

## Press Release

### Art Jameel and Edge of Arabia serve as Education Partner and Lead Cultural Partner of The Armory Show 2015 Focus: *Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean (MENAM)*

Collaboration includes the presentation of special projects by Middle Eastern artists at The Armory Show 2015 and a dedicated Focus: MENAM Symposium

**New York, USA – February 17, 2015.**

Drawing upon their extensive history as an impetus for cross-cultural dialogue, **Art Jameel** and **Edge of Arabia** will serve as Education Partner and Lead Cultural Partner of The Armory Show 2015's Focus: Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean (MENAM) from March 4-8, 2015. Curated by Omar Kholeif, Focus: MENAM will examine contemporary cultural and artistic practices from across the MENAM region, reflecting the region's diversity and dynamism through a series of curated presentations, site-specific projects and a dedicated symposium. Art Jameel will serve at the **Education Partner** for Focus: MENAM, reflecting its long-term commitment to nurturing artists careers and supporting a better understanding of contemporary Middle Eastern art and culture. In this capacity Art Jameel will collaborate on the presentation of the **Focus: MENAM Symposium** on March 7-8, 2015 and participate in the Open Forum talks on March 5-6, 2015. As **Lead Cultural Partner**, Edge of Arabia will partner with Art Jameel to present site-specific projects at The Armory Show, exploring the interconnected stories that link ideas and communities across physical and psychological borders.

As global supporters of the arts, Art Jameel and Edge of Arabia have worked with leading cultural institutions and organizations throughout the world. Their partnership with The Armory Show is the latest in a series of collaborations aimed at cross-cultural engagement in the United States. At The Armory Show, they will present the latest iteration of the ongoing **CULTURUNNERS** project, which hosts artistic collaborations and technologies to connect cultural territories between the United States and MENAM regions. From March 4-8, **CULTURUNNERS** will be sited in a mobile artist studio and broadcast vehicle, in the form of a modified Gulf Stream RV that uses custom-built cultural technologies to map, archive, and amplify stories and voices from the Focus section of the fair. **CULTURUNNERS** is a core component of Edge of Arabia's multi-year US Tour in partnership with Art Jameel.

Armory Focus: MENAM will also mark the launch of **FREEWAY**, the online broadcast platform of Edge of Arabia's US Tour. During The Armory Show 2015, **FREEWAY** will explore connections between the Focus and MENAM communities across New York. Featured projects include original video exploring the neighborhoods of Little Syria and Harlem, directed by Husam Al-Sayed and featuring scores by SALAR, both recipients of the 2015 **Art Jameel Residency at The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**. Following its long-term commitment to the development of artists' careers, Art Jameel will also award residencies to two artists from the MENAM region through its second

annual partnership with the **International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP)** in Brooklyn and Edge of Arabia.

Through Focus: MENAM, Edge of Arabia in partnership with Art Jameel will also present a series of special projects installed within the exhibition halls, including Ahmed Mater's *Cowboy Code (Hadith)* presented by Athr Gallery, Saudi Arabia and Oraib Toukan's *The New(er) Middle East* presented by EOA.Projects

CULTURUNNERS is co-authored by Azra Aksamija, MIT Assistant Professor, and Stephen Stapleton, Director of Edge of Arabia, and developed in collaboration with artists who have spent a decade traveling between the US and the Middle East. CULTURUNNERS @ ARMORY participating artists include Azra Aksamija (with Andrea Boit, Lillian Harden and Karina Silvester), Dietmar Offenhuber, Nick Beauchamp, Chris Riedl, Darvish Fakhr, Madeleine Gallagher, John Steiner, Orkan Telhan and Matthew Mazzotta. CULTURUNNERS @ Armory is curated by Azra Aksamija.

