

For Immediate Release

**Saudi Art Council Announces Exhibition Details of 21,39 Jeddah Arts  
Featuring *safar*, an Educational Forum / al-muntada and Art Exhibition / al-  
maarad**

**Curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath**

*safar*, The Exhibition features 24 artists, including 16 new commissions by emerging Saudi artists and 8 video works by leading international artists

*safar*, The Forum, consists of a series of workshops, film screening and artist talks featuring more than 50 cultural practitioners from Saudi Arabia and beyond

*Opening Events: February 1 – 4, 2017*



Moath Al-Ofi, *The Shepherd*, 2015/16. Digital Print on Paper, 200 cm x 136 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and Athr Gallery

(Jeddah, Saudi Arabia) January 30, 2017—The Saudi Art Council announces exhibition details for the 4th edition of **21,39 Jeddah Arts**, an annual program of special exhibitions, workshops and educational forums, in various locations throughout the city of Jeddah, from February through May 2017, with a series of opening events February 1 – 4, 2017. 21,39 is an annual initiative—created and organized by the Saudi Art Council—to foster Saudi Arabia’s thriving art community.

The 2017 edition is curated by **Sam Bardaouil** and **Till Fellrath** and is conceived as both a public forum for creative experimentation, as well as a visual arts exhibition. Entitled **safar**—the Arabic word for travel—the multifaceted program explores the notion of travel and movement as a vehicle for learning and growth. The Arabic word for travel, *safar*, is rooted in the word *sāfer*—a term that is used to describe things that are revealed, or unveiled. Rather than simply describing movement from one site to another, *safar* implies a process of discovery and exploration by which things are revealed to the traveler—added knowledge of self, of others, of the places that were left behind and the places that were arrived at. The curators, Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, commented, “*safar* is a reflection of the dynamism and diversity within the creative community in Saudi Arabia. The 16 artists who we developed these new commissions with over the course of the last year are at the forefront of this young generation.”

**Mohammed Hafiz**, Vice Chairman of the **Saudi Art Council**, says, “Excitement is building for the opening of the 4th edition of 21,39, and we hope that through our efforts, awareness of the talented local contemporary art community in Jeddah and throughout the region continues to grow.”

UBS, the world’s leading wealth manager, and a long term partner of the Saudi Art Council sponsors 21,39 Jeddah Arts for the third consecutive year.

**Ali Janoudi**, UBS Group Head Middle East and North Africa said, “UBS has been involved in contemporary art initiatives across the world and we are proud to extend our partnership with the Saudi Art Council supporting 21,39 Jeddah Arts and the growing art community in the region. UBS believes that good contemporary art reflects and influences trends in society, and at times may even suggest the future. This year’s theme based on using movement as a medium for growth particularly resonates with UBS as a global firm.”

The theme of *safar* was also present in the lead up to this year’s edition. Six emerging Saudi artists took part in a yearlong mentorship program organized by Bardaouil and Fellrath. As part of this, they went on two international study trips to Berlin and Korea, and subsequently created special commissions for the exhibition. The artists are **Majid Angawi**, **Marwah Al-Mugait**, **Abdullah Al-Othman**, **Bayan Abdullateef**, **Mohammad Al-Faraj** and **Reem Al-Nasser**.

### **The Exhibition (al-maarad)**

*February 1 – May 6, 2017*

**The Exhibition (al-maarad)** takes place across three venues in Jeddah: **The Mall (al-mol)**, Al Shate’a District’s Gold Moor mall; **The Home (al-manzil)**, a 19th century abandoned woman’s shelter in the city’s historic quarter; and **The City (al-madinah)**, the fast-growing King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC). Each venue will host site-specific installations that respond to the historical and contemporary narratives of each space.

### **The Mall (al-mol)**

The Mall (al-mol), will feature all new commissions by 16 emerging Saudi artists, spanning painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, film, graffiti and mixed media installations. The installation of these works within the mall reflects the significance of

such public places to Jeddah's social fabric, thereby serving as a metaphor for the present. Each work, in turn, echoes the conceptual framework of *safar*.

