



‘Crude’ Artist Biographies

Curator

Murtaza Vali

Place of Residence: New York, USA

Murtaza Vali is an independent critic and curator based in the UAE and USA, a member of Art Jameel’s Curatorial Council, and visiting instructor at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn. A recipient of a 2011 Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant, he regularly contributes to international art periodicals and publications, including the book accompanying the UAE National Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017). Vali curated the 2013 Abraaj Group Art Prize. Other recent curatorial projects include ‘Mohammed Kazem: Ways of Marking’, Aicon Gallery, New York (2018); ‘Vikram Divecha: Minor Work’, Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Dubai (2017); ‘Accented’, Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah (2015); ‘Geometries of Difference: New Approaches to Ornament and Abstraction’, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz (2015); and ‘Brute Ornament: Kamrooz Aram and Seher Shah’, Green Art Gallery, Dubai (2012). He is a Lead Tutor of Campus Art Dubai 7.0.

Artists

Latif Al Ani

Born: 1932

Place of Residence: Baghdad, Iraq

Known as the “father of Iraqi photography”, Latif Al Ani was the first to capture cosmopolitan life in Iraq in the 1950s to 1970s. His black-and-white images represent a unique visual memory of the country during its belle époque. Al Ani presented the vivid Iraqi culture in its abundance and complexity: besides documenting everyday life, political culture and industry, he captured images of Iraq from the air for the Iraq Petroleum Company. In 2018, Sharjah Art Foundation produced a major retrospective exhibition of his work.

Manal Al Dowayan

Born: 1973

Place of Residence: Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and Dubai, UAE

Embracing diverse media, Manal AlDowayan's work encompasses black-and-white photography, sculpture, video, sound, neon and large-scale participatory installations. Her artistic practice revolves around themes of forgetting, archives and collective memory, with a primary focus on Saudi women and their representation. Her recent exhibitions include 'Suspended Together', The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (2018); 'Letters: Fragments of a Memory', ATHR Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi Art and Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi (2018); 'Melancholia', Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2018); and 'Femitopias', Rafael Boti Foundation, Córdoba (2018). She is represented by Cuadro Gallery, Dubai and Sabrina Amrani Gallery, Madrid.

Monira Al Qadiri

Born: 1983

Place of Residence: Berlin, Germany and Beirut, Lebanon

Monira Al Qadiri is a visual artist whose work explores unconventional gender identities, petrocultures and their possible futures, as well as legacies of corruption. Al Qadiri received a PhD in intermedia art from Tokyo University of the Arts, where her research was focused on the aesthetics of sadness in the Middle East stemming from poetry, music, art and religious practices. Al Qadiri's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Circl, Amsterdam (2018), Sursock Museum, Beirut (2017), Gasworks, London (2017), Stroom Den Haag, The Hague (2017), Acud Macht Neu, Berlin (2017), ATHR Gallery, Jeddah (2017), Sultan Gallery, Kuwait City (2014) and Tokyo Wonder Site, Tokyo (2009). Her work has also been shown in group exhibitions, including 'Spectrum 1', Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2018); 20th Contemporary Art Festival Sesc_Videobrasil, São Paulo (2017); 'Glasstress 2017', Palazzo Franchetti San Marco, Venice (2017); 'Let's Talk about the Weather: Art and Ecology in a Time of Crisis', Sursock Museum, Beirut (2016); 'Invisible Threads: Technology & Its Discontents', NYU Abu Dhabi (2016); 'DUST', CCA Warsaw (2015); 'Whose Subject Am I?', Kunstverein Düsseldorf, Germany (2015); and 'Accented', Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah (2015).

Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck

Born: 1972

Place of Residence: Berlin, Germany

Alessandro Balteo-Yazbeck studied fine arts in Caracas, Venezuela, and continued his practice in New York from 2000 to 2010. He has developed a hybrid practice that incorporates the activities of a researcher, archivist, historian and curator. Embracing various media, his productions formally resemble or incorporate the works of others, stressing notions of authorship and cultural authority. His entangled narratives are motivated by socio-political questions involving gaps in collective knowledge or misrepresentations in the public record, often focusing on the importance of propaganda as a political strategy. Through his practice, he aims to reveal the political strategies and motives at work in the world by analysing the dynamics of power and propaganda in modern history and aesthetics. His solo exhibitions include 'Instrumentalized', Carmen Araujo Arte, Caracas (2018); 'Instrumentalized', Green Art Gallery, Dubai (2018); 'Autocratic Nostalgia: Venezuelan Contemporary Landscapes', Henrique Faria Fine Art, New York (2017); 'Electoral Autocracy' (*Venezuelan Case*), Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna (2016); 'Diplomatic Entanglements', Rochester Art Center, Minnesota (2015); 'Modern Entanglements', Green Art Gallery, Dubai (2015); 'Cultural Diplomacy: An Art We Neglect', Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna (2013); and 'Corrupted Files', Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo (2012). He is represented by Henrique Faria, New York; Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna; Galeria Luisa Strina, Sao Paulo; and Green Art Gallery, Dubai.

