# Canvas

ART AND CULTURE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARAB WORL

### MUSEUMS OF THE FUTURE

UNVEILING LOUVRE ABU DHABI

THE NEW ZEITZ MOCAA IN CAPE TOWN

**FONDATION LV X MoMA** 

RUNDOWN OF FRIEZE LONDON, FIAC PARIS, SKULPTUR PROJEKTE MÜNSTER

> BASQUIAT RETROSPECTIVE AT THE BARBICAN

**FIRST BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR** 



BOOKMARK

### BUT WE CANNOT SEE THEM

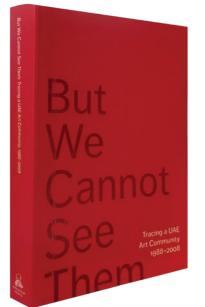
TRACING A UAE ART COMMUNITY, 1988-2008

Publisher: Akkadia Press Publication date: March 2017 Pages: 274 Price: £28.84 www.akkadiapress.uk.com Canvas rating: ★★★☆

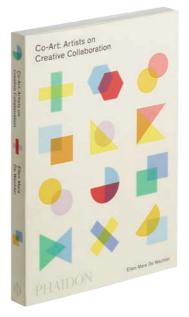
### **CO-ART: ARTISTS ON CREATIVE COLLABORATION**







Over a decade before the Flying House came into being (2007), there was the lesser-known Satwa House in Dubai. It was home to Hassan Sharif and his cohorts, who formed the UAE's most important artistic community and one that had begun to gain ground before the arts infrastructure became developed in the region. The house was eventually torn down but relationships remained, as UAE artists were discovered internationally via Art Dubai (also in 2007) and the first UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2009). Tracing the historical contours of the UAE's independent art scene, which, as Maya Allison argues, has parallels with international art movements that grew outside the establishment, the exhibition Tracing the UAE Art Community was held at NYUAD Art Gallery (March - August 2017), where Allison is chief curator. It was accompanied by this book, which looks at a dozen UAE-based artists, poets and filmmakers who were part and parcel of this community. Taking an oral history approach, the interviews map the creative landscape over two decades (1988-2008), documenting the emergence of a group that went beyond traditional approaches to artmaking and created a culture of mentorship and experimentation in its creative exchanges. More than simply an archive or historical document, this book - which includes an essay by art historian Aisha Stoby describing how the key members of this group were part of a larger, regional art scene - comprises deeply personal accounts of a defining moment in UAE art history.



### BOOKMARK

Publisher: Phaidon Publication date: April 2017 Pages: 244 Price: £24.95 www.phaidon.com *Canvas* rating: ★★★★

#### Elmgreen & Dragset

The Danish Michael Eingreen (b.1961) and Norwegian Ingar Dragset (b.1969) met in a nighticulu in Cogenhagen in 1994 and started a tomathic relationship that gradually developed into a collaborative artistic practice, Eingreen's background in writing and poetry, and Dragset's studies in theatre have influenced many of their collaborative works, in which language and scengraphy often play an important part. After devising performance works early on in their collaboration they started creating the type of art for which they subsequently became best known: hyper-real sculptures and mize-en-scene installations that subvert and critique institutions, including the apparatuses of the state and the art world, and the power structures embedded within them. They do this with an inclive humour that remains ensitive to the polgnancy of human follois.

Over the years, their same-sex relationship and the wider theme of gay identify have lent themselves to various autobiographical sculptures on the theme of mirroring, including *Marriage* (2004), a pair of matching sinks linked by wildly contorted pipes, and *Boy* Scouf (2008), bunk beds whose mattresses face each other rather than both facing up. While their romantic relationship, ended in 2004, they continue to produce art together in Berlin.

In 2009, they curated their national pavilions – the Danish and Nordic Pavilions – at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Vonice Biennale, the first time that two national pavilions had collaborated on an exhibition for the Biennale. Their unforgettable show, *The Collectors*, included their own work as well as contributions from more han twenty artists and designers. It staged as cecanic in which a flictional art collector, Mister B, had drowned himself in his pool following a disastrous inancial deal. The theatricality of *The Collectors* is also a reminder of various tage shows the duo have created over the years, including *Drama Queens* 2007), a one-act play in which iconic artworks from the twentieth century

I met Elingreen & Draget in their studio in Neukölin, Berlin, a converted 1920s water-pumping station, where they work with a team of assistants. We spoke in an airy room at the top of this vast building. A sort of sanctuary for the busy artists, the room is open plan with a peaked root, and furnished with a grand plano, desks and several seating areas.

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It was only in the early 1990s that artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude announced that they had been a creative duo since 1961. This was perhaps due to the difficulties in marketing collaborative work at the time, the emphasis on the lone, creative genius throughout history and the blurred definition of what a collaboration is or could be. Yet the 1980s book Art Worlds by sociologist Howard Becker described any work of art to be the product of a 'cooperation' of a group of individuals, including artists, assistants, gallerists and critics. Author and curator Ellen Mara De Wachter first became interested in such collaborations and realised their value when working in London during the great recession of 2008, when many artists had to find alternative ways of working in order to survive. Through discussions with 25 artist duos and collectives ranging from friends to lovers and siblings, De Wachter carried out research that would form the basis of Co-Art, a collective voice on what it means to work together, then and now. Well-established groups such as the Gorilla Girls and up-and-coming collectives like LeBeouf recount how they began their practice, broaching issues around authorship and anonymity, the pressures of the media and financial constraints. Nicely presented with different voices, the book allows readers to form their own opinions and perhaps draw inspiration from the multiple possibilities and modalities of collaborating in creative work.

