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Sneak Peek: What to See at Abu Dhabi Art 2016

Since its first edition in 2009, Abu Dhabi Art has established itself as one of the region's – and the world's – most dynamic and innovative art fairs. Although relatively small in size compared to its international counterparts, Abu Dhabi Art punches well above its weight, attracting top galleries from around the world.

Organized by the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi), Abu Dhabi Art returns for its 8th edition in 2016 from November 16-19 at Manarat Al Saadiyat with a lineup of 40 galleries from 20 countries, exhibiting within the four different sectors of the fair: Modern & Contemporary, Bidaya, Beyond, and Gateway.

Commenting on this year's edition of Abu Dhabi Art, HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Director General of TCA Abu Dhabi, said: "Abu Dhabi Art celebrates the cultural and creative diversity of the region and is a platform for artistic expressions, serving as a vibrant beacon of Abu Dhabi's creative ambitions, intellectual exchange and inspired dialogue. We are proud to present a globally renowned event which bolsters Abu Dhabi's vision as a hub for cultural fortitude."

This year Abu Dhabi Art introduces a new and innovative vision with its "Gateway" program of exhibitions, which features a large-scale installation by Chinese artist Gu

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Dexin, curated by Alexandra Munroe, Samsung Senior Curator, Asian Art and Senior Advisor, Global Arts at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

The “Gateway” sector will also include an exhibition of Modern Arab art curated by Catherine David, Deputy Director at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and a thematic group exhibition of modern and contemporary artworks titled “(Re) Birth” and curated by artistic director and long-term Abu Dhabi Art collaborator Fabrice Bousteau. Spanning a wide range of themes, the “(Re) Birth” exhibition includes works by emerging and established artists including the likes of Gilles Barbier (Galerie GP&N Vallois), Mona Hatoum (GALLERIA CONTINUA), Seidou Keïta (Leila Heller Gallery), Faig Ahmed (Cuadro Fine Art Gallery), and Zeinab Al Hashemi (Cuadro Fine Art Gallery).

This year’s Modern & Contemporary sector features a wide range of works, with highlights including presentations featuring Wael Shawky (Lisson Gallery), [Pablo Picasso](#) (Acquavella Galleries), Jacques Villeglé (Galerie GP & N Vallois), Etel Adnan (Sfeir Semler Gallery), Ali Banisadr (Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac), Rashid Rana (Leila Heller Gallery), Michelangelo Pistoletto (Galleria Continua), Shafic Abboud (Agial Gallery), and Idris Khan (Sean Kelly Gallery).

Curated by Fabrice Bousteau, the 2016 edition of the Beyond sector, which provides a curated public art platform for large-scale sculptures and installations, features works by artists including Nja Mahdaoui (Elmarsa), Slavs and Tatars (The Third Line), Lawrence Weiner (Giorgio Persano), Lee Bul (Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac), and Wang Dongling (Hanart TZ Gallery) with selected works exhibited throughout the city for a period of six months.

The Beyond sector also includes a new “Street Art” initiative curated by Fabrice Bousteau, characterised by artistic live demonstrations on shipping containers across four locations throughout the city.

The Bidaya sector, which provides a platform for an emerging gallery to participate in the international art scene, has this year been awarded to Hafez Gallery, based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Durub Al Tawaya, a multidisciplinary performing arts program curated by Tarek Abou El Fetouh, returns in 2016 with a captivating series of live performances, including Raed Yassin with traditional Emirati musicians, an opera concert by Japanese virtual humanoid persona Hatsune Miku in collaboration with contemporary composer Keiichiro Shibuya, Anna Rispoli’s performance about Abu Dhabi’s waterfront, experienced from a boat, performances by Chinese dance company Tao Dance Theater, and a specially adapted performance by artist Miet Warlop.

The newly initiated Majlis Fann program of curated talks and panel discussions, curated by Reem Fadda, will present a series of daily curated talks offering diverse perspectives on global art trends, with a focus on the history and complexities of art practices in the UAE. The lineup features some of the most influential figures of the art world such as curator Okwui Enwezor, architect David Adjaye, and artists Idris Khan and Giuseppe Penone, to name a few.