



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

Sharjah Biennial 12

The past, the present, the possible

5 March – 5 June, 2015

Sharjah, UAE

Sharjah Biennial 12: The past, the present, the possible (SB12) opened on Thursday, 5 March, 2015, in the presence of **H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi**, Member of the UAE Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah and **H.E. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi**, President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation.

Curated by **Eungie Joo** with associate curator **Ryan Inouye**, SB12 includes works by more than fifty artists and cultural practitioners from twenty-five countries, with over two thirds of the participants presenting new work and commissions. SB12 takes place in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, crossing the emirate to sites in and around the city, as well as in the city of Kalba on the Gulf of Oman, and will be on view through 5 June, 2015.

Rather than conforming to proscribed themes, works in SB12 are presented in conversation with each other. Challenging modes of participation and engagement, *The past the present, the possible* invites participants and the public to reflect upon the possibilities and ambitions of Sharjah, a city and emirate still in the process of imagining itself through education, culture, religion, heritage and science. SB12 acknowledges the centrality of the present—respecting the past, but rejecting nostalgia and the burden of history in favour of productive imaginings of the possible. These perspectives resonate with the ideas of philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his essay *The Right to the City* (1967), which inspired the exhibition's title.

Beginning with *March Meeting 2014: Come Together* and continuing through *March Meeting 2015* (11–16 May, 2015), SB12 has developed over two years of site visits, research trips and production. Many of the works are site-specific and location figures prominently in several new projects, from material elements, negotiations of space and time, and even methods of collaboration.

SB12 spreads further into the city than previous editions of the Biennial, with **Michael Joo's** new commission featured across Sharjah Creek in a warehouse at Port Khalid, and **Hassan Khan's** intervention at The Flying Saucer, an iconic building built in the 1970s. Installations by **Mohammed Kazem** and **mixrice** are found within Souq Al Shanasiyah, and **Abraham Cruzvillegas'** site-specific sculptures can be seen at the Bird and Animal Market. In Kalba, **Adrián Villar Rojas'** massive intervention covers the entire site of the city's old Ice Factory.

The extensive SAF Art Spaces include new commissions by **Abdullah Al Saadi**, **Iman Issa**, **Cinthia Marcelli**, **Taro Shinoda**, **Rayyane Tabet**, **Haegue Yang** and other new commissions and works. **Gary Simmons'** *Across the Chalkline* takes the form of a cricket field for children, while **Rirkrit Tiravanija's** *untitled 2015 (Eau de RRose of Damascus)* transforms Calligraphers' Studios into a rose garden, rosewater distillery, kitchen and lounge. At Sharjah Art Museum, works by **Hassan Sharif** include those created in 1985 at Sharjah's Al Mareija Art Atelier funded in the 1980s in Al Mureijah, the area where SAF Art spaces now stand, and **Byron Kim's** newly commissioned *ليل المدينة (City Night)*. Also on view in the Arts Area, **Basel Abbas** and **Ruanne Abou-Rahme's** mixed-media installation, *The Incidental Insurgents* at Bait Al Serkal and **Mark Bradford's** *Untitled (Buoy)* on the façade of Bait Obaid Al Shamsi.

Across the various exhibition spaces, are major presentations of historic works by senior artists including **Etel Adnan**, **Chung Chang-Sup**, **Saloua Raouda Choucair**, **Abdul Hay Mosallam Zarara** and **Fahrelnissa Zeid**. While primarily produced from the 1940s to 1990s, the works remain incredibly relevant today and together form the backbone of the Biennial.

SB12 Opening Programme (Opening events: 5–7 March, 2015)

On **Thursday, 5 March**, Sharjah Biennial 12 officially opened with a series of events including the culmination (5-6 March) of **Nikhil Chopra**'s nine-day performance *Use Like Water*, which considering the relationships between land and sea as much as that of spectator and audience; the work *XYZ* by **Eduardo Navarro**, centered on a new game developed with children from Sharjah schools and clubs and *Souls' Landscapes*, the first of a three-part performance conceived and performed by **Uriel Barthélémi**, in collaboration with a small troupe of dancers, actors, and visual artists. Thursday also marked the launch of the Anembassy of Abkhazia staffed by Maxim Gvinjia, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, part of *The Secession Sessions* by **Eric Baudelaire**. The project, which considers the question of statehood through the prism of the stateless state of Abkhazia, was open to the public from 5-6 March and 14-16 May. The night concluded with the SB12 Awards ceremony, at which point the 2015 Biennial prizes were announced.

On **Friday, 6 March**, featured performances included a mix of dance, theatre, live music and resistance in *Fanfare funérailles* (Funeral brass) by **Papy Ebotani** and a self-choreographed performance, *Le Cargo* by **Faustin Linyekula**. At 10pm, **Ayreen Anastas** and **Rene Gabri** will presented a screening event as part of *In the absence of the objects seen*, an evolving open structure project taking place throughout the duration of SB12.

Saturday, 7 March saw excursions to the Flying Saucer and Kalba Ice Factory to view large scale and site-specific installations by **Hassan Khan** and **Adrián Villar Rojas***. The evening concluded with the second part of Uriel Barthélémi's *Souls' Landscapes*, an encore performance of *Le Cargo* by Faustin Linyekula and a screening of *Edouard Glissant: One World in Relation* by **Manthia Diawara**.

