



# Here's your handy guide to this year's Art Dubai



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March 8



From the galleries you need to visit to the artists you cannot miss, this is what you need to know.



The month of March alludes to the most exciting time of the year for international and UAE art

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In celebration of this grand event, Art Week programmes a multitude of art festivities and events surrounding the fair, bringing together all creative outlets across the city, including the galleries located inside Alserkal Avenue and DIFC's Gate Village.

In addition, following its opening last year, the Louvre Museum Abu Dhabi will be joining Art Week's festivities, adding the cultural achievements of mankind to the region's art story. Here are our top gallery picks and must-see artists.

### **Contemporary Hall**



Marc Quinn, South China Sea. Courtesy of Custot Gallery Dubai.



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installation, Planet, exhibited in Singapore and in the gardens of Chatsworth House, UK, Quinn raises what it is to be human in the modern world of today and shows the vulnerability of nature and our needs to nurture it.



Jules de Balincourt, Valley Pool Party, 2016. Courtesy of Victoria Miro Gallery.

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escapism; you will find yourself imagining the lives of the people presented in the canvas in a daydream. It can be difficult to distinguish whether you are observing a utopia or a dystopia, which only adds to your experiential journey.



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Soheila Sokhanvari, *Dark Horse*, 2017. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery.

Soheila Sokhanvari is an Iranian-born artist who layers political history with enigmatic, mysterious stories. The artist's original and intriguing compositions of pattern, colour and portraiture invite the audience to question the artwork's message and encourages viewers to reach their own conclusion about its meaning. Her works collectively explore themes of trauma and hope. Sokhanvari uses family photographs and pre-revolutionary Iran as the inspiration behind her work.

### **Modern Hall**



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Mahjoub Ben Bella, Untitled, 1988. Courtesy of Elmarsa Gallery.

The Modern Hall of Art Dubai, presents museum-quality work by masters from the Middle East,

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pulsations of his brush strokes.

**Residents Hall**



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Yasuaki Onishi, *Edges*, 2017. Courtesy of The Mine.

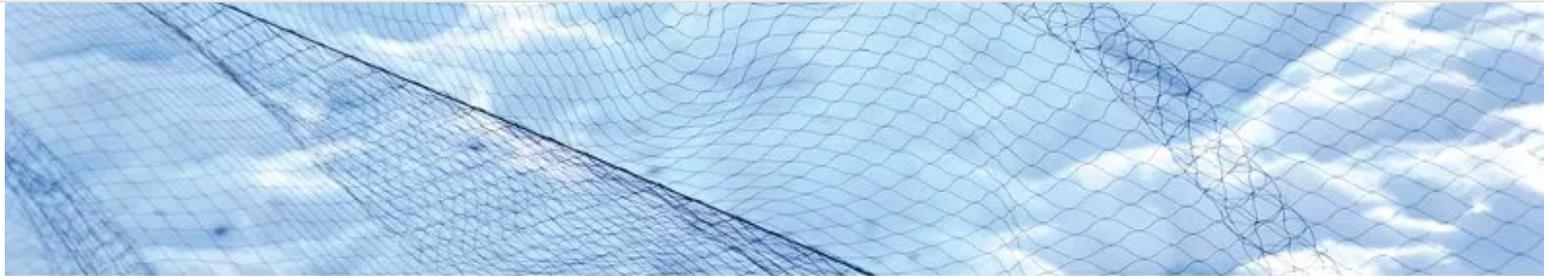
Residents is a new addition to Art Dubai. The new gallery programme invited select artists to the region to participate in a four to eight week residency. Here, the artists were encouraged to immerse themselves in the local art scene and create a body of work that combines their art practice with inspirations gained from UAE culture.

Internationally acclaimed contemporary sculptor Yasuaki Onishi focuses on the relationship between human agency and nature. His choice of installation materials are flexible and free from rigid structures or formed shapes. Onishi gives visual forms to spaces that are considered hollow and, directly requests the viewer to consider the meaning of empty spaces.