Media Farzan

Born: 1979

Place of Residence: New York, USA

Media Farzin is a New York–based critic and art historian, and a PhD candidate in Art History at the City University of New York, where she is researching language-based art of the 1960s and 70s in relation to performance.

Raja'a Khalid

Born: 1984

Place of Residence: Dubai, UAE

Raja'a Khalid has an MFA in Fine Art from Cornell University. Her practice is concerned with the Arabian Gulf region and its narratives of class, ultra luxury, pre-Islamic paganism and contemporary consumer culture. Khalid's current work aims to look at the Gulf's own streaming motifs of masculinity, male initiation, game, discipline, athleticism, sport, adornment, desire, conspicuous production and crypto-secularity. Recent exhibitions include 'SOLAR FLARE, ALWAYS RED', Grey Noise, Dubai (2016); 'Bitter Bites', Cuchifritos Gallery + Project Space, New York (2017); Sylvain 'welcome to what we took from is the state', Queens Museum, New York (2016); and '1497', Green Art Gallery, Dubai (2016).

Lydia Ourahmane

Born: 1992

Place of Residence: Oran, Algeria, and London, UK

Lydia Ourahmane's artistic practice encompasses new media, video, performance, sculpture, and found objects to explore transitory forms of existence, surveillance and social and political structures. Her works address the ability of individuals to overcome the historical narratives in which they are grouped; many of them deal with the history of Algeria and its present. Exhibitions in 2018 include 'Manifesta 12', Palermo; 'Droit du Sang', 'Kunstverein München', Munich; 'The you in us', Chisenhale Gallery, London; and 'Songs for Sabotage', 4th New Museum Triennial, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Recent exhibitions also include 'a good neighbour', 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017); 'Social Calligraphies', Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2016); and 'Bloomberg New Contemporaries', Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2014).

Houshang Pezeshknia

1917–1972

Houshang Pezeshknia was one of Iran's most influential and prominent modern painters. Much of his work explores the representation of social issues and working class families — themes that began when he was employed by the National Iranian Oil Company in the 1950s, reflecting on the lives of oil workers and their families. Pezeshknia, who learned painting from students of Kamal-ol-Molk, was best known for his expressive abstract style and his adventurous approach to the medium. His significant impact upon the Iranian cultural scene was largely realised only after his death.

Hassan Sharif

1951–2016

A pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the UAE, Hassan Sharif explored form, time, social action and mathematical systems throughout his career. His work is marked by the use of common materials in accumulative installations as well as complex social and philosophical reflection. Rejecting calligraphic abstraction, the dominant regional art discourse in the 1970s, Sharif pursued a contemporary art vocabulary that drew upon the non-elitism and intermedia of the art collective Fluxus and the systemic processes of making found in British Constructionism. He was a founder of The Flying House, Dubai (2007); Art Atelier, Youth Theatre and Arts, Dubai (1987); Al Mureijah Art Atelier, Sharjah (1984); and Emirates Fine Arts Society, Sharjah (1980). Solo exhibitions of his work include 'Hassan Sharif: I am the Single Work Artist', Sharjah Art Foundation, which is currently touring to Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, Turin, and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2018-2020); 'Hassan Sharif: Objects and Files', Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2016); 'Hassan Sharif; Experiments & Objects 1979—2011', Qasr Al Hosn, Abu Dhabi (2011); and 'Hassan Sharif', Sharjah Art Museum (2007). His estate is represented by IVDE, Dubai, and Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

Wael Shawky

Born: 1971

Place of Residence: Cairo, Egypt

Wael Shawky studied fine art at Alexandria University, Egypt, before receiving his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania. Using a variety of media, from drawing and photography to film and performance, he investigates and analyses the real and imaginary histories and narratives of the Arab world. His multi-layered reconstructions and retellings force viewers to engage in questions of truth, myth and stereotypes. Shawky sees himself as a translator; translating instances of civilisational into form. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at AROs, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark (2018); Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Yinchuan, China (2017); Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy (2016). He is represented by Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut and Hamburg.

Babak Afrassiabi

Place of Residence: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Nasrin Tabatabai

Place of Residence: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Since 2004, Babak Afrassiabi and Nasrin Tabatabai have collaborated on various joint projects, beginning with the publication of the first issue of *Pages*, a bilingual (Farsi/English) magazine. This expanded into several projects and exhibitions, defined mostly by their combinations of different media and materials, often brought together as a result of long-term research. Linking these works is an attempt to articulate the undecidable space between art and its historical conditions. The recurring question, especially in more recent works, has related to the role of the archive in defining this juncture between politics, history and the practice of art. Afrassiabi and Tabatabai work both in Iran and the Netherlands. Their work has been presented internationally in various solo and group exhibitions, including 'Publishing Against the Grain', Centre For Contemporary Art, Lagos and Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town (2018); 'Lodgers 8', Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp (2017); 'Gestures and Archives of the Present, Genealogies of the Future', Taipei Biennial, Taipei, (2016–2017); 'Between East and West: A Gulf', Kuwait National Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice (2016); 'Lost in the Archive', Latvia Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga (2015–2016).

