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فن أبوظبي abu dhabi art

دائرة الثقافة والسياحة
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND TOURISM

PRESS RELEASE

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath to curate Abu Dhabi Art's Beyond: Emerging Artists 2021

Abu Dhabi Art's annual programme will also feature commissioned artists Hashel Al Lamki, Maitha Abdalla and Christopher Benton

Abu Dhabi, UAE, 15 July 2021: Abu Dhabi Art announced today that the guest curators for its 2021 *Beyond: Emerging Artists* programme will be **Sam Bardaouil** and **Till Fellrath**, co-founders of multidisciplinary curatorial platform *Art Reoriented*. The curators have chosen three UAE-based emerging artists - **Hashel Al Lamki, Maitha Abdalla** and **Christopher Benton** - to participate this year and create new commissions for the exhibition in November.

"We are honoured and delighted to have such distinguished curators as Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath helming the *Beyond: Emerging Artists* programme for 2021. With their critical insights into Modern and Contemporary art from the region, they will bring a deeply informed art-historical context and perspective to bear on what can be viewed as a new moment for the contemporary Emirati art scene today," said **Dyala Nusseibeh, Director of Abu Dhabi Art**. "The commissioned artists for 2021, Hashel Al Lamki, Maitha Abdalla and Christopher Benton, are all key voices from within the community and will be supported by Sam and Till as they realise ambitious new projects for this year's programme. We are thrilled that they have accepted the invitation to participate in the programme this year."

The commissioned artists each bring a unique perspective to this year's programme. Al Lamki is inspired by the evolution of the UAE's cultural dynamic since the early 2000s, while performance artist Abdalla explores the real and the imagined using memory and folktales. Benton's multimedia works span sculpture, photography and film.

"We are thrilled to be curating Abu Dhabi Art's 2021 *Beyond: Emerging Artists* programme," said Bardaouil and Fellrath. "The next edition will showcase new commissions by three very diverse artists whose practices are marked by a truly interdisciplinary approach, in both conceptual reference and choice of media. Departing from a position of heightened social engagement, and with remarkable formal inventiveness and intellectual rigour, Maitha, Hashel and Christopher touch upon a number of pertinent issues that are of significant relevance to the socio-cultural context of the UAE, as well as the current discourse within the global arts community."

Al Lamki said, "I am super excited and thankful to be selected for the *Beyond: Emerging Artists* programme this year, to be among other great artists that I consider friends and family, and work with star curators Sam and Till." He added, "I have known Maitha and Christopher for a long time, we have a close connection, we discuss our projects and help each other out."

Al Lamki's project for the programme, titled *Dice*, highlights the patterns of the world, showing that everything has a rise and fall, and is meant to repeatedly evoke a sense of tension and release.

Abdalla said, "My work often revolves around local stories, folktales and mythology and explores the boundaries of these stories through performance. I plan on exploring one of these folktales in particular this year, a folkloric female character who pushes boundaries and is feared by the community. Working with Sam and Till will be fantastic, they are curators that I have been following and admiring."

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Abdalla added, "The body of work I am producing is across multiple disciplines, tackling the conflict between the desire for freedom and the social limitation in society."

Benton said, "The curators Till and Sam have already been incredible mentors and friends, working with me to challenge and develop my ideas for this commission. It has been a really fun process. I am presenting a project that is looking at the date palm tree as a symbol for the movement of people, ideas, and products across the world, and across decades. I am envisioning my project as comprising a large-scale installation, video and sculpture, and I can't wait to share what I have been working on this November."

He added, "I am grateful to be part of Abu Dhabi Art this year and to be able to explore untold histories and journeys through a platform that brings the art world together from around the world in the UAE."

Beyond: Emerging Artists 2021 will be on show at Manarat Al Saadiyat from 17 November until 22 January 2022.

The fair's upcoming edition will open to the public at Manarat Al Saadiyat from Thursday 18 November to Sunday 21 November 2021, with an opening reception on 17 November.

Strict precautionary and hygiene measures will be enforced at Abu Dhabi Art 2021 to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants and visitors. Details of these measures will be announced in due course.

For more information on Abu Dhabi Art 2021 and its year-round programmes, visit abudhabiart.ae and follow Abu Dhabi Art on social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

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Notes to Editors:

About Abu Dhabi Art
Abu Dhabi Art expands beyond the notion of a traditional art fair, in placing strong emphasis on a diverse public engagement programme, including art installations and exhibitions, talks and events that take place in different locations throughout the year. The culmination of this year-long programme is the Abu Dhabi Art event in November, which provides an important sales platform for participating galleries whilst also offering these galleries an opportunity to showcase ambitious installations and site-specific works by their artists to a wide audience.

About the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi
The Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) drives the sustainable growth of Abu Dhabi's culture and tourism sectors, fuels economic progress and helps achieve Abu Dhabi's wider global ambitions. By working in partnership with the organisations that define the emirate's position as a leading international destination, DCT Abu Dhabi strives to unite the ecosystem around a shared vision of the emirate's potential, coordinate effort and investment, deliver innovative solutions, and use the best tools, policies and systems to support the culture and tourism industries.

