



In what is perhaps a situation indicative of Abu Dhabi Art's (ADA) evolving nature, Dubai's Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde (IVDE) returns to the fair after a year away. Creating a well-rounded platform for artists is vital to avoid being what the gallery's Barrak Alzaid calls "a flash in the pan". As the space prepares to host a solo exhibition for Emirati artist Hassan Sharif this month, it has also commissioned the Conceptual master to create two monumental works for ADA's *Beyond* section. In addition, Sharif will take part in the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi *Talking Art Series*, taking place alongside the fair, as one of his works was recently acquired by the museum. "We are cross-pollinating," says Alzaid. "Fairs are about building a broader picture, not just about sales and we are most successful in our experiences when it's an engaging conversation. We are keeping an open mind this year." And so are ADA regulars.

ROUNDING UP

The fair, which runs from 20–23 November, sees a 91 per cent return rate and the number of participating galleries, 43, remains the same. The line-up is also largely unchanged: Atassi Gallery, Simon Lee Gallery, Ota Fine Arts, Tony Shafrazi Gallery and Waterhouse & Dodd are out, while New York's Cheim & Read, Abu Dhabi's Salwa Zeidan, Dubai's Lawrie Shabibi and London's Carpenters Workshop Gallery (the first design space to take part in the fair) are in. Though European spaces continue to dominate in numbers with 20 galleries, the Middle East is strongly represented with 16 galleries, nine of which are UAE-based. Cheim & Read's Adam Sheffer says that after spending a couple of years developing a network of relationships in the Gulf, it was time to adopt a "bricks and mortar" approach in what he describes as an "amaz-

This page:
Joan Mitchell. (Detail) *River*. 1989. Oil
on canvas diptych. 280 x 400.1 cm.
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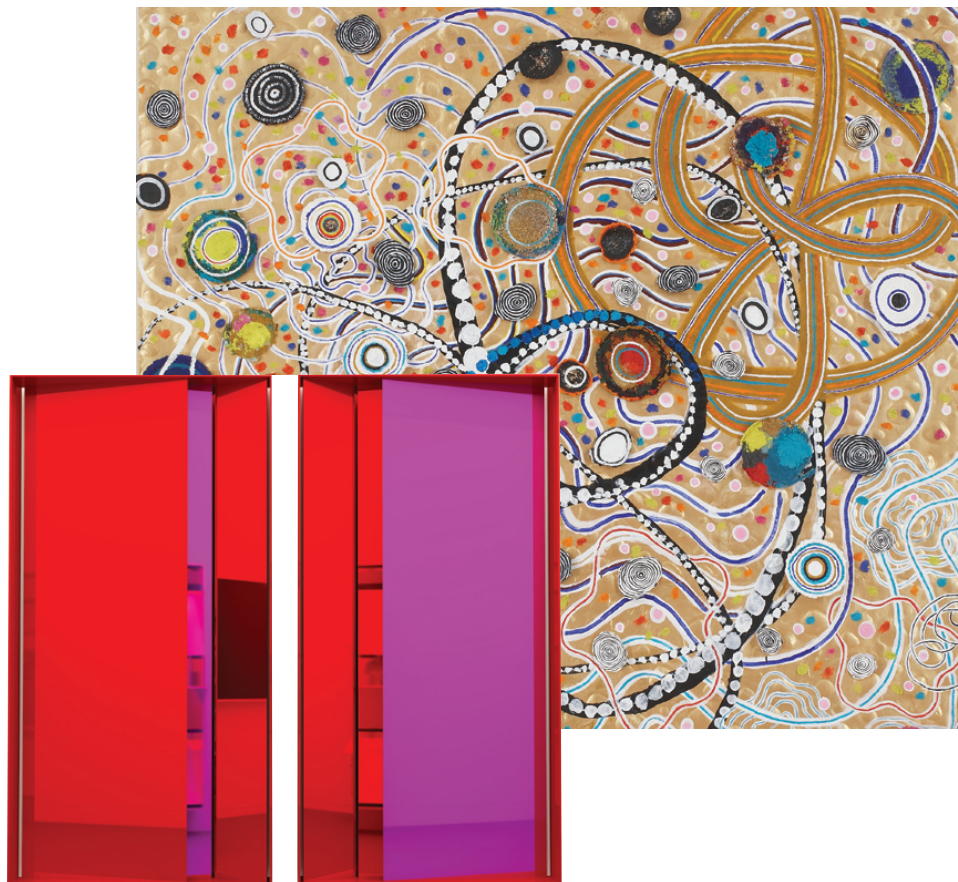
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Left: :mentalKLINIK. *Scraper
Duo_1301*. 2013. Glass, micro-
layered polyester films and anodized
aluminium. 175 x 90 x 12 cm.
Image courtesy Gallery Isabelle Van
Den Eynde, Dubai.
Right: Nabil Nahas. (Detail) *24 Carats*.
2013. Acrylic on canvas. 213 x 226 cm.
Image courtesy the artist and Lawrie
Shabibi, Dubai.

