



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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Wael Shawky, *Al Araba Al Madfuna II*, 2013
Black-and-white video projection with sound, film still, courtesy of the artist

**SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION PRESENTS MAJOR SOLO EXHIBITIONS OF WORK BY
WAEI SHAWKY, RASHEED ARAEEN, AND SUSAN HEFUNA,
ON VIEW THROUGH JUNE 13, 2014**

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates—Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) presents three solo exhibitions of work by **Wael Shawky**, **Rasheed Araeen**, and **Susan Hefuna**. Titled ***Wael Shawky: Horsemen Adore Perfumes and other stories***, ***Rasheed Araeen: Before and After Minimalism***, and ***Susan Hefuna: Another Place***, the exhibitions opened on March 13, 2014, in the presence of **Hoor Al-Qasimi**, President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation.

The exhibitions opened concurrently with the **seventh annual March Meeting (MM 2014)**, a four-day symposium from March 13-16, 2014, in Sharjah. March Meeting 2014 includes conversations with artists about sustaining engagement in Sharjah and the UAE; brainstorming sessions for collective research and analysis; keynote presentations by leading artists, scholars, and curators; and informal conversations. **Sharjah Biennial 12 (SB12) curator Eungie Joo** considers the MM 2014 an integral part of the upcoming 2015 Biennial, in that it lays the foundation for collaboration and exchange.

Wael Shawky: Horsemen Adore Perfumes and other stories includes videos, installations, sculptures and drawings, highlighting Shawky's interest in how history is rewritten, documented and interpreted. His multilayered works explore the effects of globalisation on society today, and force viewers to navigate the territory of truth, myth and stereotype.

Religion and the tradition of storytelling – both oral and written – play a central role in Shawky's aesthetic. His work often captures settings and social practices that present unexpected moments of irony: significant texts are translated into different languages, age and authority

become inverted, and the separation between religious and social rituals is blurred.

Featured in this exhibition is Shawky's new work *Al Araba Al Madfuna II*, which premiered at London's Serpentine Gallery last November. Co-produced by the Wiener Festwoen and Sharjah Art Foundation, the film re-tells the parables *Horsemen Adore Perfume* and *The Offering* by Egyptian novelist Mohamed Mustagab. As in his earlier film *Al Arab Al Madfuna*, shown during Sharjah Biennial 11, the artist uses children dressed as adults to enact the tales while mouthing words spoken by adult voices. Wael Shawky explains: "Mustagab is interested in narrating tales mainly from villages from upper Egypt. He mixes religion and life to create stories that seem believable, but you know are mythical. His language establishes a link between metaphysics and physics".

Rasheed Araeen: Before and After Minimalism presents sculptures, paintings and drawings created during the more than 50-year career of this influential Pakistani-born British artist. This first major exhibition of the artist's work in the MENASA includes early paintings and drawings, documentation of participatory and performance works, seminal sculptures from the 1960s and a new sculpture specially commissioned for Sharjah titled *Sharjah Blues*.

The exhibition traces his evolution as a painter in Karachi to his shift towards Minimalism in London and ultimately to his international recognition and achievements as a post-Minimalist sculptor. With no formal training in sculpture, it was his work as a civil engineer and an early encounter with the sculptures of Anthony Caro that influenced the formal language and use of simple or industrial materials characteristic of Araeen's best-known works.

Rasheed Araeen: Before and After Minimalism has been supported by the British Council.

Installed in a converted traditional Emirati home, ***Susan Hefuna: Another Place*** brings together a large selection of work by the German-Egyptian artist Susan Hefuna, shown together for the first time. Sculpture, drawing, photography, and videos, created from the 1980s to the present day, reveal the artist's focus on structure in her practice, both directly and indirectly, through these different mediums. The intimate setting of Bait Al Serkal underscores the tension between public and private that is central to Hefuna's practice and offers a framework for understanding the links between the works the artist has created over the course of her career.

In the grid patterns of her mashrabiya works, the lines of her drawings, or the lattice-like structure of her palm-wood towers placed in the courtyard of Bait Al Serkal, Hefuna traces the intersections between identity, social politics, and place. This exhibition includes drawings from Tokyo, Istanbul, New York, and a new series titled *Sharjah Ceilings* created specifically for this exhibition.

