

The Future of a Promise

Collateral Event of the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

Magazzini del Sale, No. 262 Dorsoduro Fondamenta delle Zattere, Venice (ACTV stop: Line 1, Salute)
2nd June – 20th November 2011, Tuesday - Sunday: 11am-6pm; Closed: Mondays. Admission Free.

Press Preview: 1st June 2011, 5pm – 6pm // **Private View:** 1st June 2011, From 6pm

www.thefutureofapromise.com

The Future of a Promise will be the largest Pan-Arab show of contemporary art at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. From Tunisia all the way to Saudi Arabia, this landmark exhibition brings together more than twenty-five recent works and commissions by some of the foremost artists from the Arab world.

Presenting important works that range from installation, performance and photography, to video, sculpture and painting, *The Future of a Promise* includes the following artists: **Ziad Abillama** (Lebanon), **Manal Al-Dowayan** (Saudi Arabia), **Ahmed Alsoudani** (Iraq), **Ziad Antar** (Lebanon), **Ayman Baalbaki** (Lebanon), **Lara Baladi** (Egypt/Lebanon), **Fayçal Baghriche** (Algeria), **Yto Barrada** (Morocco), **Taysir Batniji** (Palestine), **Abdelkader Benchamma** (France/Algeria), **Ayman Yossri Daydban** (Palestine/Jordan), **Mounir Fatmi** (Morocco), **Abdulnasser Gharem** (Saudi Arabia), **Mona Hatoum** (Lebanon), **Raafat Ishak** (Egypt), **Emily Jacir** (Palestine), **Yazan Khalili** (Palestine), **Ahmed Mater** (Saudi Arabia), and **Driss Ouadahi** (Algeria), as well as three Abraaj Capital Art Prize Winners, **Jananne Al-Ani** (Iraq), **Kader Attia** (Algeria), and **Nadia Kaabi-Linke** (Tunisia).

The exhibition is being curated by Lina Lazaar, produced by Edge of Arabia and supported by Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives and Abraaj Capital, three newly partnered organisations whose commitment to contemporary art practice in the Middle East is at the heart of a current artistic renaissance in the region.

The Future of a Promise examines the way in which an idea is made incarnate in a formal, visual context and how a promise opens up a horizon of future possibilities, be they aesthetic, political, historical, social or critical. With the events currently unfolding in the Middle East, the question of the future and the promise inherent within culture has assumed an even more acute degree of pertinence. It is with this in mind that the exhibition enquires into the promise of visual culture in an age that has become increasingly disaffected with politics as a means of social engagement. Whilst the artists included in *The Future of a Promise* are not representative of a movement as such, they do seek to engage with a singular issue in the Middle East today: who gets to represent the present-day realities and the horizons to which they aspire?

“Through the artworks selected, I wanted to investigate how artists from this diverse, fragmented region have responded to the often contradictory promises that have defined our history,” says curator Lina Lazaar. “I am incredibly proud and honoured to be putting together this exhibition in 2011, at such critical times for the Arab world, and I very much hope to create the rightful platform for these voices to be heard.”

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For immediate Release, May 2011

On the occasion of the 54th International Art Exhibition, Ibraaz Publishing will launch its first volume, *The Future of a Promise*, alongside its on-line research platform. Through the publication of essays by academics, artists, curators, historians, commentators, writers, and critics, www.ibraaz.org will offer a primary research forum for in-depth, peer-reviewed texts about the MENA region. The long-term ambition of the project is to utilise these essays and ideas to further commission and develop full-length, illustrated books.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

CURATOR: LINA LAZAAR

Lina Lazaar has an M.A. in Statistics and M.A in Art History and is a specialist at Sotheby's London in Post War and Contemporary Art. Her passion for Arab and Iranian Contemporary Art led Sotheby's to hold their first European auctions in this category in 2006. Since then she has curated these sales annually and significantly increased the international exposure and discussion of Middle Eastern contemporary art. Lina is the associate editor of the publishing forum Ibraaz and member of the Middle East North Africa Acquisitions Committee of the Tate in London.

PRODUCTION PARTNER: EDGE OF ARABIA

Edge of Arabia is a non-profit contemporary arts platform and traveling exhibition promoting artists from the Arab world with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. Since launching in London in 2008, this grassroots initiative has travelled to Riyadh, Berlin, Istanbul and Dubai, becoming a project of international cultural significance. Following a landmark exhibition of Saudi art in Venice two years ago, Edge of Arabia has chosen the opportunity of the 54th Venice Biennale to produce its first pan-Arab exhibition. www.edgeofarabia.com

TITLE 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 successful initiatives and social programmes provides a multitude of successful globally applicable sustainable projects, solutions, schemes and mechanisms. 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

PRINCIPAL PATRON: ABRAAJ CAPITAL

Abraaj Capital is the largest private equity group in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA). 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

The Abraaj Capital Art Prize was founded in 2008, and is entering its 4th edition. 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. www.abraajcapitalartprize.com

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