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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM

PRESS RELEASE

Abu Dhabi Art Fair concludes largest and most diverse edition to date, with over 35,000 visitors

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 2 January 2025 – Abu Dhabi Art, organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), has concluded its 16th edition with over 35,000 visitors.

The fair was Abu Dhabi Art's largest and most diverse gallery line-up to date, with 102 galleries from 31 countries participating, showcasing over 1,500 artworks. This year's edition also featured 42 new galleries from Qatar, Kuwait, and Kazakhstan amongst other countries, transporting visitors through a rich curated fair programme experience.

Highlights from the 16th Abu Dhabi Art fair include:

- 3 new focus sectors at the fair; **Something Bold, Something New**, by Myrna Ayad, a spotlight on modern artists from the region; **The Collectors Salon**, by Roxane Zand, bringing together galleries presenting artefacts, historical objects, manuscripts and artworks for the first time at Abu Dhabi Art, and **Silk Road: Drifting Identities**, by Elvira Eevr Djaltchinova-Malec, bringing together galleries and artists from Central Asia & the Caucasus.
- Established Emirati artists represented at the fair included; Mohamed Kazem, Hussain Sharif, Hassan Sharif, Azza AlQubaisi, and Abdul Qader Al Rais who have played pivotal roles in shaping the conceptual and interdisciplinary art scene in the UAE.
- Abu Dhabi Art also presented seven works **In & Around** the fair, including:
 - **Abdoulaye Konaté** (*Efie Gallery*): The artist blends West African textile traditions with reflections on socio-political and environmental issues.
 - **Raed Yassin** (*Gallery Isabelle*): The artist's work, City Mirage, uses repurposed shop signs, reflecting the city's economic hardship and the resilient creativity of its people.
 - **Rayanne Tabet** (*Sfeir-Semler Gallery*): T Découpages, a frieze of 114 cut-out sheets from Jules Bourgoïn's 19th-century manuscripts, reimagines the geometries of these works that defined European perceptions of "Arab Art".
 - **Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola** (*Carbon 12*): The artist explores themes of critical race theory, commodification, and colour theory, addressing epistemic violence in his work.
 - **Nike Davies-Okundaye** (*kó*): The textile artist preserves traditional batik and adire techniques. Her work has empowered thousands of women to learn the intricacies of these crafts.
 - **Dima Srouji** (*Lawrie Shabibi*): The artist combines architecture and art to explore cultural history and collective healing through projects involving archaeologists, anthropologists, and artisans.
 - **Stefano Simontacchi** (*Salwa Zeidan*): Inspired by quantum entanglement, The Prism offers a luminous exploration of infinite dimensions.

The fair programme also included:

- **Beyond Emerging Artists** - Curated by Lorenzo Fiaschi, this annual exhibition featured



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commissioned works by UAE-based emerging artists Dina Nazmi Khorchid, Simrin Mehra Agarwal, and Fatima Al Ali for 2024.

- **Gateway: *Otra Orilla (Another Shore)*** - This exhibition, curated by Odessa Warren and Carine Harmand, explored connections between the Arab world and Latin America. It featured works by Emilia Estrada, Alia Farid, Francisca Khamis Giacomani, and Ishtar Yasin Gutiérrez, as well as a new commission by Mandy El-Sayegh.
- **Arab Presences: *Modern Art and Decolonisation. Paris 1908-1988 - Farjam Collection Close-Up*** - The Farjam Foundation presented nearly 50 artworks, co-curated by Morad Montazami and Madeleine de Colnet, of award winning and prominent artists in the Arab world including Shafic Abboud, Hamed Abdalla, Salah Abdel Kerim, Etel Adnan, Adonis, Dia Al Azzawi, Shakir Hassan Al Said, Marwan Kassab Bachi, Fatma Baya, Aref El Rayess, Paul Guiragossian, Mohamed Hamidi, Faeq Hassan, Saad Hassani, Adam Henein, Haider Khadim, Helen Khal, Rachid Koraichi, Nja Mahdaoui, Mehdi Moutashar, Mahmoud Mokhtar, Fateh Moudarres, Mohammed Naghi, Samir Rafi, Mahmoud Said, Mona Saudi, Jewad Selim, Fahrelnissa Zeid, and Bibi Zogbe.
- **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 invited community partners to explore different ways of translating their narrative through symbolism and patterns as a form of communication. The participating community partners were 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.

