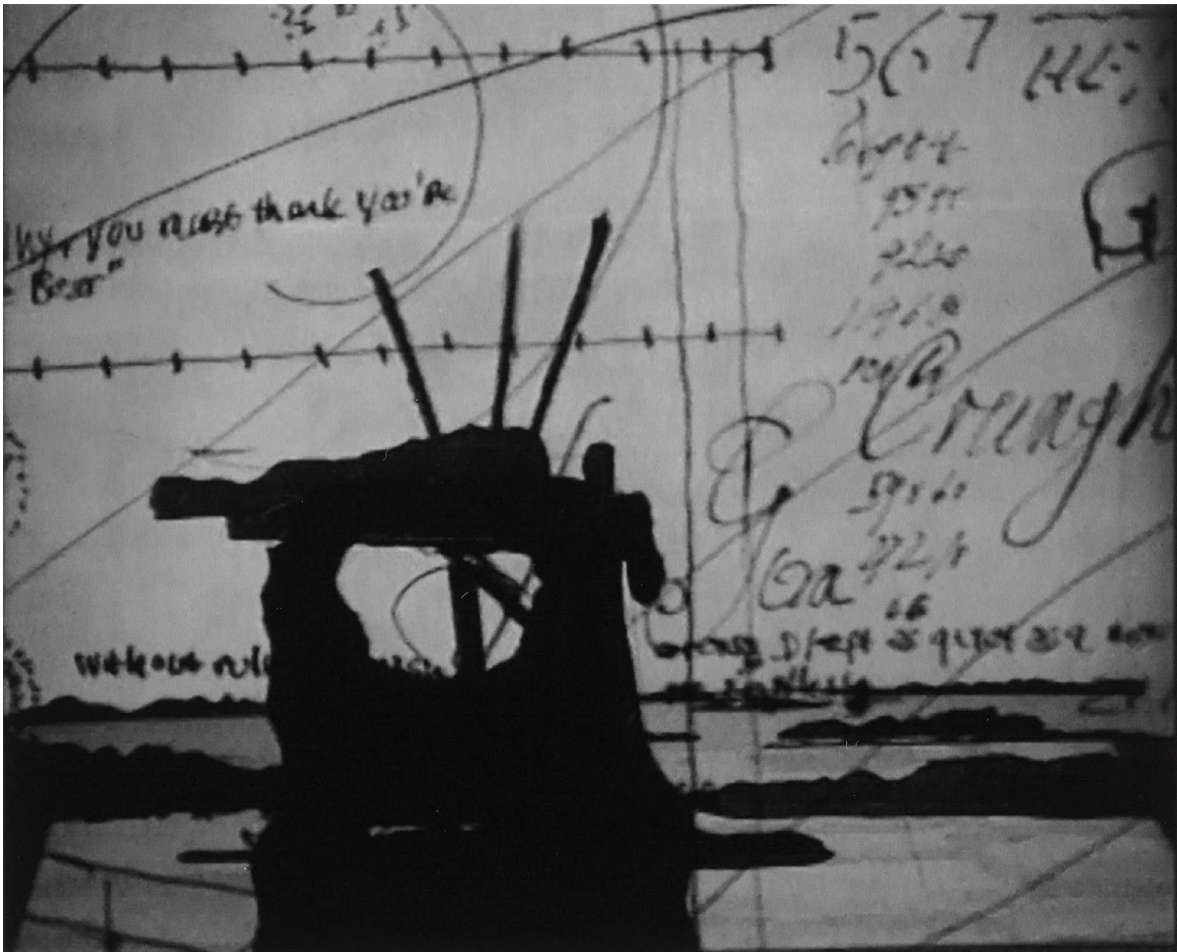




SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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William Kentridge, *Zeno Writing* (still), 2002. 35mm, 16mm and mini DV transferred to Betacam and DVD; 12 minutes. Collection Sharjah Art Foundation. Recipient of the 6th Sharjah Biennial Award, *Zeno Writing* was part of Sharjah Biennial 6 (2003) and will be on view in the exhibition *Unsettled Objects* (12 March–15 June 2021).

