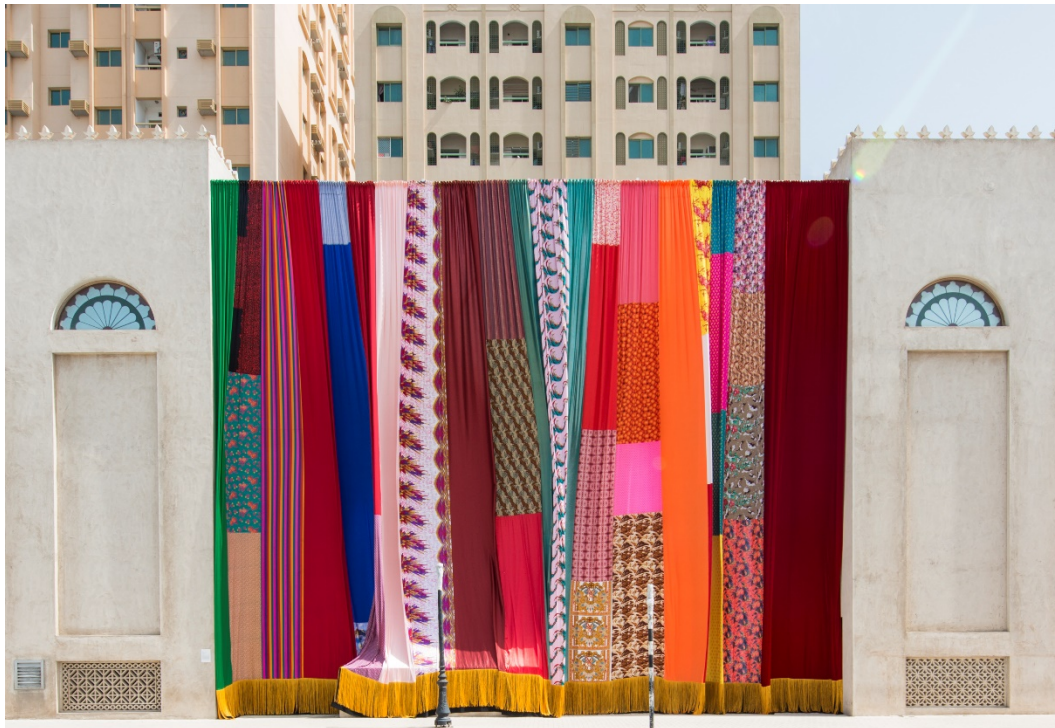


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**SHARJAH BIENNIAL 13: TAMAWUJ PRESENTED
CONCLUDING EVENTS IN BEIRUT, INCLUDING
THE PUBLIC PROGRAMME FOR ACT II
AND *UPON A SHIFTING PLATE*,
THE FOURTH AND FINAL SB13 OFF-SITE PROJECT**

**SB13 WAS AN EXTENSIVE GLOBAL INITIATIVE ENCOMPASSING
EXHIBITIONS, PUBLIC PROGRAMMES, EDUCATION,
RESEARCH AND PROJECTS IN SHARJAH, BEIRUT,
DAKAR, ISTANBUL AND RAMALLAH**



Joe Namy, *Libretto-o-o: A Curtain Design in the Bright Sunshine Heavy with Love*, 2017. Site-specific installation, curtain and stereo sound. Dimensions variable. Commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation. Image courtesy of Sharjah Art Foundation.

Sharjah Biennial 13: *Tamawuj* (SB13) concluded in Beirut with Act II, the final public programme (16–22 October 2017), and *Upon a Shifting Plate*, the Biennial's fourth and final off-site project (14–15 October 2017). Curated by Christine Tohme, SB13 encompassed exhibitions and a public programme in two acts in Sharjah and Beirut; a year-long education programme in Sharjah; projects in Dakar, Ramallah, Istanbul and Beirut; chip-ship, a collaborative, data-rich

research depository; and tamawuj.org, the year-long publishing platform of the Biennial. *Tamawuj*, a noun in Arabic which is defined as a rising and falling in waves, a flowing, swelling, surging or fluctuation and a wavy, undulating appearance, outline or form, reflects SB13's mission to cultivate collaborations, infrastructures and strategies within Sharjah and the project localities.

Rearranging and expanding Sharjah Biennial's structure, Tohme questioned the format of large-scale, centralised exhibitions with a dynamic, discursive and locally rooted vision. Her vital interventions took place against the backdrop of infrastructural fragility within regional institutions and channeled friendships and collaborations—a practicality which has been necessary for the survival of many art landscapes, institutions and individuals of the region. Social interaction and exchange were the thematic focus of SB13, grounded in the four keywords **water**, **crops**, **earth** and **culinary**.

