

Art Jameel Commissions

Art Jameel has a longstanding interest in commissioning artists to make new works, often for the public realm, as well as in media or situations that further their ongoing artistic practice. In 2017, Art Jameel launched a commissioning programme anchored at Jameel Arts Centre in Dubai, UAE. The programme was planned to run in a 3-year cycle, focusing on Sculpture (2018); Arts Writing and Research (2019); and Drawing and Painting (2020). With 2020 proving to be a year of exceptional circumstance, the programme has been adjusted and expanded to include a new iteration—**Art Jameel Commissions: Digital**. (The drawing and painting commission will move to 2021-2022.)

Through an Open Call, Art Jameel is inviting artists to respond to the brief for this exciting opportunity – specifically, artists from or based in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey and those around the world (regardless of nationality) who have sustained and demonstrable links to, and a meaningful understanding of, the wider ‘Middle East region’. Applicants may originate from the region, reside either in the region or diaspora, and/or have contributed to the various cultural scenes across this diverse and nuanced region.

An eminent jury will discuss the applications received and select a work to be commissioned and produced. Jury members include: **Nadim Samman**, Curator for the Digital Sphere, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Finnish digital and organic media artist **Jenna Sutela**; and publisher and Chief Technology Officer at the Serpentine Galleries, London **Ben Vickers**.

Art Jameel Commissions plays a central role in Jameel Arts Centre’s programming, and aims to embrace the institution’s aims to be a multidisciplinary, exploratory space dedicated to contemporary artists, writers and researchers from across the Middle East and beyond, and to welcome a broad local, regional and international audience. The programme requests that applicants have some prior experience of working to commission. This year’s commission is for a digital work but artists whose practice is not wholly dedicated to this medium are actively also encouraged to apply. The Open Call runs from April 13, 2020 to **June 10, 2020**; the application form can be found [here](#).

Art Jameel Commissions: Digital

The third round of [Art Jameel Commissions](#) aims to support the production of a digital artwork that will live online, on the Jameel Art Centre website, for audiences to engage with, regardless of where they may be. Jameel Arts Centre has a long-term focus on reaching out to audiences beyond its physical location, aware that for many in the Middle East and South Asia, travel can be a luxury. In addition, 2020 is proving to be a year where many artists and arts institutions find themselves ‘on pause’, while audiences are more reliant than ever on engaging with art and with each other online.

Art Jameel Commissions: Digital invites artists to propose projects, artworks or experiences that engage with **TIME**. It has been said that time has become more atomised due to the ubiquitous mediation of technology in almost every aspect of personal, public or working life. Stock markets are mostly governed by automated algorithms whose competitive edge comes down to nanoseconds. In contrast, others seek escape from such relentless regimes into slower passages of time, linked more closely to circadian rhythms. TIME can also be understood as ‘epochal,’ lending itself to demarcations between the future, the present and end times. What TIME are we living in and living through? Submissions for Art Jameel Commissions: Digital should address a specific aspect of time today, and inventively translate this into a digital interface that helps us re-examine what time has been, is — or could be.

The commission also presents an opportunity to rethink and reboot our understanding of “digital art” and the ways in which it can question, investigate and form meaningful connections and experiences that explore this theme. How can the commission be used to bridge stronger connections between communities? Can the digital realm act as a primary medium through which to explore the urgent questions we face today? What does it mean to formally innovate in the digital realm? This commission is primarily interested in art and ideas, rather than technological hard or software – but the proposed work should be imagined with and through the platforms in question. The Commission is open to any medium that can be easily navigated online, including but not limited to augmented reality, apps, online platforms and multimedia works.

This commission aims to support practitioners in the production of a digital artwork that will be hosted by (or promoted via) the Jameel Arts Centre website from autumn/winter 2020-2021. The work should be weighted in research and concept, and may make use of found media, or reinterpret and explore multiple and new media derived from the digital sphere. The launch of the commissioned work online will be accompanied by an outreach campaign and potentially also by public programming (online, and potentially physically also).

