

Abu Dhabi Art 2024 announces Community Partners for 2024, Art + Tech programme and winners of the Student Pavilion Prize this year

- - *House of Artisans* appointed to design the Community Partners exhibition at Abu Dhabi Art
- - *Afra Al Suwaidi* and *Marina Fedorova* have lead Abu Dhabi Art's Art + Tech programme
- - *American University of Sharjah's Omar Darwish, Abdulla Abbas, and Salama Alhammadi* announced as the Student Pavilion Prize winners



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Abu Dhabi, 08 November 2024: Abu Dhabi Art announces that **House of Artisans** will be conceiving and designing the Community Partners exhibition at Abu Dhabi Art this year under the theme of *Crafts as a Language*. Abu Dhabi Art is a platform that fosters community engagement through a wide array of initiatives including student exhibitions and awards, talks, and events throughout the year. The culmination of these efforts comes together in November during the art fair, building bridges between art and the local community. The Fair has also shared announcements on its Art + Tech programme this year titled *Where Creativity Meets Technology* and on the winners of the annual Student Pavilion Prize, with the winning project for 2024 titled *Why Do Materials Die Young?*.

Community Project: Crafts as a Language

Every year, Abu Dhabi Art hosts community partners who contribute to society in meaningful ways through cultural production. This year **House of Artisans** has invited

community partners to explore different ways of translating their narrative through symbolism and patterns as a form of communication. The concept of *Craft as a Language*, reflects on the idea of crafts serving as a universal language, blending natural resources with creative expression to produce objects that reflect cultural narratives and daily life. Community partners at this year's Abu Dhabi Art are encouraged to explore a new language through crafts inspired by lived experiences and narratives that have shaped our society in the past and are continuously shaping our present & future.

House of Artisans, which bring the rich history of Emirati craftsmanship to the forefront, will lead the exhibition to take visitors on a journey through storytelling with textiles, reshaping the perception of crafts as a language that draws on symbolic methods and traditional techniques. This immersive experience will evoke new dialogues by exploring the relationship between materiality and symbolism, engaging all senses in a nostalgic space. The community partners include Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, 81 Designs, Kalimat Foundation, Zayed University, **College of Arts and Creative Enterprises**, MFA in Art and Media, New York University Abu Dhabi and 1971 Design.

Art + Tech: Where Creativity Meets Technology

Abu Dhabi Art's **Art + Tech** program, launched in 2017, continues to break new ground by connecting art and technology students with visual artists working across diverse media. The programme includes students from eight universities across the UAE. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between art and technology, encouraging students to explore innovative ways of integrating the two disciplines through hands-on workshops and projects. This year's edition, like those before it, continues to support the future of art and tech collaboration in the UAE.

This year, students have had the opportunity to work with artists Afra Al Suwaidi and Marina Fedorova. Afra Al Suwaidi, a visual artist whose practice is anchored in sculpture, has guided students in creating a unique installation through the process of designing and bringing life to conceptual artwork. Marina Fedorova has simultaneously worked with students to create an engaging story that actualizes artwork through an augmented reality scenario.

Commenting on the importance of this program, Afra Al Suwaidi said: "This program not only merges cutting-edge technology with contemporary art, but also offers a unique space for innovation and expression. I am grateful to have shared this opportunity with passionate students, who have displayed unimaginable talent and eagerness to showcase their creativity."



Portrait of Afra Al Suwaidi

The results of this collaborative series of workshops were exhibited at American University in Dubai and will be exhibited at Abu Dhabi Art this November.

Abu Dhabi Art Pavilion: A Platform for Young Creatives

The **Abu Dhabi Art Pavilion Prize**, established in 2017, is a key initiative that invites university students across the UAE to propose visionary architectural designs. The winning project is constructed and showcased during the fair at Manarat Al Saadiyat, offering young creatives a chance to present their work to a large and engaged audience. This year's winners, Omar Darwish, Abdulla Abbas, and Salama Alhammedi from the American University of Sharjah, will see their design come to life at the heart of the fair, further underscoring Abu Dhabi Art's commitment to nurturing the next generation of talent.

Their project, titled *Why Do Materials Die Young?* examines the impact of construction on material waste and sustainability. More specifically, the concept challenges the notion of materials being discarded prematurely after use. By focusing on scaffolding, which often plays a temporary role on construction sites, the design reimagines how such materials can be continuously recycled and repurposed into a modern, adaptable pavilion.



Pavilion Prize Project: "Why Do Materials Die Young?"

Salama Alhammadi, one of this year's winners, said: "Being selected as one of the winners for the Pavilion Prize this year is an incredible honour. This rewarding opportunity has inspired me to push the boundaries of my creativity and contribute to necessary conversations around the rising challenges in sustainability and material waste management. I am looking forward to seeing the pavilion take shape at this year's edition."

Abu Dhabi Art 2024 expands beyond the conventional art fair, emphasizing public engagement and collaborative projects that bring the community together. Through programs such as Art + Tech, the Pavilion Prize, and Community Projects at Abu Dhabi Art, the fair highlights the diverse ways in which art can unite people, inspire creativity, and preserve cultural heritage.

For further information, visit www.abudhabiart.ae.

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