

MIDDLE EASTERN ARTISTS ACROSS BORDERS



ART JAMEEL ANNOUNCES EDGE OF ARABIA GRASSROOTS JOURNEY ACROSS USA

Cross-country, cross-cultural tour of Middle Eastern artists launches at Fotofest Biennial in Houston TX

EDGE OF ARABIA US TOUR (2014 – 2016)

HOUSTON, TX – EDGE OF ARABIA ARTIST LECTURE AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON:
MARCH 29

HOUSTON, TX – FOTOFEST BIENNALE'S PORTFOLIO REVIEW PROGRAM, THE MEETING PLACE:
MARCH 30-APRIL 2

NEW YORK, NY – RESIDENCY AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO & CURATORIAL PROGRAM:
JULY 2014

Additional events and cities to be announced in the coming months.

New York - Edge of Arabia, in partnership with Art Jameel, will embark on a tour across the United States of America, with the aim to connect artists with new audiences, bridge communities and inspire renewed cultural dialogue. Launching in March 2014 in Houston, the tour will travel to New York, Boston and Washington D.C. before making the cross-country road trip to the west coast.

“As a continuation of ALJCI’s longstanding work with Edge of Arabia, Art Jameel is proud to partner on this tour,” adds Fady Jameel, President of Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALJCI) International. “Over the last 10 years ALJCI’s arts and culture initiatives, now gathered under the ‘Art Jameel’ umbrella, have sought to foster and promote a thriving contemporary art scene in the MENAT (Middle East, North Africa and Turkey) region through the development of special arts and cultural exchange programs like Edge of Arabia.”

“It is significant, in both the broader historical moment and the history of art, that a dynamic contemporary art movement has emerged from the Middle East at this time,” explains Stephen Stapleton, Director of Edge of Arabia, “and it is an amazing moment for the artists driving this movement to engage with audiences in the United States. These artists are at the vanguard of a new openness, which has the potential to create positive change - internally and externally - by offering an alternative viewpoint to the recurrent stories in the media. This tour is a continuation of the border-crossing encounters that have marked Edge of Arabia’s work for the past ten years. What began as a friendship between artists has evolved into a platform dedicated to championing artistic voices on the periphery - a mission that was galvanized on the road.”

Founded in 2003 by Stephen Stapleton and two of the Middle East's foremost contemporary artists, Ahmed Mater and Abdunasser Gharem, Edge of Arabia has made history with pioneering shows across Europe and the Middle East.

Abdunasser Gharem notes, "Edge Of Arabia stands for the power of art to suggest alternative paths for our societies and between our society and the rest of the world. It allows us to translate contested histories and marginalized voices, into a visual language of ideas that can communicate across cultures. Art allows us to move beyond a localized, often limiting perspective, and respond to the more complex reality of today's increasingly globalized community."

The tour begins in Houston, with a vocational exchange program for six young artists from Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Kuwait. The artists have been invited by Edge Of Arabia and Art Jameel, with additional support from Tamer Group, to participate in the FotoFest Biennale's internationally recognized portfolio review program, The Meeting Place. Artists Nouf Alhimiary, Abdullah Al-Shehri, Huda Beydoun, Ajlan Gharem, Saeed Salem, and Mohammed Sharaf, will take part in four days of workshops with international curators and art professionals to network and present photography-based projects developed in their communities. On March 29, Edge Of Arabia will host a talk featuring these young artists as part of a historic daylong conference on Arab Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

In July 2014, Edge Of Arabia will launch a New York residency program in partnership with Art Jameel and the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP). Open to artists from across the Middle East, the residency aims to support diverse artistic practices and to immerse artists within the cultural landscape of New York. This flexible, high calibre program will allow artists to undertake independent projects and work alongside curators during their 4-6 month residency, as well as join the ISCP's esteemed community of international artists.

Additional events and cities to be announced in the coming year.

Visit www.edgeofarabia.com for further information on Edge of Arabia's US Tour.

Connect with Edge of Arabia on **Facebook** | **Twitter** | **Instagram** for all the latest news, updates, photos and more. Join the conversation by mentioning **@EdgeOfArabia** and using the **#EOAUSA** hashtag.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT EDGE OF ARABIA

Edge of Arabia is an independent arts initiative developing an appreciation for contemporary Arab art and culture with a particular focus on Saudi Arabia. As a pioneering non-profit arts and education initiative, Edge Of Arabia is dedicated to connecting Middle Eastern artists with international audiences. To date, Edge Of Arabia has welcomed 250,000 visitors to its exhibitions, distributed over 50,000 books & catalogues worldwide, impacted over 300 schools & universities through its award winning education program and reached a wider audience of over 10,000,000 through a dedicated communications campaign. 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).

ABOUT ART JAMEEL

Art Jameel - the new name for ALJCI's arts and culture initiative - was created to form partnerships with art organizations worldwide to foster and promote a thriving arts scene inside the MENAT region, support the development of creative enterprises, and develop cultural exchange programs to encourage networking and knowledge sharing. Art Jameel has a long-standing partnership with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London providing the Jameel Prize for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition. The Prize was conceived after the redesign and redisplay of the V&A's Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art, which opened in July 2006. Art Jameel is also the founding partner of Edge of Arabia, The Crossway Foundation, Jeddah Art Week, 1001 Inventions and The Archive. Additional projects include Jeddah's Open Air Museum, a public sculpture park of international artists established in collaboration with Jeddah Municipality, an art center in Dubai, and the development of art courses in Saudi schools, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

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, Global Poverty Alleviation, Arts & Culture, Education & Training, and Health & Social. More information on ALJCI's considerable set of initiatives can be found online at www.aljci.org.

ABOUT TAMER GROUP

In Tamer Group, the initiative that perhaps best illustrates the Group engagement with the community is its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) platform, SAAID. The name of the programme means "forearm" in Arabic which symbolizes the part of the body that connects the body "Community" to the hand which symbolize "the company". SAAID is structured to address five main areas, namely health awareness and education; art and culture; environmental conservation; workplace wellness; and women's empowerment. Under the firm believe that art & culture is an essential part of expressing and empowering local communities, SAAID is working on various inspiring social art initiatives through partnership with passionate art curators, expertise and art entities.

For more information, please contact:

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