

TALKING HEADS: WHO CAME, WHAT THEY SAID

We gauged key figures and participants at Abu Dhabi Art this year and asked them what they thought.



HE Sheikh Salem Al Qassimi, Assistant Undersecretary of Arts and Heritage, UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development

"The fair is an international platform as is the 15-year-old Al Burda initiative developed by the UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development. Altogether, it felt like the perfect combination and we were keen on the Al Burda Endowment debuting in the capital, where it was born."

"A calm breeze was blowing on the coast but a stronger and refreshing wind of creation struck me at Abu Dhabi Art. I was impressed by *Beyond: Emerging Artists* and the quality of presentation. This is art diversity at its best."



Alexandre Boquel, CEO, Vermont (Christian Dior Couture)



Valérie Sandoz, Secretary General of Comité Colbert

"French luxury feels at home in Abu Dhabi Art as artists and artisans speak the language of creativity. The collaboration between the luxury industry and artists challenges both and also opens new doors while enhancing their respective skills."

"The fair has a rich selection of galleries, artists and art theorists who create this meeting point between East and West. Many works caught my eye but artists Maimouna Guerressi (Officine dell'Imaginaire) and El Anatsui (October gallery) have to take the cake."



Stella Kesaeva, President of Stella Art Foundation



Ashwin Thadani, collector and founder of Galerie Isa

"Collectors get introduced to a wide range of artistic formats and ideas by being exposed to artworks from various regions. For gallerists, art fairs serve as extended professional spaces where artists can be exposed to a new audience."

"Traveling with board members from the Honolulu Biennial Foundation marks the first time for most of us here. I've found that the focus on China and India has given the fair an incredible level of depth and focus that is particularly distinctive."



Jonathan Kindred, CEO Morgan Stanley Japan



Inna Bazhenova, publisher of The Art Newspaper and founder of the IN ARTIBUS foundation

"Abu Dhabi Art is extraordinary and a work of art in itself, especially with its focus on India and China this year. Both are countries with ancient traditions and now they are establishing a niche on the international art circuit."

ABSTRACT ARABESQUE

The recipient of the Chevalier de La Legion d'Honneur, France's highest merit, artist Bernar Venet comes to ADA. We go to Ceysson & Bénétière's booth to find out why the conceptual artist, known for his curved, mathematically precise steel sculptures would make a series of paintings with a Persian mathematician's writings in Arabic script.



two-dimensional works such as formulas painted on canvas or industrial drawings on paper. "My first diagrams on canvas and paper were inspired by school textbooks. Representing graphs with equations enabled me to free myself from anything that was traditionally defined as artistic," explains the artist.

It is his 2013 *Homage to Al-Khwarizmi* in the Venice Biennale that added an elusive quality to his rather precise work. The series of saturation paintings on coloured backgrounds is inspired by the ninth-century oeuvre of the eminent mathematician and astronomer Muhammad ibn Musa Al-Khwarizmi, whose explanation of the Indian numerical system incorporated the then-revolutionary zero and marked a turning point in the history of the discipline. Venet, whose Arabic is close to non-existent, relied on translators to use excerpts of the mathematician's writings. Intrigued by the script, the artist didn't let the language barrier hinder him, seeing it as a source of inspiration and further abstraction. When asked about how he could possibly possess a full appreciation for the eloquence of his source texts, he comments, "I paint these symbols on a gold background – in the manner of Byzantine iconography – to glorify, one could say, this high level of abstract thought from human reason."

In a fitting tribute to a cultural heritage of mathematics and science that comes from this part of the world, New York-based Ceysson & Bénétière gallery saw ADA as the necessary next destination for this work. "Venet is a reference point for minimalism and conceptualism. He is one of this generation's greatest," says a gallery representative, stressing that there is a growing local appetite for these artistic movements – as evidenced by their sales since their first participation in 2017. "The fair is a great yardstick for

Bernar Venet. *Homage to Al-Khwarizmi*. 2013. Acrylic. 240 x 454 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Ceysson & Bénétière



"I paint these symbols on a gold background to glorify this high level of abstract thought from human reason."

gauging trends in this part of the world, and Venet's work is very much at home here."

Khwarizmi's script has made the rounds, entering different domains and revolutionising them, but it is here in ADA that it makes a homecoming, surrounded by avid collectors and art aficionados drawn to the capacity for art to transcend multiple disciplines. [Read more](#)

AT DUSK

A Desert Experience with ADA at the Jumeirah Al Wathba resort.



Khan and Maraki



Simone Odematt and Maraki



Mariano Tibelhorn and Channing Norton



Audrenn Trouillet and Iole Pellion di Persano



Kho Khorsandian, Bobby and Mohammad Afshar



Edward Mitterand and Nazanine Sabbag



Natasha and Alexandra Akhmerova



Benhood Javaherpour and Jean-Marc Decrop



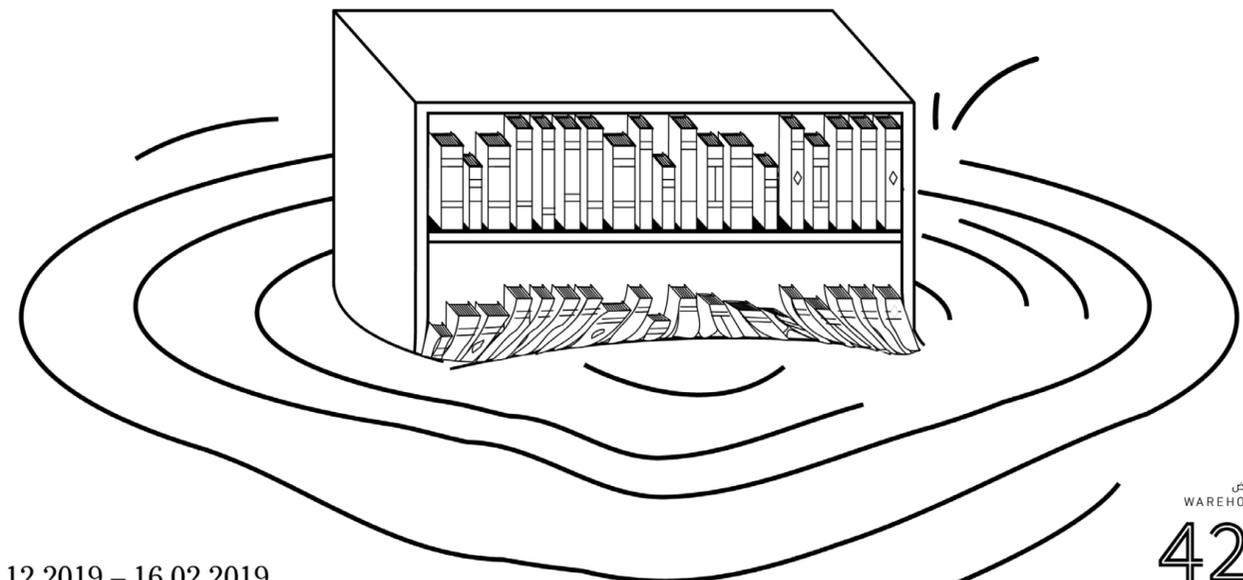
Ayesha Shehmir and Shehmir Shaikh



Frederick Dufour and Ann Faircloth

Warehouse421 presents its upcoming exhibition: How to maneuver: Shape-shifting texts and other publishing tactics

Curated by Kayfa ta / Maha Maamoun and Ala Younis



10.12.2019 – 16.02.2019

Warehouse421, Mina Zayed, Abu Dhabi

From Hussein Nassereddine's "The Complete Uncredited Works" 2018 – ongoing.

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