### **Alserkal Avenue**

*Alserkal Programming Artist commission: curated by Mari Spirito*

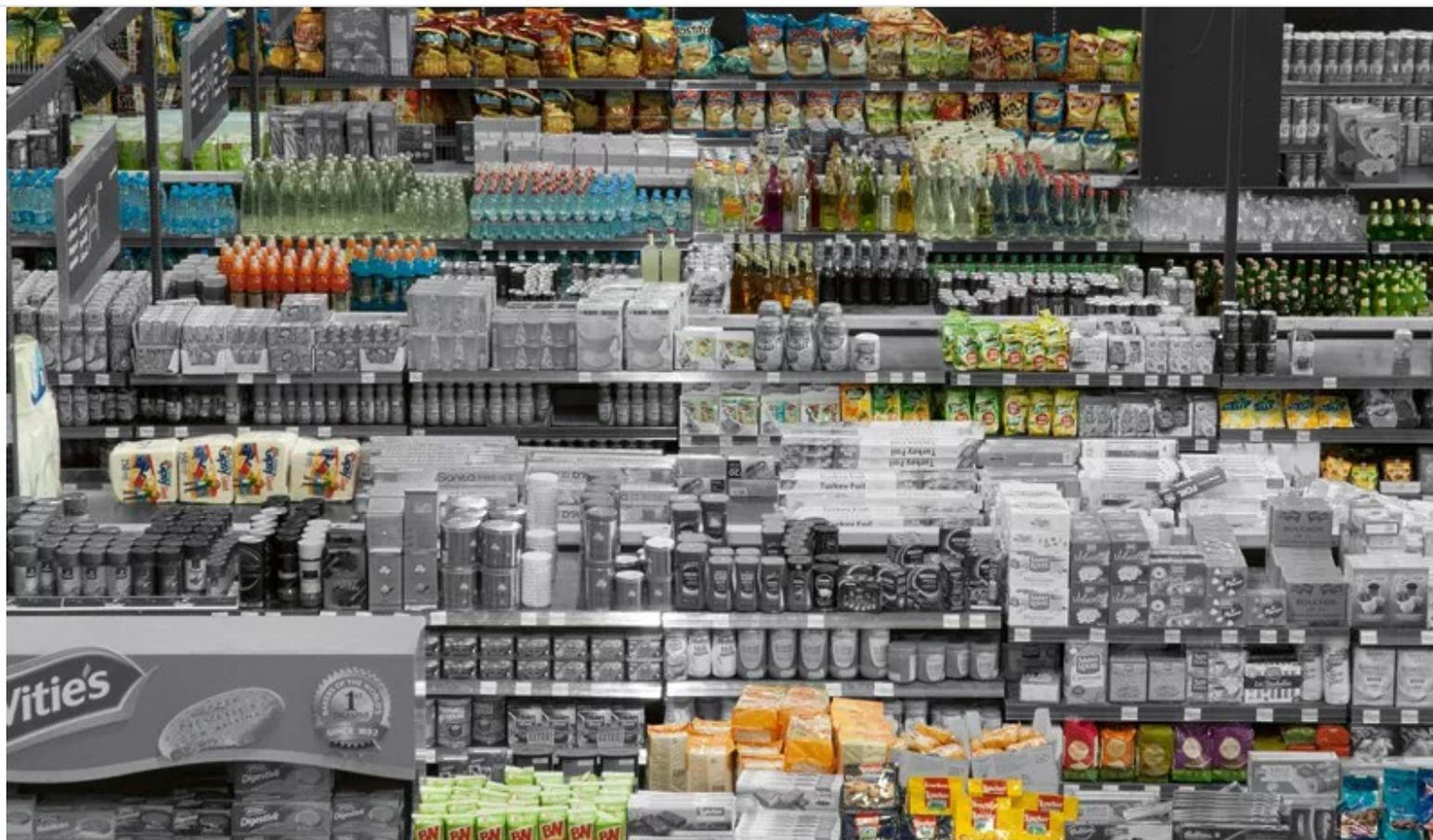
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*Under, 2018 by Hale Tanger.*

Hale Tanger will reveal his installation, *Under 2018* in The Yard during Art Week. A vernacular material will cover the existing buildings within the space of the avenue where visitors will be invited to enter. *Under 2018*, is related to a fictional narrative of an ancient hunting ploy by aristocrats that would restrict the height birds could fly, by trapping birds under a net until they believed it was permanently there. Even after the net was removed, the bird's flight would remain restricted as if they had forgotten that the sky has no limits. Tanger's installation comments on the physical and psychological effects of modernity on human behavior and control.

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Lawrence Abu Hamdan A Convention of Tiny Movements, 2015 - Spinneys Supermarket, Achrafieh Beirut, August 2017.

The Abraaj Group Art Prize was established in 2008, to provide notable contemporary artists from the region with the opportunity to actualize their dream project and the opportunity to exhibit their work at Art Dubai.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan is the winner of this year's Abraaj Group Art Prize. Lawrence is an artist,

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analyses for legal investigations at the UK Asylum Tribunal and advocacy for organisations such as Amnesty International and Defence for Children International.

**DIFC – Opera Gallery – Manolo Valdes**



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Dorothy II.

Rather than evoking his audiences, Manolo Valdes paintings manage to provoke the viewer to reflect and project visual narratives from his works. His work consists of historical art figures and motifs as silhouettes rich in colour and bold lines. You can observe the pop-art influence on the Spanish artist as well as the political connotations in his work, highlighting the great turmoil Spain experienced during 1940s to 1970s.

In addition, Opera Gallery Dubai will display 5 monumental sculptures throughout the DIFC for a period of one year, as part of the neighbourhood's public art integration program. For the very first time in his career, Valdes will reveal four sculptures mixing brass and 24 carat gold, which have been created exclusively for Dubai. The exhibition will open on 14 March in the presence of the artist, the Ambassador of Spain, the director of Opera Gallery and representatives of Dubai Culture and the DIFC.

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- Galleries Night at Alserkal Avenue on 19 March (6-10pm) showcasing the galleries' new exhibitions
  - DIFC Art Nights will take place on the evening of 19 March. This year's theme is 'Bridging the Gap'
  - Louvre Abu Dhabi- if you haven't yet visited this is a must-see
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*Images: Supplied*

*Main image: Earshot exhibition view, Portikus, Frankfurt/Main, 2016. Photos: Helena Schlichting*

*Courtesy Portikus, Frankfurt/Main and Maureen.*

*Words: Felicity Stokes*

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