

I LOVE YOU, URGENTLY: PARTICIPATING ARTISTS & PROJECTS

Ayman Zedani, *the return of the old ones*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Sharjah, UAE

Ayman Zedani's practice manifests between objects and multi-layered installations and attempts to renegotiate the relationship between human and non-human, animal and plant, organic and inorganic, land and water. His conceptual works are built on a series of experiments and investigations that look towards new materialist philosophies exploring the agency of matter. He considers multi-species collaboration as a way of surviving the challenges of the Anthropocene. **Told from the perspective of a non-human entity, the return of the old ones is an experimental film that offers a poetic rendition of the story of oil. Interrogating the Anthropocentric attitudes that have rendered our current emergency, the monumental timeframes humbles and diminishes our inflated sense of importance. Written in collaboration with the independent researcher and writer Saira Ansari, the story is told through the life, death and resurrection of ancient giant fungi known as Prototaxites, whose remnants have only been found in a few places in the world, including Saudi Arabia and the United States. From this strange vantage, ritual, tradition, and culture are dwarfed and the outsize role played by our species in the Anthropocene is laid bare.**

Aziz Jamal, *1056%*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Dammam, Saudi Arabia

Aziz Jamal's multidisciplinary practice explores both personal and societal inconsistencies. His works are informed by observations and aesthetics of the incongruous – lacking harmony or provoking surprise. Employing found and handmade materials, he documents scenes that contain contradictions, suggesting shifting social realms or the passage of time. **1056%'s candy-coloured scenes document abandoned water parks in the Eastern Province and Riyadh. Drained of water and empty of people, their elaborate infrastructure is rendered purposeless, absurd. The title of the work refers to the fact that Saudi Arabia is saddled with a critical debt, having used 1056% of its total renewable water sources, far exceeding the conservative global water-scarcity threshold of 20–40%. The largest producer of desalinated water globally, the Kingdom relies almost exclusively on aquifers and desalination. The limited awareness of such stark facts exacerbates the dire reality of the situation, and these abandoned places become eerie landmarks to excess.**

Cristiana de Marchi, *Black (Aarhus Convention)*, 2019 and *Commemorative Stamps. Environmental Justice*, 2019

Born in Italy, Lives in Beirut, Lebanon, and Dubai, UAE

Cristiana de Marchi's practice explores social and political terrains, from memory, places of the past and present, identity and contested borders to the paraphernalia of contemporary nationhood. Using textiles, embroidery, film, and performance, she instigates processes that draw attention to currencies and structures of power. **The Aarhus Convention in 1998, gave the universal right to access information, justice, and public participation in environmental matters. Black (Aarhus Convention, 1998) is the translation into braille of the articles of this convention alluding to the blindness surrounding**

these very same rights. **Commemorative Stamps. Environmental Justice** consists of a fabricated set of stamps representing environmental emergencies, catastrophes and natural disasters that have occurred since the 1992 Convention on Climate Change. The stamps have then been used to fictionally post a series of 50 letters, addressed to the representatives of key environmental ministries and institutions worldwide. Standing in for dialogue between the public base and power, the envelopes, displayed open and without letters, testify to the possibility of a dialogue, and symbolise the spoils of communication, or the seed of listening.

Daniah Al Saleh, *Delicate*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in London, UK

Daniah Al Saleh's work tackles notions of the unobtrusive, the ordinary and the common. Her approach is to deconstruct and rearrange the obvious, to make the invisible visible, and manifest a space for reflection with new ways of seeing. Using geometry and pattern making, she has developed a distinctive language that combines traditional Islamic painting techniques and generative processes with code. Daniah gained her bachelor's degree in Computer Applications at King Saud University and is currently undertaking her MFA in computational art at Goldsmiths, University of London. **Through a network of hanging fabric sculptures, *Delicate* addresses the inequalities of class, religion, and race within our highly striated contemporary cultures. The installation uses the infinite perfection of fractal patterns found in nature to explore potential structures for harmony and positive change. Considering how these orders work, the artist offers a model to counter what is otherwise fragmented, hierarchical, and imbalanced.**

Duran Lantink, *It's not what u think*, 2020

Born in the Netherlands, Lives in Amsterdam, Netherlands

Fashion designer Duran Lantink is known for his upcycling methods and collage techniques which reflect street style. Duran's desire is to produce clothing using innovative, sustainable and ethical practices. His collections, styling and exhibitions draw on a diverse mix of inspirations. His breakthrough came with his design of a sky-high pair of 3D printed heels that brought him national and international publicity, being exhibited in London, Paris, Eindhoven, Arnhem and New York. Currently on the shortlist for the 2019 LVMH Prize; the most prestigious award in the fashion industry, he has worked as a stylist and designer for Vogue, Glamcult, kingkong magazine, g- star, Janelle Monae and many others. **Frustrated by fashion's rampant overconsumption, Duran takes leftover designer overstock, sourced directly from fashion houses, and splices them together to create improbable new garments. For 21,39 Jeddah Arts, he will be creating an on-site installation of three outfits from pre-owned/used garments donated by individuals in Jeddah.**