Application Process

Applicants should submit:

- A summary of their area of interest in 250 words
- A concept proposal (up to 500 words)
- A bio (up to 150 words)
- A one-page CV highlighting relevant experience
- Supporting visuals and/or audio files: Sketches, drawings, moodboards, storyboards, video clips, sound bites or background thinking (up to 10)
- Samples of previous works (PDF portfolio)
- Draft production budget breakdown ranging from USD10,000-15,000 depending on the scale, format and mediums being utilised
- A one-page preliminary breakdown of the hardware and software needed to realise your concept and ensure its compatibility with continually changing technologies (PDF)

Brief & Eligibility

Art Jameel aims to commission a work that embraces technology and new media within the digital realm, to be exhibited on or via the Jameel Arts Centre website. The work should ideally have a strong visual and experiential impact, and be conceptually engaging in nature.

The commission is open to artists who:

- demonstrate some experience with working to commission
- demonstrate an ability to create a work that is compelling and suitable for online public viewing
- have a proven track record of adhering to budgets and deadlines
- are of any nationality or age and have links to, and a grasp of, the environmental and cultural nuances of the location and the wider Middle Eastern region. Artists may be from or based in the Middle East, North Africa or Turkey — either living in the region or diaspora — and/or engaged in contributing to the various cultural scenes of the region
- possess the ability to compose a work that either uses digital media, technology or its derivatives as the primary technique and embraces visual/aural ideas or concepts that are wholly original, dynamic, carefully considered and contextually-appropriate

- have the background to maintain and/or troubleshoot the artwork during its production and exhibition

Criteria

Submissions should:

- stand out conceptually, artistically and technically
- engage meaningfully with a broad, contemporary audience base
- provide a compelling and experiential focal point within the Jameel Arts Centre's digital platforms
- meet the deadlines of the application and production process, and of launch around Autumn/Winter 2020

List of additional documents/appendices included in this brief:

- FAQs
- Terms and conditions

Budget

The winning commission will be awarded a prize of USD 7,500. An additional dedicated production budget will be allocated to the winning artist to cover:

- all materials and production costs necessary for the production of the work, not to exceed USD 10,000-15,000
- Travel and accommodation to travel to Jameel Arts Centre during the exhibition period to participate in one public programme

Art Jameel will provide:

- curatorial support to the commissioned artist regarding the production of the work, both during the production process and during launch
- technical mentorship and support, delivered in collaboration with [MIT's Jameel World Education Lab \(J-WEL\)](#), an initiative that engages educators, creatives, technologists, policymakers, societal leaders through online and in-person collaborations, workshops, research, and information-sharing events. Through this mentoring opportunity, the selected artist will be able to problem-solve their concept and work with experts to think about how best to use technology to engage with audiences via dedicated online feedback sessions and critiques. The long-distance mentoring and advice sessions will be conducted online or via written correspondence.

Application Process

Artists are invited to respond to the above brief with supporting visuals, a budget and the application form by **June 10, 2020, 11:59 pm** (Dubai time). The application form is to be completed online in English and requires the following information:

- A one-page CV (PDF) that highlights your relevant experience of working to commission for projects in the digital realm [*CV_FirstnameLastname*]
- a statement on how your proposed work relates to the brief (up to 500 words)
- A portfolio of captioned images/links to work relevant to your proposal (up to 10) that includes date, dimensions and medium in a PDF document [*Portfolio_FirstnameLastname*]
- Up to 10 captioned supporting visuals/audio files–labelled [*Conceptdocs_FirstnameLastname*] to correspond with the sequence in the application.
- An itemized draft budget in PDF format
- A one-page preliminary breakdown of the hardware and software needed to realise your concept and ensure its compatibility with continually changing technologies

You may access the online application [form here](#).