As part of Abu Dhabi Art's year-round programme is **Artist Commissions in Cultural Sites** - Installations by Dina Mattar, Ahmed Saeed Al Areef Al Dhaheri, and Manal Mahamid will remain on view in Al Ain at Al Jahili Fort and Al Ain Oasis until 21 January 2025.

- The artist Ahmed Saeed Al Areef Al Dhaheri is presenting new and existing works within the historic walls of Al Jahili Fort, centered around Lady Lioness, a mythological figure born from the artist's childhood memories.
- For Manal Mahamid, the gazelle holds profound cultural resonance, appearing as a powerful symbol in literature, poetry, and environmental discourse. In her sculpture for Al Ain Oasis, Mahamid contemplates the shared heritage of the gazelle in the UAE and the Levant.
- Dina Mattar presents a new body of work that includes painting, tatreez embroidery, and works on paper. Her references to the gazelle abound throughout the works in exhibition, drawing on diverse associations of this beautiful animal with stories, legends and landscape, including plants and beautiful flowers.

Organised by DCT Abu Dhabi, the partners of Abu Dhabi Art 2024 include:

- Aldar: Aldar proudly participated as a Platinum Partner of **Abu Dhabi Art**, reaffirming their commitment to promoting art and culture while showcasing our continuous contribution to the growth and development of the **Saadiyat Cultural District**. This partnership highlights Aldar's dedication to fostering creative expression and solidifying Abu Dhabi's position as a global cultural hub.
- HSBC: The Evolving Self exhibition at Abu Dhabi Art reflects culture, memory, and history, embodying HSBC's commitment to inclusivity and celebrating the beauty of connection across continents.



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- The Farjam Collection: “The Farjam Foundation presented the exhibition “Arab Presences: Modern Art and De-Colonization, Paris 1908-1988 – Farjam Foundation Close-Up”, curated by Morad Montazami, based on the previous iteration at the Paris Museum of Modern Art in summer of 2024 but with a catalogue in English.
The Farjam Foundation also sponsored the Abu Dhabi Art Talks Programme, that included a focus on three panel Talks featuring prominent speakers and covering a wide range of topics from Arab Modernism to cultural diplomacy.”
- Abu Dhabi Motors: BMW Abu Dhabi Motors commissioned Omar Al Gurg to create Majlis Fann space for talks and performances throughout the fair.
- Al Fardan: Al Fardan contribution to Abu Dhabi Art 2024 reflects their dedication to creating immersive installations that seamlessly blend heritage, creativity and innovation, made possible through the support and energy provided by ADA community and team
- Fatima Bint Mohamed Bin Zayed Initiative (FBMI): FBMI participate in Abu Dhabi Art, highlighting the visionary works of Emirati artists Khalifa Ahmed and Dr. Najat Maki, whose creative voices beautifully merge cultural heritage with contemporary expression.
- Memo Paris: Mémo Paris revealed to the world their latest creation - Abu Dhabi - Enchanted date - during the Abu Dhabi Art Fair, showcasing the brand’s strong connection to the art world

For more information about Abu Dhabi Art’s year-round programmes, visit abudhabiart.ae and follow Abu Dhabi Art on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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About Abu Dhabi Art

Abu Dhabi Art expands beyond the notion of a traditional art fair, in placing strong emphasis on a diverse public engagement programme, including art installations and exhibitions, talks and events that take place in different locations throughout the year. The culmination of this year-long programme is the Abu Dhabi Art event in November, which provides an important sales platform for participating galleries whilst also offering these galleries an opportunity to showcase ambitious installations and site-specific works by their artists to a wide audience. abudhabiart.ae

About the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi:

The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) drives the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi’s culture and tourism sectors, fuels economic progress and helps achieve Abu Dhabi’s wider global ambitions. DCT Abu Dhabi cements the ecosystem around a shared vision of the emirate’s potential, and use the best tools, policies, and systems to support the culture, creative and tourism industries.

For more information about the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, please visit: dct.gov.ae and visitabudhabi.ae and abudhabiculture.ae.

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