

NYU Abu Dhabi art gallery announces its fall exhibition

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Ways of Seeing, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, features works by 26 internationally-acclaimed artists and artist collectives from the region and the world



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Staff Report

NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, the university's academic museum, will open its fall exhibition titled *Ways of Seeing* on September 3, 2018. This international group exhibition is curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, founders of the multi-disciplinary curatorial platform Art Reoriented, and co-chairmen of the Montblanc Cultural Foundation.

The exhibition is based on John Berger's seminal 1972 text on visual culture, *Ways of Seeing*, in which he shifted the emphasis of art criticism away from the professional art-expert and relocated it within the grasp of the layperson. In taking its cue from Berger's groundbreaking argument, this exhibition invites the viewer to actively engage with the artwork, and to explore the ways by which artists assign forms and concepts that seem familiar with renewed appearances and meanings.

Ways of Seeing first opened at ARTER – Space for Art in Istanbul last summer. The curators then reconfigured the exhibition for its second venue, the Boghossian Foundation – Villa Empain in Brussels last winter, bringing in a number of new artists and artworks. The third iteration of the exhibition premieres in Abu Dhabi, and has been adapted to include new works by Andreas Gursky, Mona Hatoum, Lateefa bint Maktoum, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Hassan Sharif, Cindy Sherman, and Thomans Struth, among others.

Bringing together 26 artists and artist collectives with 41 works, the exhibition spans a variety of media from painting, sculpture, and photography to sound, film, and installation. In addition, historical artworks and objects punctuate the contemporary displays. Through these works, the curators present the various strategies that artists employ to re-configure our perception, as viewers, of the world around us.

Several artists in the exhibition, such as James Turrell, Hans-Peter Feldmann, and Fred Sandback, blur the boundaries between the artwork and the space in which it is displayed. Others, such as James Webb, Vik Muniz, and Gustav Metzger, offer the viewer new ways of accessing the artwork. A few, like Shana Moulton, James Casebere, and Andreas Gursky, push the technical and formal possibilities of their genre. Works by Salvador Dali, Mona Hatoum, Alicja Kwade, or Hassan Sharif change our perception of familiar objects by altering their function. Finally, images of people engaged in the act of looking, in works by Thomas Struth and Lateefa bint Maktoum, make us ponder the way in which narratives are constructed through what we see.

Curator Sam Bardaouil commented: “Artists use form and technique to express something about themselves and the world. Each of the artworks on display beckons us to take a second look, upon which the contours of a new reality begin to emerge.”

Curator Till Fellrath said: “We encourage viewers to be active rather than passive in the way they look at the works in this exhibition. There is no one ‘correct’ way to look at art, and our wish is that our audiences should both be aware of and embrace their individual reactions and points of view, as these are borne of unique personal experiences.”

Maya Allison, Founding Director and Chief Curator of NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery said: “This remarkable exhibition brings together an incredible roster of world-class artists. The curators depart from traditional exhibition narratives and put the artworks into dialogue in a unique way that draws out *how* these artworks invite the viewer to see them.” She went on, “We are honored to be working with Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath to bring *Ways of Seeing* to the UAE, and to our University community. Our academic museum takes as the core of its mission the study of art and culture as it interacts with varied audiences, such as our student audience made up of over 100 nationalities, and the UAE public that represents one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world.

We, as this diverse audience, bring our own many ways of seeing to this exhibition, that, in turn, offers us a kaleidoscopic journey through ways of seeing.”

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated, bilingual English / Arabic catalogue, published by NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, and edited by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath with contributions by Mary Acton, Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, and Stephanie Moser.

Artists featured in *Ways of Seeing* include: Ghada Amer, Frédéric Borgella, James Casebere, David Claerbout, Salvador Dali, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Andreas Gursky, Mona Hatoum, Paul and Marlene Kos, Alicja Kwade, Lateefa bint Maktoum, Gustav Metzger, Shana Moulton, Vik Muniz, Grayson Perry, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Fred Sandback, Markus Schinwald, Hassan Sharif, Cindy Sherman, Jojakim Cortis and Adrian Sonderegger, John Speed, Thomas Struth, Kim Tschang-Yeul, James Turrell, and James Webb.

Ways of Seeing will be accompanied by a full program of public events, including talks, workshops, and family-friendly activities. Further details will be announced closer to the time of the exhibition.