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Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces, Sharjah Heritage Area, image courtesy of Sharjah Art Foundation

SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEW DETAILS OF SHARJAH BIENNIAL 11, MARCH 13–MAY 13, 2013

Sharjah Biennial 11

March 13–May 13, 2013
Sharjah, UAE

Opening Week Programme: March 13–17, 2013
register@sharjahart.org

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)—Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) has announced new details of Sharjah Biennial 11, which takes place from March 13–May 13, 2013, in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Inspired by the courtyard in Islamic architecture, Sharjah Biennial 11 curator **Yuko Hasegawa** proposes a new cultural cartography that reconsiders the relationships between the Arab world, Asia, the Far East, through North Africa.

Film Programme

A film programme curated by Thai filmmaker **Apichatpong Weerasethakul** will feature programming by leading figures in the film industry, including **Steve Anker**, Dean of the School of Film/Video at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), Los Angeles; **Khavn De La Cruz**, Poet, Pianist, Filmmaker, Mondomanila, the Philippines; **Ali Jaafar**, Executive Director, Independent Film Division, Quinta Communications, London; **Mehelli Modi**, Founder of Second Run DVD, London; **Alcino Leite Neto**, Editor, Sao Paulo; **Jean-Pierre Rehm**, Theorist, Festival director, FIDMarseille, Paris; **Tilda Swinton**, Scotland; and **Apichatpong Weerasethakul**, Film Director/ Producer, Chiang Mai, Thailand. The programme will include evening screenings in an outdoor courtyard cinema in the new SAF spaces.

Sharjah Art Foundation New Art Spaces

The opening of Sharjah Biennial 11 will mark the inauguration of Sharjah Art Foundation's five new multi-functional art spaces which have been in development since 2009. With approximately 20,000 square feet of interior space, connected by open-air courtyards and rooftop terraces, these new spaces will provide venues for the Sharjah Art Foundation's growing activities and the increasing needs of its community.

The new buildings are located in the Sharjah Heritage Area, which is characterised by clusters of courtyard buildings with windowless, peripheral walls that form narrow alleys. Many of the existent buildings in these areas are former traditional Emirati family homes, which have been preserved or restored over the past 50 years. The new SAF art spaces will follow this typology, while re-introducing lost historic details such as the use of rooftops as social and communal spaces with bridges connecting one to another.

New Commissions

For SB11, Yuko Hasegawa has invited approximately 24 artists to create site-specific works in the new SAF spaces or in the other existing buildings and courtyards across the Arts and Heritage Areas that have been used for the Sharjah Biennial since 2003. Among the confirmed new commissions are works by artists, musicians, and filmmakers including **Saadane Afif, Tiffany Chung, Yang Fudong, Runa Islam, Lucia Koch, Nasir Nasrallah, Ernesto Neto, Otobong Nkanga, Anri Sala, Wael Shawky**, and a collaborative work by **Ryuichi Sakamoto, Seigen Ono, and Shiro Takatani**.

Hasegawa has also announced the names of architects and designers who will create new works, including **Office KGDVS**, Kersten Geers and David Van Severen; **SANAA**, Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa; **Studio Mumbai**, Bijoy Jain; and **SUPERFLEX**, Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen. Each will create a "courtyard," or rather, propose a new, conceptual social space by adding their interpretation to the courtyard's context in the city of Sharjah. Charged with various architectural programmes, these spaces will take the form of an oasis, a pavilion, a place to rest, and a public sculpture park.

Sharjah Biennial Opening Week Programme & March Meeting Dates:

The Sharjah Biennial Opening Week Programme will begin with the professional opening on March 13, 2013, followed by the evening Opening Gala Dinner and Biennial Awards ceremony. A full schedule of events March 13–17 will include performances, films, lectures, and the annual March Meeting, a three-day symposium featuring presentations by artists, art professionals, and institutions on the production and dissemination of art in the MENASA (Middle East, North Africa, South Asia) region and internationally. Professional registration is available at register@sharjahart.org.

Sharjah Biennial 11 Curatorial Concept

For the Biennial's upcoming edition, Yuko Hasegawa has begun to look at artworks and practices that resonate with strands of the Sharjah Biennial 11 theme: complexity and diversity of cultures and societies; spatial and political relations; notions of new forms of contact, dialogue, and exchange; and production through art and architectural practices of new ways of knowing, thinking, and feeling.

Hasegawa was inspired by the courtyard in Islamic architecture—in particular the historical courtyards of Sharjah—where elements of both public and private life intertwine, and where the objective political world and the introspective subjective space

intersect and cross over. What sorts of encounters and exchanges do they make possible? What are the ambiguities of such open-closed spaces, and their potentials?

The courtyard is also seen as a plane of experience and experimentation—an arena for learning and critical thinking of a discursive and embodied kind. It marks a generative space for the production of new awareness and knowledge. Within the network of intensifying international and globalising links, the courtyard as an experiential and experimental space comes to mirror something of Sharjah as a vital zone of creativity, transmission, and transformation.

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.

For more information on Sharjah Art Foundation and its programmes, please visit www.sharjahart.org.

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