

Press Release

## EDGE OF ARABIA JEDDAH: We Need to Talk

Following its recent success with the first Pan-Arab exhibition of contemporary art 'The Future of a Promise' at the 54th Venice Biennale, on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012 the internationally renowned arts initiative Edge of Arabia, with support from Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives and Abraaj Capital, launched the most significant show of Saudi contemporary art ever held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Edge of Arabia Jeddah: We Need to Talk*, curated by Mohammed Hafiz and co-curated by Edge of Arabia founder Stephen Stapleton, opened in a stunning 1000 square meter space in the Al Furusia Marina, a magnificent new development on the Jeddah Corniche overlooking the Red Sea.

Ranging from video to sculpture to installation, the exhibition features over 40 new works by Saudi's emerging contemporary artists, including: **Abdulnasser Gharem, Adwa AlMubarak, Ahaad Alamoudi, Ahmed Angawi, Ahmed Mater, Ayman Yossri Daydban, Effat Fadaag, Eyad Maghazel, Hala Ali, Hamza Serafi, Ibrahim Abumsmar, Jowhara AlSaud, Maha Malluh, Manal Al-Dowayan, Mohammed Al Ghamdi, Nasser Al-Salem, Noha Al-Sharif, Saddek Wasil, Saeed Salem, Sami Al-Turki, Sara Al-Abdali and Sarah Abu Abdullah.**

Curator Mohammed A. Hafiz says: "This exhibition is a true homecoming for Edge of Arabia and is geared towards encouraging constructive discussion and dialogue between Saudi contemporary artists and the local community. All participating artists have reacted to our title 'We Need to Talk' within three categories: the Past, the Present, and the Future. This is a great opportunity for us all to think about how we can positively shape and influence the world around us."

To accompany the exhibition, Edge of Arabia has delivered an ambitious **education programme** aimed at engaging local school and university students in contemporary art from across the region. The programme includes an art symposium held at the Chamber of Commerce in Jeddah, a dedicated education room within the exhibition, with workshop, presentation and research facilities for visitors; guided tours of the exhibition and practical workshops with participating artists for local school and university groups; and an internship programme for local students.

### EDGE OF ARABIA JEDDAH: We Need to Talk

**Location:** Al Furusia Mall & Marina, Al Corniche Road, Jeddah

**Curator:** Mohammed A. Hafiz // **Co-Curator:** Stephen Stapleton

**Exhibition dates:** 20<sup>th</sup> January – 18<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Saturday - Thursday: 12–11pm.

**Admission Free.**

### ART SYMPOSIUM

**Location:** Chamber of Commerce, Jeddah

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012, 3.30pm. **Admission Free.**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### Curator: Mohammed Hafiz

Born in 1975. Lives in Jeddah. Co-Founder and Director of Athr Gallery.

Founded Athr Gallery in 2008, one of the first contemporary art galleries in Saudi Arabia dedicated to providing a platform for art from Saudi Arabia and the wider Arab world. A keen collector and art patron, Mohammed is engaged with a number of initiatives to promote art from Saudi Arabia, such as Edge of Arabia, and The Crossway Foundation.

### Co-Curator: Stephen Stapleton

Born in 1976. Lives between London, Istanbul and Jeddah.

Artist, Teacher, Curator, Founding Director of Edge of Arabia, EOA Projects, Offscreen Expeditions and The Crossway Foundation. Founded the arts initiative Edge of Arabia while travelling as an artist across the Middle East in 2003. Since then he has developed a number of creative platforms for education and collaboration between the Arab and Western world. Recently produced the first Pan-Arab exhibition at the Venice Biennale *The Future of A Promise*, as well as Edge of Arabia exhibitions in Dubai (*Terminal*), Istanbul (*Transition*), Berlin (*Grey Borders/Grey Frontiers*), Riyadh, Jeddah and London. Has published a number of books in collaboration with Edward Booth-Clibborn including: *Offscreen: Four Young Artists in the Middle East* (2004), *Ahmed Mater* (2010), *Abdulnasser Gharem: Art of Survival* (2011), *Edge of Arabia: Contemporary Art from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (2012).

## EDGE OF ARABIA

Edge of Arabia is an independent arts initiative developing the appreciation of contemporary Arab art and culture with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. As a social enterprise Edge of Arabia is committed to reaching new audiences and improving understanding through touring, non-commercial & free exhibitions, through publications, and through education programs targeting schools & universities. Following its launch in London in 2008, this grassroots initiative has travelled to Riyadh, Berlin, Istanbul, Dubai and most recently Venice, where it presented the first pan-Arab exhibition at the 54th Venice Biennale: *The Future of a Promise*. In 2012, Edge of Arabia will travel to Jeddah, London and Beirut before embarking on a tour of the US from 2013. [www.edgeofarabia.com](http://www.edgeofarabia.com)

## FOUNDING SPONSOR: ABDUL LATIF JAMEEL COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

ALJ Community Initiatives was established in 2003 as the corporate social responsibility programs provider under the prominent ALJ Group. It has global coverage and through its many initiatives and social programmes ALJ Community Initiatives have developed and promoted a portfolio of globally applicable sustainable projects and solutions, supported socio-economic development by providing social programs for the needs of communities, and brought about a reduction of unemployment and poverty through novel and innovative schemes and mechanisms. [www.aljci.com](http://www.aljci.com)

## PRINCIPAL PATRON: ABRAAJ CAPITAL

Abraaj Capital is a leading private equity manager investing in the rapidly growing economies of the Middle East, Africa, Turkey and Asia. Since its inception in 2002, Abraaj Capital has raised close to US\$7 billion and distributed almost US\$3 billion to its investors. Abraaj Capital implements a widely recognized stakeholder engagement strategy positively impacting economic, cultural and social welfare across a number of countries, industries and sectors. [www.abraaj.com](http://www.abraaj.com)

The Abraaj Capital Art Prize was founded in 2008. Annually it rewards artists from the MENASA on the basis of a proposal rather than completed works-of-art. The aim of the prize is to reflect Abraaj Capital's dedication to empowering potential in the region, giving talented artists the opportunity to break new ground and showcase the rich artistic and cultural heritage of the MENASA. Applications are open from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2011 for artists and curators to apply for the 2013 edition. [www.abraajcapitalartprize.com](http://www.abraajcapitalartprize.com)

## KINDLY SUPPORTED BY: CHRISTIE'S

Christie's is the leading auction house in the Middle East. In 2005, Christie's became the first international auction house to open an office in the region and the first auctioneer to hold regular sales in Dubai, providing an international platform for artists of the region. In 2010, Christie's appointed Hayat Shobokshi as Christie's representative in Saudi Arabia. In April 2011, Christie's Dubai facilitated the sale of six donated artworks from a group of Saudi contemporary artists for a record high totaling over \$1 million, the proceeds of which were donated to the *Edge of Arabia* education programme targeting Saudi Arabian schools and universities. [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

## EXHIBITION PARTNERS



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