



PRESS RELEASE

## Abu Dhabi Art Expands Programme to the UK With Cromwell Place Collaboration

*Abu Dhabi Art to showcase UAE-based artists and galleries in London from 2-13 June 2021, marking the first art fair presentation at Cromwell Place*

*Beyond: Emerging Artists will debut emerging UAE practitioners as part of annual programme*

**Abu Dhabi, UAE, 3 June 2021:** Abu Dhabi Art, organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), is set to be the first art fair in the world to collaborate with London's new exhibition space and membership organisation Cromwell Place, with an exhibition event in the UK capital as part of the fair's official programme.

In its [first ever exhibition abroad](#), Abu Dhabi Art is presenting commissioned works created in 2020 as part of the annual programme *Beyond: Emerging Artists* at Cromwell Place London from 2 to 13 June. The three emerging artists included in the exhibition, who are all from the UAE, were supported in the development of their commissions in 2020 by curator Maya El-Khalil. Their works are being shown alongside presentations of UAE-based galleries Tabari Artspace, Lawrie Shabibi, The Third Line and Isabelle Van Den Eynde across five galleries in 2,3 and 4 Cromwell Place.

*Beyond: Emerging Artists* was curated by El-Khalil in 2020 and first shown at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi in November 2020. The commissions explore in diverse ways the theme of memory, with works by Hind Mezaina, Afra Al Dhaheri and Afra Al Suwaidi. Alongside these new commissions and by invitation from Abu Dhabi Art, Tabari Artspace is showing recent works by emerging performance artist Maitha Abdalla, whose work crosses mediums to explore adolescence and transitional moments. Lawrie Shabibi is showing works by the UAE's most established contemporary artist, Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, who will represent the UAE at the Venice Biennale in 2022. Dubai-based galleries The Third Line and Isabelle Van Den Eynde are presenting a selection of MENA-based artists including Anuar Khalifi, Sara Naim, Sophia Al Maria and Manal AlDowayan.

Since opening its doors last October, Cromwell Place has fast become one of London's most exciting new arts destinations. Providing its members flexible, pay-as-you-need services, it is the home and London base to a local and international community of arts professionals. Art dealers, advisors, curators, collectors and institutions have year-round access to exhibition space, viewing rooms, offices, art storage and logistical support, bringing to London a programme of art and antiquities, all accessible to the public. *Beyond: Emerging Artists* is exhibiting alongside shows from members, whose specialties range from antiquities through to Contemporary art.

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Dyala Nusseibeh, Director of Abu Dhabi Art said: “Our annual initiative *Beyond: Emerging Artists* takes a step forward this year in becoming a programme that exhibits abroad, enabling emerging local artists that we have commissioned and supported, to gain valuable international exposure for their work. Cromwell Place was a natural partner for our first exhibition abroad, as several of our gallery exhibitors at the fair are also members at Cromwell Place. They are ready to join us in an art week that highlights emerging and established UAE-based artists and galleries to a UK audience this June as London comes out of lockdown. The community models emerging from a challenging year of the pandemic for artists, galleries, curators and even fairs, are here to stay and this is a positive new development for the wider art market. Our exhibition at Cromwell Place offers us a vital connection with our network in the UK and kickstarts a year of adaptation and growth for us as a fair.”

May Calil, Membership Director, Cromwell Place said: “Cromwell Place has become a new community in central London with flexibility and collaboration at the heart of our business. We are thrilled to partner with Abu Dhabi Art fair, and to provide a home for fairs looking to connect with UK audiences, collectors and clients. I am excited by this opportunity to debut commissioned works by emerging UAE-based artists in our galleries alongside complementary exhibitions from some of our members, including Tabari Artspace, Lawrie Shabibi and The Third Line. This collaboration presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase the ingenuity and flair of the UAE's artistic landscape. We look forward to welcoming visitors back to Cromwell Place with exhibitions that highlight dynamic and exceptional talent by emerging artists from the UAE.”

Exploring the theme of memory, the *Beyond: Emerging Artists* programme features artworks from Mezaina using multimedia archival materials, such as photography and archival film, to express elements of collective memory, masculinity, heritage, and the UAE. Mezaina often describes her work as a form of ‘visual archaeology’.

As a starting point to explore identity formation, Al Dhaheri disorders hair strands, using her own reclaimed hair, which she collects once it has fallen out. Beyond exploring self-identity, her work draws on broader social associations and inhibitions related to female hair and its containment. Al Dhaheri uses mixed media to render nuances of memory and time.