Fahad bin Naif & Alaa Tarabzouni, *Al-Manakh, You Will Be Missed*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Fahad bin Naif and Alaa Tarabzouni are architects, urban designers, curators, and artists, based in Riyadh, where they run the multidisciplinary art and design Studio AF, focused on local architecture and regional contemporary art. Fahad's work seeks design and theoretical solutions to anthropogenic, socioeconomic, and geopolitical issues, particularly those inherent to urban environments. Alaa's practice is concerned with urbanity and the built environment. **Expedited urban development has rendered the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, especially the city of Riyadh, perpetually heterotopic. The ramifications of this growth are vividly demonstrated in the Al-Manakh neighborhood, home to the behemoth Yamamah Saudi Cement Company and Al-Manakh Park. The installation explores the foundations of this localized ecological crisis.**

Farah K. Behbehani, *Rahal*, 2020

Born in Kuwait, Lives in Kuwait

Farah K. Behbehani is an artist and designer whose practice focuses on the Arabic letter, with its layered meanings and forms, both mystical and metaphorical. Her body of work ranges from large-scale calligraphic installations in wood and metal to intricate geometric letterforms hand sewn with metallic threads and beads. She received a distinction for her MA in Communication Design from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, London, in June 2007. Farah is the author of *The Conference of the Birds* (Thames & Hudson, London, 2009), a book based on Farid ud-Din Attar's 12th century Sufi allegorical poem, which she designed and illustrated with Jali Diwani calligraphy. ***Rahal* is a sculptural paper installation that explores the changing conditions and connections with the Arabian Gulf Sea, from early pearl diving traditions to modern-day industry and subsequent pollution. Composed of folds, the dynamic sculptural form is inspired by the elaborate mineral skeletons of the Radiolaria species – planktonic microorganisms that inhabit our oceans. Verses of a Kuwaiti seafarer song entitled *Rahal*, which means Wanderer, are hidden in the surface, the lyrics only legible when light passes through. Adapting its shape with each movement, the highly flexible structure is a constant state of flux, mirroring a principle of universal interconnectedness.**

Filwa Nazer, *In the Fold*, 2019

Born in Swansea, United Kingdom, Lives in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Multi-media artist Filwa Nazer began her creative journey as a fashion designer and graduated from Marangoni School of Fashion and Design in Milan. Her practice ranges from digital print and collage to textile and photography. **Exploring the relations between our bodies and the spaces we occupy, this work considers the value of mimicry and conformity. Taking cues from insects found in Saudi Arabia which use camouflage, *In the Fold* considers modes of social assimilation to question the dangers of homogenization in human society. Filwa approaches the concept of mimicry from a socio-psychological angle, inspired by Roger Caillois' likening of psychosis to certain insects use of camouflage as a failed defence tactic. The large sculptural work invites interaction, with one person at a time able to slip inside for an embodied experience. Standing within the folds of structured fabric, partially visible but unable to see, a heightened awareness of the body's limits, and individuation, occurs.**

Maha Nasrallah, *Thawra*, 2018/2019

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Lives in Beirut, Lebanon

An architect by training, Maha Nasrallah has run her own practice since 2002 and has taught part-time at the School of Architecture at the American University of Beirut since 2003. She began experimenting with clay in 2010, and it has since become a significant material in her creative practice. In 2011, she became a conceptual co-founder of the Bkerzay Pottery Workshop, Baakline, where her work is on permanent display. **For 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Maha considers the global wave of popular movements connected with the climate emergency, the mismanagement of social infrastructure and vital resources. A shared action seen across the world is the closing of roads, whether through sheer number of people gathered together or with the use of other devices such as overturned burning bins. Both practical and symbolic, these gestures stop the ordinary flow of life in the city. Made of clay, Maha's work recreates one such scene of disorder. By re-appropriating and overturning common and unremarkable artefacts such as bins, the work causes a reassessment of the daily structures we take for granted.**

Manal AIDowayan, *Ephemeral Witness*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Dubai, UAE

Embracing diverse media, Manal AIDowayan's work encompasses black and white photography, sculpture, video, sound, neon and large-scale participatory installations. Her artistic practice revolves around themes of active forgetting, archives, and collective memory, with a focus on the state of Saudi women and their representation. **For Jeddah Arts 21,39, Manal has seized on a powerful geological phenomenon as a motif to explore Saudi society as it diversifies from oil; in particular, the impact on the place of women. The "Desert Rose", known colloquially, amongst geologists and mystics as "an ephemeral witness to time", is a rare, flower-like crystal formation, found in the desert near her childhood home of Dhahran. Rendered here in fabric, the "Desert Rose's" surfaces are printed with information that guides women on how to behave in public spaces. Falling and folding, the soft sculpture loses meaning. Erect, it solidifies the concept. As the layered petals reveal and conceal the texts, the work suggests the difficulties that exist when discussing gender issues in the public sphere.**

