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## Contemporary Saudi Art

*Desert to Delta* at the Art Museum of the University of Memphis (AMUM) presents 20 artists and a video artist collective from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The exhibition opens with a public reception for visiting artists on Sunday, October 8, 3-6pm and continues through January 6, 2018.

Curated by AMUM, selected work ranges from seemingly traditional manuscript illumination to bold "calligraphiti," from bronze sculpture to sound and "scent" portraits, from cell-phone photography to multi-media installation. Saudi artists address issues that resonate throughout the world: environmental degradation, economic disparity, urban growth and loss of traditional culture, social inequality of women and minorities, and escalating tensions between and among ideologies. While these concerns may be universal, Saudi artists approach them through the lens of their country's unique history and forms of cultural expression. For example, Abdunasser Gharam's "Camouflage," a giant mixed media painting depicts a military tank with an orange flower sprouting from its gun against the background of an opulently tiled Iranian mosque. Combining traditional Muslim arabesques and geometric designs and printed aphorisms, the artist addresses religious sectarianism and armed conflict among Islamic state and non-state actors all superimposed on a ground of 1000s of tiny rubber stamp elements, symbols of Saudi's bureaucratic regimentation. By contrast, the video collective Telfaz 11, hilariously confronts the disconnect between Saudis' traditions and their desire to participate contemporary international culture.

*Desert to Delta* is part of a United States program of Saudi contemporary art organized by the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, a Saudi Aramco initiative, and produced in collaboration with Culturrunners, a UK-based platform for international artist exchange. *Desert to Delta* is one of ten separately curated exhibitions shown in 2016 through 2018 in Houston, Aspen, San Francisco, Lewiston, Maine, Los Angeles, Detroit, Salt Lake City, Memphis, Washington, D.C. and Brooklyn.

The Art Museum of the University of Memphis is a unit of the College of Communication and Fine Arts. It is located within the CCFA building at 3750 Norriswood near the Central Avenue entrance to the campus. Call 901-678-2224 for directions and more information or go to the website