Al Suwaidi, meanwhile, reconstitutes fragmented visual memories, rendering lines of trauma as embodied in domestic architectural forms. Al Suwaidi presents her work through a process of collage. In her work, time is caught in a fugitive state but also pushed further away, to elsewhere.

Abu Dhabi Art 2021 will return to Manarat Al Saadiyat in a physical format this year, taking place from 18 to 21 November 2021, with an opening event on 17 November 2021. Following the success of last year’s virtual fair, Abu Dhabi Art will also continue to have a strong digital presence through a number of online initiatives.

Strict precautionary and hygiene measures will be enforced at Abu Dhabi Art 2021 to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants and visitors. Details of these measures will be announced in due course.

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

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***With safety as a priority, Cromwell Place has implemented additional measures including increased cleaning of touchpoints and high traffic areas, reduced capacity, People Counting Cameras and a track and trace system. These will be continuously reviewed and updated as circumstances evolve.***

**END**

**Press Preview days book [here](#).**

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**Notes to Editors:**

**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.

**About Beyond: Emerging Artists**

Beyond: Emerging Artists was established by Abu Dhabi Art in 2017 to support emerging Emirati talent, offering critical feedback, the opportunity to work closely with a leading guest curator as well as comprehensive financial support to realise their artworks.

**About the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi**

The Department of Culture and Tourism conserves and promotes the heritage and culture of Abu Dhabi emirate and leverages them in the development of a world-class, sustainable destination of distinction that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike. The Department manages the emirate's tourism sector and markets the destination internationally through a wide range of activities aimed at attracting visitors and investment. Its policies, plans and programmes relate to the preservation of heritage and culture, including protecting archaeological and historical sites and to developing museums, including Louvre Abu Dhabi, Zayed National Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. The Department of Culture and Tourism supports intellectual and artistic activities and cultural events to nurture a rich cultural environment and honour the emirate's heritage. A key role played by the Department is to create synergy in the destination's development through close co-ordination with its wide-ranging stakeholder base.

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### **About Cromwell Place**

Cromwell Place is a first-of-its-kind exhibition and working space for art professionals. Created as a solution to changing industry demands, the membership organisation offers flexible services including exhibition space, viewing rooms, art storage, handling, working facilities, events and a Club Room. Set in the heart of London's museum district, their terrace of Victorian townhouses home to over 50 of some of the world's most exciting galleries, institutions, dealers and advisors.

Cromwell Place is open to the public from Wednesday-Sunday (Wednesday through Saturday: 10 am – 6 pm and Sunday: 10 am - 4 pm) and by invitation only on Tuesdays.

### **About Dyala Nusseibeh**

Dyala Nusseibeh has been the Director of Abu Dhabi Art since 2016. Having graduated with a BA from Cambridge University and an MLitt (with Distinction) from Glasgow University, she spent a year at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi followed by four years at the Saatchi Gallery in London as Head of Education. In this capacity she organised annual student shows, the education programme at the gallery and a travelling exhibition of works from the Saatchi collection to Ipswich in order to broaden outreach. In 2013, Nusseibeh became founding Director of ArtInternational Istanbul, managed by leading fair organisers Angus Montgomery, a position she held until 2016 when she joined the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi.

### **About Maya El Khalil**

Born in Beirut, currently lives in Oxford, UK. Maya El-Khalil is an independent curator, who for the last decade has been working locally, regionally and internationally with artists, collectors and institutions to develop the identity and ideas that have defined the contemporary art scene in Saudi Arabia.

From its inception in 2009 until 2016, she was the Founding Director of Athr, a leading contemporary art gallery based in Jeddah. She is the curator of the 7th Edition of 21,39 Jeddah Arts. El Khalil holds a Bachelor's Degree in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA from the American University of Beirut. She is currently enrolled in an MA Program in Art and Politics at Goldsmiths University. Maya El-Khalil is Curator of the programme "Beyond: Emerging Artists", Abu Dhabi Art 2020.