Sharjah Art Foundation Announces March Meeting and Spring 2021 Exhibitions

Major Solo Show of Rayyane Tabet's Work and
Exhibition of Recently Acquired and Rarely Seen Works
from the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection to Be Presented

Landmark Hassan Sharif Retrospective Travels to MAMC+ Saint-Etienne
While Tarek Atoui and Zarina Bhimji Exhibitions Remain on View in Sharjah

Sharjah Art Foundation today announced its spring 2021 programme, which sees the return of the Foundation's annual March Meeting (MM) in an expanded in-person and virtual format. MM 2021 will serve as a prelude to **Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present***, opening in spring 2022. The spring 2021 programme will also feature major solo shows exploring the work of influential artists from the MENASA region, the first Sharjah Art Foundation Collection exhibition to be held in the newly renovated Flying Saucer, and the third international collaboration to present the Foundation's expansive Hassan Sharif retrospective to a global audience.

The Foundation's annual March Meeting (MM) will return in an extended dual on-site and online format from 12 to 21 March 2021. Usually organised as a three-day convening of artists, curators and art practitioners who meet to explore critical issues in contemporary art, the 2021 edition of March Meeting will take place over 10 days and serve as the launch of the 15th edition of the Sharjah Biennial, due to open in 2022. Titled *Unravelling the Present*, this edition of March Meeting examines the past 30 years of the Biennial and brings together former Sharjah Biennial curators, artistic directors and artists as well as art historians and critics to consider the initiative's role and impact on the region and examine the art biennial as an important vehicle for engaging with history, politics and society and the ways in which they shape our global present. MM 2021 is an integral part of Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present* (SB15), which was laid out by the late Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019) and will be organised as a posthumous homage to his transformative contributions to the field. SB15 will be curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, in collaboration with the SB15 Working Group and Advisory Committee. Registration for the online and in-person portions of the programme is now live at this [link](#).

The spring 2021 season also features the exhibitions **Rayyane Tabet: *Exquisite Corpse***, the first presentation in the region of the sculptor's ambitious project *FRAGMENTS*, which expands on his exploration of the improbable history of stone reliefs from the ancient palace of Tell Halaf in northeast Syria in two commissions, and **Unsettled Objects**, an exhibition composed mostly of newly acquired and rarely seen works from the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection that will encourage the viewer to reconsider how the colonial imagination is reconstructed. In addition, the landmark Foundation retrospective **Hassan Sharif: *I Am The Single Work Artist***, originally on view in Sharjah (2017–2018) before travelling to KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2020), and Malmö Konsthall, Sweden (2020), will open at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (MAMC+), France, in March 2021. In Sharjah, **Tarek Atoui: *Cycles in 11***, which marks the artist's decade-long collaboration with the Foundation and the wider Sharjah community through a range of experimental and innovative musical forms, and **Zarina Bhimji: *Black Pocket***, which presents some of the artist's seminal works in film, photography and installation, remain on view at the Foundation through April 2021.

Detailed information on the Foundation's spring 2021 programme in Sharjah and around the world follows below:

March Meeting 2021: *Unravelling the Present*

12–21 March 2021

Sharjah Art Foundation

Sharjah Art Foundation's March Meeting (MM) will return in an extended dual on-site and online format from 12 to 21 March 2021. Usually organised as a three-day convening of artists, curators and art practitioners who meet to explore critical issues in contemporary art, this edition of March Meeting will take place over 10 days and serve as the launch of Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present* (SB15), due to open in 2022.

Originally scheduled for March 2020, MM 2021 examines the past 30 years of the Sharjah Biennial as a model for dealing with the disruptive power of artistic monolingualism and a horizon for developing a theoretical space for thinking historically in the present. Titled *Unravelling the Present*, this edition of March Meeting brings together former Sharjah Biennial curators, artistic directors and artists as well as art historians and critics to examine the role and impact of the Sharjah Biennial in the region and the global contemporary art scene at large. MM 2021 will also explore the evolution of the Sharjah Biennial, focusing on its disruption of traditional modes of curating and displaying art by activating non-institutional spaces, moving to non-geographic models of representation and developing a year-round programme enabled by the establishment of Sharjah Art Foundation.