Rayyane Tabet

Born: 1983

Place of Residence: Beirut, Lebanon

Rayyane Tabet holds a Bachelor's in Architecture from Cooper Union, New York, and an MFA from the University of California, San Diego. Tabet's work explores the relationship between history and the built environment. His multi-faceted installations often reconstitute the perception of physical and temporal distance. Tabet has had solo shows at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2017), daadgalerie, Berlin (2017), Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2017), Museo Marino Marini, Florence (2016) and Trouw Amsterdam (2014). His work was featured in the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018), the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017), the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo (2016), the 6th Marrakech Biennale (2016), Sharjah Biennial 10 and 12 (2011 and 2015), the 55th Venice Biennale (2013) and the 2nd New Museum Triennial (2012). Named the best emerging artist of Sharjah Biennial 10, he is a special winner of the Future Generation Art Prize (2012) and a recipient of the Abraaj Group Art Prize (2013). He is represented by Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut and Hamburg.

Hajra Waheed

Born: 1980

Place of Residence: Montreal, Canada

Hajra Waheed's multidisciplinary practice ranges from interactive installations to collage, video, sound and sculpture. Prompted by news accounts and extensive research, Waheed uses complex narrative structures to explore issues surrounding covert power, mass surveillance, cultural distortion and the traumas and alienation of displaced subjects via mass migration. Over the last decade, she has participated in exhibitions worldwide, including the 57th Venice Biennale (2017); the 11th Gwangju Biennale (2016); 'The Cyphers', BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2016); 'Still Against the Sky', KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); and 'L'avenir' (*Looking Forward*), La Biennale de Montréal (2014). She received the prestigious Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award (2014) for outstanding achievement as a Canadian mid-career visual artist and was shortlisted for the Sobey Art Award (2016), Canada's preeminent contemporary art prize. Waheed's works can be found in permanent collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; British Museum, London; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Burger Collection, Zurich/Hong Kong; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; and the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.

Michael John Whelan

Born: 1977

Place of Residence: Dublin, Ireland, and Berlin, Germany

Michael John Whelan received a BFA from the Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dublin, and an MFA from Chelsea College of Art and Design, London. He works predominantly in photography and moving image, and most recently in sculpture and drawing. His recent projects address ideas of duration, geometry and humanity's attempt to grasp the universe. A recent exhibition includes 'The Birth and Death of Stars', Boetzelaer|Nispen, London (2012). The 2005 Clifford Chance/University of the Arts London Sculpture Award winner, he has also won the Culture Ireland Exhibition Award six times. Whelan has work in public and private collections, including the London Collection for the University of the Arts. He is represented by Grey Noise, Dubai.

Lantian Xie

Born: 1988

Place of Residence: Dubai, UAE

Lantian Xie makes images, objects, stories, jazz bands, motorcycles, books and parties. He holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has been featured in exhibitions including the 57th Venice Biennale (2017), the 11th Shanghai Biennale (2016) and the 3rd Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2016). He is represented by Grey Noise, Dubai.

Ala Younis

Born: 1974

Place of Residence: Amman, Jordan

Ala Younis' projects encompass research, curating, film and publishing. Ala Younis holds a BSc in Architecture from the University of Jordan and an MRes in Visual Cultures from Goldsmiths, University of London. Using objects, film and printed matter, Younis often seeks instances where historical and political events collapse into personal ones. The recipient of a Bellagio Creative Arts Fellowship, as well as art prizes from Cairo Youth Salon and Jordanian Artists Association (both 2005), she is co-founder of the non-profit publishing initiative Kayfa ta, and serves on the Advisory Board of the Berlinale's Forum Expanded. She has exhibited at the Venice, Istanbul and Gwangju biennials and the New Museum Triennial, New York, as well as in solo shows at Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville; Delfina Foundation, London; Darat al-Funun, Amman; and Sharjah Art Foundation, amongst others. She curated several shows and film programmes, as well as Kuwait's first national pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2013) and the collection of 'Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence', Museum of Modern Art Kuwait (2012).

GCC

GCC is an artist "delegation" or collective composed of seven members from the Arabian Gulf. GCC is an acronym that alludes to the Gulf Cooperation Council (the intergovernmental political and economic partnership that connects six countries in the region). The group was formed in 2013 as a nine member collective at Art Dubai. Its members emeriti include artists Sophia Al-Maria and Monira Al Qadiri. The group has since shown at the 9th Berlin Biennial and Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin; Brooklyn Academy of Music, The New Museum, Whitney Museum of Art, MoMA PS1, Public Art Fund and The James Gallery, CUNY Graduate Center in New York; Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris; Art Dubai, The Barjeel Art Foundation, and The Sharjah Art Foundation in UAE; and Fridericianum in Kassel.

Collective members: Nanu Al-Hamad, Khalid Al Gharaballi, Abdullah Al-Mutairi, Fatima Al Qadiri, Aziz Al Qatami, Barrak Alzaid and Amal Khalaf.