

CHI-KA presents 'EAST-EAST: 2020, Vol. 3'

featuring emerging Emirati, Japanese and UAE based artists



Press Release

September 25th, 2017

'EAST-EAST: 2020, Vol. 3'

OPENING RECEPTION

Wednesday, October 18th, 2017 - 7pm

With curator and artist-led tours

CHI-KA is pleased to announce the opening of 'EAST-EAST: 2020, Vol.3', the third edition of the EAST-EAST exhibition series which aims to explore invisible bridges and links between the UAE and Japan through the works of emerging artists. Curated by Sophie Mayuko Arni, this edition's theme is 2020, the coinciding year of Dubai Expo and Tokyo Olympics.

In a wave of ambitious projects for brighter and better futures, 2020 stands as a catalyst for megalithic urban development and social high tide for both Dubai and Tokyo. 2020 will be the year that Dubai and Tokyo shine under global spotlight, welcoming millions of curious visitors. 2020 marks the celebration of a vision and master plan realized. 2020 stands as a cultural model: a race to a more efficient, sustainable, convenient,

technologically advanced, happier future. Moreover, Dubai and Tokyo's upcoming events will inspire global collaborative agendas and promote inclusiveness in a world that is gradually retracting in ethnic divides.

For *EAST-EAST: 2020, Vol.3*, curator Arni places the two cultures side by side, UAE and Japan, both preparing for their big moment. She raises the idea of 'Gulf Futurism', a term coined by Qatari-American artist Sophia Al Maria, which examines this state of permanently looking ahead, relating particularly to the Gulf states, while expressing concern over the social and environmental costs of hyper-development. Essentially, Gulf Futurism warns us of a potentially displaced global future.

While keeping a positive outlook, Arni is interested in comparing the theory of Gulf Futurism, with the participating artists of the exhibition, to Japanese futurist cases. Although Japan is often regarded as the land of the future, attractive for its technological innovation and economic activity, the island suffered in many ways following the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Arni poses the question, 'How can a country that suffered from not just one but three nuclear disasters keep rebuilding itself?' With regard to the UAE, when it comes to creating the future, there is no place like Dubai. 'But how does one ensure a holistic, sustainable, positive result for generations to come?'

The works in this exhibition depict a balance in futuristic ideals with ecological and social realities, providing a view of the future as cyclical rather than linear, spiralling one step back and a couple steps forward. Three large themes frame the exhibition: Construction, Consumption and Reconstruction. Selected artists include Farah Al Qasimi, Alaa Edris, Ali Al Shehabi and BABU.

The choice of media is intentionally technologically inclined and will include digital art, video art, photography and projected installation.

The 'EAST-EAST: 2020, Vol. 3' opening reception will be held on Oct 18th, 2017 at 7pm. The exhibition will run until November 11th, 2017.

CHI-KA's interest lies in exploring new boundaries and futures with cross-cultural resonance. Connecting any two cultures reveals a fabric of invisible bridges that subtly connects all of mankind. Now more evident and exciting than ever.

About CHI-KA

CHI-KA is a multifaceted practice, both a gallery and retail space, hosting a diverse program of collaborations in fine art, fashion, design, craft, robotics, multimedia, and performance.

CHI-KA is located in Alserkal Avenue 69
Opening Hours: Sat-Thu 11am-7pm



Farah Al Qasimi, *Miracle Garden*, 2014.
Image courtesy of the Third Line Gallery.

About the Curator

Sophie Mayuko Arni is a Swiss-Japanese curator and art critic. She believes in breaking the geographical boundaries of contemporary art, as well as expanding the art world to include design, fashion and street culture. In 2015, Arni founded Global Art Daily, an online platform of artist interviews, exhibition reviews and opinion pieces covering the art scenes of Abu Dhabi, New York City, Buenos Aires, London and many other cities. She curated her first exhibition for the East-East exhibition series, titled 'East-East: UAE meets Japan', at the NYU Abu Dhabi Project Space in October 2016. The exhibition opened after a ten-month studio process in which the curator and artists exchanged information about concepts and histories of Japanese and Emirati aesthetic cultures. The exhibition travelled to CHI-KA, Alserkal Avenue in November 2016. She graduated from New York University Abu Dhabi with a BA in Art History (2017). She currently lives and works in Tokyo.

