

Sara Ouhaddou: Featured Artist-in-Residence

The French/Moroccan artist works with traditional craftsmen to reinterpret classic motifs and employs age-old techniques in ceramics, textile embroidery, and now glass

Through the summer of 2015 **Art Jameel**, in partnership with **Edge of Arabia**, features Artist-in-Residence Sara Ouhaddou (b. 1986 in Morocco, lives and works between Paris and Morocco). Ouhaddou is taking part in a residency program in Brooklyn, New York at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), in collaboration with Art Jameel and Edge of Arabia.

Sara Ouhaddou is an artist and designer dedicated to preserving and reinterpreting dying craft techniques and to using them as the base for her contemporary art practice. Through her residency in New York City, Ouhaddou is adapting previous explorations in textile and ceramic tile, though glass.



Left: Craftsman working to adapt Sara Ouhaddou's designs to traditional techniques.

Right: Tessellations of geometric forms in ceramic tiles, made from natural clay.

Ouhaddou's ongoing exploration of traditional Moroccan designs and forms began in 2011, when she first started researching Islamic geometry. Imbued with strong spiritual and cultural significance, Islamic geometry forms a longstanding cultural language used in craft, architecture, clothing and art across the Islamic world. Motivated by a curiosity around adapting this visual language to modern forms, as well as a desire to support traditional craft techniques at risk of being forgotten in contemporary Moroccan society, Ouhaddou set out to collaborate with craftsmen and women in her home country. In doing so she created modes of dialogue between artisans as well as supported micro-economies.

Working closely with master craftsmen in South Morocco's Ourika Valley to use locally sourced natural clay, Ouhaddou's handcrafted ceramic tile collection is influenced by the delicate mosaic tradition of Fez with its Spanish and Arabic roots. Each tile, of which there are five distinct patterns, is hand sculpted and unique as a result of the firing technique, which creates subtle variations. The works combine handcrafted detail with a contemporary dynamic tension evoked through a bold use of space and depth. Ouhaddou later developed a partnership between the

craftsmen of Ourika Valley in Morocco and the craftswomen of Limoges in France, to create a collection of tiles in thin, almost translucent porcelain.



Left: Textile embroidered with evolving pattern adapted from traditional Tetouan designs.

Right: Tessillations of geometric forms created in recycled rubberized-cloth and silk embroidery, form the top of a stool design.

Tetouan, a town in North Morocco, is known for its unique embroidery patterns that developed through historic cultural links with Andalusia, Spain. Working with young student in the Dar Sanaa school, Ouhammadou developed a curriculum to teach traditional embroidery and to explore modern adaptations of classic motifs through embroidery on textile, as well as on recycled scraps of rubberized-cloth. Young women with restricted schooling, Ouhammadou's collaborators worked with her to create a range of adaptations, gaining skills and economic opportunities through the process. Through sculpting, layering, embroidering and polishing rubber scraps, Ouhammadou also worked in Tetouan to design a series of modern stools. Ouhammadou also partnered with Berber communities in Morocco's Atlas Mountains to re-launch collectives of women led, societies of weavers, working to create a modern collection of fabric and carpets using traditional weavers' techniques.

During her residency at ISCP, Ouhammadou aims to explore adaptations of her designs in glass, partnering with small-scale glass artisans in Brooklyn to develop models she can use on her return to Morocco. Handmade glass, once a staple in Morocco, has been largely abandoned in the face of mass-produced glassware. Ouhammadou hopes through her work to help revive traditional techniques in collaboration with locally based craftsmen.

Ouhammadou was selected for the ISCP residency along with Ayman Yossri Daydban (Palestine / Saudi Arabia) and Zeinab Shahidi Marnani (Iran) from over 200 applications submitted by artists living and working across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This is the second annual collaboration between the ISCP, Art Jameel and Edge of Arabia.

