



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

For Immediate Release

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**March Meeting 2021 to Examine Evolution of the Biennial Model and Sharjah Biennial through Panels, Lectures and Performances with Artists, Curators and Arts Practitioners from Around the World**

**Annual Sharjah Art Foundation Convening from 12 to 21 March Serves as the Launch of Sharjah Biennial 15 with Extended 10-day Programme**

**In-person and Virtual Programmes are Free and Open to the Public with Advance Registration**

March Meeting 2021 (MM 2021), the annual Sharjah Art Foundation convening of artists, curators and art practitioners to explore critical issues in contemporary art, returns as an expanded 10-day, hybrid on-site and online programme from **12 to 21 March 2021**. Examining the 30-year history of the Sharjah Biennial and the future of the biennial model through panels, lectures and performances, **March Meeting 2021: *Unravelling the Present*** serves as the launch of **Sharjah Biennial 15: *Thinking Historically in the Present***, which was conceived by the late Okwui Enwezor (1963–2019) and is curated by Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) Director Hoor Al Qasimi alongside the Sharjah Biennial (SB15) Working Group and Advisory Committee, and opens in spring 2022.



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MM 2021 explores the past 30 years of the Sharjah Biennial as a model for dealing with the disruptive power of artistic monolingualism and the starting point for developing a theoretical space for thinking historically in the present. Titled *Unravelling the Present*, this edition of the March Meeting brings together former Sharjah Biennial curators, artistic directors and artists as well as art historians and art critics to consider 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 as well as non-geographic models of representation.

MM 2021 is an integral part of the framework for SB15 laid out by Enwezor. Building on Enwezor's remarkable and transformative contribution to contemporary art, SB15 will serve as a platform for the exploration of his curatorial and intellectual legacy. The Biennial 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. The Biennial will be realised by Hoor Al Qasimi as curator in conjunction with the SB15 Working Group and Advisory Committee.

In addition to panels and lectures, the programme will include performances led by acclaimed artist and musician **Tarek Atoui** as well as resident artists and advisors participating in the residency programme that is taking place as part of Atoui's ongoing solo exhibition *Cycles in 11*. Participants include Leyya Mona Tawil, Kristoffer Kjaerskov and Safeya Alblooshi (from 1 to 15 March), and Boris Shershenkov, Hadi Zeidan and Zeynab Ghandour (from 14 to 23 March).

### **March Meeting 2021 Speakers and Participants**

MM 2021 speakers and participants include **Tarek Abou El Fetouh** (curator); **Thuraya Al Baqsami** (artist, writer); **Mona Al Khaja** (artist); **Hisham Al Madhloum** (Chairman, Sharjah Arts Collection); **Noora Al Mualla** (Director of Learning and Research, Sharjah Art Foundation); **Hoor Al Qasimi** (President and Director, Sharjah Art Foundation); **John Akomfrah** (artist, filmmaker); **Yousif Aydabi** (Cultural Advisor, Sheikh Dr Sultan Al Qasimi Centre); **Sammy Baloji** (visual artist and co-founder of the Lubumbashi Biennale); **Ute Meta Bauer** (Founding Director, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and Professor, School of Art, Design and Media, NTU); **Zarina Bhimji** (artist); **Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev** (Director, Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art and Director, Fondazione Francesco Federico Cerruti); **Lucrezia Cippitelli** (scholar, curator); **Iftikhar Dadi** (Associate Professor, History of Art and Director, South Asia Programme, Cornell University); **Catherine David** (Deputy Director, National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou); **Manthia Diawara** (Professor, NYU, and filmmaker); **Bongiwe Dhlomo-Mautloa** (artist, curator); **Anita Dube** (artist, curator); **Ehab Ellaban** (Director, Center of Arts Cairo); **Reem Fadda** (Director, Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation); **Coco Fusco** (artist, writer and Professor, Cooper Union School of Art); **Theminkosi Goniwe** (Assistant Professor of Art History, Rhodes University); **Hou Hanru** (Artistic Director, MAXXI); **Yuko Hasegawa** (Artistic Director, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo and Professor, Tokyo University of the Arts); **Salah M. Hassan** (Director, The Africa Institute, Sharjah and Goldwin Smith Professor, Cornell University); **Eungie Joo** (Curator of Contemporary Art, San Francisco Museum of Art); **Geeta Kapur** (art critic, curator); **Mohammed Kazem** (artist); **Omar Kholeif** (Director of Collections and Senior Curator, Sharjah Art Foundation); **Vasif Kortun** (curator); **Adrian Lahoud** (Dean, School of Architecture, Royal College of Art London, Co-chair, Rights of Future Generations Working



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Group and Curator, first Sharjah Architecture Triennial); **Peter Lewis** (curator); **Arshiya Lokhandwala** (art historian, curator and founder, Lakeeren Art Gallery); **Margarita Gonzalez Lorente** (Vice Director, 13th edition of Havana Biennial and Curator, International Contemporary Art, National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana); **Amina Menia** (artist); **Gabi Ngcobo** (curator, educator); **Otobong Nkanga** (artist); **Chika Okeke-Agulu** (Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University); **Jack Persekian** (Director, Al Ma'amal Foundation); **Qudsia Rahim** (Executive Director, Lahore Biennale Foundation and Director, Lahore Biennale); **Enrique Rivera** (Director, Biennial of Media Arts of Santiago); **Nada Shabout** (Professor, Art History and Coordinator, Contemporary Arab and Muslim Cultural Studies Initiative, University of North Texas); **Suha Shoman** (Founder and Chair, Darat Al Funun, The Khalid Shoman Foundation); **Aisha Stoby** (curator, researcher); **Alia Swastika** (curator); **John Tain** (Head of Research, Asia Art Archive); **Ming Tiampo** (Professor, Art History, Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture, Carleton University and Co-Director, Centre for Transnational Cultural Analysis); **Christine Tohme** (Founding Director, Ashkal Alwan); **Françoise Vergès** (author, public educator, decolonial feminist); **Octavio Zaya** (Executive Director, Cuban Art Foundation); and **Tirdad Zolghadr** (Associate Curator, KW Institute for Contemporary Art and Artistic Director, Sommerakademie Paul Klee).

### On View at Sharjah Art Foundation in March 2021

Coinciding with MM 2021, the exhibitions **Rayyane Tabet: Exquisite Corpse**, curated by SAF Senior Curator Ryan Inouye, and **Unsettled Objects**, curated by SAF Director of Collections and Senior Curator Omar Kholeif, will open on 12 March 2021. **Zarina Bhimji: Black Pocket** and **Tarek Atoui: Cycles in 11**, both curated by SAF Director Hoor Al Qasimi, will also remain on view through 10 April 2021. Special curator and artist-led tours of the exhibitions will take place throughout MM 2021, and additional information on all spring 2021 exhibitions is available [here](#).

### Registration for March Meeting 2021

MM 2021 is free to attend. To register to join in-person or online, visit: <http://saf.sharjahart.org/March-Meeting-2021>

### 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



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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 organizations, corporate sponsors and individual patrons. All exhibitions 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 Mohammed Al Qasimi, Sharjah is home to more than 20 museums and has long been known as the cultural hub of the United Arab Emirates. In 1998, it was named UNESCO's 'Arab Capital of Culture' and has been designated the UNESCO 'World Book Capital' for the year 2019.

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