLER.



CERAMICS BY ELIF URAS

There were many favourites from the various booths that merit mention, but if I were to list some, I would pick everything I saw at Jhaveri and Isa galleries; the exceptional Al Burda Endowment exhibition, **Leila Heller's unerring choices by YZ Kami and Derakshani**, and Khak Gallery, who despite current events in Iran, valiantly showed wonderful works by Golnaz Fathi and the rising star of an artist that is Narges Hashemi.

For those interested in the art of the region, Abu Dhabi Art is without doubt an unmissable occasion. Come this year, and put it in your diary for the next.