MM 2021 is an integral part of the framework for Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present* that was laid out by the late Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019). Organised as a posthumous homage to Enwezor's remarkable and transformative contributions to contemporary art, Sharjah Biennial 15 will serve as a platform for the exploration of his curatorial and intellectual legacy. SB15 will reflect on the critical work of alternative platforms and artistic experimentation enabled by the emergence of the contemporary art biennial, uniquely embracing Enwezor's insistence on the art exhibition as an important vehicle for engaging with history, politics and society and the ways in which these domains shape our global present. SB15 will be curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, in collaboration with the SB15 Working Group and Advisory Committee. More information about SB15 is available [here](#).

Registration for the online and in-person portions of the programme is now live at this [link](#). Additional information on MM 2021 speakers and participants will be announced in the coming weeks.

Rayyane Tabet: *Exquisite Corpse*

12 March–15 June 2021

Sharjah Art Foundation

Rayyane Tabet: *Exquisite Corpse* brings together newly commissioned works and reconceived presentations from *FRAGMENTS* (2016–ongoing), the artist's most ambitious project to date, and marks its first in-depth presentation in the region. Drawing on personal insight and historical records to stage encounters between audiences and matters of geopolitical consequence, the

body of work explores an archaeological excavation led by German diplomat Baron Max von Oppenheim in Tell Halaf, northeast Syria, at the turn of the twentieth century. The artist's great-grandfather Faek Borkhoche worked as von Oppenheim's secretary for six months in 1929, a few years after Western powers had carved up the region. Following this familial connection, Tabet has developed works that engage with family heirlooms and archaeological artefacts through accidents of history—across time, generations and continents. Taken together, this project intimates the wide-ranging fallout of an era that looms large over current discussions of cultural appropriation, museological practice and freedom of movement.

Curated by Ryan Inouye, Senior Curator at Sharjah Art Foundation, *Exquisite Corpse* conveys the story of the Tell Halaf excavation while also foregrounding ethical questions further afield. *Basalt Shards* (2017), an expansive installation of 1,000 charcoal rubbings made from the shattered remains of the Tell Halaf artefacts, reveals their violent separation from their original context and suggests a confrontation with potential energy and raw, undifferentiated matter. In *Ah, my beautiful Venus!* (2017), Tabet has made foil pressings from an archaeological cast of a carved stone figure. These delicate impressions of face and hands, sitting atop basalt tiles quarried in southern Syria, are shown with the shipping records for the construction material, charting a journey into Europe and now the United Arab Emirates.

In *Exquisite Corpse* (2017), the work from which the exhibition takes its title, military tents used in Western ground offensives in the Levant, North Africa and the Arabian Gulf recall a traditional Bedouin jacket that doubles as both personal garment and provisional shelter. The suspended tents juxtapose life defined by settlement and expanding territorial borders with life that moves across land according to seasons. In a new commission, *Portrait of Faek Borkhoche* (2021), Tabet liberates material from numerous physical archives, including his great-grandfather's never-before-seen field notes, as an intervention into this history. Finally, *Digital Surrogates* (2021), a new web project that houses images of artefacts and Tabet's own artwork, explores the possibilities offered by digital preservation and circulation while treating such representations as extensions of their physical counterparts, particularly within debates around ownership, copyright and intellectual property today.

An exhibition booklet will feature a curatorial essay on the evolution of the project and the development of the Sharjah Art Foundation presentation. This text will be accompanied by commissioned writing by Omar Dewachi, Associate Professor of Medical Anthropology, Rutgers University, New Brunswick; Uzma Rizvi, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Urban Studies, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn; and Andrea Wallace, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Exeter.