About Sara Ouhammadou

Ouhammadou graduated from the Olivier de Serres in Paris. She has taken part in artist-residencies at Atla(s)now Artist Residency, Morocco (2015); Africa-Center, South Africa (2014);

Dar Al Ma'mun, Morocco (2014 and 2013); and Trankat, Morocco (2014). Awards include the Special Jury Prize at Wanted DESIGN NYC (2015); an Arab Fund for Art and Culture grant (2014); the Fondation of France, Fondation Vallet Laureate (2008/2011); and the L'Oréal Brandstor contest (2010). Ouhaddou participated in the Africa Design Weeks, Casablanca (2015); Dubai Design Days, UAE (2015); French Institut and Intitut du Monde Arabe Paris open call on Morocco Culture (2014); and Paris Design Week (2014); and also held an exhibitions of her work at the Moulin d'Art Contemporarian Toulon, France (2015); Gaite Lyrique Tanger, Tangiers (2014); and Marrakech French Institute (2014). In addition to her work blending art/craft, Ouhaddou has also worked to create brand design and scenography for such international brands as Lancome, Viktor & Rolf, and PreljocaJ ballet. While in the US for her current residency, she also produced a street art mural in Detroit as part of CULTURUNNERS, Art Jameel and Edge of Arabia's evolving cross-cultural journey across the United States.

About Art Jameel's ongoing Artist Residency Program

Art Jameel's ongoing Artist Residency Program is a continual project, in partnership with Edge of Arabia, which aims to support artists from the Middle East and North Africa by providing them with platforms in New York City to further develop their practice, share their work with new audiences, and collaborate with locally based artists. Art Jameel collaborates with artist-in-residence programs at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) and Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA).

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Art Jameel

Art Jameel, one of [Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives](#), fosters and promotes contemporary art and creative entrepreneurship across the MENAT region. In partnership with arts organizations worldwide, ART JAMEEL is developing two arts centres and cultural exchange programs to encourage networking and knowledge sharing. ART JAMEEL is the founding partner of Edge of Arabia, The Crossway Foundation, Jeddah Art Week, and The Archive. In partnership with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, it awards the biannual Jameel Prize for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic traditions. Additional projects include: Art Jameel Photography Award; Jeddah Sculpture Museum, a public park established in collaboration with Jeddah Municipality; Art Jameel Olympics, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia; and Art Jameel Program for Traditional Arts and Crafts in Fustat, Egypt, in collaboration with the Prince's School of Traditional Arts. ALJCI was established in 2003 to promote positive social change through the establishment of long-term partnerships with international institutions, and the creation of initiatives in the fields of Job Creation – Bab Rizq Jameel; Global Poverty Alleviation; Arts and Culture – Art Jameel; Education and Training – Education Jameel; and Health and Social – Social Jameel.

For further information, please visit www.aljci.org.

Edge of Arabia

Edge of Arabia is an independent, non-profit arts initiative, which connects artists and cultural communities between the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region, Europe and United States.

It is the vision of a group of British and Saudi artists who met in the mountains of South-West Saudi Arabia in 2003 and shared a common desire "to start a cultural movement from the periphery of the international art world." With its exhibitions, expeditions, educational programs, and publications, it seeks to foster new audiences, create expanded networks and inspire artists to develop independent and authentic practices, which unite people across physical and psychological borders. Based between London and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and New York, Edge of Arabia is a registered UK Social Enterprise, which maintains creative independence and has, to date, welcomed over 250,000 visitors to its exhibitions and distributed over 50,000 publications worldwide. In 2014 Edge of Arabia launched a grassroots tour across the United States in partnership with Art Jameel. International exhibitions include: Rhizoma, 55th Venice Biennale (2013); #COMETOGETHER, East London (2012); We Need to Talk, Jeddah (2012); The Future of a Promise, 54th Venice Biennale (2011); Terminal, Dubai (2011); Transition, Istanbul: European Capital of Culture (2010); Grey Borders/Grey Frontiers, Berlin (2010); Edge of Arabia, Riyadh (2010); Edge of Arabia, 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); and Edge of Arabia, University of London (2008).

More information can be found online at www.edgeofarabia.com.

International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP)

The International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) is a leading nonprofit, residency-based contemporary art institution for emerging to mid-career artists and curators from around the world, including the United States. With more than 30 artists and curators in residence at all times, the program provides residents with the space, time, and support to develop new projects. With additional activities tailored for professional development and public engagement, ISCP is a platform to produce, present and contextualize contemporary art through a diverse range of international perspectives. ISCP's public programs encourage dialogue and integrate residents into the cultural community of New York City. The residency includes 24-hour access to a private studio space, studio visits from Visiting Critics; Field Trips to museums, galleries and other cultural institutions; and participation in ISCP Talks. Residents at ISCP are also invited to take part in ISCP's Exhibition Program and Participatory Projects.

More information can be found online at www.iscp-nyc.org.

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