### **About Hind Mezaina**

Born and works in Dubai. Hind Mezaina's work delves into themes of collective memory, the notion of heritage, and the representation of Dubai and the UAE in the media. Her work is a continuous development of what she describes as a 'visual archaeology' through research, observation, collecting and preserving memories. Working primarily in photography, and most recently in video and collage, her work has been exhibited in numerous exhibitions in the UAE and abroad, including 'Made in Tashkeel' (Tashkeel, 2018); Sharjah Biennial 13: Tamawuj (2017); 'Al Haraka Baraka: In Movement There Is Blessing' (Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, 2016). She has also worked on various commissioned projects, including 'The Wedding Project' (Art Dubai, 2016); 'In the Meanwhile' (Global Art Forum, Art Dubai, 2014); 'Cassette Project' (Red Bull Music Academy Bass Camp, Dubai, 2013) and 'Mass Medium: Emirati TV on Home Video', (Global Art Forum, Art Dubai, 2012). Hind curates film screenings for Louvre Abu Dhabi, is the Founder of The Culturist blog and the Co-Founder of Tea with Culture podcast. She participated in the 2016 Autumn Programme residency at Delfina Foundation, supported by Maraya Art Centre. She is a graduate of the 2015–2016 Salama Emerging Artist Fellowship (SEAF) and was selected for A.i.R Dubai 2015, a partnership between Delfina Foundation, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and Tashkeel.

Hind Mezaina is a commissioned artist for the programme "Beyond: Emerging Artists", Abu Dhabi Art 2020 curated by Maya El-Khalil

### **About Afra Al Dhaheri**

Born and works in Abu Dhabi. Afra Al Dhaheri's work is rooted in her experiences growing up in Abu Dhabi and the wider UAE – a place of recent and rapid change. Working across various mediums including mixed media, sculpture, drawing, painting, installation, photography, and printmaking, she draws out notions of time and adaptation, rigor and fragility. With each experiment, there is a new phase, each new phenomenon or

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actualization plucked from her unique vocabulary of references – repetition acts as a method for prolonging time as much as a tool through which to truly experience or realize each stage of a work.

Born in 1988 in Abu Dhabi, UAE, Afra Al Dhaheri obtained her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design, USA in 2017 and completed residencies with The Salama bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship, in partnership with the Rhode Island School of Design in 2014 and Porthmeor Studios, St. Ives, Cornwall, UK (2019). Her first solo exhibition 'Inevitable Ephemera' was hosted by T + H Gallery in Boston, USA in 2016. Selected group exhibitions include 'Avoid Bad Dreams', Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2019); 'Barcelona to Abu Dhabi', Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2018) and 'Emirati Expressions', Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2011 and 2015). She works as an Assistant Professor in Visual Arts at Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Afra Al Dhaheri is a commissioned artist for the programme "Beyond: Emerging Artists", Abu Dhabi Art 2020 curated by Maya El-Khalil

#### **About Afra Al Suwaidi**

Born and works in Abu Dhabi. Emirati artist Afra Salman Al Suwaidi was born in 1992. She specialized in fine arts and received a BA Degree from Zayed University in 2016. Al Suwaidi participated in a number of shows locally and internationally. In 2015 she participated in an exhibition at the Rochester Contemporary Art Center in New York and at Lessedra World Art Print Annual Exhibition in Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2017 she participated in Imago Mundi in Treviso, Italy. Locally Al Suwaidi presented her work in the French Alliance Art Exhibition In Abu Dhabi and in 'Guggenheim Abu Dhabi: Do Art Do It Now', Manarat Al Saadiyat in 2017. Most recently she participated in the 35th Annual Exhibition of the Emirates Fine Arts Society in Sharjah, UAE.

Al Suwaidi is currently participating in the Cultural Foundation Art Residency 2020. Afra Al Suwaidi is a commissioned artist for the programme "Beyond: Emerging Artists", Abu Dhabi Art 2020 curated by Maya El-Khalil

#### **About Lawrie Shabibi**

Lawrie Shabibi opened its doors in early 2011 in Alserkal Avenue, located within the light industrial warehouse district of Al Quoz in Dubai. Following the relocation of several renowned galleries, this quickly became the hub of contemporary art in the Middle East region.

The gallery supports the long-term development of the careers of young international contemporary artists, with a focus on those from the Middle East and North Africa, and more recently diasporic artists within the UK. The gallery has also organized art historical exhibitions, working with an older generation of artists from the Middle East and North Africa region. By holding a regular programme of exhibitions, screenings and talks, publishing catalogues and participating in international art fairs, in the space of ten years we have been a forerunner in the development of the contemporary art scene in Dubai. Lawrie Shabibi is a member of Cromwell Place and participated in its opening in October 2020 with what was to be the final solo exhibition for Moroccan modernist Mohamed Melehi.