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Artist Bios > on the following page.

ARTIST BIOS

BABU (b. 1983, Kitakyushu, Japan)

BABU is a Japanese street artist best known for his contributions to the graffiti and skateboard scenes of southern Japan. He started his career at age 14 in Kitakyushu. Skateboarding has been a considerable influence in his work, as he finds it a subtle protest against the normalization of society. His work focuses on reclaiming empty and forgotten urban landscapes, and he has recently expanded his practice to include drawings, paintings, video art and found objects installations. Selected exhibitions include a solo exhibition *Ai (LOVE)* at B-Gallery/Beams Japan, Toyko (2017); *LANDSCAPE: Hotel Asia Project 2016* curated by Ni Kun and Gen Sasaki which premiered in Gallery Soap, Kitakyushu (2015-6) and traveled to venues in Thailand, China and Japan; *ANACONDA*, Gallery Soap, Kitakyushu (2006); *one against 4*, a solo exhibition at the Art Space Tetra, Fukuoka (2005); and *SAD Song*, Gallery of Modern Art Bank Vald, Fukuoka (2005). BABU's participation in *East-East Vol.3: 2020* marks his first exhibition in the Middle East.

Alaa Edris (b. 1986, Sharjah, UAE)

Alaa Edris is an Emirati artist and currently serves as the Programs Curator for the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery. Her work takes distinct forms between video installations, photography, and projections onto three-dimensional surfaces. She is known for conducting extensive research for her projects to explore social issues, semiotics, and tradition in contemporary Emirati culture. Edris has exhibited in the United Arab Emirates and abroad, including in Bangladesh, the United States, England, and Italy. In 2011, she completed an artist residency at the Fondazione Cini in Venice, supported by the Emirates Foundation. In 2013, Maraya Art Centre commissioned Edris to create a site-specific installation throughout the Al Qasba district coinciding with the Sharjah Biennial. Selected exhibitions include London's Moving Image contemporary video art fair (2013); *Past Forward*, a traveling exhibition of Emirati artists throughout the United States (2014-15); and participation in the L.A. Art Fair (2015). Edris holds a Bachelor's degree from the College of Fine Arts & Design at

the University of Sharjah, with a concentration in Electronic Media.

Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991, Abu Dhabi, UAE)

Farah Al Qasimi is an Emirati artist and musician. Her practice over the years has moved fluidly between private and public spaces, but the content has primarily remained focused on locating the fantastic in the everyday. She also explores how consumer culture seduces people, particularly women, with promises of beauty or self-improvement. Selected exhibitions include *No to The Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects*, CCS Bard Galleries, New York; *Coming Up Roses*, The Third Line, Dubai (2016); the first Biennial for Arab Photography, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2015); *Walls and Margins*, the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah (2016); *Emirati Expressions*, Manarat al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi (2015); *Accented*, Maraya Art Center, Sharjah (2015); and *The World is Sinking*, The Third Line, Dubai (2014). Her work is housed in public collections including Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE and Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE. Al Qasimi earned both her Bachelor's and MFA degree in Photography at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Ali Al Shehabi (b. 1994, Jidhafs, Bahrain)

Ali Al Shehabi is a Bahraini photographer and visual artist based in Dubai, UAE. He works with analog photography giving his photographs recognizable anachronistic and nostalgic features. His practices focus on documenting Middle Eastern youth. He is also interested in dialogues between his native Middle East and Japan - a country he has traveled to extensively to capture its thriving street energy. His works have been exhibited both in Dubai and Tokyo. Selected exhibitions include *Life in Tokyo: Just a Dream* at the Adidas BYND72 space in the Dubai Design District (2017) and *Life in Tokyo* at a gallery space in Shibuya, Tokyo (2016). Al Shehabi earned a degree in New Arts & Languages at the Tokyo Academy of Language & Arts in 2016.