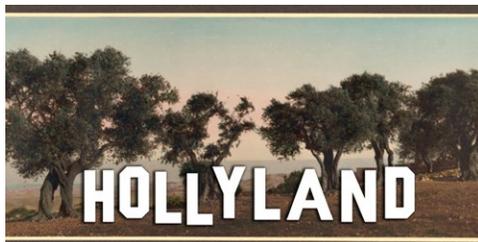


daily **canvas**

21-22 NOVEMBER 2019 | ISSUE 2 | ABU DHABI ART EDITION



Slow and Steady

Opening sales pick up after a slow start, revealing a robust local offering

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When Picasso went to Palestine

We discuss Khaled Hourani's work with Zawyeh gallery

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Islamic Art with a Contemporary Twist

The new Al Burda Endowment showcases the latest talent at ADA

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ALL EYES ON CHINA

While artistic director Jérôme Sans can enter a room and own it, it's the debuted works from China that stole the show at Abu Dhabi Art's *New Horizons: China Today*.

Our encounter began with a hurried invitation into what curator Jérôme Sans called his "secret room". The private viewing space, set back from the walkways of the fair enclosed one of the more provocative works; Xu Zhen's *Alien 2* (2017-2018). The other works of Sans' selection for *New Horizons: China Today*, however, remain in full view.

For Abu Dhabi Art, the renowned curator, art critic, and co-founder of Palais de Tokyo, introduced ten contemporary Chinese artists that he claims encapsulate the region's relentless momentum. "There's a clear-sightedness of expression and rich dynamism that's only just being acknowledged," says Sans. "When I was invited to curate this show I said that these two emerging countries have so much to share that no one can fully comprehend yet. It's a huge platform for dialogue."

Li Qing's multimedia practice, for example, oscillates between global and local dialogues. Two pieces on display, *View From The Pangu Hotel* (2017-19), and *Curve and Straight* (2017-19), invite the viewer to gaze through the artist's 'windows for observation'. Qing's wooden frames, recovered from the streets of Shanghai are re-painted in artificial shades of turquoise and fuchsia. Through Qing's intervention, they become portals into tangible and imagined realities – the collages inside critique the universal burden of consumerism and the hypocrisy of beauty via a local lens. "I introduce multiple perspectives through the imposition of digital images uploaded by social media users as is the case with the manipulated Bird's Nest stadium image in *View From The Pangu Hotel*," says the artist.

While Qing's practice unpicks human habits, for Lu Chao, groups of people become ominous masses. Haunting and morbid, in *Black Light No. 4*, (2016) bodiless heads form a worm-like trail writhing through a forest, expanding endlessly across the 2.5-metre canvas. *Mineral Ancestry* (2019) by Li Shurui, on the other hand, is more optimistic. The artist codifies seminal moments in human evolution with boldly coloured, acidic spheres, or what she describes as "black holes" set against a backdrop of purple rice paper. Shurui, typically works in large-scale format and

"There's a clear-sightedness of expression and rich dynamism that's only just being acknowledged."

is fascinated by light and its spectrum. "Nature was man's first religion," she says. Across the wall her circles of varying colours and textures form chronological markers of time and space. At one point, a cluster of blue spheres mirror the colour codes once imposed upon the Chinese population to remove individual thought. "Right now, we're returning to nature," she says. "We're seeking natural foods and a

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Xu Zhen. *Fortune - Statuette of the Overseer of Priests Armeny*, 2018. Oil on canvas. 120 x 95 cm. Courtesy of the artist and ShanghART



SERPENT BOHÈME COLLECTION

BOUCHERON

PARIS SINCE 1858

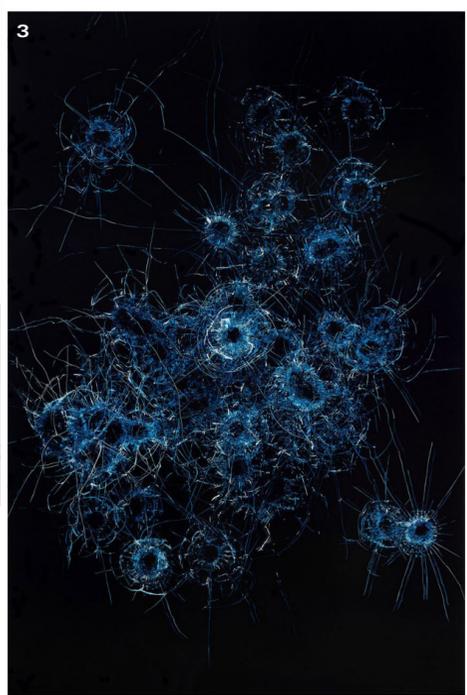
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ALL EYES ON CHINA

connection with our environment, yet at the same time science is greatly shaping our existence and we don't know where this will take us."