DCT Abu Dhabi's vision is defined by the emirate's people, heritage and landscape. We work to enhance Abu Dhabi's status as a place of authenticity, innovation, and unparalleled experiences, represented by its living traditions of hospitality, pioneering initiatives and creative thought.

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Beyond: Emerging Artists
An annual initiative that launched in 2017. The programme provides three emerging artists in the UAE with a platform from which to develop their practice and realise ambitious art projects. The selected artists are chosen by a guest curator each year. They undertake a year-long programme of workshops and studio visits initiated by the guest curator which leads toward the realisation of a project for the Abu Dhabi Art fair in November. The works remain on exhibition to the public for several months beyond the fair dates.

About Dyala Nusseibeh
Dyala Nusseibeh has been the Director of Abu Dhabi Art since 2016. Having graduated with a BA from Cambridge University and an MLitt (with Distinction) from Glasgow University, she spent a year at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi followed by four years at the Saatchi Gallery in London as Head of Education. In this capacity she organised annual student shows, the education programme at the gallery and a travelling exhibition of works from the Saatchi collection to Ipswich in order to broaden outreach. In 2013, Nusseibeh became founding Director of ArtInternational Istanbul, managed by leading fair organisers Angus Montgomery, a position she held until 2016 when she joined the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi.

About Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath
Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath are Founders of Art Reoriented, a multidisciplinary curatorial platform launched in 2009 in New York and Munich. They are Curators of the Lyon Biennale in 2022, and Affiliate Curators at Gropius Bau in Berlin.

As an independent voice, Bardaouil and Fellrath have collaborated with more than 70 institutions worldwide, including Centre Pompidou, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Tate Liverpool, Moderna Museet, Reina Sofia, ARTER, and the Montblanc Cultural Foundation. They are internationally recognized curators and award-winning authors whose practice is rooted in global contemporary art, as well as in the field of modernist studies.

In 2016 they were part of the team of curatorial attachés of the 20th Biennale of Sydney. At the Venice Biennale, they were curators of the National Pavilions of Lebanon in 2013 and the United Arab Emirates in 2019, and they are Curators of the French Pavilion in 2022.

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath are co-curators for *Beyond: Emerging Artists*, Abu Dhabi Art 2021.

About Hashel Al Lamki
Hashel Al Lamki was born in the UAE, where he has experienced not only the rapid industrial and architectural growth of Dubai and the rest of the Emirates, but also the cultural complexities and dynamics that came as a result of the construction boom. In 2007 Al Lamki joined a BFA programme at Parsons the New School for Design In New York City. During the artist's time in New York City, he nurtured his passions and enriched his practice through multidisciplinary collaborations. Currently, he infuses these vibrant perspectives to bring them into his practice, which focuses on social innovation, sustainability, environmental & philanthropic practices. Al Lamki's most recent exhibition is his first solo show, "The Cup and The Saucer", at Warehouse421.

Hashel Al Lamki is represented by Leila Heller Gallery and a commissioned artist for Beyond: Emerging Artists curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Abu Dhabi Art 2021.

About Maitha Abdalla
Born in 1989, mixed media artist Maitha Abdallah oscillates between the diaphanous, vibrant and surreal; her art is always marked by an atmosphere of reminiscence and nostalgia. Her paintings and mixed-media work often evolve into series and articulate strong cultural narratives; they are assemblages of memory, travel and human interactions. Informed by exchanges and experiences, her socially driven commentaries on the human condition reveal astute, intuitive observations on the world around her in a narrative form. A particularly influential encounter was with children at an orphanage where Abdallah taught English and art. The motifs of childhood began to permeate her work after this time, becoming an eloquent vernacular in which she further explores the difference between the

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imaginary and the real; mapping the liminal space between these interconnected worlds, she plays out many questions of social and cultural identity.

Abdallah is a graduate of the Salama Bint Hamdan Emerging Artists Fellowship, in partnership with the Rhode Island School of Design, and is also one of the founders of Bait 15, an artist-run gallery and studio in Abu Dhabi, and plays an active role in the Contemporary art scene in the UAE. She participated in Abu Dhabi Festival 2019 Visual Arts Residency Programme in Vaduz, Liechtenstein and Vienna, Austria.
Maitha Abdallah is a represented by Tabari Art Space and commissioned artist for Beyond: Emerging Artists curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Abu Dhabi Art 2021.

About Christopher Benton
Christopher Joshua Benton (b. 1988) is a UAE-based American artist working across sculpture, photography, and film. Christopher works closely with communities and neighborhoods to instigate collaboration and share stories of power, labor, and hope. His practice explores how the working-class uses culture and innovation to stage resistance to post-colonial and neo-liberal forces. Past work has been presented at Dubai Design Week, the Fikra Graphic Design Biennial, and Jameel Arts Centre. He is currently pursuing his MS in Art, Culture, and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, through the support of Salama Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation.

Christopher Benton is a commissioned artist for Beyond: Emerging Artists curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Abu Dhabi Art 2021.

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