The exhibition within The Mall (al-mol) begins with a presentation of the Obelisk of Tayma, a stele from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. that was excavated in the ancient northwestern Saudi city of Tayma. The curatorial appropriation of the stele as an opening act of a contemporary art exhibition is a nod to the historical context of *safar*, and the transfer of aesthetic and formal vernaculars that it enables. It highlights the temporal journey that objects make and how, with the passage of time and change of locations, they acquire different meanings and agencies.

New commissions, each conceived of as immersive, spatial installations, on view at The Mall (al-mol) include:

- A monumental installation by **Nasser El-Salem** that employs his skills as a trained calligrapher to reimagine the ancient saying *yatatawaluna fil bunyan* (their buildings reach higher) into a three-dimensional structure, taking the form of architectural building blocks arranged as a dystopian metropolis
- **Moath Al-Ofi's** *The Last Tashahhu*, a series of photographic light boxes that depict a number of desolate mosques, paired with large-scale photographs from the *Shepherds of Arabia* series that are displayed across the exhibition mirroring the nomadic state of the photos' subjects
- An audiovisual installation by **Muhannad Shono**, entitled *The Fifth Sun*, which features an animation compiled from a new body of drawings and a score developed in collaboration with a musician in Seoul
- An immersive installation by **Majid Angawi** that seeks to replicate the imprints of memory that are revisited by the inner narratives of the mind—comprised of a dark tunnel leading to a mirrored chamber, in which the visitor is immersed in a multi-layered recording of the artist's voice
- A large-scale, site-specific work by Zahra **Al-Ghamdi**, in which she uses natural elements such as sand, cotton and water to recreate structural forms that echo the architectural features of traditional Saudi Arabian houses
- **Marwah Al-Mugait's** single-channel video installation *We Were*, which depicts a solitary woman on a deserted road who is gradually surrounded by a group of people and then be left again on her own, and, through its imposing presence in the gallery space, invite visitors to partake in the unfolding cinematic scene
- A multimedia installation by **Sara Abdu**, entitled *Unforbidden Lands*, which transports the visitor into an intimate space where text and a dreamlike landscape are meticulously transcribed with charcoal onto long scrolls of paper
- **Bayan Abdullateef's** photographic series *My Most Precious*, inspired by a phrase that compares girls to matchsticks which includes hyperrealist close ups of the flammable end of matchsticks echoing the way photographic portraits are typically displayed

- ***The Silver Plate***, an immersive two-channel video work by **Reem Al-Nasser**, which reflects on different stages in a woman's life, exploring the various associations to a generic household item
- **Abdullah Al-Othman's** mixed-media installation *Letters* includes the stories of individuals translated into musical scores, as well as objects the individual associated with their experience, and seeks to give a platform of expression for the voices that remain unheard
- *Crash*, an artistic presentation of research materials compiled by **Manal Al-Dowayan**, which explores the social issue of female teachers from Saudi Arabia who have lost their lives in fatal car crashes while being driven to the remote villages to which they have been assigned.
- A mural by the graffiti duo **Firas Bawazir** and **Sami Al-Amoudi**, known as **Frop and Muso**, which consists of fantastical characters that appear to be floating in space. The 4 x 6 meter mural is centrally located within the exhibition's art lounge / al-majlis
- *When the Sun Began to Surrender*, filmmaker **Mohammad Al-Faraj's** first foray into video installation, imagines new endings to the artist's favorite scenes from films by Pasolini, Godard and Kieślowski, among others
- An installation by **Dana Awartani**, comprising a geometric floor design made of locally procured sand colored with traditional local pigments, and a projected film depicting the artist sweeping and destroying the same pattern in a previous installation
- A site-specific installation by **Ahmad Angawi**, which enacts a confrontation between two divergent aesthetics: the traditional repetition within decorative Islamic architectural motifs, and the rough, industrial nature of the exhibition site itself

### **The Home (al-manzil)**

The second part of *safar* occupies an abandoned 19<sup>th</sup> century women's shelter known as *Al-khunji Al-kabir*. Located in Al-balad, the historic downtown of Jeddah, this edifice stands as a reminder of the individual *safar* of the women who inhabited it. The space itself has undergone a long journey, assuming various functions over time leading to its present state.

