

For Immediate Release



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

**Announces Artists and Participants of the 2011 Sharjah Biennial
Plot for a Biennial
March 16 – May 16, 2011**

***The 10th edition of the Sharjah Biennial, curated by
Suzanne Cotter and Rasha Salti in collaboration with Haig Aivazian***

***119 Artists and Participants From 36 Countries Across the Globe;
65 Sharjah Biennial Commissions To Be Presented***

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE), December 7, 2010 — The **Sharjah Art Foundation** announces the presentation of work by **119 artists and participants** from **36 countries** across the globe to partake in ***Plot for a Biennial***, the 10th edition of the acclaimed Sharjah Biennial, **March 16 through May 16, 2011**. One of the oldest and most respected contemporary art events in the Middle East, the Sharjah Biennial has nurtured the creativity and collaboration of artists, arts organizations, and institutions throughout the MENASA region (Middle East, North Africa, South Asia) and internationally since 1993. For the occasion of *Plot for a Biennial*, the Sharjah Biennial has commissioned approximately 65 new works for a cutting-edge presentation of visual art, film, music, performance, video and publication. The 2011 artists and participants were selected by *Plot for a Biennial* Co-Curators **Suzanne Cotter** (Curator, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project) and **Rasha Salti** (Creative Director ArteEast), and Associate Curator **Haig Aivazian** (Chicago-based independent curator, artist and writer).

Expanding on the geographic reach and focus of previous Sharjah Biennials, *Plot for a Biennial* merges what have traditionally been parallel formats of exhibition, film and performance into a multivalent sequence of encounters that extend from the Sharjah Art Museum to Sharjah's historic Heritage Area, and sites throughout the city. The 2011 Sharjah Biennial will feature work by 119 artists, filmmakers, choreographers, writers, publishers and musicians, working individually and collaboratively, from Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States. *Please see below for a list of confirmed artists and participants. A complete list will be released in January 2011.

Sharjah Art Foundation President H.H. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi stated, "With Sharjah Biennial 10 we celebrate twenty years of supporting the production and presentation of art in the region. Over the years we have been privileged to work with a wide range of artists and institutions which have helped us contribute to what is now the solid foundation of a robust cultural landscape with reverberations across the Middle East and internationally."

Jack Persekian, Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation, added, "This edition of the Biennial not only engages with the fabric of the city of Sharjah, but will also explore the broader historical, political and aesthetic terrain that underpins this year's *Plot for a Biennial*. While the scope of the Biennial has grown and developed over the years, its work remains at the heart of the Sharjah Art Foundation's mission, initiatives and programs."

About *Plot for a Biennial*:

Plot for a Biennial takes as its curatorial narrative the idea of a treatment for film, "scripted" around a constellation of keywords that include *Treason, Necessity, Insurrection, Affiliation, Corruption, Devotion, Disclosure, Translation*. These terms operate as motifs and serve to frame explorations in both subject matter and aesthetic positions. Among the central themes is the assertion of individual subjectivity within the realms of culture, religion and statehood. Equally central are questions around the aesthetics of art as seduction and formal dissidence, and the production and communicability of art as both dubious and potentially transformative. Located within a web of etymological tracings, the concept of treason, a word that shares its Latin roots with trade and translation, provides multiple registers of interpretation, from betrayal to translation and trade, the latter being activities central to the economy, history and culture of Sharjah.

Within this lexical framework, artists and their projects, filmmakers, performers and writers suggest a cast of players, often assuming multiple roles, which include The Traitor, The Traducer, The Collaborator, The Insurgent and The Experientialist. Proposing the Biennial as a script to be followed or improvised also allows for narratives and thematic chapters to emerge. In borrowing the structure of a film narrative, the

Biennial is intended to function as a series of sequences, or reels, that unravel or are refashioned by visitors at different moments and over the course of the plot's unfolding. In its visual, spatial and temporal dimensions that play on proximity, duration and correspondences, *Plot for a Biennial* attempts to reflect the hybrid nature of contemporary artistic practice, and the singularity of artistic positions as part of an intersecting and overlapping spectrum of concerns and consequences in our present time.

