

-Press release-

## PORTRAIT OF A NATION

Contemporary Art from the United Arab Emirates  
Featuring works from the ADMAF Art Collection

13 September – 29 October 2017

me Collectors Room Berlin / Olbricht Foundation  
Auguststrasse 68, 10117 Berlin  
Opening hours: Wed – Mon, 12 – 6 pm



The exhibition *Portrait of a Nation* offers a glimpse into the creative practices of 50 contemporary artists from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Visitors are invited to explore the country through the individual perspectives of the participating artists who call it home. The exhibition is divided into seven themed rooms: Nation & Unity, Geography & Nature, Architecture & Urbanism, Portraiture & Identity, Religion & Spirituality, Language & Calligraphy, and Tradition & Heritage.

Founded in 1971 the UAE is today home to some 200 nationalities. The exhibition offers a rare glimpse into its little-known history and diversity while considering significant contemporary questions of heritage and identity. Against a backdrop of rapid development and globalisation, the works explore complex ideas of modern nationhood, visiting urban and rural landscapes and examining major issues of unity, spirituality, and language.

Tracing the nation's shifting identity, the exhibition includes 20 specially commissioned works by emerging and established artists. These new reflections are contextualised by seminal pieces dating back to the birth of the country. Three generations of renowned Emirati artists are presented; from Hassan Sharif and his atelier students to younger artists.

The exhibition presents a variety of mediums: sculpture, photography, land art, painting, textiles, video, scenography, and new takes on traditional crafts.

One of the largest exhibitions of Emirati art, *Portrait of a Nation* opened in Abu Dhabi in 2016. Now staged abroad for the first time, it prompts urgent and globally relevant questions on identity and exchange in the 21st century.

### **Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF)**

The exhibition features works from the collection of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF), among the oldest, non-profit cultural organisations in the Arabian Gulf and organiser of the Abu Dhabi Festival. Founded in 1996, ADMAF has pioneered new artistic practices over the last 20 years, seeking to deepen global cross-cultural dialogue and inspire a renewed interest in the creativity of the UAE and the wider Arab region.

### **Artists**

Ebtisam Abdul Aziz, Ali Al Abdan, Zayed Al Absi, Sarah Al Agroobi, Sarah Al Ahabbi, Ahmed Saeed Al Areef Al Dhaheri, Mohammed Al Astad, Ammar Al Attar, Jassim Al Awadi, Khalid Al Banna, Amna Al Dabbagh, Shamsa Al Dhaheri, Abdul Aziz Al Fadli, Ahmed Al Faresi, Reem Al Ghaith, Yousif Al Harmoudi, Eman Al Hashemi, Zeinab Al Hashemi, Khuloud Al Jabri, Saeed Al Madani, Fatema Al Mazrouie, Mohammed Al Mazrouie, Sheikha Alyazia Bint Nahyan Al Nahyan, Omran Al Owais, Mohammed Al Qassab, Azza Al Qubaisi, Abdul Qader Al Rais, Sumaya Al Rais, Hamdan Buti Al Shamsi, Karima Al Shomely, Architecture + Other Things, Hind Bin Demaithan, Maitha Demithan, Afra Bin Dhaher, Lamya Gargash, Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, Aisha Juma, Layla Juma, Mohammed Kazem, Fatma Lootah, Najat Makki, Lateefa Bint Maktoum, Mohammed Mandi, Khalid Mezaina, Salama Nasib, Abdul Rahim Salem, Khalid Shafar, Hassan Sharif, Hussein Sharif, Obaid Suroor, Khalil Abdul Wahid

### **Events programme**

**13.09., 1-6 pm:** 'Meet the Artists': Meet 22 of the featured Emirati artists and listen to their stories in a series of one-on-one conversations.

**14.09., 3-5 pm:** Presentation and talk with featured artist Saeed Al Madani.

**16.09., 4-5 pm:** Talk with Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF), Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival. Moderated by Nicola Graef.

**16.09., 5-6 pm:** Concert 'Tarek Yamani – Peninsular: Portrait in Khaleeji Rhythms and Jazz'.

**30.09., 4-7 pm:** Film Day 'UAE on Screen' with 'Father's Grant' by Ahmed Zain, 'Nearby Sky' by Nujoom Al Ghanem, 'The Art of Nature', an ADMAF film to accompany the Abu Dhabi Festival's 2017 Exhibition.

**05.10., 7-8.30 pm:** Panel Discussion 'Emirati Identity, Emirati Creativity' with featured artists Zeinab Al Hashemi and Amna Al Dabbagh, as well as the world's first Emirati spoken word artist Afra Atiq. Moderated by Arsalan Mohammed.

**18.10., 7-9.30 pm:** Art & Dinner

**19.10., 7-9 pm:** Talk & Performance by the artist Karima Al Shomely, who speaks about her research into the Emirati burqa, followed by a live performance. Moderated by Arsalan Mohammed.

**26.10., 7-8.30 pm:** Talk '50 Years of Transformation' with Dr Frauke Heard-Bey, author and historian, David Heard, petroleum engineer. Moderated by Monika Krauss.

## **Educational programme for school groups & students**

**14.09.:** Workshop with featured artist Sarah Al Agroobi

**15.09.:** Workshop with featured artist Azza Al Qubaisi

**06.10.:** Workshop with featured artist Zeinab Al Hashemi

**07.10.:** Workshop with featured artist Amna Al Dabbagh

**08.10.:** Workshop with the first Emirati spoken word artist Afra Atiq

**20.10.:** Workshop with featured artist Karima Al Shomely

### **Images & Copyrights (f.l.t.r./ f.u.t.d.):**

Khalid Al Banna, Cycle of change (detail), 2016, fabric collage, 130 cm diameter. An Abu Dhabi Festival 2016 Commission. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

Sarah Al Agroobi, The Desert Rose, 2016, Resin with sand from the seven Emirates, 45 x 60 x 45 cm. An Abu Dhabi Festival 2016 Commission. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

Lamy Gargash, Diana, 2012, from the series 'Through the Looking Glass', Diptych C-Type Print, each 114 x 76 cm. Courtesy of the artist and The Third Line

Azza Al Qubaisi, Dhad, 2016, galvanised steel with colour coating, 250 x 300 x 150 cm. An Abu Dhabi Festival 2016 Commission. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

Mohammed Kazem, Photographs with a Flag, 1997, 12 C-Prints, each 42 x 27,22 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Dubai

Obaid Suroor, Al Fujairah Castle, 2007, oil on canvas, 65 x 79 cm. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

Khalid Mezaina, Cafeterias of the UAE, Pencil and drawing pen on cartridge paper, digitally coloured, 6 illustrations; each 50 x 50 cm. An Abu Dhabi Festival 2016 Commission. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

Zeinab Al Hashemi, Coast Collision, 2016, from the 'Urban Phantasmagoria' series. Digital scanography; satellite shot and digital editing, 160 x 240 cm. An Abu Dhabi Festival 2016 commission. Courtesy of the artist. Part of the ADMAF Art Collection. © ADMAF

## **Press contact**

me Collectors Room Berlin / Olbricht Foundation

Tina Volk

Auguststrasse 68, 10117 Berlin

[presse@me-berlin.com](mailto:presse@me-berlin.com)

Fon 030 860085 -114, Fax -120

## **In cooperation with**

**ASK  
HELMUT.  
COM**

**BERLINARTLINK**

**BLAU**

**Collectors Agenda**

**tip** Berlin