

**For Immediate Release**  
**June 14, 2012**



Sharjah Heritage Area. Courtesy Sharjah Art Foundation.

## **SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES DATES OF NEXT SHARJAH BIENNIAL: MARCH 13 – MAY 13, 2013**

**Sharjah Biennial 11 Curator Yuko Hasegawa Reveals A Selection of Artists: Saadane Afif, Yang Fudong, Studio Mumbai, Kazuyo Sejima, and Wael Shawky**

**Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)—Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF)** has announced the dates for Sharjah Biennial 11: March 13 – May 13, 2013, and curator Yuko Hasegawa has revealed a selection of the artists invited to create work for the Biennial: Saadane Afif, Yang Fudong, Studio Mumbai, Kazuyo Sejima, and Wael Shawky.

For the theme of Sharjah Biennial 11, Yuko Hasegawa, Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (MOT), has selected artworks that explore the complexity and diversity of cultures, societies, and political relations, and encourage new forms of dialogue. Hasegawa was inspired by the metaphor of the courtyard in Islamic architecture, where elements of both public and private life co-exist, in particular the historical courtyards of Sharjah and the exchanges and encounters they host. With globalisation, the concept of the courtyard is more important than ever before.

Yuko Hasegawa states, “I will invite a selection of Indian, Lebanese, Belgian, Japanese, and Spanish architects to help envision a new urban structure that connects the historic area and its courtyard typology with the larger city. Within these new and traditional structures a broad range of artists will be invited to create works that will offer new experiences to be shared. Here the courtyard becomes more than a ‘place’—it becomes a ‘condition’ where culture is nourished and true knowledge is formed.”

Sharjah Art Foundation President Hoor Al Qasimi states, “The 2013 Biennial will reflect Sharjah’s long history as a place where diverse communities are encouraged to share ideas and contribute to the multi-cultural landscape that is characteristic of the Emirate. Ms. Hasegawa has proposed a deeply thoughtful Biennial that will address

some of the issues critical to art production in this current moment of great cultural change.”

### **About the Artists:**

**Saadane Afif** (b. 1970, France) is a visual artist who works with text, music, sculpture, and performance in collaboration with writers, composers, and musicians. Afif proposes a new system for art production that allows a work to take multiple forms. Afif is currently based in Berlin.

**Studio Mumbai**, founded by artist Bijoy Jain (b. 1965, India), is a collective of skilled craftsmen and architects who explore the relationship between land and architecture, among other themes, through the production of large-scale mock-ups, models, material studies, sketches, and drawings.

**Yang Fudong** (b. 1971, Beijing, China) makes film and video works that often focus on the youth of China and explore the human condition in the context of this rapidly changing and modernising country.

**Kazuyo Sejima** (b. 1956, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan) has developed an architectural language to create a minimal and transparent space between public and private that offers people a new experience and understanding of their architectural environment. She established her own architecture firm, Kazuyo Sejima & Associates in 1987, and another, SANAA with Ryue Nishizawa, in 1995.

**Wael Shawky** (b. 1971, Alexandria, Egypt) uses a range of media to produce art that explores issues of religion, culture, and the effects of globalisation on society today. For Sharjah Biennial 11, Shawky will present a new commission developed as part of his Sharjah Biennial 10 Witness Programme residency.

### **About Sharjah Biennial 11:**

The origins of courtyard culture can be found in ancient Rome, but Islamic culture gave it a distinct sophistication and articulation. The Mughal Empire introduced courtyards to India. At the far end of the Silk Road, China and Japan have their own courtyard culture, where the gardens serve as a space to meet with others, or for contemplation. The culture of the courtyard garden spread to Spain and across the Mediterranean coast of North Africa. It reached Central America through Spanish and Portuguese explorers. It has played a vital role in the building of local cultural consciousness, and the fostering of engaged conversation. Unlike the Western agora, it is not a space that is uncritically open to the public. It is precisely the place where the global and local encounter one another and negotiate the effects of each wave of globalisation.

Early instances of what we now call ‘globalisation’ connected East Asia and the Levant between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, during the European Dark Ages. The Silk Road, both over land and by sea (the Maritime Road), not only facilitated exchange and development in economic terms but it also vastly reshaped our cultures. Illuminating these roots in the context of the present allows us to re-orientate ourselves once again, and to reconsider the historically significant geopolitical and cultural role of the Arabian Peninsula.

Hasegawa continues, “Imagining such a cultural map, stretching East and West, with the Arabian Peninsula at its center, the meditative Islamic courtyard garden became my key concept. My intention is to form social spaces, in between the public and the

private, where visitors and locals, both Emiratis and the broader local community, will meet and contribute to the exchange of ideas and the production of new cultural forms.”

### **About Yuko Hasegawa:**

Yuko Hasegawa is Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2006 – present) and is also a Professor at Tama Art University, Tokyo, where she teaches curatorial and art theory. Previously, she was Chief Curator and Founding Artistic Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (1999–2006).

Hasegawa has worked on many international biennials, and has held such positions as: Artistic Advisor of the 12<sup>th</sup> Venice Architectural Biennale (2010), Co-Curator of the 29<sup>th</sup> Sao Paulo Biennale (2010), and Co-Curator of the 4<sup>th</sup> Seoul International Media Art Biennale (2006).

Hasegawa has curated major thematic group exhibitions, and solo exhibitions by such artists as Matthew Barney, Marlene Dumas, Rebecca Horn, and Atsuko Tanaka. She has served on advisory boards for the Guggenheim Museum and the Venice Biennale, and has authored curatorial essays in publications for museums including The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

### **Recent SAF NEWS and Announcements:**

SAF at Documenta 13: The Sharjah Art Foundation has commissioned two artist projects that are now on view at Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany, which opened June 9, 2012. Both artists were the recipients of SAF’s Production Programme grant in 2011, which is awarded annually to encourage ambitious projects and to provide artists with a platform for experimentation.

Bani Abidi’s (b. 1971, Karachi, Pakistan) “Death at a 30 Degree Angle” is a mixed media project that narrates a fictitious account of a small-time politician's attempt to commission a monumental public statue of himself.

CAMP (an artist studio founded in 2007 including Shaina Anand [b. 1975, Bombay, India] and Ashok Sukumaran [b. 1974, Sapporo, Japan]) presents the project “The Boat Modes” (2009–12), an installation that includes a film that takes viewers on a journey from the Gulf of Kutch in India to the U.A.E. to the ports of Somalia, and back. The Kassel presentation of this work was co-commissioned by Documenta.

SAF at MoMA PS1: *Lara Favaretto: Just Knocked Out*, on view at MoMA PS1 in New York City through October 9, 2012, is curated by Peter Eleey, Curator, MoMA PS1, and co-organised by MoMA PS1 and Sharjah Art Foundation. The first survey of work by Lara Favaretto (b. 1973, Treviso, Italy), the exhibition comprises a dozen works from the past 15 years, as well as new pieces created specifically for the exhibition. This exhibition will open in Sharjah on December 15, 2012. A selection of Favaretto’s work was included in Sharjah Biennial 9, in 2009.

### **About the 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 its core initiatives, including 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. Sharjah Art Foundation is funded by the Department of Culture and Information, Government of Sharjah.

For more information on Sharjah Art Foundation and its programmes, please visit [www.sharjahart.org](http://www.sharjahart.org).

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