The two founders are Asmaa Al-Shabibi and William Lawrie. Asmaa was previously managing director of Art Dubai, the leading international art fair. She instigated many initiatives and collaborations including the Abraaj Art Prize. William was the founding director of the Middle East contemporary art department at Christie's, where he planned and oversaw the first nine auctions in Dubai, seen as the catalyst for the art market in the Middle East.

#### **About Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim**

Khorfakkan-based Emirati artist Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim (b. 1962, Khorfakkan, UAE) is part of the UAE's first generation of contemporary artists from the 1980s and 2000s, an avant-garde that included Hassan Sharif, Abdullah Al Saadi, Hussein Sharif, and Mohammed Kazem.

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Ibrahim has exhibited internationally including at the Venice Biennale (2009), the Kunstmuseum Bonn (2005); the Sharjah Art Museum (2005 and 1996); the Dhaka Biennial (2002 and 1993); the Ludwig Forum (2002), the Havana Biennial (2000); the Cairo Biennial (1998); the Institut du Monde Arabe (1998); Kunstszentrum Sittard (1995). Significant group exhibitions within the UAE include But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community, 1988-2008 at The NYUAD Art Gallery (2017) and the Sharjah Biennial (1993- 2003 and 2007).

In March 2017 Elements, a survey of works spanning three decades of practice, was presented at the Sharjah Art Foundation curated by Hoor Al Qasimi. The Space between the Eyelid and the Eyeball was his first solo at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai (2019).

Ibrahim's public works include: Falling Stones Garden (2020), Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, commissioned by the Royal Commission for Al Ula and Desert X; Grocery (2019), Madinat Zayed Market, Abu Dhabi, UAE, commissioned by Ghadan 21, Government of Abu Dhabi as part of the For Abu Dhabi initiative; Untitled (2019), Reem Central Park, Al Reem Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE, commissioned by Aldar Properties PJSC in partnership with Abu Dhabi Art; Kids' Garden (2019), Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Abu Dhabi, UAE, commissioned by Abu Dhabi Health Services Company; and Bait Al Hurma (2018), Al Mureijah Square, Sharjah, commissioned by the Sharjah Art Foundation as part of the exhibition Elements.

His works are in significant international collections, including the Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE), the Sharjah Art Museum (UAE); Art Jameel (UAE); Arab Museum of Modern Art (Qatar); Kunstszentrum Sittard (Netherlands), the British Museum (London) and The Centre Pompidou (Paris).

Ibrahim works and lives in Khorfakkan, United Arab Emirates. In 2022 Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim will present a solo exhibition at the National Pavilion of the UAE at the 59th Venice Biennale.

#### **About Tabari Artspace**

Since its inception in 2003 Tabari, Artspace's mission has been to foster fresh dialogue between the artists of the Middle East and an international audience.

Established in Dubai, eighteen years ago, Tabari Artspace embarked upon an ambitious programme of exhibitions and special projects to cultivate a global community centred around Middle Eastern art. As a pioneer of this movement, the gallery played a pivotal role in drawing international attentions towards Middle Eastern Masters such as Adam Henin, Mohamed Abla, Adel El-Sawi, Hussein Madi, and Khaled Zaki. Today these artists are collected and exhibited by such institutions as British Museum, The Guggenheim, Centre Pompidou, The Barjeel Art Foundation, Institut du monde arabe, and Seoul Museum of Art.

The name 'Tabari' stems from 'Lake Tiberias' and foregrounds notions of borders, space, place, and identity - some of the universal topics that are tackled by the Middle Eastern artists of the contemporary moment. As a reflection of the Founder's belief that art is a powerful tool to dismantle social boundaries and ignite greater cultural understanding, Tabari Artspace continues to honour the Masters it built in the past while introducing a new generation of artists that are deeply engaged with the present and push forward perspectives - male and female - from far-reaching social and cultural contexts including: hyperrealist, Samah Shihadi; painter, Tagreed Darghouth; and visual artist, Hazem Harb.

At the core of Tabari Artspace's missions are community engagement and wider social access to Middle Eastern art, as such its programming is supplemented by talks, publishing, workshops, and community events. In 2020 the gallery expanded its presence, opening a second location at Cromwell Place, London. 2021 will witness the inauguration of the Tabari Artspace global residency programme, Home from Home, which encourages the artists of the region to develop their practice amid new communities and environments.