Unsettled Objects

12 March–15 June 2021

Sharjah Art Foundation

The first presentation of the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection to be held in the newly renovated Flying Saucer, *Unsettled Objects* is curated by Omar Kholeif, the Foundation's Director of Collections and Senior Curator. The exhibition draws its title from a major new acquisition by the late conceptual artist Lothar Baumgarten, *Unsettled Objects* (1968–1969), which is a slide carousel projection that unfolds the hidden characteristics behind the foundational artefacts of Western museum collections. The work is presented alongside other newly acquired and rarely seen works from the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection, revealing artists and artworks that encourage the viewer to reconsider how the creative imagination is constructed. Designed to create conversations through thought-provoking individual experiences, the exhibition is composed of a constellation of individual presentations and salon hangs that take on the circular shape of The Flying Saucer, one of Sharjah's architectural landmarks.

Unsettled Objects encourages viewers to ask questions and make connections. Where do these objects come from? Are the keepers of these entities entitled to hold them, and if so, under what jurisdiction? Many of the holdings shown as part of *Unsettled Objects* are by figures whose work has somehow been contested, for example, because of provenance or origin. Also on view is the work of artists who have held multiple identities or personas as well as that of figures who seek to recast colonial art history by imbuing it with the complex multiplicity of people and cultures that have remained invisible for too long.

Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist

5 March–26 September 2021

Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Saint-Étienne Métropole (MAMC+), France

Originally organised by Sharjah Art Foundation and curated by Hoor Al Qasimi as the largest and most comprehensive survey of the artist's work to date, the fourth iteration of the international tour of *Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist*, co-curated by Al Qasimi and Aurélie Voltz, General Director of MAMC+, will be on view at MAMC+ from 5 March to 26 September 2021. Tracing nearly five decades of the artist's multimedia practice, including painting, sculpture, assemblage, drawing, installation and photography as well as later works on view for the first time, this landmark retrospective is the culmination of the artist's lifelong role as an advocate and pioneer for the development of contemporary art and thought in the United Arab Emirates, particularly in Sharjah, where he first began staging interventions and exhibitions of contemporary art and exhibited at the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993.

Often cited as the father of contemporary art in the United Arab Emirates, Sharif began making art in the 1970s, but he soon departed from his region's dominant art forms and embraced the radical approaches of avant-garde movements such as Fluxus and British Constructivism. Organised chronologically, *I Am The Single Work Artist* traces the development of Sharif's conceptual art practice from 1973 to 2016, highlighting his unprecedented influence through key

series revisited throughout his life that illustrate his enduring social and philosophical reflections on mathematical systems, time and the banality of the everyday. Following the retrospective, four rooms will be dedicated to works from the MAMC+ collections that echo Hassan Sharif's work and influences and give resonance to the artist's use of everyday materials, from Hard-edge painting to Fluxus, photo conceptualism and minimal art as well as other practices such as Supports/Surfaces in France.

Following its debut at Sharjah Art Foundation in 2017, *Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist* travelled to KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2020), where it was curated by Al Qasimi and KW Institute Director Krist Gruijthuisen, and to Malmö Konsthall (2020), where it was curated by Al Qasimi and Mats Stjernstedt, Director of Malmö Konsthall.

The European tour of the exhibition has been organised by Sharjah Art Foundation in collaboration with KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Malmö Konsthall; and the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne.

Tarek Atoui: Cycles in 11

On view through 10 April 2021

Sharjah Art Foundation

Marking over a decade of collaboration with Sharjah Art Foundation and the surrounding community, *Tarek Atoui: Cycles in 11*, curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, centres around experimental and innovative musical forms. The exhibition offers audiences opportunities to learn about and explore instrument-making, compositional structure and musical collaboration.

The works in the exhibition, developed over the last 11 years, represent the culmination of the artist's ongoing exploration of different methods of listening, composition and performance. The instruments Atoui has created are the product of extensive research into music history and tradition as well as collaborations with different experts. Challenging established ways of listening through innovative approaches to sound, the instruments also build on the artist's earlier project *WITHIN*, which grew out of years of work with Deaf culture. This project, originating in Sharjah, investigated how deafness can influence the way sound performance, space and instrumentation are understood.