Susan Hefuna explains, "I'm excited to see over 200 of my works created between 1984 and 2014 showcased in this exhibition together for the very first time. Bait Al Serkal – which contains more than 45 rooms, corridors, a large courtyard, windows, and doors – is the perfect location for my works, as the atmosphere of the building reminds me of a breathing human being with memories, present and past, unconsciousness, hidden corners, and surprises. The visitor enters the building and discovers works along the way, walking in a labyrinth-like setting. The spirit of the works is unveiled through the dynamic changes in light and shadows. Patterns emerge from the shadows between the inside and outside space. I discovered similarities to the structures of my drawings. Inspired by Bait Al Serkal, I did a series of ink drawings titled Sharjah

Ceilings in 2013, and *Sharjah Afaz Drawings* in 2014, which is a site-specific installation made from palm wood in the courtyard of Bait Al Serkal. All works in this exhibition are interconnected in a way. The dialogue between the house, the works, and the viewers is a unique and amazing experience.”

Susan Hefuna: Another Place has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with the support of Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V. Stuttgart (IfA).

About the artists:

Wael Shawky

Wael Shawky uses a range of media to produce work that explores issues of history, religion, culture, and the effects of globalisation on society today. In photographs, installations, videos and performances, he mines traditions of entertainment and performance through multilayered historical reconstructions that force viewers to navigate the territory of truth, myth, and stereotype. Shawky’s solo exhibitions include Serpentine Galleries, London, UK (2013-2014), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, USA (2013), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2012), Nottingham Contemporary, UK (2011), Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2011), and Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, Italy (2010), among other venues. Recent group presentations include dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel, Germany (2012), and the Istanbul Biennial, Turkey (2011). He received the Schering Foundation Art Award and the Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2011. Shawky’s residencies include Sharjah Art Foundation’s Witness Programme and the Serpentine’s Edgware Road Project. Shawky founded MASS Alexandria, an independent studio study programme for young artists in Alexandria in 2010.

Rasheed Araeen

London-based artist, writer, and curator Rasheed Araeen began working as an artist while studying Civil Engineering at NED University in Karachi. In 1964, Araeen moved to London, and became an early pioneer and practitioner of Minimalism. With no formal training in sculpture, it was his work as a civil engineer and an early encounter with the sculptures of Anthony Caro that influenced the formal language and use of simple or industrial materials characteristic of Araeen’s best-known works.

Yet unlike Caro, Araeen tried to eliminate hierarchy and traditional notions of composition in his work. In early works, such as *Sculpture No. 1*, conceived in 1968, steel girders were placed, without a plinth, in a simple grid on the gallery floor. In his later “Structures,” he used modular cubes or rectangles that were infinitely repeatable and re-combinable. While reflective of Minimalist aesthetics, Araeen’s work became increasingly participatory as seen in works such as *Char Yar* (1968), where viewers were free to manipulate a series of cubic forms. By 1970, his growing interest in the performative and participatory possibilities of sculpture was realised with his seminal “Chakras,” where the artist and audience tossed a series of disks into the water at St. Katherine’s Docks.

Araeen has exhibited internationally and regionally with significant solo and group exhibitions including *Zero to Infinity*, Museo de Arte, Lima, Peru (2013), *Before and After Minimalism: Drawings, Painting, Sculpture and Concepts, 1959 – 1974*, Aicon Gallery, London (2010), *To Whom It May Concern*, Serpentine Gallery, London (1996), V Habana Biennale, Havana, Cuba (1994), *Strife and/or Structure*, Modern Art Gallery, Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka-Shi, Japan (1993), *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Rasheed Araeen A Retrospective*, Ikon Gallery,

Birmingham (1987), Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China (2012), Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2012), *Migrations*, Tate Britain, London (2012), *every day* Sydney Biennale, Australia (1998), *Magicians de la terra*, Centre George Pompidou/ La Villetter, France, Paris (1989), and *Art of Society* at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (1978).