SB13 began in October 2016 with the inauguration of **SB13 School**, a year-long education programme which engaged various communities in western, central and eastern Sharjah and focused on crafts, culinary and digital arts, farming and music, and the launch of **chip-ship**. For **Act I** of the Biennial in Sharjah (10 March–12 June 2017), Tohme invited more than 70 artists to respond to the thematic focus of SB13. The exhibition, which featured over 25 new artist commissions, was on view in various sites across the Emirate, including the new multi-purpose artist studios and exhibition spaces in Al Hamriyah. Act I opened with the annual **March Meeting** (10–14 March 2017), featuring presentations and panels as well as a programme of talks, performances and film screenings. **Dineo Seshee Bopape**, **İnci Eviner**, **Uriel Orlow** and **Walid Siti** received the Sharjah Biennial Prize. A special prize was awarded to the late **Ali Jabri**, dedicated to the conservation of his work.

Tohme drew on Sharjah's unique positioning in the region in order to expand the Biennial through various nodes, inviting four 'interlocutors' to create varied permutations of artistic conversation and production across four other sites: **Dakar**, Senegal; **Istanbul**, Turkey; **Ramallah**, Palestine; and **Beirut**, Lebanon. These four interlocutors organised projects around the keywords that comprised SB13's conceptual framework. **Kader Attia** investigated water with **Vive l'Indépendance de l'Eau** in Dakar (8–9 January 2017), a two-day workshop encompassing a symposium, workshops and performances. **Zeynep Öz** considered crops during **BAHAR** in Istanbul (13 May–10 June 2017), a programme featuring commissioned work by over ten artists, special projects, a film series and the launch of new publications. **Lara Khaldi** studied earth with **Shifting Ground** in Ramallah (10–14 August 2017), which included a five-day symposium, performances and the launch of ten new publications. Finally, represented by **Ashkal Alwan**, the fourth off-site project, **Upon a Shifting Plate**, reflected on culinary in Beirut (14–15 October 2017), presenting a programme of workshops, walks, talks and cooking sessions. More information on the off-site projects can be found [here](#).

The interlocutors worked closely with researchers in the four localities and in Sharjah to populate chip-ship, a centralised digital storage space, housing various media, images and texts that address the Biennial's four keywords. They also collaborated with the four editors of tamawuj.org—Omar Berrada, Amal Issa, Kaelen Wilson-Goldie and Brian Kuan Wood—to develop commissioned content which expanded upon the keywords and made chip-ship research accessible to the public through four downloadable compendia.

Following the varied programme of off-site projects and public events, SB13 concluded in Beirut with **Act II** and **Upon a Shifting Plate**, the final off-site project. **Ashkal Alwan**, the interlocutor of the culinary programme, presented a weekend of discursive and performative projects

themed around the keyword culinary, during which workshops, walks, talks and cooking sessions explored the production and consumption of culinary heritage and how our eating habits condition and shape our psychological and cultural dispositions.

Act II launched two exhibitions conceived by guest curators **Reem Fadda** and **Hicham Khalidi** at the Sursock Museum and Beirut Art Center respectively. On view in Act II were works by over 55 participating artists and collectives as well as 15 new commissions. Fadda's exhibition ***Fruit of Sleep*** (14 October–31 December 2017) continues the exploration into the notion of dormancy, initially begun by Zeynep Öz as part of the Istanbul off-site project, ***BAHAR***. Fadda examines sleep neither as act of the singular nor collective mind but rather of a social body carefully plotting action in the face of failed revolutionary attempts. Khalidi's exhibition ***An unpredictable expression of human potential*** (14 October 2017–19 January 2018) seeks to address the current moment of disenfranchisement and frustration, pondering whether the young generation holds the vitality needed to upturn the socio-political legacies of modernity. Act II also featured a public programme of talks, film screenings and performances across the city, including new commissions and publications released throughout SB13 in Beirut, Dakar, Istanbul, Ramallah and Sharjah.

Summarising her vision for SB13, curator Christine Tohme stated: '*Tamawuj*, in the most abstract sense, is a motion of ebbs and flows, and pragmatically, describes the way in which we work together, most often by leaving traces rather than demarcation lines, by building adaptable structures rather than solid grounds. To conceive of spaces for commonality is what *Tamawuj* as a biennial attempts to do... in the hope that it can exist as a model for other frameworks, extending beyond the SB13 program of infrastructures to open up onto broader social and cultural contexts.' Through multiple components and locations, Sharjah Biennial 13 brought together a broad global network, which included artists, curators, interlocutors, writers and art professionals, to interrogate the infrastructure of the art world and propose new conditions and ways to work. In this way, the exhibitions, research, public programmes and education projects of *Tamawuj* have set the stage for, and will continue to inspire, collaborations, friendships and investigations in the region and beyond.

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.

For more information, visit www.sharjahart.org.

About Christine Tohme

Christine Tohme is the founding director of Ashkal Alwan, the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts. A non-profit organisation established in 1993, Ashkal Alwan supports artistic practice through various initiatives such as Home Works: A Forum on Cultural Practices, initiated by Tohme in 2001, and Home Workspace Program, a tuition-free study programme inaugurated in 2011. Tohme is the recipient of Prince Claus Award (2006) and the CCS Bard Audrey Irmis Award for Curatorial Excellence (2015). She is on the boards of Marsa, a health centre in Beirut that provides specialised medical services for at-risk youth and marginalised communities, and SAHA, an association in Istanbul that supports contemporary art from Turkey.

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