

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority Celebrates the Opening of The Creative Act: Performance, Process, Presence, Second Exhibition from The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection

 PR Newswire March 9, 2017

ABU DHABI, UAE, March 9, 2017 /PRNewswire/ --

Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) celebrated the opening of *The Creative Act: Performance, Process, Presence* at Manarat Al Saadiyat on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi. Featuring works by more than 25 artists from different nationalities and generations, the exhibition explores the related themes of performance, process, and presence through a variety of mediums. Running until 29 July 2017, *The Creative Act* is the second major exhibition of works from the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection.

HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, Director General of TCA Abu Dhabi commented, "The Creative Act offers a transcultural perspective on defining aspects of contemporary art by highlighting interconnections among artists working in various corners of the world since the 1960s. The works in the exhibition reveal common sources of inspiration, lines of influence, and distinctive

contributions. Two commissions reflect the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi's commitment to supporting the production of new work by living artists. This exhibition marks not only the next defining step for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, but also the establishment of the future museum's role to encourage, inspire, and inform. Only through direct interaction with artworks, themes, creative professionals, and artists can we provide future generations with a fully rounded set of tools through which to understand the development of artistic expression."

Three distinct yet interconnected themes of the exhibition provide a unifying framework for the exhibition, with many artists exploring more than one theme in the works on view:

Performance can be represented in several different forms: *The Creative Act* features examples of live actions that constitute works in and of themselves and performative practices that result in drawings, paintings, sculptures, and videos. A selection of photographs document the renowned Emirati artist **Hassan Sharif**'s 1980s performances, realised in both London and Dubai. His conceptual, experimental, and performative practice greatly influenced subsequent generation of artists in the UAE, such as **Mohammed Kazem**, who is also featured in *The Creative Act*.

A key work within the **process** section is **Anish Kapoor**'s *My Red Homeland* (2003), a monumental sculptural installation composed of nearly twenty-five tonnes of red wax with a mechanical arm that circumnavigates the platform, continually altering the surface as it moves across the material. Works by pioneering 1960s experimental art practitioners including **Rasheed Araeen**, **Julio Le Parc**, **Niki de Saint Phalle**, **Jean Tinguely**, **Günther Uecker**, and **Jacques Villeglé**, explore the process of creating with everyday materials and using performative techniques.

The theme of human **presence** is highlighted through artworks that involve the appearance of the artist or others in the works as well as visible traces of the physical acts undertaken to realise them. Paintings by artists affiliated with the Gutai Art Association (1954-72) including **Motonaga Sadamasa**, **Shiraga Kazuo**, and **Tanaka Atsuko** epitomise these ideas. Video installations by **Susan Hefuna** and **Anri Sala** take the performing arts—dance and music respectively—and the theme of interpretation as points of departure.

Autobiography (03-07) (2007), a series of forty photographs and a video, captures Emirati artist Ebtisam Abdulaziz's performances in various public spaces in Sharjah and examines the often complex relationship between social and personal identities.

Richard Armstrong, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, commented: "*The Creative Act* brings into focus the complexity, poetry, and power of the human spirit. The exhibition also reflects our shared understanding of the vital necessity of global exchange that is at the heart of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi project. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is proud to be working with Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority to realize this exhibition that celebrates the considerable scholarship underpinning the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection and the catalytic potential of the future museum as a vital addition to the cultural landscape of the region and the world."

TCA Abu Dhabi has commissioned artists, **Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh** and **Hesam Rahmanian** to create an installation inspired by the core themes of *The Creative Act*. *Another Happy Day* (2016-17) is a multiroom, immersive installation featuring artworks by the commissioned artists and others, which, like the selections from the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection, probe the nature of the creative artistic process while inviting visitors to become engaged and activated. This project, coupled with photographs by **Tarek Al-Ghoussein**, part of a series commissioned by TCA Abu Dhabi for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection, offers a convergence of past, present, and future in our own time.

Contacts:

TCA Abu Dhabi

Faisal Al Dhahri

Communications - Museums Department

Email: faldhahri@tcaabudhabi.ae

Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation:

Tina Vaz

Deputy Director, Global Communications

Email: tvaz@guggenheim.org