ingly vital area." "We truly believe in the region," says Sheffer. "It's not just the future, it's the present. We want to disavow the notion that to do an art fair in Abu Dhabi or Hong Kong for example, you have to ghetto-ise your presentation." The booth will explore the universal language of abstraction through large-scale works by Ghada Amer, Louise Bourgeois, Joan Mitchell, Lynda Benglis, Jack Pierson and Al Held. Fellow New York space and ADA faithful Leila Heller Gallery presents a "mini version" of *Calligraffiti* (page 98), a popular show that revisited the seminal 1984 exhibition of the same name. The "very calligraphic" booth will present works by artists such as Charles Hossein Zenderoudi and Rostarr alongside younger artists such as Yasmina Alaoui, as well as sculptures by British artist Richard Hudson.

As for Lawrie Shabibi, the young space was selected as this year's *Bidaya* gallery and presents works by Egyptian artist Farghali Abdel Hafiz, Korean Meekyoung Shin, Algerian painter and architect Driss Ouadahi and Lebanese artist Nabil Nahas, whose second solo show at the gallery opens this month. "We are presenting beautiful items with a strong Conceptual premise behind them that will appeal to ADA's audience," says co-director Asmaa Al-Shabibi. It is an audience that Heller – who has taken part in ADA since 2008 – says has evolved into an exciting international one. "The organisers have really reached out to an international group of curators and collectors, so this will make the fair much more interesting," she says.

TALK THE TALK


The fair organisers, the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA) have also made new additions to the fair's programme. *Artists' Waves*, a section curated by *Arts, Talks & Sensations'* Fabrice Bousteau, provides artists with a more inclusive platform by giving galleries the opportunity to exhibit works by artists who did not make it to the booths. The revamped agenda also includes a performing arts programme, *Durub Al-Tawaya*, which will extend



from the Saadiyat Island fair headquarters to the rest of Abu Dhabi. Curated by Tarek Abou El-Fetouh, it comprises paths that audiences can follow on designated buses, whose stops will be transformed by performances and commissioned interventions. Artists taking part in the programme include Afra Al-Dhaheiri, Salem Al-Qassimi, Rayyane Tabet, Wael Shawky and Mobius Studio, among others.

As for *Arts, Talks & Sensations* – a crowd-pleaser at ADA – it returns under the title *Dunes and Waves*. Alongside video screenings, live performances and installations, it will include *Small is Beautiful*, an exhibition of small-scale artworks from galleries participating in the fair. Bousteau selected one artwork corresponding to the "small" criteria – both in size, and "based on the ethical, philosophical and aesthetic will to revalue the concept of small". The unveiling of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi's seven latest acquisitions coincides with ADA this year, bringing Sharif, Monika Sosnawska, Yang Fundong, Angela Bulloch, Marwan and Heinz Mack to the museum's

Talking Art Series. Panel discussions will also feature a talk between Louvre Abu Dhabi architect Jean Nouvel, gallerist Thaddaeus Ropac, Conceptual artist Jenny Holzer and President of Paris's Pompidou Centre Alain Seban, which will explore the critical role of art and architecture in the vision of cities. Another panel, featuring Athr Gallery's Mohammed Hafiz, IVDE's Isabelle Van Den Eynde, Hanart's Johnson Chang and Galleria Continua's Lorenzo Fiaschi, will survey the dichotomy of value and art.

The connections needed to create a well-rounded fair are clearly beginning to take shape at ADA, with organisers focusing on the demands of galleries looking to reap more benefits from the four-day event. Though organisers were still finalising details at the time of press, citing exciting changes and additions, this year's edition looks to be a more solid and structured version. 

Abu Dhabi Art runs from 20–23 November. For more information, visit www.abudhabiartfair.ae