



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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L e a v i n g T h e E c h o C h a m b e r L e a v i n g T h e E c h o C h
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v i n g T h e E c h o C h a m b e r L e a v i n g T h e E c h o C h a m b

**Sharjah Biennial 14 Features Major New Commissions,
Installations, Performances and Works by Over 80 Artists
From Around the World**

***Programme of Talks and Performances Will Be Presented During
Sharjah Biennial 14 Opening Week and
Foundation's Annual March Meeting***

Sharjah, UAE – 26 February 2019 – Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) will feature over 80 established and emerging artists from around the globe, over 60 major new commissions and many never-before-seen works in the upcoming Sharjah Biennial. Open to the public from **7 March to 10 June 2019**, the 14th edition of the **Sharjah Biennial (SB14)**, *Leaving the Echo Chamber*, will explore the possibilities and purpose of producing art when news is fed by a monopoly of sources, history is increasingly fictionalised, when ideas of 'society' are invariably displaced, and when borders and beliefs are dictated by cultural, social and political systems. Concurrent with the opening of SB14, from **9 to 11 March**, the SB14 curators will present the foundation's **March Meeting (MM 2019)**, an annual convening of local and international artists, curators, scholars and other arts practitioners who explore topical issues in contemporary art through a programme of talks and performances.



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Curators **Zoe Butt**, **Omar Kholeif** and **Claire Tancons**, who have collaboratively conceived the SB14 theme, will present three distinct exhibitions that bring together a range of experiences and works—including major new commissions, large-scale public installations, performances and films—to create a series of provocations about how one might renegotiate the shape, form and function of the ‘echo chamber’ of contemporary life. Butt, Kholeif and Tancons will also spearhead three distinct programmatic approaches for March Meeting 2019, with each curator programming one day of talks and performances corresponding to the ideas raised in their respective SB14 platforms.

‘Contemporary life is dominated by competing information and fluctuating histories—a reality that raises important questions about the trajectory of contemporary art as well as the conditions in which it is made,’ said **Hoor Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Art Foundation**. ‘Zoe Butt, Omar Kholeif and Claire Tancons bring incredibly different perspectives to these questions and together represent the complexity of challenges faced by today’s artists and society as a whole. The aim of Sharjah Biennial 14 is to deepen the context of these questions through thought-provoking and often experiential works of art, and this year’s March Meeting will complement and provide opportunities to explore these works and the Biennial theme more deeply.’

On view in buildings and courtyards across the city’s arts and heritage areas as well as SAF’s Al Hamriyah Studios, the east coast city of Kalba and other public spaces across and around the city and emirate of Sharjah, *Leaving the Echo Chamber* will explore subjects ranging from migration and diaspora to concepts of time and interpreted histories, giving artists the agency to explore stories that echo in a different way and reveal differing means of connecting and sustaining a collective humanity.

Sharjah Biennial 14

Sharjah Biennial 14 launches with a special opening week programme from Thursday 7 March to Monday 11 March, featuring performances, film screenings, processions, talks and other programmes.

The complete selection of SB14 artists follows below. Artist biographies, full curatorial statements, the complete schedule of talks and performances and the opening week program are available at sharjahart.org/biennial-14.

***Journey Beyond the Arrow*, curated by Zoe Butt**

Journey Beyond the Arrow seeks to illuminate the necessity of exchange and diversity across the globe and throughout human history. In this exhibition, artists reveal the intergenerational impact of a range of physical and psychological ‘tools’, of how the representations and meanings of these tools have shifted as a consequence of colonial exploitation, social and religious conflict or ideological extremism. With their own distinctive approaches, the artists assembled here investigate the historical context of the ‘bow’, which reveals the ‘arrow’ of humanity’s echo—an echo of the diversity of all our activity in relation to language, memory, belief, ritual, and cultural and social practice. The



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artists' imaginative retelling of our planet opens us up to what has been overlooked or lost in the echo chamber—a chamber that is economically intertwined yet governmentally divided, often culturally stymied by tradition and insidiously controlled by authoritarianism, a chamber that betrays us when we blindly participate in its algorithmic realm, which pursues quantity instead of meaning.

The exhibition will feature work by 31st Century Museum of Contemporary Spirit, Khadim Ali, Antariksa, Shiraz Bayjoo, Adriana Bustos, Kawayan de Guia, Rohini Devasher, Léuli Eshrāghi, GUDSKUL, Anawana Haloba, Ho Tzu Nyen, Roslisham Ismail (Ise), Meiro Koizumi, Jompert Kuswidananto, Lee Mingwei, Nalini Malani, Neo Muyanga, Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn, Ahmad Fuad Osman, Phan Thảo Nguyễn, Qiu Zhijie, Lisa Reihana, Mark Salvatus, Ampannee Satoh, T. Shanaathanan, Kidlat Tahimik, Lantian Xie and Xu Zhen.