Marwah AIMugait, *I lived once*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Marwah AIMugait is a visual artist whose works draw attention to the invisible, neglected, or unfamiliar details of everyday life. Using exposition, she sheds light on the mechanics of communication, finding the gaps and ambiguity in human relations. She has a BA in Business Administration from King Saud University and gained her MA in Photojournalism from the University of Westminster in 2012. **Her large-scale video installation for 21,39 Jeddah Arts portrays a powerful group performance that translates processes from nature, including the reactive, unconscious defence mechanisms of organisms in danger. By observing and enacting performers' gestures, the film hints at alternative structures, shapes and patterns, outside of the often hierarchical order of human society. The**

movements are not intended as literal defence mechanisms or straight-forward mimicry – instead, they embody the psychological and emotional experience of protection and co-existence.

Mohammad Alfaraj, *HEAT*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Saudi Arabia

Mohammad Alfaraj was born and raised in Al Hassa, a remote town in Saudi Arabia. His multidimensional practice encompasses video, photography, installations and writing. Exploring nature and ecology, he depicts a world on the verge of collapse – yet always with an undertone of hope. **Committed to social and environmental activism, his film for 21,39 Jeddah Arts presents a world of extreme heat. Using the aesthetic of the thermal image, this alarming account of the environmental emergency looks at the present and possible future of a region already suffering from a harsh climate. Familiar scenes of shepherds and labourers become alien as the logic of biomimicry is taken to extreme conclusions. Saturated with unbearable heat, the everyday descends to radical ends. Despite their extremes, they nevertheless feel eerily logical, forcing questions around status quo and misdirection of efforts.**

Mohammed Kazem, *Sound of Light*, 2019

Born in Dubai, UAE, Lives in Dubai, UAE

Throughout his practice, Mohammed Kazem has tried to capture the un-capturable. From his own body and the objects of his quotidian to nature itself, Kazem senses what is un-measurable and transfigures it into a visual work. He observes and measures, collects and analyses, responding to the abstractness of nature. Through rendering sounds visually and using action and performance to make a vision manifest, his scratchings, paintings, drawings and sculpture are at the fulcrum of many senses — sound, sight, touch, movement. **For 21,39 Jeddah Arts, he ventures into secluded, sonic and luminous realms, exploring and mapping construction sites to ‘depict’ the sound of light found in their architecture. For Mohammed, every building emits a sound, and every building’s sound is determined by the light that hits it. In a series of paintings, he has “collected” confluences of light and architecture, processing the resulting sound, to present a silent symphony that is absent of humans but unmistakably marked by their industry.**

Muhannad Shono, *The Last Garden Of Al Khidr*, 2020

Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Muhannad Shono's multidisciplinary practice ranges from paper-based illustrations to large scale installations, including video, sound, mechanised actors, and digital artefacts. He is interested in rituals and mythologies, interrogating the forces that lie beneath the surface of our lived realities. Regardless of the medium, he is, first and foremost, an avid storyteller who believes that all begins and is ordered by stories that later evolve and structure meaning. His work considers how these meanings emerge, from the doctrine of religion to the governing principles of society. **In his work for 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Muhannad defiantly rejects cynicism. Refusing the defeatist state generated by tides of negative news, he chooses to tell stories that stir life. The Last Garden of Al Khidr is the imagined aftermath of mythical beheading – of the character of Al Khidr, an elusive figure spoken of in various Islamic**

narratives and found across many global traditions as ‘The Green Man’. The symbolic beheading represents the silencing of the creative individual that may speak truth to power. Like Al Khidr, the figure who refuses to be limited, this work seeks to redress an artificial severing of humankind from their imaginations.

Obadah Aljefri, *Non-perishables*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Saudi Arabia

Obadah Aljefri is a multidisciplinary visual artist who challenges the acceptance of social norms and cultural constructs as given truths. He earned his BFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in Savannah, GA, USA in 2016. **For 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Obadah looks into an absurdist future that runs uncomfortably close to present realities, satirizing the excess of consumerism as a self-destructive compulsion. Depicting animals advertising what destroys their habitat, the series demonstrates the careless and shortsighted greed that sustains everyday products. The corrupted language of advertising is laid bare with poignancy, revealing the severe consequences in the lives of many generations to come.**