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#### **About Maitha Abdalla**

b.1989. Mixed media artist Maitha Abdallah oscillates between the diaphanous, vibrant and surreal; her art is always marked by an atmosphere of reminiscence and nostalgia. Her paintings and mixed media works often evolve into series and articulate strong cultural narratives, they are assemblages of memory, travel and human interactions. Informed by exchanges and experiences, her socially driven commentaries on the human condition reveal astute, intuitive observations on the world around her in a narrative form. A particularly influential encounter was with children at an orphanage where Maitha taught English and art. The motifs of childhood began to permeate her work after this time, becoming an eloquent vernacular in which she further explores the difference between the imaginary and the real; mapping the liminal space between these interconnected worlds, she plays out many questions of social and cultural identity.

Abdallah is a graduate of The Salama Bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship, in partnership with the Rhode Island School of Design, and is also one of the founders of Bait 15, an artist-run gallery and studio in Abu Dhabi, and plays an active role in the contemporary art scene in the UAE. She participated in Abu Dhabi Festival 2019 Visual Arts Residency Programme in Vaduz, Liechtenstein and Vienna, Austria.

#### **About The Third Line**

Founded in 2005, The Third Line is a Dubai based art gallery that represents contemporary artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region. Represented artists include Abbas Akhavan, Anuar Khalifi, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Jordan Nassar, Laleh Khorravian, Lamyra Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Nima Nabavi, Pوران Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Yasiin Bey, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

#### **About Sara Naim**

Artist Sara Naim (b. 1987, London) received her MFA in Fine Art Media at The Slade School of Fine Art, London (2014), completed her Bachelors in Photography from London College of Communication (2010) and Art Foundation at Chelsea College of Art (2007). Through visualizing micro-formations, Sara's practice dissects how proportion shapes our perception and notion of boundary. Sara explores the physicality of those 'boundaries' and their forms, with the fundamental question: If borders do not exist on a cellular scale, can we define 'border' on a macro scale? Sara questions the way we encounter the sinuous line between interiority and exteriority - whether that tension be the body's skin, digital communication glitches, or chemical reactions.

Her selected solo shows include Building Blocks, The Third Line, Dubai, (2019), Reaction, Parafin, London (2018), When Heartstings Collapse at The Third Line, Dubai (2016); Heartstrings at Concrete, Hayward Gallery, London (2016). Selected group shows include Centre Photographique Rouen, Science Fictions, Normandie, Kaviar Factory, Creation of a Moment, Henningsvaer, Katzen Arts Center, Tribe: Contemporary Photography from the Arab World, Washington D.C. (2018), Stedelijk Museum, Artificial Impressions, Breda Photo (2018), Sans Titre, Chambre 10, Paris, Secular Icons in an Age of Moral Uncertainty, Parafin, London (2017).

#### **About Anuar Khalifi**

Self-taught artist Anuar Khalifi was born in 1977 in Lloret de Mar, Spain. Currently based between Barcelona and Tangier, Anuar creates richly detailed and vibrant paintings that reward the keen eye with their captivating layers of meaning. Within these layers, the artist explores a wide range of themes such as identity, duality, diaspora, orientalism, colonialism, extremism, and consumerist society.

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Anuar's paintings demonstrate his understanding of both the stylistic elements and the sociopolitical spirit of neo-impressionism. Mixing fact and fiction to confront stereotypes about the Middle East, his works are at times ironic and humorous, evoking a childlike naivety as the artist dismantles the canon of orientalism.

His work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions such as Personal Mythologies, Galerie Julien Cadet, Paris, France (2020); Forever Is A Current Event, The Third Line, Dubai (2019); Dust, Roses & cockroaches, Galerie Shart, Casablanca, Morocco (2018); El niño que le dolía el cuello de tanto mirar el cielo, Plom gallery, Barcelona, Spain (2016); DESORIENTE- BCN, The Mothership, Barcelona, Spain (2015); Les nouvelles créations artistiques, Bank Al-Maghrib, Rabat, Morocco (2015); DESORIENTE, Yakin and Boaz Gallery, Casablanca, Morocco (2014); A New Hope, Galeria Mitte Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain (2012); Tourists go home, Galerie Kandisha, Paris, France (2012); Now, Biennale, Marrakech, Morocco (2012); Blast, Mastermind (GVCC), Casablanca, Morocco (2012); Boys don't cry, Artingis, Tangier, Morocco (2011); Fast Food, Les Insolites, Tangier, Morocco (2011).