#### BOOKMARK

### **WHO'S AFRAID OF CONTEMPORARY ART?**

Publisher: Thames & Hudson Publication date: March 2017 Pages: 144 Price: \$16.95 www.thamesandhudsonusa.com Canvas rating: ★ 🛧 😭

## **SHIVA AHMADI**

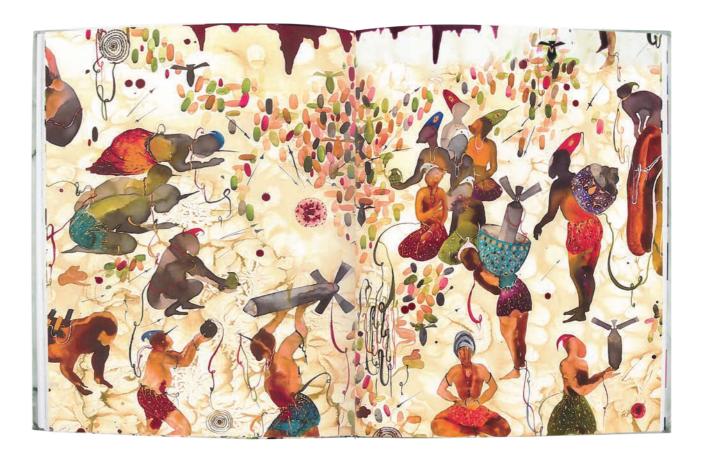
Saadiyat Island's **Cultural District** 

> OCATED JUST 500 METRES (less than half a mile) off the coast of Abu Dhabi, the capital or the United Arab Emirates, Saadiyat Island has garnered much attention since plans were announced in 2006 for its transformation into a global cultural destination. Saadiyat Cultural District is to become home to several brand new. purpose-built museums.

> Each museum will be designed by a leading architect revealing ambitions to redefine Abu Dhabi's voice in the region and its position in the world. There is the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a Frank Gehry design flanked by eleven of his signature conical structures and dedicated to contemporary art: the Performing Arts Centre by the late Zaha Hadid (the most famous female architect ver), designed to draw visitors upwards to performance spaces escribed by Hadid as 'fruits of a plant'; the Maritime Museum, y self stught Lapanese architect Tadao Ando, whose design is nspired by the shapes created by a sail full of wind; the first ver outpost of Paris's iconic Louvre, by the French architect can Nouvel; and, finally, Zayed National Museum by Norma start was a start of the brains behind the Gherkin building in London - which ntroduces the history and culture of the UAE and Sheikh Zayed 1918 2004), the UAE's first president and the driving force

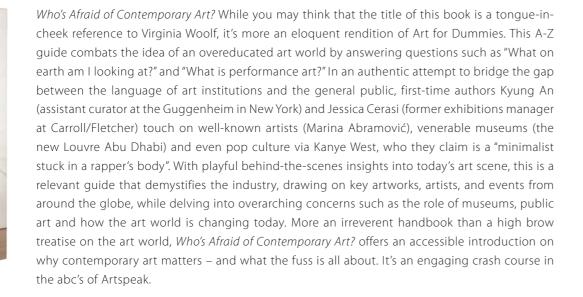
(1918-2004), the UAE's first president and the driving force behind its formation. Yet, proceedings for the estimated \$28 billion construction of this arts district have not been without controversy. Human Rights Watch drew attention to the abuse of migrant workers from South Asia in 2009 and 2015, pointing out the frony in the fact that the island's Arabic name literally translates as the island of thereines. While much versites have forced the 11de to reform The island's Arabic name literally translates as the island of piness'. While such protests have forced the UAE to reform irati labour laws and policies, New York University Abu Dhabi ich opened its campus in the Marina District in 2010), the vive and the Guggenheim have continued to come under attack the low wages paid to migrant labourers and harsh working ditions. These are issues they continually seek to address, eknowledgement of a shared responsibility for the decisions





Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art?

Thames & Hudson





Publisher: Skira Publication date: April 2017 Pages: 128 Price: \$42.37 www.skira.net Canvas rating: + + + \*

When the Iranian-American artist Shiva Ahmadi was young, she would sit under a wood and metal table in her family's Tehran home because her mother told her it would protect her from the bombs of the Iran-Iraq war. Maybe this is when her urge to control her environment began. She creates complex, violent landscapes in exacting detail - her poetic and fluid watercolour paintings have often been likened to intricate Persian miniatures. Her recent solo exhibition Ascend ran at Leila Heller's New York gallery in April, and referenced not only Iran's political struggles but also the Syrian refugee influx – in particular, the 2015 drowning of a three-year-old boy, Aylan Kurdi, who was fleeing the Syrian war with his family, and whose name means 'high one' or 'to ascend' in Arabic. The artist's works are reproduced on generous white space in this monograph, providing the reader with respite before the next colourful kaleidoscope of blood, monkeys and royalty. With jarring juxtapositions of the miniature in large-scale form, of flux and precision, the horrible and the sublime are seductively represented. The artist declares - cited in Talinn Grigor's insightful essay – "There are things in the world that are highly controlled – the state, the police, my taxes. Then there are things out of control: the school shootings, the terrorist attacks, the refugee crisis." Her work is a stunning mix of both worlds.