Making New Time, curated by Omar Kholeif

Responding to the overall theme of *Leaving the Echo Chamber*, *Making New Time* is a provocation on how material culture can be reimagined through the lens of a group of artists whose political agency, whose activism, and whose astute observations encourage us to extend beyond the limits of belief. The exhibition considers how economies have formed around technological culture, how narrative is created and deconstructed, and how these forces enable a reconstitution, or indeed a restitution of a history lost, or even unknown. Drifting in and out of hegemonies and entrenched structures of power, here, the sensorial and the bodily intertwine, becoming archaeological sediments in the landscape of Sharjah, imploring viewers to consider their complicity in a world that is forever slipping away.

The exhibition will feature work by Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Cory Arcangel, Marwa Arsanios, Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck, Semiha Berksoy, Candice Breitz, Huguette Caland, Ian Cheng, Shezad Dawood, Stan Douglas, Lubaina Himid, Alfredo Jaar, Ann Veronica Janssens, Barbara Kasten, Astrid Klein, Marwan, Otobong Nkanga and Emeka Ogboh, Bruno Pacheco, Heather Phillipson, Jon Rafman, Michael Rakowitz, Pamela Rosenkranz, Hrair Sarkissian, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Kemang Wa Lehulere; Munem Wasif and Akram Zaatari.

Look for Me All Around You, curated by Claire Tancons

Look for Me All Around You is an open platform of migrant images and fugitive forms concerned with the alternatively dispossessive and repossessive disposition of diasporisation as an aporetic phenomenon of the contemporary. Conceived as a contrapuntal proposal to the realm of the retinal, embedded within hegemonic structures of looking, learning, and feeling, *Look for Me All Around You* is an address to the redistribution of the sensible and a call for the repossession of perception. In *Look for Me All Around You*, what is being 'looked for' is not what is being 'looked at'—if only it could be seen. Composed of multiple scores drawn from the many scales of Sharjah as city, emirate and peninsular territory, *Look for Me All Around You* straddles the lines of the cosmo-ecological, the techno-sensorial and the museo-imaginal in response to human



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and material displacement and digitalisation to stand witness to the imperilment of the contemporary in the atomised space between 'me' and 'you'.

This platform will be primarily comprised of new commissions. Featured artists include Allora & Calzadilla, Caline Aoun, Leo Asemota, Aline Baiana, Hannah Black and Ebba Fransén Waldhör, Mohamed Bourouissa, Jace Clayton, Christopher Cozier, Annie Dorsen, Torkwase Dyson, Alaa Edris, Alia Farid, Peter Friedl, Meschac Gaba, Nikolaus Gansterer, Eisa Jocson, Isabel Lewis, Matthew Lutz-Kinoy, HACKLANDER/HATAM, Laura Lima, Ulrik López, Carlos Martiel, Suchitra Mattai, Mohau Modisakeng, New Orleans Airlift, Tracey Rose, Wael Shawky, Caecilia Tripp and Wu Tsang.

March Meeting - Programme Highlights 9–11 March 2019

Saturday 9 March:

***Look for Me All Around You*, curated by Claire Tancons**

March Meeting 2019: *Look for Me All Around You* presents performances, talks and landscapes spanning the United Arab Emirates, from the Gulf of Oman in the east to the Arabian Gulf in the west. The programme is a journey that both retraces and anticipates diasporic movements, speculative flows and extractive uses of human and natural resources scattered across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, thereby placing models of modernity under scrutiny. The programme evolves from contemporary forms of public address and modes of embodiment that resist solidification and codification, reification and canonisation, to trembling gestures and passing presences, elusive sounds, flickering lights and interrupted motions that ultimately unfold into idea-forms of history and futurity.

Continuing the exploration of issues presented in *Look for Me All Around You*, Claire Tancons' programming for MM 2019 is co-convened by *Terremoto* magazine editor Diego Del Valle Ríos. Highlights include talks in Sharjah by Hannah Black, Imani Brown, Jace Clayton, Adrienne Edwards, Alexandre Kazerouni, Suchitra Mattai, Philippe Rahm and Felwine Sarr, as well as a talk on 8 March in Kalba by Dr Aisha Bilkhair, Yarimar Bonilla, Michael Marder and Fabian Villegas.