About the Curators:

Suzanne Cotter is Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation Curator, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project. Cotter has held curatorial positions at the Whitechapel Gallery and Hayward Gallery, London and was Senior Curator and Deputy Director of Modern Art Oxford (2002–2009). She has written for and edited numerous catalogues and artist monographs, including a forthcoming book on the choreographer Michael Clark, in addition to contributing to art publications including *Artforum*, *Frieze*, and *Parkett*. A Jury member for the Turner Prize 2008, she was recipient of the Chevalier de l'Ordre dans les Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication in 2005.

Rasha Salti is an independent curator and freelance writer, working and living in Beirut, she is also creative director of the New York based non-profit *ArteEast*. In 2006, she co-curated with Richard Peña *The Road to Damascus*, a retrospective of Syrian cinema, and *The Calm Before the Storm*, a retrospective of Lebanese cinema in 2010 at the Film Society of the Lincoln Center. In 2010 she also co-curated with Jytte Jensen *Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema from the 1960s Until Now* at the MoMA. She collaborated with photographer Ziad Antar on a book entitled *Beirut Bereft, The Architecture of the Forsaken and Map of the Derelict* and co-edited with Issam Nassar the publication *I Would Have Smiled; A Tribute to Myrtle Winter-Chaumeny*.

Haig Aivazian is an artist, curator and writer based in Chicago. He has a BFA from Concordia University in Design and Studio Art, and is in the process of acquiring an MFA in Art Theory and Practice from Northwestern University. Aivazian's work has been investigating the intersections between the migration of peoples, the circulation of consumer goods and the propagation of ideologies. Aivazian has been involved in a number of curatorial initiatives such as *Roads Were Open / Roads Were Closed*, and has written for a number of publications including *Bidoun*, the Arab Studies Journal, and *AdBusters*.

More About Sharjah Biennial 2011:

The Sharjah Biennial is one of the most established cultural events in the Arab world. Since its inception in 1993, it has formed a cultural bridge between artists, art institutions and organizations locally, regionally and internationally. The acclaimed, eight-week biennial consists of various components from its primary exhibitions of visual art, film, music, and performance, to seminars for artists and art professionals and workshops for students and families. In 2009, the 9th edition of the Sharjah Biennial received nearly 75,000 visitors including collectors, curators, art critics, artists, arts organizations, museum groups, students and art aficionados from both the UAE and abroad.

As well as exhibiting projects by 119 artists and participants from around the world, Sharjah Biennial 10 will offer a number of programs and events designed to support and nurture creativity for local and visiting participants

About the Sharjah Art Foundation:

Sharjah Art Foundation supports the flourishing arts environment in the Gulf by nurturing artistic opportunities and actively pursuing both a regional and international program of cultural collaboration and exchange.

Sharjah Art Foundation builds on the pioneering role the Emirate of Sharjah has played in the artistic and cultural development of the Gulf region. Inspired by the cross-fertilization and rich cultural diversity of the Emirates, the Foundation provides both national and international leadership in the production and presentation of contemporary visual arts. Recognizing the central and distinctive contribution that art makes to society, the Sharjah Art Foundation cultivates a spirit of research, experimentation and excellence while acting as a catalyst for collaboration and exchange within the Middle East and beyond.

Programs of the Sharjah Art Foundation:

Sharjah Art Foundation Production Program

The Sharjah Art Foundation Production Program provides direct support to artists for the production of art as well as funding to art practitioners for projects, research, publications and film. Recipients of the 2010 Production Program grants were artists Bani Abidi, Zarina Bhimji and CAMP.