The Home (al-manzil) will host a monumental site-specific installation by **Abdullah Al-Othman**. The artist has wrapped the entire *Al-Khunji Al-Kabir* building with thousands of meters of tin foil. Through Al-Othman's intervention, the entire structure stands out from the midst of the neighboring houses vividly reminding dwellers and visitors alike of the historical layers of the city and the beauty of its traditional architecture, inviting them to embark on *safar* through time and place.

## **The City (al-madinah)**

The City (al-madinah), the fast-growing King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC), will feature a series of 8 immersive film and media installations by leading international artists, marking the first exhibition of its kind in Saudi Arabia. Each of the works explores the curatorial concept of *safar* from a distinct point of view, ranging from personal journeys to the crossing of temporal and physical terrains.

The City (al-madinah) will feature the following works: **Douglas Gordon's** *Play Dead; Real Time* (2003); **William Kentridge's** *Tango for Page Turning* (2012-13); **Shirin Nehsat's** *Rapture* (1999); **Hans Op de Beeck's** *Staging Silence (2)* (2013); **Giuseppe Penone's** *Rovesciare I propri occhi / To reverse one's eyes* (1970); **Anri Sala's** *1395 Days without Red* (2011); **Ho Tzu Nyen's** *2 or 3 Tigers* (2015); and **Yang Fudong's** *Yejiang / The Nightman Cometh* (2011).

## **The Forum (al-muntada)**

*December 2 – May 6, 2017*

Bardaouil and Fellrath have also developed **The Forum (al-muntada)**, a program of ongoing workshops, artist talks and presentations, and film screenings to take place over the course of six months, fostering connections between local artists, designers and the Saudi public. Programs include: **The Workshop (al-mashghal)**, a series of two 12-week courses and six weekend seminars open to the creative community in Jeddah, which is designed to replicate core elements of foundational curriculum in studio arts; **The Art Platform (al-minassah)**, a three-day series of artist talks, panel discussions and presentations by international and local arts professionals during the opening days of 21,39; and **Encounters (al-multaqah)**, a series of alternating bi-weekly screenings of art documentaries, and group discussions and presentations by Saudi cultural practitioners. All of these activities will take place in **The Lounge (al-majlis)**, a physical space in Gold Moor mall designed as a creative hub that is available for young creatives to meet and network throughout the exhibition duration.

For more information about 21,39, please visit <http://www.21-39.com/>.

For more information about the curators, please visit: <http://www.artreoriented.com>

Important Dates:

The Exhibition (al-maarad): February 1 – May 6, 2017

Opening Program – The Art Platform (al-minassah): February 1 – 4, 2017

The Forum (al-muntada): December 2, 2015 – May 6, 2017

Connect on Social Media:

**Facebook:** [21,39 Jeddah Arts](#)

**Instagram:** [@saudiartcouncil](#)

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **About 21,39**

Organized by the Saudi Art Council, 21,39 is an annual art initiative featuring exhibitions, educational workshops, curated cultural events, and symposiums in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Named for the geographic coordinates of the city of Jeddah (21.5433°N, 39.1728°E), the Saudi Art Council launched 21,39 in 2014 to create a platform for local artists and institutions to gain visibility among local audiences, as well as connect with the global art community. The first iteration of 21,39 featured two seminal exhibitions: *Past is Prologue*, which highlighted 26 modern Saudi artists, and *Moallaqat*, a contemporary art exhibition featuring works by seminal Saudi artists. The 2015 edition featured an exhibition titled “Fast Forward,” curated by Bashar al Shroogi, and the 2016 edition “Earth and Ever After,” was curated by Mona Khazindar and Hamza Serafi. The 4th edition of 21,39 opens February 1, 2017, with a featured exhibition and education forum curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath.