Directed towards fresh eyes through Abu Dhabi Art, such exchanges see regional histories unite with global narratives, while specificities and differences are equally magnified. Sans' role is to mediate this energy flow from one work to the other, as from one generation to another. Dynamically leaping from large-scale works like Shurui's and Chao's, to smaller pieces like Xu Zhen's 50cm high *Turbulent* 'action paintings' left engulfed in space, *New Horizons: China Today* exudes powerful tension achieved through proportion. At the entrance of the show, the viewer is faced with the giant presence of a dinosaur and rhinoceros in fiberglass, created by famed duo Sun Yuan and Peng Yu, and facing a mirror that doubles their magnitude. "I need to show the adrenaline and electricity of the artists and their works," says Sans. "This vibrancy in the presence of the artist and my curation is essentially a matter of how to enter each artwork into a space and, together with the artist, take it over." [Read more](#)



1. Li Qing. *Curve and Straight*. 2017-19. Courtesy of the artist and Tang Contemporary Art
2. Sun Yuan & Peng Yu. *Teenager Teenager & I Didn't Notice What I am Doing*. 2011-2012. Courtesy of the artists and Galleria Continua
3. Zhao Zhao. *Constellations No. 14*. 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Chambers Fine Art Gallery

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UPCOMING TALKS

At Manarat Al Saadiyat Theatre
22 November

RISE FROM THE PACIFIC: EMERGING CONTEMPORARY ART CENTERS

2:30-3:30pm
Leading experts on the Pacific region discuss the emergence of this area as a growing hub for contemporary art and innovation

ON THE DEFENSE: CULTURAL IDENTITY

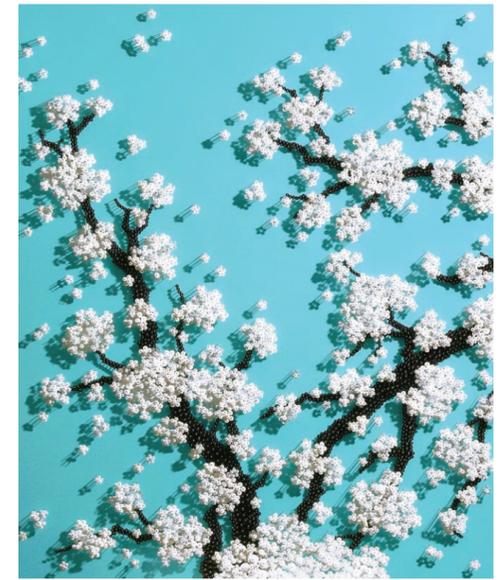
4:30-5:30pm
Zoulikha Bouabdellah, Dana Awartani and Stanley Siu on their commissioned work for the inaugural Al Burda Endowment.

SACRED VS. SPIRITUAL: ISLAMIC ART IN CONTEMPORARY LENS

5:30-6:30pm
Artists Nasser Al Salem, Ebtisam Abdulaziz and Aisha Khalid convene to upend the perceptions of Islamic art

MAKING IT RAIN

With the imminent rainfall approaching the capital, grey skies loomed over sales at Abu Dhabi Art. Despite the slow start and uncertain weather conditions, many local and regional galleries reported sales soon picking up with keen interest from private collectors as well as institutions. Interestingly, international galleries mostly sold artists primarily from the Middle East and beyond.



Notwithstanding overcast skies, Dubai-based galleries staked their territory with sales reported at Tabari Artspace, Cuadro Fine Art Gallery, Leila Heller Gallery, Green Art Gallery and Carbon 12. Tabari Artspace sold three pieces to private collectors, with sales for both naqsh collective's large sculptural works and Hazem Harb's photographic collages, which fell between the vast range of \$10,000 to \$120,000 – with Harb's faux-iconic *HOLLYLAND* selling for \$30,000. Cuadro Fine Art Gallery's eye-catching booth of multiple glass works by the Italian-Spanish design duo Yomuto, derived from their time at a Sharjah residency, sold at a price for \$10,500 (for the larger pieces). Neon signs by Zeinab Al Hashemi and Nasir Nasrallah also sold for the same price each.

In the higher bracket, Leila Heller Gallery sold the majority of the booth as Korean artist Ran Hwang's recognizable works comprising buttons and beads intricately pinned onto wood boards proved popular with private collectors and UAE royals. Reza Derakshani's large-scale oils sold as well, with both artists priced at a range between \$50,000 to \$200,000. Green Art Gallery stated strong sales with both Kamrooz Aram's works on canvas and Afra Al Dhaheri's drawings placed into private collections in the region. Carbon 12 sold a Bernhard Buhmann work (*Glorious*

"The capital's appetite is evolving, as the sales reflect, and as Abu Dhabi Art continues to grow."

Bastards) to a UAE private collection and Lawrie Shabibi also mentioned three Mohammad Melehi works on reserve. Meem Gallery and 1x1 also conveyed strong interest from buyers. From Saudi Arabia, Hafez Gallery sold three works by Raeda Ashour depicting Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque at \$10,000 each and Rashed Al Shashai's lightbox *Brand 9* (2019) at approximately \$23,000. Athr sold one small-scale collection of mixed media works, *The Union of Fire and Water I* (2019) by Dana Awartani for \$4,300 with two larger scale works on hold.

Above: Ran Hwang. *Healing Forest – TWHL*. 2018. Buttons, beads and pins on wooden panel. 120 x 100 cm. Courtesy the artist and Leila Heller Gallery

Left: Nasir Nasrallah. *Visit Me 365 Times A Year*. Neon lights / 100 x 15 cm. Courtesy the artist and Cuadro Gallery

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