The author of numerous essays and journals Araeen has written *Art beyond Art/ Ecoaesthetics: A Manifesto for the 21st Century*, Third Text Publications, London (2010) and the autobiographical *Making Myself Visible*, Kala Press (1984). His work is included in the collections of Arts Council of England, CANAL PLUS, Paris, Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka- Shi, Japan and Tate Gallery London.

Susan Hefuna

Susan Hefuna uses a variety of media, including drawing, photography, sculpture, installation, film, and performance to create multilayered works informed by her dual German-Egyptian heritage and personal experiences in life. For more than 25 years, the artist has investigated images and structures and how they work in diverse contexts, Awarded the Daniel and Florence Guerlain Contemporary Drawing Prize in Paris in 2013, Hefuna has exhibited widely and internationally, including solo exhibitions at Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany (2014), PiArtworks Istanbul/London (2014 and 2011), Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago (2014 and 2012), *Notationsnotations*, The Drawing Center, NYC, USA (2013), *Rasm: of Wood, Silver and Gold*, Rose Issa Projects London, UK (2013 and 2010), *I Love Egypt* cooperation Serpentine Gallery and Townhouse (2011), *Cairo Dreams*, The Third Line, Dubai (2011 and 2008), Townhouse, Cairo, Egypt (2010/2011 and 2008, 2006, 2004, 2001, 2000), Belvedere, Vienna, Austria (2010), MUMOK, Vienna (2010), Freud Museum, Vienna (2010), Mapping Wien, Galerie Grita Insam, Vienna (2009), ACAF, Alexandria (2008), Bluecoat, Liverpool, UK (2004), Kunstverein Heidelberg, Germany (2004), *Navigation x cultural*, National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa (2000), Kunstverein Ludwigsburg, Germany (1994). Group exhibitions include *Abstract Drawing*, Drawing Room, London (2014), *Safar/Voyage*, MOA, Vancouver (2013), *Nouvelles Vagues - Champs Elysées*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013), *Cross-border*, ZKM Karlsruhe, (2013), *Encounter*, Katara Arts Center, Qatar, Doha (2012/13), Sydney Biennale, Australia (2012), *Wunder*, Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2011), *On Line: Drawing Through the 20th Century* MoMA, NYC (2010), *Susan Hefuna - Bharti Kher - Fred Tomaselli: between Worlds*, Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland (2010), *Fare Mondi*, Venice Biennale, Italy (2009), *Taswir*, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, Germany (2009), *Manifesto Marathon*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2008), Seville Biennale, Spain (2008), *Museum as Hub: Antikhana*, New Museum, NYC (2008), Museum of Modern Art, Algiers, Algeria (2007), The Second Riwaq Biennale (2007), Sharjah Biennial, UAE (2007), Institut Du Monde Arabe, Paris, France (2005/2006), Bulgaria Biennale, Bulgaria (2006), Prague Biennale, Czech Republic (2005), *Contrepoints*, Louvre, Paris (2004/2005), ArteEast Gallery, NYC (2004), Photo Cairo, Egypt (2003) *Rencontres*, Photo Biennale Bamako, Mali (2003), *DisORIENTATION*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2003) *Photographie a la carte!*, Centre PasquArt, Biel, Switzerland (2002), *Al Nitaq*, Cairo (2001), Cairo Biennale, International Award (1998).

About Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF)

Sharjah Art Foundation brings a broad range of contemporary art and cultural programmes to the communities of Sharjah, the UAE, and the region. Since 2009, SAF has built on the history of cultural collaboration and exchange that began with the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993. Working with local and international partners, SAF creates opportunities for artists and artistic production through core initiatives that include the Sharjah Biennial, the annual March Meeting,

residencies, production grants, commissions, exhibitions, research, publications, and a growing collection. SAF's education and public programmes focus on building recognition of the central role art can play in the life of a community by promoting public learning and a participatory approach to art.

For more information about SAF and its programmes, visit www.sharjahart.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

FITZ & CO Katrina Weber Ashour T: 212-627-1455, ext. 232 E: katrina@fitzandco.com

Sharjah Art Foundation Maitha Al Jassim T: +971-6-544-4113, ext. 25 E: maitha@sharjahart.org

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