*Free public buses to Kalba Ice Factory and other off-site installations are available every Saturday throughout SB12, departing at 11:00 am from SAF Art Spaces.

SB12 Film Programme, Education Programme and Monthly Talks

SB12 Film Programme focuses on the documentary form, with screenings every Saturday through the end of May. Featured works include films directed by **Manthia Diawara**; **Kelvin Kyung Kun Park**; **Kalyanee Mam**; **Mahmoud Kaabour**; **Maryam Kashani**; **Jehane Noujaim**; **Mohammed Ali Atassi** and **Ziad Homsi**; **Nikolaj Larsen**; **Antonio Augugilaro**, **Gabriele Del Grande** and **Khaled Soliman Al Nassiry**; **Oura Nobuyuki**; **Rirkrit Tiravanija**; and **Talal Derki**. The 8:30 pm screenings take place at Mirage City Cinema, SAF Art Spaces outdoor cinema, unless otherwise noted.

The Saturday **SB12 Education Programme** activities offers a range of workshops, conversations and artist talks, with dedicated programmes tailored to adults, children, schools and youth centers to encourage public engagement with the exhibition.

The Biennial also features **SB12 Monthly Talks**, a series of artist talks, workshops and conversations with SB12 artists. Since October 2014, these have included discussions of recent work and practice by artists **Rheim Alkadhi** and **Eduardo Navarro**, a conversation with several Emirati artists including SB12 participants **Mohammed Kazem** and **Hassan Sharif** moderated by **Dr. Yousef Aidabi** and a roundtable discussion with SB12 artists **Michael Joo**, **Byron Kim** and curator Eungie Joo. On **9 March**, SB12 artist **Papy Ebotani** also held a creative movement workshop.

March Meeting 2015 (11 – 16 May, 2015)

For this edition of the March Meeting, SAF's annual symposium, SB12 curator Eungie Joo has invited **Kristine Khouri** and **Rasha Salti**, **Eric Baudelaire**, and **Ayreen Anastas** and **Rene Gabri** to conceptualise different sections of MM2015 as integral parts of their contributions to SB12. March Meeting 2015 will include panel discussions, keynote lectures, conversations, screenings and performances pertaining to the respective programmes' concerns.

On 11 May, Khouri and Salti will organise three sessions, including a presentation on their ongoing research on the International Art Exhibition for Palestine (1978), based on interviews with artists, filmmakers and journalists associated with this project, as well as a keynote address by the scholar W.J.T. Mitchell. Eric Baudelaire's *Sharjah Sessions* from May 12-13 will act as a continuation of his

contribution to SB12. In addition to the Anembassy of Abkhazia and daily screenings of the feature length film, *Letters to Max*, this discursive programme will include sessions with artists and scholars. From 14-15 May, the discussion continues through a series of presentations, conversations and screening organised by Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri.

***Sharjah Biennial 12: The past, the present, the possible* includes works by:**

Basel Abbas*, Ruanne Abou-Rahme*, Etel Adnan*, Babak Afrassiabi*, Abdullah Al Saadi*, Rheim Alkadhi*, Ayreen Anastas*, Leonor Antunes*, Uriel Barthélémi*, Eric Baudelaire, Mark Bradford*, Unnikrishnan C.*, Chimurenga*, Nikhil Chopra*, Saloua Raouda Choucair, Chung Chang-Sup, Abraham Cruzvillegas*, Papy Ebotani, Rene Gabri*, Ahmad Ghossein*, Im Heung-Soon*, Iman Issa*, Michael Joo*, Maryam Kashani*, Mohammed Kazem, Hassan Khan*, Kristine Khouri*, Beom Kim, Byron Kim*, Lala Rukh, Lee Kit *, Jac Leirner*, Faustin Linyekula, Jawshing Arthur Liou, Cinthia Marcelle*, Rodney McMillian*, Julie Mehretu*, mixrice*, Asunción Molinos Gordo, Eduardo Navarro*, Damián Ortega*, Rasha Salti*, Hassan Sharif, Taro Shinoda*, Gary Simmons*, Nasrin Tabatabai*, Rayyane Tabet*, Rirkrit Tiravanija*, Adrián Villar Rojas*, Danh Vo, Xu Tan, Haegue Yang*, Lynette Yiadom-Boakye*, Abdul Hay Mosallam Zarara, and Fahrelnissa Zeid

*presenting new works and commissions

About Sharjah Biennial

Sharjah Biennial is organised by Sharjah Art Foundation, which brings a broad range of contemporary art and cultural programmes to the communities of Sharjah, the UAE, and the region. Since 1993, Sharjah Biennial has commissioned, produced, and presented large-scale public installations, performances, and films, offering artists from the region and beyond an internationally recognised platform for exhibition and experimentation.

About Sharjah Art Foundation

Since 2009 SAF has built on the history of cultural collaboration and exchange that began with the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993. Working with local and international partners, Sharjah Art Foundation creates opportunities for artists and artistic production through core initiatives that include Sharjah Biennial, the annual March Meeting, residencies, production grants, commissions, exhibitions, research, publications and a growing collection. Our education and public programmers focus on building recognition of the central role art can play in the life of a community by promoting public learning and a participatory approach to art. All our events are free and open to the public. Sharjah Art Foundation is funded by the Department of Culture and Information, Government of Sharjah.

For more information, please visit: www.sharjahart.org

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