

## All you need know about Art Dubai 2017

The fair will bring together 93 galleries from 44 countries to showcase the works of more than 500 artists



Atfal Ahdath, A Pillar of Salt, 2017

Image Credit: Courtesy of the artists

---

Published: 15:30 March 8, 2017  
By Jyoti KalsiSpecial to Weekend Review

Art lovers can look forward to discovering new contemporary artists, art movements and trends, and rediscovering the work of modern masters at the 11th edition of Art Dubai to be held at Madinat Jumeirah from March 15 to 18. The art fair will bring to Dubai 93 galleries from 44 countries showcasing the work of more than 500 artists. It will also host a public programme featuring a spectrum of art-related projects, activities and events for all ages.

Highlights of Art Dubai 2017 include a new Modern Symposium, innovative art performances, an exhibition commemorating the late Emirati master Hassan Sharif, who passed away in September 2016, and an art installation that combines visual, sensory and gastronomic experiences.

“Art Dubai is the world’s most globally diverse and dynamic art fair and the leading platform for the regional art scene. Through its year-round activities, educational initiatives and artistic commissions, the event redefines what an art fair can be and I am delighted that this year with new initiatives such as the Modern Symposium and our largest performance art programme to date, we will be able to offer further insights into the regional art scene with an increased programme to engage our visitors outside the gallery halls,” fair director Myrna Ayad says.



Myrna Ayad,  
fair director

Visitors can view and acquire a variety of artworks at the gallery booths that are divided into two sections — Art Dubai Contemporary, located in the Madinat Arena and featuring 79 galleries from 41 countries and Art Dubai Modern — located in Mina Salam Hotel where 15 galleries from 12 countries will showcase museum quality works by modern masters from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (Menasaa). Artists featured in this section include Aly Ben Salem, S. H. Raza, Sliman Mansour, Manuel Figueira and Sonia Balassanian. Countries represented for the first time at the fair include Algeria, Peru and Uruguay.

“We are offering visitors a new experience in the gallery halls, with more tightly curated presentations this year. The exhibitions at the booths will be split between solo or two-artist exhibitions, allowing a more focused contemplation, and multi-artist shows enabling an overview of different works,” the fair’s international director Pablo del Val says.

The fair is held under the patronage of His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. It is organised in partnership with The Abraaj Group and sponsored by Julius Baer, Meraas and Piaget. The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture) is a strategic partner and supports the fair’s year-round education programme.

Art Dubai’s community arts programme is the largest of any art fair in the world.

**Highlights of this edition include:**

**Global Art Forum 11: Fort Island, Madinat Jumeirah, from March 15 to 17**

The forum will bring together international curators, museum directors, writers, artists and other art professionals to discuss the theme, Trading Places, focusing on the trade of goods and ideas that shape and reshape the world.

The programme includes writer William Dalrymple speaking about the history of the East India Company; Laleh Khalili reflecting on the role played by transportation and logistics in the making of the Modern Middle East; an overview of his monumental projects by artist Christo; and Farah Al Qasimi's photographic study of Dragon Mart, the largest trading hub for Chinese products outside mainland China.

---

### **Modern Symposium: Art Dubai Modern in Mina Salaam Hotel on March 17 and Alserkal Avenue on March 18**

This new forum will complement the fair's popular Art Dubai Modern section, with well-known curators, scholars and patrons discussing the life, work and cultural impact of modern masters from the Menasa region who had a major influence on the region's art history in the 20th century. Topics to be discussed include the influence of spirituality in modern Menasa art; modern women artists from the Middle East and strategies for documenting and preserving modern art from the region.

---

### **Art Dubai Commissions**

This year, the fair's site specific commissions are focused exclusively on performance art with artists Manuel Pelmu, Lana Fahmi, Eglé Budvytyté, Iván Argote and Pauline Bastard slated to present a variety of performances at the fair venue. In addition, curator Yasmina Reggad and Fahmi will pay homage to Hassan Sharif with a dance piece based on his work.

---

### **The Room**

The Room at Mina Salam Hotel features Cooking Liberty, a large-scale, surreal, immersive installation, that combines visual art, performance and gastronomy. Presented by Beirut-based art collective Atfal Ahdath, it is inspired by Salvador Dali's cookbook, Les Dinners de Gala. During the day, the artists will present various performances. In the evenings, on March 16 and 17, they will host a grand buffet in The Room. The performance-led ticketed dinner will take guests on a journey with a surprisingly alternative drinks reception followed by a twelve course banquet. The menu includes edible dreams, bespoke cocktails, music, moving image and an array of art forms offering a variety of sensorial experiences. Advance booking is recommended.

