



Exhibition of Arab Modern and Contemporary Art, presented by Barjeel Art Foundation opens at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris

Chefs-D'oeuvre De L'art Moderne Et Contemporain Arabe
28 February – 2 July 2017

Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris

Chefs-D'oeuvre De L'art Moderne Et Contemporain Arabe an exhibition of over 80 works from the Barjeel Art Foundation's Collection in Sharjah has been inaugurated at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris on February 27 2017 by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, Madhed Hareb Al Khaiili, the UAE Ambassador to France, Jack Lang, President of the Institut du monde arabe and Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi, founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation.

Curated by Philippe van Cauteren, Artistic Director of S.M.A.K. Belgium, and Karim Sultan, Curator at Barjeel Art Foundation, this exhibition explores the act of exhibition-making and the role that a collection has in the construction of art history, within an emphasis on Arab Modern and Contemporary art.

Chefs-D'oeuvre De L'art Moderne Et Contemporain Arabe highlights the role of the collection in defining artworks as 'masterpieces'. The exhibition draws attention to this phenomenon, displaying major works from the collection alongside works by lesser well-known artists. The exhibition aims to illustrate the methods that occur behind the scenes during the presentation and the conservation of artworks in an exhibition.

Referencing Achraf Touloub's 'Le Visage du Monde / Surat al-ard' from the Barjeel Art Foundation Collection, van Cauteren will examine the idea that the discourse of art has been monopolised by an almost exclusively Western view – one that he aims to avoid during the curation of this exhibition. The artworks within the exhibition have been meticulously selected, but independently of their position in art, national or cultural history. As a result, the curatorial approach is a reconstruction of the conditions within institutions, such as the Barjeel Art Foundation, placing importance upon presentation, conservation and personal reflection.

The exhibition will be split into two sections: a room which brings together leading artists from the collection in an archetypal museum scenography ('white cube' format), and a second space focused on presenting the 'back rooms' of the museum. The works in this second room appear as objects of study, granting the visitor a rare intimate experience with these works.

Major artists such as Adel Abdessemed, Hassan Sharif, Mohammed Cherkaoui, Marwan Kassab Bachi, Kader Attia, Rachid Koraichi, Chafic Abboud, Asim Abu Shakra, Shakir Hassan Al-Said, Achraf Touloub and Etel Adnan will be exhibited alongside their peers.

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Notes to Editors

Barjeel Art Foundation

Barjeel Art Foundation is an independent, United Arab Emirates-based initiative established to manage, preserve and exhibit a collection of Arab modern and contemporary art. The foundation's guiding principle is to contribute to the intellectual development of the art scene in the Arab region by building a prominent, publicly accessible art collection in the UAE.

Part of this objective involves developing a public platform to foster critical dialogue around contemporary art practices with a focus on artists with Arab heritage internationally. The foundation strives to create an open-ended enquiry that responds to and conveys the nuances inherent to Arab histories beyond borders of culture and geography.

By hosting in-house exhibitions, lending artwork to international forums, producing print and online publications, and fashioning interactive public programmes, the foundation strives to serve as an informative resource for contemporary art by Arab artists both locally and on the global stage.

In addition to building an informative database of artists, the foundation is seeking to develop an educational programme that both understands and involves the local community. By establishing partnerships with arts and cultural institutions internationally, the foundation looks to create opportunities to encourage public awareness of the importance of art to the community.