March Meeting

The March Meeting is an annual gathering of global artists, art professionals and institutions involved in the production and dissemination of art in the MENASA region. The annual event is designed to provide leaders in the art world with an opportunity to connect, share ideas and expertise, network and collaborate on future projects. The March Meeting 2011 will take place March 13-15 to coincide with the opening of Sharjah Biennial 10.

Artists' Residencies

The Sharjah Art Foundation sponsors dedicated residency programs for artists to explore their relationships with the UAE and the region. From February through March 2011, Sharjah Biennial 9 Prize winning artist Basma Al Sharif will be in residence working on a new film project.

Education and Participation

The Sharjah Art Foundation fosters various ongoing collaborations with regional educational and cultural institutions in its development of specialized programs of workshops, seminars, lectures and events designed for a range of age groups from students to professionals as well as community outreach events.

For more information on the Sharjah Art Foundation and the Sharjah Biennial, please visit www.sharjahart.org.

Image credit: Diana Al Hadid, *Spells On Our Youth*, 2009, Steel, fiberglass, resin, polystyrene, high-density foam, paint, Installation view, Commissioned and produced by Sharjah Biennial 9. Photo by Plamen Galabov.

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SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

SHARJAH BIENNIAL 10

March 16 – May 16, 2011

Announces Artists and Participants

Full list to be released in January 2011

Dimi Mint Abba
Jumana Emil Abboud
Youssef Abdelké
Ebtisam Abdulaziz
Adel Abidin
The African Film Festival (Mahen Bonetti)
Atfal Ahdath
Karim Ainouz
Hala Al-Ani
Abdullah Al Saadi
Ziad Antar
Doug Ashford
Mouna Atassi
Vartan Avakian
Hicham Ayouch
Yto Barrada
Judith Barry
Shumon Basar, Jane and Louise Wilson
Bahar Behbahani
Mustapha Benfodil
Omar Berrada and Érik Bulloz
Alexis Bhagat and Lize Mogel
Alan Bishop and Sam Shalabi
Anna Boghiguian
Ammar Bouras
Dan Brault
Cabinet
Sophie Calle
CAMP (Shaina Anand and Ashok Sukumaran)
Guillaume Cassar
Marie-Hélène Cauvin
Jem Cohen (with Luc Sante)
Ziad Dalloul
Raffie Davtian
Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency
Trisha Donnelly
Başak Ertür
Ali Essafi
Solange Farkas

Harun Farocki
Simone Fattal
Mariam Ghani
Ahmed Ghossein
Sean Gullette
Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige
Ramin Haerizadeh
Rokni Haerizadeh
Gilbert Hage
Angela Harutyunyan and Aras Özgun
Khalid Hourani
Richard Ibgby and Marilou Lemmens
Hatem Imam
Alfredo Jaar
Emily Jacir
Amar Kanwar
Aisha Khalid
Bouchra Khalili
Bahman Kiarostami
Mark Lombardi
Lynn Love and Ann Sappenfield
Maha Maamoun and Haytham El-Wardany
Josephine Meckseper
Shohreh Mehran
Julia Meltzer and David Thorne
Almagul Menlibayeva
Ma'alem Abdelkbir Merchane and Pharoah Sanders
Naeem Mohaiemen
Tom Molloy
Houman Mortazavi
Fateh Moudarres
Jean-Luc Moulène
Rosalind Nashashibi
Melik Ohanian
Noma Omran
Imran Qureshi
Steve Reinke
Walid Raad
Khalil Rabah
Omar Rajeh
Walid Sadek
Hrair Sarkissian
Matt Saunders
Samir Sayegh
Marcel Schwierin
Ashkan Sepahvand
Slavs and Tatars
Rania Stephan
Rayyane Tabet

Jorge Tacla
Jalal Toufic
Murtaza Vali
Apichatpong Weerasethakul
What, How and from Whom/ WHW
Raed Yassin
Caveh Zahedi
Elias Zayat
Artur Żmijewski