---

### **Art Dubai Bar at Fort Island**

For this year's edition of the Art Dubai Bar, Moroccan-born, Brooklyn-based artist Meriem Bennani, has created an interactive installation titled Ghariba/Stranger, featuring playful video portraits of Moroccan

women. The bar area, featuring video viewing pods is inspired by public places that encourage social interactions amongst strangers and reminiscent of beauty salons or entertainment parks.

---

### **Abraaj Group Art Prize exhibition at Madinat Arena**

London-based Bangladeshi artist, Rana Begum, who won the \$100,000 prize this year will unveil her winning project at 7pm on March 14. The work will be showcased at the fair alongside works by other shortlisted artists.

---

### **Film Series**

Art Dubai's film programme, screened in a dedicated space, will showcase videos and films by and about artists from the Arab world.

---

### **Shaikha Manal Little Artists Programme**

This programme offers a variety of workshops, activities and discovery tours of the fair for children and teenagers. New additions include drop-in workshops and Expanding Treasures led by Suzan Drummen where children will work together with their families to create large scale on-site installations at the fair.

---

### **Education programme:**

Art Dubai has the largest education programming of any art fair worldwide. This includes Campus Art Dubai, a school for UAE-based artists, curators, writers, designers and cultural producers, which conducts courses, talks and workshops led by well-known experts throughout the year; the Artists in Residency programme which facilitates interaction between Emirati and international artists; and a fellowship programme for artists, curators, writers from the region, currently focused on artists as writers.

---

### **Exhibitions by Art Dubai sponsors**

Sunny Side of Life presented by Piaget will showcase their latest collections of haute couture jewelry and watches.

Homage Without an Homage presented by Julius Baer. In previous years, the Swiss private banking group has exhibited works by prominent contemporary Swiss artists at their lounge at Art Dubai. But this year, the company is celebrating the life and legacy of the late Emirati artist Hassan Sharif through their exhibition. The show, curated by Cristiana de Marchi, features works by artists from different generations who have been mentored, influenced, or inspired by Sharif's conceptual art practice and teaching. These include the core group of Emirati conceptual artists — Hussein Sharif, Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim and Mohammad Kazem; artist, writer and filmmaker Nujoom Ghanem; the next generation of Emirati artists such as Ebtisam AbdulAziz, Layla Juma, Shaikha Al Mazrou

and Jumairy; as well as Sharif's international friends such as Vivek Vilasini, Cristiana de Marchi, Salwa Zeidan, Ramin and Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian. The show is accompanied by a programme of performances, video screenings and talks addressing various aspects of Sharif's artistic journey.

---

### **Launch of 81 Designs at Julius Baer Lounge on March 17 at 5.30pm**

81 Designs is a UAE-based social enterprise co-founded by Nesrine El-Tibi Maalouf and Nadine Y Maalouf. It collaborates with artists from the region with the aim of using art to empower skilled women refugees by providing them with jobs that give them hope, a renewed sense of purpose and a sustainable future. For its inaugural project, the company collaborated with well-known 'calligraffiti' artist eL Seed, whose contemporary artworks have been recreated in the form of handmade tapestries, by Palestinian women refugees, using traditional embroidery techniques. The project will be launched with a talk by eL Seed, and screening of a documentary about the project.

---

#### **Here are the event details:**

Event: Art Dubai 2017  
Venue: Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai  
Dates: March 15 – March 18

#### **Public timings:**

March 15 – 1pm - 4pm Ladies Day Preview, open to all women;  
March 16 - 4pm to 9.30pm;  
March 17 - 2pm to 9.30pm;  
March 18 - 12noon to 6.30pm.

**Tickets:** day tickets cost Dh50 online and Dh80 on site. Entry is free for children up to 18 years old, and students with valid ID cards. Three-day ticket costs Dh80 online and Dh120 on site.

Parking available at Dubai Police Academy with shuttle service to Madinat Jumeirah.

For more information, visit [www.artdubai.ae](http://www.artdubai.ae)

- *Jyoti Kalsi is an arts-enthusiast based in Dubai.*