

# Art Jameel

For Immediate Release

## **Art Jameel partners with the National Pavilion UAE – la Biennale di Venezia to support the exhibition ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors: Positions in Play’ at the 2017 Venice Biennale**

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates | May 3, 2017** – Art Jameel is delighted to announce its support for the National Pavilion United Arab Emirates’ 2017 exhibition at la Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale). Commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and supported by the UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, the exhibition will run from May 13 to November 26, 2017, with a preview from May 10-12, 2017.

Art Jameel collaborated with the National Pavilion United Arab Emirates to support an intensive six-month research period in the lead-up to the exhibition, which resulted in a rich, extensive body of historical material on the foundations of the contemporary art movement in the UAE, plus new interviews and perspectives.

Art Jameel’s director Antonia Carver says, “Working with the National Pavilion UAE and curator Hammad Nasar to develop the research for this project has been a rewarding experience and we are excited to see the final results in person at the opening in Venice. Art Jameel is committed to developing research programmes, plus international collaborations and partnering with arts organisations across the UAE, so this project fits so well within our wider remit.”

The research has not only informed the publication accompanying ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors: Positions in Play’, but it will also contribute to the Jameel Arts Centre Research Library’s focus on arts histories of the UAE and GCC. The Research Library is set to open in winter 2018, as part of the forthcoming Jameel Arts Centre Dubai, currently under construction in Jadaf, on the Dubai Creek.

The exhibition, titled ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors: Positions in Play’, is curated by **Hammad Nasar**, and will explore the concept of “playfulness” as a connecting thread across multiple generations of artistic practice in the UAE. [As the UAE National Pavilion has detailed](#), the exhibition attempts to address a set of nested enquiries: *Where does ‘playfulness’ in artistic practice come from? How and where is ‘play’ nurtured? What does ‘play’ do?*

The exhibition will present a mix of new commissions, existing works and re-fabrications of ‘lost’ pieces by five artists who call the UAE home: **Nujoom Alghanem, Sara Al Haddad, Vikram Divecha, Lantian Xie** and **Dr. Mohamed Yousif**. Their exhibited works approach play through movement, rhythm, form, time and place.

Researcher **Uns Kattan** worked alongside curator Hammad Nasar, and the artists and their wider community, in the development of the research accompanying the exhibition. The accompanying publication and programme serve as additional sites of exhibition and play.

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Dubai-based artists **Ramin Haerizadeh**, **Rokni Haerizadeh** and **Hesam Rahmanian** have been commissioned to contribute a 30-page series of paintings and collages conceived as a creative playground for the publication, which will go beyond the exhibition's contents to explore the curatorial concept from additional creative perspectives, both visual and textual. **Deepak Unnikrishnan** has written a series of contemporary fables for the publication, while **WTD Magazine** contributes a project mapping informal spaces of play in the UAE; both contributions will also have a physical presence within the exhibition space. These creative responses to the exhibition's themes will sit alongside a series of essays. Art historian **Murtaza Vali** explores the artistic genealogy of play in the UAE with a focus on the works of **Hassan Sharif** and **Abdullah Al Saadi**. **Uzma Rizvi** will write about fluidity and spaces of belonging, as journalist **Osman Samiuddin** contributes a piece on cricket, its history and stories within the UAE. Ethnomusicologist **Aisha Bilkhair** analyses Afro-Emirati music and folkloric games, and **Reem Fadda** and **Maisa Al Qassimi** write about the research on Abu Dhabi's social clubs they incorporated in their curation of *Emirati Expressions* 2015.

Art Jameel is also one of several cultural institutions across the UAE that has been invited to join the conversation around the themes of the exhibition with activations in their own programming. As UAE National Pavilion [recently announced](#), some of the confirmed institutions include [Sharjah Art Foundation](#), [The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi](#), [Alserkal Programming](#), [Tashkeel](#), [Maraya Art Centre](#), [Warehouse421](#) and [London-based art school Central Saint Martins](#).

During Dubai Art Week 2017, Art Jameel announced one of the first non-profit contemporary arts institutions in Dubai, the Jameel Arts Centre Dubai. The Centre will present curated exhibitions that draw from the Jameel Art Collection, as well as regional and international solo and group shows. The Jameel Arts Centre—a 10,000 square metre, three-storey multi-disciplinary space designed by UK-based firm Serie Architects—is designed as a hub for educational and research initiatives, while its wider programming embraces collaboration and partnerships with local, regional and international artists, curators and organisations.

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### About Art Jameel

Art Jameel is a non-profit organisation that supports artists and creative communities. Current initiatives include running heritage institutes and restoration programmes, plus a broad range of arts and educational initiatives for all ages. The organisation's programmes foster the role of the arts in building open, connected communities; at a

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time of flux and dramatic societal shifts, this role is understood as more crucial than ever.

Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art; locally, the organisation works with individuals and organisations to develop innovative programming that embraces both ancient and new technologies, and encourages entrepreneurship and the development of cultural networks.

*[www.artjameel.org](http://www.artjameel.org)*

### **National Pavilion UAE - la Biennale di Venezia**

The National Pavilion United Arab Emirates - la Biennale di Venezia supports the UAE's art and architecture practices on an international platform through participation at la Biennale di Venezia, and promotes a cultural dialogue between the UAE and the international community.

The UAE's participation at la Biennale di Venezia commenced in 2009 with a national pavilion at the 53rd International Art Exhibition, and has continued in subsequent editions of the art exhibition. 2016 marked its second participation in the International Architecture Exhibition. 2017 will mark its fifth participation in the International Art Exhibition, which will run from May 13th to November 26th, 2017 (vernissage May 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>). The National Pavilion UAE also organizes the Venice Internship, offering opportunities to young residents of the UAE through a one-month internship on site in Venice acting as custodians and docents of the National Pavilion.

The National Pavilion UAE - la Biennale di Venezia is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, and supported by the UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development.

### **Commissioner: The Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation**

The Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation's mission is "to invest in the future of the United Arab Emirates by investing in its people." The Foundation is committed to developing and supporting initiatives in the areas of education; arts, culture, heritage; and health.

### **Supporter: UAE Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development**

The Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development highlights the UAE's fast-growing community and thriving youths, while not losing sight of its heritage and cultural scene. The Ministry aims to revive the UAE's heritage by inspiring and encouraging the creative talents abundant among the youths of today. It is responsible for promoting and investing in the energies of young people, inspiring them and adding to their artistic abilities. In doing so, the Ministry has raised much awareness towards the community's cultural practices and in turn, has promoted innovation and enrichment of cultural communication. It is constantly working to create an integral framework for providing detailed information regarding the country's culture, youth and community development. In addition, the Ministry also organizes ongoing activities and develops mechanisms to secure the necessary support required to achieve its goals.

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