During the exhibition, the heritage house Bait Al Serkal, located in one of the oldest areas in the city of Sharjah, will operate as both a sound lab and a performance and listening space informed by the local tradition of hospitality. In Sharjah's east coast city of Kalba, another sound lab will be set up close to the emirate's natural reserves and archaeological sites. *Cycles in 11* will also be the starting point for a regional and international residency programme that will extend into 2022. Musicians, composers and artists will be invited to develop new work for the residency, either individually or with different audiences in Sharjah.

Zarina Bhimji: Black Pocket

On view through 10 April 2021

Sharjah Art Foundation

For over thirty years, Zarina Bhimji's work has staged enquiry into image, object, sound and language, searching for the universal in both its literal and abstract manifestations. This major survey, organised by Sharjah Art Foundation and curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, presents a number of the artist's seminal works across film, photography and installation. The exhibition features the artist's early exploration into forms of knowledge overlooked by established systems of order as well as her later exploration of architecture and landscape as arbiters of complex experience and emotion. Each project, embarked upon after meticulous research and recce trips spanning weeks at a time, sees Bhimji sympathetically inhabit sites via her practice: every location becomes an open-air studio, cleared of political or historic specificity.

Growing from ambiguity and observation, her work draws on a deep—and, at times, bleak—consciousness of specific moments. In her film works *Out of Blue* (2002), *Yellow Patch* (2011) and *Jangbar* (2015), constituting a central axis of this exhibition, she uses the camera as a subjective, painterly tool. Unfurling across multiple views and lands (Uganda, the United Kingdom, India, Zanzibar and Kenya, among others), the images ask how we can understand ourselves at different points in time. Most importantly, they question how we take up and rethink our own time—or time beyond our direct experience.

Whether in immersive single-screen films or installations, Bhimji's work spatialises attitudes, gestures and movements. Allowing sentiment to stand on its own merit, her work confronts our reliance on written narrative instead of manipulations of light, shadow, colour and texture to recall the significance of intuition and cultural inheritance. In slow pans across lush forested landscape, lingering shots of emptied architecture, or stamps and seals on official documents, her compositions of image and object come together to create a cacophony of sound and motion that shape and reshape our understanding of the present moment with quiet immediacy.

About Sharjah Art Foundation

Sharjah Art Foundation is an advocate, catalyst and producer of contemporary art within the Emirate of Sharjah and the surrounding region, in dialogue with the international arts community. Under the leadership of founder Hoor Al Qasimi, a curator and artist, the Foundation advances an experimental and wide-ranging programmatic model that supports the production and presentation of contemporary art, preserves and celebrates the distinct culture of the region and encourages a shared understanding of the transformational role of art. The Foundation's core initiatives include the long-running Sharjah Biennial, featuring contemporary artists from around the world; the annual March Meeting, a convening of international arts professionals and artists; grants and residencies for artists, curators and cultural producers; ambitious and experimental commissions; and a range of travelling exhibitions and scholarly publications.

Established in 2009 to expand programmes beyond the Sharjah Biennial, which launched in 1993, the Foundation is a critical resource for artists and cultural organisations in the Gulf and a conduit for local, regional and international developments in contemporary art. The Foundation's deep commitment to developing and sustaining the cultural life and heritage of Sharjah is reflected through year-round exhibitions, performances, screenings and educational programmes in the city of Sharjah and across the Emirate, often hosted in historic buildings that have been repurposed as cultural and community centres. A growing collection reflects the Foundation's support of contemporary artists in the realisation of new work and its recognition of the contributions made by pioneering modern artists from the region and around the world. Sharjah Art Foundation is a legally independent public body established by Emiri Decree and supported by government funding, grants from national and international nonprofits and cultural organisations, corporate sponsors and individual patrons. All exhibitions and events are free and open to the public.

About Sharjah

Sharjah is the third-largest of the seven United Arab Emirates, and the only one bridging the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Reflecting the deep commitment to the arts, architectural preservation and cultural education embraced by its ruler, Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Sharjah is home to more than 20 museums and has long been known as the cultural hub of the United Arab Emirates. It was named UNESCO's Arab Capital of Culture for 1998 and the UNESCO World Book Capital for 2019.

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