Jury Biographies

Nadim Samman is Curator at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin. He read Philosophy at University College London before receiving his PhD from the Courtauld Institute of Art. He was Co-Director of Import Projects in Berlin from 2012 to 2019 and, concurrently, Curator at Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna (2013-2015). He curated the 4th Marrakech Biennale (with Carson Chan) in 2012, and the 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art in 2015. He co-founded the 1st Antarctic Biennale (2017) and the Antarctic Pavilion (Venice, 2015-). Widely published, in 2019 he was the First Prize recipient of the International Award for Art Criticism (IAAC).

Jenna Sutela is a Finnish artist based in Berlin. She works with words, sounds, and other living media, such as *Bacillus subtilis natto* bacteria and the “many-headed” slime mold *Physarum polycephalum*. Her audiovisual pieces, sculptures and performances seek to identify and react to precarious social and material moments, often in relation to technology. Sutela's work has been presented at museums and art contexts internationally, including Guggenheim Bilbao, Moderna Museet and Serpentine Galleries. She is a Visiting Artist at The MIT Center for Art, Science & Technology (CAST) in 2019-20.

Ben Vickers is a curator, writer, explorer, publisher, technologist and luddite. He is CTO at the Serpentine Galleries in London, co-founder of Ignota Books and an initiator of the open-source monastic order unMonastery.

APPENDICES

Frequently Asked Questions

Q How do you define digital art?

A In the context of Art Jameel Commissions: Digital, jurors will place an emphasis on artists producing work that is intended for online viewing (or via a specialised platform) and offer an interactive, immersive experience. The commission’s work may be comprised of, but not be limited to, new media art, data projections and film. Artists may elect to incorporate virtual reality and artificial intelligence-derived technologies.

Q Where will the work be shown?

A Online.

Q How long will it be on view?

A Approximately 6 months

Q Can a collective or duo apply?

A Yes, but they will be considered one artist with a shared budget.

Q Who will own the work?

A The work will enter the collection of Art Jameel.

Q Will the artist retain the copyright for the work?

A The artist will retain copyright, but Art Jameel will have the right to use images and video extracts of the work.

Q Who will pay installation costs?

A Art Jameel is responsible for costs related to readying the website (where needed) to exhibit the work.

Q Instead of photos, can we supply short videos of work in the public realm in our application?

A Yes, YouTube and Vimeo links will be accepted.

Q If I have participated in a Jameel-affiliated programme in the past, am I still eligible to apply?

A Yes, the Commission is open to everyone who meets the criteria.

If you have any questions that have not been addressed above, please contact: commissions@artjameel.org

Terms and Conditions

Stage One

I) A panel of eminent jurors will select the winning commission. By registering his/her interest and submitting his/her details and concept proposals, the artist agrees to be bound by the rules and terms and conditions of entry

and by the decision of the judging organisation, which is final and binding in all aspects, being specified that jurors are not obliged to provide reasons for their decision.

II) Jurors will not enter into correspondence with artists.

III) Only one artist (or collective or practice, should the application be made as a duo/group) will be commissioned.

IV) Proposals must be the applicant's own work and not breach any third party's intellectual property rights in any way. Applicants must declare the names of any third parties who may have intellectual property, moral or other rights in any part of the work submitted. Artists must be able to demonstrate on demand that any third party rights have been assigned, licensed or waived as appropriate for all relevant purposes. In the case of copyright infringement, the commissioned practitioners will assume full responsibility, the commission will be cancelled and the commissioner will be reimbursed any fees paid and costs incurred.

V) All submissions must comply with the rules and if they do not comply they shall be disqualified.

VI) By completing a submission, the applicant will opt into being added into the Art Jameel database in accordance with our [privacy policy](#).

Stage Two

I) By accepting the commission, the winning artist(s) shall agree to take part in related promotional photographs, interviews and similar publicity activities as may be reasonably requested. Notably, the use of the artist's name, biography and images and videos of the work may be used for publicity.

II) A commissioning contract and any other necessary contracts will be executed by the commissioned artist and Art Jameel, setting out each parties' rights and obligations under the Commission.