#### **About Sophia Al Maria**

Sophia Al Maria (b. 1983, Tacoma, USA) is an artist, writer, and filmmaker. She grew up between the United States and Qatar before moving to Egypt to study comparative literature at the American University in Cairo. She next completed an MFA in aural and visual cultures at Goldsmiths, London. The seemingly disparate sources of inspiration for Sophia's multidisciplinary practice include pop culture, anime, Arabic poetry, sci-fi, and her personal experience of pollution and climate change. Working primarily with film and narrative text, the artist weaves captivating tales as a way to process her thoughts and feelings about the future, particularly in the current extinction climate. Her recent work focuses increasingly on the isolation of individuals via technology, consumerism as proxy religion, and how agency and chance play in the blinding approach of an uncertain future.

Her work has been shown in various international exhibitions including: Julia Stoschek Collection, Dusseldorf, Germany (2020); Beast Type Song, Tate Britain, London (2019); Sophia Al-Maria: BCE, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2019); Age of You, Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, Canada (2019); Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva, Switzerland (2018); Let's Talk About The Weather: Art and Ecology in a Time of Crisis, Times Museum, Guangzhou, China (2018); Biennale of Moving Images, Miami, USA (2017); EVERYTHING MUST GO, The Third Line, Dubai, UAE (2017); Black Friday, Whitney Museum, New York (2016); The 9th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2012) and many more.

#### **About Isabelle Van Den Eynde**

One of a handful of pioneers who shaped the UAE's early commercial art scene, Isabelle van den Eynde opened her first gallery, B21, in 2006 in Dubai's Al Quoz industrial district. At a time when contemporary art galleries were just beginning to stake their place in the local cultural landscape, she exhibited challenging artists whose names still figure on her roster today—Rokni and Ramin Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian, Mohammed Kazem, and the late Hassan Sharif, considered a trailblazer of contemporary art in the UAE.

In 2010, van den Eynde founded her eponymous space in Alserkal Avenue. As the gallery grew, what the roster gained in artists, the program garnered in daring. Alongside her long-time co-conspirators came new artists from the Middle East and North Africa and beyond.

In addition to a robust exhibition program and art fair participation, the gallery's reach extends beyond physical spaces into publishing ventures, online activities and international projects with curators and collectors.

#### **About Manal AIDowayan**

Few artists understand metamorphosis as keenly as Saudi artist Manal AIDowayan. Long invested in interrogating the gender-biased customs that impact the condition of women in Saudi Arabia, AIDowayan is a sensitive yet critical witness to the cultural metamorphosis engulfing the Kingdom. Her practice, formally speaking, regularly shifts and evolves - from the assertive black and white photographic portraits of highly

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skilled working women in her early I Am series (2005), to the research-driven Crash (2014) documenting media silence on fatal road accidents involving commuting women schoolteachers. Equally recognized for her work in sound, neon, and sculpture, AIDowayan is perhaps best known for the participatory installations Suspended Together (2011) and Esmi-My Name (2012), the result of workshops offering channels for over 400 women in the Kingdom to protest inequality.

AIDowayan's practice navigates a territory where the personal and the political overlap. Her works spring from lived experiences-these intimate encounters with social injustice, the pangs of memory and forgetting. Yet her pieces are consistently galvanizing, sparking identification and engagement, particularly among women around the world. Her voice is strong, and it resonates.

Unsurprisingly, the artist's gaze unravels the expected tensions running through the fiber of Saudi society-public vs private, traditional vs modern, community vs. world. But as the Kingdom races towards further change, AIDowayan's artistic engagement with this new metamorphosis promises to be bolder and more incisive than ever.

AIDowayan's work has been exhibited regionally and internationally in such institutions as the Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE (2016); Santander Art Gallery, Madrid (2016); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA (2015); the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada (2015); Prospect New Orleans, American Biennial, USA (2014), Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea (2014); Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2014), the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2013), in collateral shows at the Venice Biennale (2009/11), among others. Her works can be found in the collections of the British Museum, London; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha. She participated in the Robert Rauschenberg Residency, Captiva, USA (2015) and the artist-in-residence program at the Delfina Foundation, London (2009). She also received a research fellowship from New York University Abu Dhabi (2014).

She holds a master's degree in Systems Analysis and Design and MA in Contemporary Art Practice in Public Spheres from the Royal College of Art, London.

Born in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia in 1973, AIDowayan currently lives and works between London, Dhahran and Dubai.

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