Sunday 10 March:

***Journey Beyond the Arrow—From the Multiple, in Process, with Flexibility and Adaptation*, curated by Zoe Butt**

Taking inspiration from the artists in *Journey Beyond the Arrow*—where asking questions forms part of an unending historical process as knowledge flows shift according to user or observer (arriving or departing, indoctrinated or assimilated)—this day of March Meeting 2019 is designated as a performative, discursive experience, composed of conversations, readings and relays (series of back-to-back performances/readings) that all address a similar theme but from differing perspectives and geographies. Seeking the drama of the stage, guest speakers share critical reflections (drawing on specific lighting, carefully cued images and sounds) and evoke the 'theatre of art' as a crucial space where



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comparative intelligence about conflict and intrigue can be engaged. Instead of questions and answers following each presentation, discussion will take place at the end of day, bringing all speakers together for a meet-and-greet with the audience.

Continuing the exploration of issues presented in *Journey Beyond the Arrow*, Zoe Butt's programming for MM 2019 is co-convened by independent curator Lee Weng Choy. Highlights include talks by Khadim Ali, Anis Chouchene, Léuli Eshrāghi, Ho Tzu Nyen, Meiro Koizumi, Neo Muyanga, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, Shubigi Rao and Lisa Reihana.

Monday 11 March 2019:

***Create Dangerously*, curated by Omar Kholeif**

Organised in conjunction with the Sharjah Biennial 14 exhibition *Making New Time*, the final day of March Meeting 2019 asks the question, 'What does it mean to create dangerously?', an allusion to the title of a 1957 lecture given by Albert Camus. This gathering presents an assembly of thoughts and forms that examine how one produces art when one is constantly perceived as an immigrant wherever she or he roams or lives. How can those in exile create practices that build community, and even more so, a discourse around art? How can they enable new forms of agency that exist against the historical prejudices wrought upon the lives of artists with marginalised identities and associations? How can a propositional space for the future be 'imagined'?

Continuing the exploration of issues presented in *Making New Time*, highlights from Omar Kholeif's MM 2019 programme include talks by Fatima Al Qasimi, Douglas Coupland, Koray Duman, Tarek El-Ariss, Yasmine El Rashidi, Reem Fadda, Hannah Feldman, Koyo Kouoh, Aram Moshayedi, Otobong Nkanga, Sarah Perks, Todd Reisz, Sofia Victorino and Akram Zaatari.

Sharjah Biennial 14 Sponsors and Partners

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About Sharjah Art Foundation

Sharjah Art Foundation is an advocate, catalyst and producer of contemporary art within the Emirate of Sharjah and the surrounding region, in dialogue with the international arts community. Under the leadership of founder Hoor Al Qasimi, a curator and artist, the foundation advances an experimental and wide-ranging programmatic model that supports the production and presentation of contemporary art, preserves and celebrates the distinct culture of the region, and encourages a shared understanding of the transformational role of art. The foundation's core initiatives include the long-running Sharjah Biennial, featuring contemporary artists from around the world; the annual March Meeting, a convening of international arts professionals and artists; grants and



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residencies for artists, curators, and cultural producers; ambitious and experimental commissions; and a range of travelling exhibitions and scholarly publications.

Established in 2009 to expand programmes beyond the Sharjah Biennial, which launched in 1993, the foundation is a critical resource for artists and cultural organisations in the Gulf and a conduit for local, regional and international developments in contemporary art. The foundation's deep commitment to developing and sustaining the cultural life and heritage of Sharjah is reflected through year-round exhibitions, performances, screenings and educational programmes in the city of Sharjah and across the Emirate, often hosted in historic buildings that have been repurposed as cultural and community centres. A growing collection reflects the foundation's support of contemporary artists in the realisation of new work, and its recognition of the contributions made by pioneering modern artists from the region and around the world.

Sharjah Art Foundation is a legally independent public body established by Emiri Decree and supported by government funding, grants from national and international nonprofits and cultural organisations, corporate sponsors and individual patrons. All exhibitions and events are free and open to the public.

About Sharjah

Sharjah is the third-largest of the seven United Arab Emirates, and the only one bridging the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Reflecting the deep commitment to the arts, architectural preservation and cultural education embraced by its ruler, Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Sharjah is home to more than 20 museums and has long been known as the cultural hub of the United Arab Emirates. In 1998, it was named UNESCO's 'Arab Capital of Culture' and has been designated the UNESCO 'World Book Capital' for the year 2019.

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