

# canvas

ART AND CULTURE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARAB WORLD

## 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

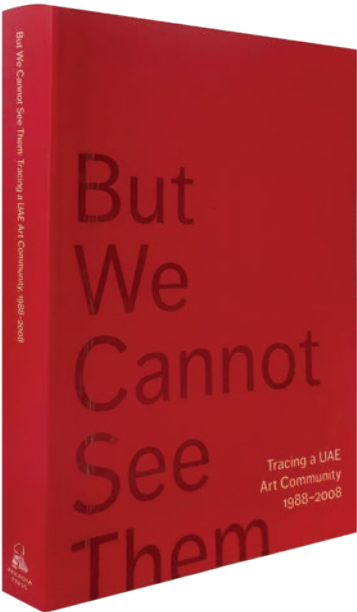
FIRST BEIRUT DESIGN FAIR



# 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: ★★★★★



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 More than simply an archive or historical document, this book – which includes an essay by art historian Aisha Stoby describing how the key members of this group were part of a larger, regional art scene –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.

# CO-ART: ARTISTS ON CREATIVE COLLABORATION

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

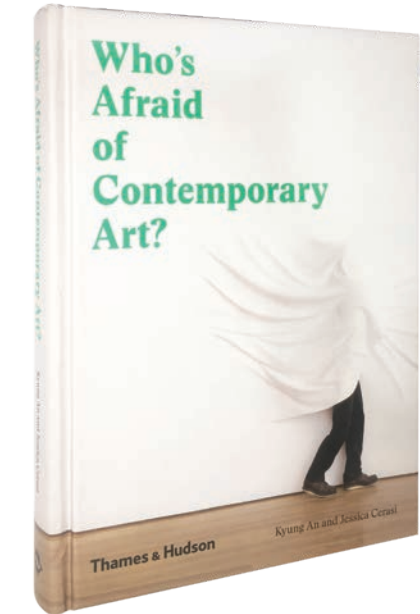


It was only in the early 1990s that artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude announced that they had been a creative duo since 1961. This was perhaps due to the difficulties in marketing collaborative work at the time, the emphasis on the lone, creative genius throughout history and the blurred definition of 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.



# WHO'S AFRAID OF CONTEMPORARY ART?

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



*Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art?* While you may think that the title of this book is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Virginia Woolf, it's more an eloquent rendition of *Art for Dummies*. This A-Z guide combats the idea of an overeducated art world by answering questions such as "What on earth am I looking at?" and "What is performance art?" In an authentic attempt to bridge the gap between the language of art institutions and the general public, first-time authors Kyung An (assistant curator at the Guggenheim in New York) and Jessica Cerasi (former exhibitions manager at Carroll/Fletcher) touch on well-known artists (Marina Abramović), venerable museums (the new Louvre Abu Dhabi) and even pop culture via Kanye West, who they claim is a "minimalist stuck in a rapper's body". With playful behind-the-scenes insights into today's art scene, this is a relevant guide that demystifies the industry, drawing on key artworks, artists, and events from around the globe, while delving into overarching concerns such as the role of museums, public art and how the art world is changing today. More an irreverent handbook than a high brow treatise on the art world, *Who's Afraid of Contemporary Art?* offers an accessible introduction on why contemporary art matters – and what the fuss is all about. It's an engaging crash course in the abc's of Artspeak.

# SHIVA AHMADI

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.