Omar Abduljawad, *Wāhidah*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Omar Abduljawad is an artist, architect, and designer whose interests lie in exploring the nature of reality through high dimensional mathematics, geometrical experiments, raw material studies, and the implementation of the divine proportions. Following graduation as a RIBA part 1 Architect from Kingston University London, in 2014, Omar co-founded ThreePointOneFour.co (@tpof.co), a design studio in Jeddah. **For 21,39 Jeddah Arts, Omar will create an interactive sculpture, a meditative experience urging reconnection to self and nature. In four phases of formation, refinement, completion, and contribution, the visitor interacts with loose earth, patiently transforming it into a solid hand-formed sphere before placing it as part of a larger collective installation. This structuring and ordering represent an effort that is diffuse and collective, yet also focused, patient and individual.**

Nojoud Alsudairi, *Compositions of Volatility I & II*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Nojoud Alsudairi’s multidisciplinary practice combines architectural research and design with weaving. Focused on socioeconomic and urban conditions as experienced in contemporary culture, her work is marked by the rhythm and flux of spatial narratives, from poetry to cities. Her studies of interaction consider people and the effects of their surroundings, whether spatial or social. She patiently observes these contextual currents, from the major conditions of history, language, and culture, to specific details of colour, poetic meter, or documents that chart urban shifts. **Alsudairi’s work for 21,39 Jeddah Arts represents the spatial narrative of Wadi Hanifa. Once covered with oases and fertile farmland, it is a valley that has existed since pre-Islamic times; today, it runs through modern-day Riyadh, which has expanded with wave after wave of exponential population growth across the historic site, absorbing it into the infrastructure of the city. Two textile works convey this contested spatial**

narrative: a weaving depicts how the wadi has become a morphed ecology, where two conditions of extreme contrast exist; a place of leisure, infrastructure, ecology, and urbanism shaped by contrasting conditions of past, present, and future. The carpet comprises masterplans, stitched together over existing parts of the wadi, representing the competing futures and projected utopias that could irrevocably change its existence.

Raja'a Khalid, *Tesla desert drift*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Dubai, UAE

Raja'a Khalid's practice is concerned with the Arabian Gulf region and its contemporary narratives of work, wellness, commodity circulation, trends, and consumer culture. Her current work looks at the Gulf's own streaming motifs of discipline, athleticism, adornment, fetish, desire, conspicuous production, idolatry, fitness, hypermasculinity, consultancy culture, neoliberal subjecthood, and crypto-religiosity.

Tesla desert drift is a scent-based artwork consisting of a room fragrance that captures the essence of 'a Tesla drifting on asphalt in the middle of the Saudi Arabian desert'. The work weaves a diverse ecology of signs which include post-oil motorisation, politics of green tech, masculine youth culture, societies of exclusivity, subterranean narratives, Gulf urban mythology, ritual, male initiation, human ingenuity. These work to 'paint' a current-day landscape that exists between the idealised and the consumable. Tesla desert drift delights in juxtaposing two prized, covetable objects of the contemporary Arabian desert: cars and perfumes. Represented here in a form influenced by an eco-cultural luxe narrative that is unique, mythic, and entirely idiosyncratic.

Sultan bin Fahd, *Al Hida'a*, 2019

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Sultan bin Fahad considers art as a journey between intangible memories and tangible cultures.

Throughout his abstract drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations, Sultan's central theme and object of concern remains material culture in his native Saudi Arabia. Connecting past to present, his stories evoke multi-layered journey(s) between the latent relationship of what is remembered and what remains silently contained within the corporeal. **His work for 21,39 Jeddah Arts memorialises a way of life that gave primacy to interspecies coexistence. Hida'a is a landscape marked by tension, where the threatened traditions of Saudi cultural heritage are crowded by consumption and waste.**

Twisted plastic sculptures stand for consumerism and excess. Each, along with a piece of traditional fabric, is marked by a lexicon of obscure marks. With a soundscape of powerful guttural calls, the work traces the intimate traditions of camel herding to compose a ritual against loss.

Zahrah Alghamdi, *Ashgan Village*, 2020

Born in Saudi Arabia, Lives in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Zahrah Alghamdi's work explores memory, history, and cultural heritage, particularly as found in traditional architecture. Through distinctive and meticulous processes, she incorporates raw, primitive materials to enact notions of "embodied memory". Her Doctorate looked at the traditional architecture of her home in the green, South West of the Kingdom. She represented Saudi Arabia at the 2019 Biennale Di Venezia.

Part of a generation that grew up between tradition and modernity, Zahrah's work for 21,39 Jeddah Arts recreates her childhood village and its distinctive architecture. More than just restaging a disappearing heritage, the installation draws together two remote times. Bringing the past into contact with the present, she shows that 'home' is not a concept that can easily be demolished. Instead, it is shown to be embodied, existing as part of shared, collective memory. A poetic echo of a disappearing way of life intimately connected to the earth, this memory cautions against the growing state of alienation from identity and land.