



THE ART BLOG

An insider's view of the UAE's art scene

Edited by
Anna Seaman



One is Not Without the Other, a wooden sculpture by Shahid Sajjad, a Pakistani artist who is showing with Artchowk Gallery from Karachi. Courtesy of Anna Seaman.

Art Dubai: A wander into the past with Modern

[Anna Seaman](#) | March 17, 2015

It was only inaugurated last year but Art Dubai's Modern section is already a firm favourite with me. I really enjoy the fact that there is a dedicated section to historically important artists whose work spans the period from the 1940s-1980s. Not only it is a wonderful chance to see these works, which are not normally exhibited in the region but for people like me, who are trying to learn about the history of art in the region, it is an invaluable chance to get educated.

The Art Dubai team work hard with the selection process and this year there are 15 galleries showing single or two person booths. This gives a chance to learn about the practice of each artist and to delve deeper into their stories.

Highlights of this year's section are numerous.

Firstly, I discovered the work of Shahid Sajjad, a self taught Pakistani artist who fascinatingly fell in love with a Paul Gauguin sculpture in the Louvre in his 1920s and decided to pursue art. His sculptures, like the one pictured here are poetic and beautiful and the gallery, Artchowk from Karachi are also showing a selection of prints and drawings never before seen outside of Pakistan.

Another discovery for me was the Nigerian artist Dr Bruce Onobrakpreya. He was part of the Zaria art movement, who made a conscious decision at the time of Nigeria's independence in the 1960s to fuse their traditional past with a modern future and create a new artistic style. His many panelled plasto-cast works tell his personal story as well as the story of this movement.

In Le Violon Bleu, a Tunisian gallery, some incredible works of dye on skin from the Moroccan master Farid Belkahia are on show including a commissioned work by King Hassan II.

Interestingly too, the Lebanese great Shafic Abboud is showing at two of the 15 spaces. Agial Art Gallery from Beirut is showing a solo of his stunning abstract works and Galerie Claude Lemand put his works in conversation with that of Algerian artist Abdellah Benanteur.

Two of Dubai's best galleries are representing in this section – Green Art Gallery with a wonderful solo of Mahmoud Hammad and Meem Gallery with pieces by Marwan and Dia Azzawi.

For those of you planning to visit the fair over the next few days I urge you to take some time out for the Modern section. The thick carpets and the muted wall colour will encourage you to slow your thinking down after the buzz of the contemporary halls and most importantly, you will come away enriched by the experience.

****BREAKING NEWS****

Mashreq Private Banking, the sponsors of the Art Dubai Modern programme, announced this afternoon that they will be starting a corporate collection of modern art. With the help of curators, they start the collection with four pieces from Shafic Abboud and Jamil Molaeb. I will tell you more about this in future blog posts.

* Art Dubai is open tomorrow from 4-9.30pm by invite only and then the public opening hours are Thurs March 19, 4pm-9.30pm, Fri March 20 from 2pm-9.30pm and Sat March 21 from 12pm-6.30pm

* For more info visit www.artdubai.ae

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