### **About Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath**

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath are independent curators and academics, and the co-founders of Art Reoriented, a multidisciplinary curatorial platform based in Munich and New York. Over the past decade they have jointly curated numerous critically acclaimed exhibitions in museums and institutions worldwide. Their curatorial projects have been praised for their rigorous inter-temporal, trans-cultural, and cross-disciplinary approach. Some of their recent museum exhibitions include *Staging film: The relation of image and space in video art* at the Busan Museum of Art (2016), *When process becomes form: Danseakhwa and Korean abstraction* at the Villa Empain in Brussels (2016), *I Spy With My Little Eye: A new generation of Beirut artists* at the Mosaic Rooms in London and Casa Arabe in Madrid and Cordoba (2015), *Mona Hatoum: Turbulence* at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha (2014), *Songs of Loss and Songs of Love* at the Gwangju Museum of Art (2014), *Paul Guiragossian: The Human Condition* at the Beirut Exhibition Center in Beirut (2013), and Mathaf’s inaugural contemporary art exhibition *Told Untold Retold* (2010). For the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, Bardaouil and Fellrath were the curators of the Lebanese Pavilion, with the presentation of Akram Zaatari: *Letter to a refusing pilot*. Their current groundbreaking exhibition *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War, and Surrealism in Egypt (1938 - 1948)* opened at The Centre Pompidou in Paris in October 2016 and will be traveling to the Reina Sofia in Madrid, the K20 in Dusseldorf and the Tate Liverpool in 2017 and 2018.

### **About the Saudi Art Council**

The Saudi Art Council (SAC) was formed in 2013 by a group of local patrons in order to respond to the growing needs of the Kingdom’s art and culture scene in Saudi Arabia. In February 2014, 21,39 took place for the first time in Jeddah which has been long seen as the cultural forefront of Saudi Arabia. The name of the festival stands for the geographic coordinates of the city (21.5433°N, 39.1728°E). The initial event featured 40 Saudi Arabian artists across multiple generations in two seminal exhibitions: [*Moallaqat*] and [*Past is Prologue*], which saw over 15,000 visitors, including 6,000 students from 150 schools. The events included education and outreach programmes, manifesting in workshops, talks and discussions over the course of three months.

The Programme aims to build bridges, raise awareness and broaden horizons through the universal language of art. Of equal importance, the Saudi Art Council wants 21,39 to

present to Saudis an opportunity to view and appreciate the artistic culture that exists and is developing in their homeland. The importance of education plays an integral role within the programme, enforcing the awareness and the teaching of art in our culture and daily lives. Together with the exhibitions, workshops and symposium, this initiative aims to continue to elevate Jeddah and its diverse community within the artistic culture throughout Saudi Arabia.

### **Partners**

**UBS** has been a long term partner of the Saudi Art Council and its 21,39 Jeddah Arts initiative. Continuing its engagement for the third year, UBS is proud to support the growing art community in Saudi Arabia and the region, drawing on its many years of involvement in art around the globe. UBS's sponsorship of the '21,39' initiative for the third year running is also aimed at promoting cross-cultural understanding, and is part of its program of actively supporting exceptional cultural and artistic endeavors around the world. UBS's partnership with the Saudi Art Council also helps showcase the Kingdom's splendid culture from the past until today.

**King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC)** is the largest privately-funded new city in the world. Situated on the west coast of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, KAEC covers an area of 181 square kilometers of land, approximately the size of Washington DC. KAEC comprises King Abdullah Port, the Coastal Communities residential districts, the Haramain Railway district and the Industrial Valley. The city is under development by Emaar, The Economic City, a publicly listed Saudi joint-stock company established in 2006.

**Van Cleef & Arpels** is an ardent supporter of the arts, and is proud to be a partner of 21,39 Jeddah Arts for the second year. Since opening on the place Vendome in Paris, Van Cleef & Arpels has proven to be an innovative design leader for over a full century, and with its ability to transform itself and advance the traditions of jewelry making, the Maison is constantly adding to its traditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Through sustaining a continuous focus of high quality workmanship and design, its desire to maintain vision through artistic direction has resulted in a distinctive aesthetic that will continue to influence consumer taste.

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