FREEWAY@ Armory is curated by Ava Ansari and Stephen Stapleton in collaboration with Husam AlSayed from Telfaz 11, and supported by SALAR, Yousef Poursohi and Hillary Sand. Participating artists include Brian Zeeger, FOUNDLAND, Rashed AlShashai, HAZIM DOHAnyc and Ayman Yossri Daydban.

[www.aljci.org](http://www.aljci.org) | [www.edgeofarabia.com](http://www.edgeofarabia.com) | [www.culturrunners.com](http://www.culturrunners.com)

**Facebook:** Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives | Edge of Arabia

**Instagram:** @ALJ\_CI, @edgeofarabia | **Twitter:** @ALJCI, @edgeofarabia

**#ARTJAMEEL | #ALJCI | #EOAUSA | #CULTURUNNERS | #FREEWAY**

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## **Art Jameel**

Art Jameel – Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI) arts and culture initiative – aims to foster and promote a thriving arts scene within the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey (MENAT) region and to support the development of creative enterprises. In partnership with art organizations worldwide, Art Jameel develops cultural exchange programs to encourage networking and knowledge sharing. Art Jameel is the founding partner of Edge of Arabia, The Crossway Foundation, Arabian Wings, Jeddah Art Week and The Archive. In partnership with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London it provides the biannual Jameel Prize for contemporary art inspired by Islamic traditions. Additional projects include: Jeddah Sculptures Museum, a public park established in collaboration with Jeddah Municipality; the Art Jameel Photography Award; the Art Jameel Art Olympics in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia; and the Art Jameel Program for Traditional Arts and Crafts in collaboration with the Prince's School of Traditional Arts.

ALJCI was established in 2003 to promote positive social change through the establishment of long-term partnerships with international institutions, and the creation of initiatives in the fields of Job Creation – Bab Rizq Jameel; Global Poverty Alleviation; Arts and Culture – Art Jameel; Education and Training – Education Jameel; and Health and Social – Social Jameel. More information on ALJCI's considerable set of initiatives can be found online at [www.aljci.org](http://www.aljci.org).

## **Edge of Arabia**

Edge of Arabia is an independent, non-profit arts initiative, which connects artists and cultural communities between the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region, Europe and United States. It is

the vision of a group of British and Saudi artists who met in the mountains of South-West Saudi Arabia in 2003 and shared a common desire "to start a real cultural movement from the periphery of the international art world." With its exhibitions, expeditions, educational programs, and publications, it seeks to foster new audiences, create expanded networks and inspire artists to develop independent and authentic practices, which unite people across physical and psychological borders. Based between London and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Edge of Arabia is a registered UK Social Enterprise, which maintains creative independence and has, to date, welcomed over 250,000 visitors to its exhibitions and distributed over 50,000 publications worldwide. In 2014 Edge of Arabia launched a grassroots tour across the United States in partnership with Art Jameel. International exhibitions include: Rhizoma, 55th Venice Biennale (2013); #COMETOGETHER, East London (2012); We Need to Talk, Jeddah (2012); The Future of a Promise, 54th Venice Biennale (2011); Terminal, Dubai (2011); Transition, Istanbul: European Capital of Culture (2010); Grey Borders/Grey Frontiers, Berlin (2010); Edge of Arabia, Riyadh (2010); Edge of Arabia, 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); and Edge of Arabia, University of London (2008). More information can be found online at [edgeofarabia.com](http://edgeofarabia.com).

### **About The Armory Show**

The Armory Show is New York's leading fair for modern and contemporary art. A seminal event in the New York arts calendar, the fair spearheads Armory Arts Week, a city-wide program of cultural events and exhibitions. Once again, the fair will comprise of an acclaimed VIP program, a lively opening night benefit party at the Museum of Modern Art and the engaging Open Forum discussion series. For the fourth year running the fair will be designed by Brooklyn-based architects Bade Stageberg Cox who will transform Piers 92 and 94 along the Hudson River on Manhattan's west side into a spectacular setting for over 65,000 visitors who come to New York for this principal event in the international art market calendar.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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