

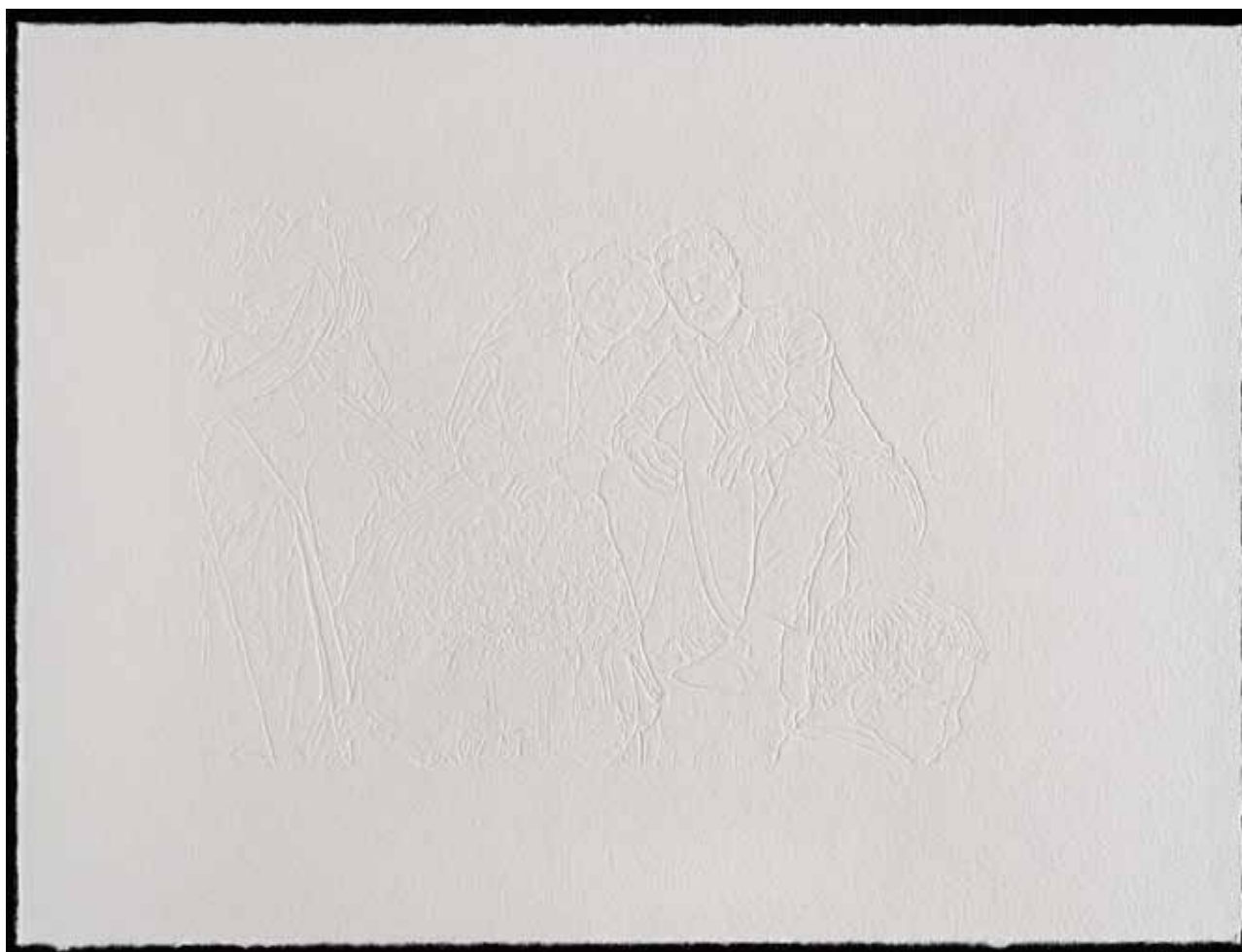
Abraaj Capital Art Prize



Wael Shawky, Raed Yassin, Nat Muller, Khalil Joreige, Arif Naqvi, Risham Syed, Joana Hadjithomas, Taysir Batniji, ACAP at Art Dubai 2012

Announced initially in 2008, the Abraaj Capital Art Prize aims to empower potential and give often under-represented, contemporary artists from the vibrant MENASA region the resources to further develop their talent. The artists work with an internationally renowned curator. This collaboration allows them to tap the latest trends, while the prize gives them a global platform to showcase their works and their region. The prize reflects Abraaj Capital's own investment philosophy, which is to take viable businesses with great potential, and create regional and global champions.

Following their unveiling at Art Dubai each March, the works go on to form part of the Abraaj Capital Collection and are exhibited in a variety of locations. To date, artworks have been shown in the UAE at Art Dubai, the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and the Maraya Arts Centre, Sharjah; in the US at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; in London at City Hall; in Italy as part of an official collateral exhibition of the 54th Venice Biennale 'The Future of a Promise' and in Tunis at the National Museum of Carthage as part of 'Chkoun Ahna'. Winning artists and curators have gone



Taysir Batniji, *To My Brother*, 1 of 60, hand carving from photograph on paper, ACAP 2012 (2)

on to be leading players in the emerging MENASA art scene.

The prize is unique for the following reasons:

- i. It is the only art prize specifically for the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) region.
- ii. It is the only art prize that rewards proposals rather than completed works-of-art. The winning artists then go on to create the artworks.
- iii. It is aimed at curators and artists working together and not a single artist.

With a very rigid systematic selection process starting from having international reputable names as nominators, to the members of the selecting committee who are all world renowned art practitioners, the prize focuses only on artists originating from the MENASA

and on selecting works that are authentic in nature, the maturity and the creativity of the power of the message that is desired to be conveyed in the artistic project, the new mediums and materials used to convey the message, the representation of the artworks to our societies and the ability of art to change the perception of art in our cultures. The Selection Committee then reviews the applications and decides on the winners collectively in August of every year. Once chosen, the winners have at least six months to create their works, which are then unveiled in March at Art Dubai, the Middle East's largest art fair, the year after.

In its fifth edition of 2012, and as usual, the winners represent different areas of art (painting, conceptual and installations) and from all corners of the region



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, *A Letter Can Always Reach its Destination*, 2012, Video Installation

the prize covers. They are Taysir Batniji (Palestine), Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige (Lebanon), Wael Shawky (Egypt), Risham Syed (Pakistan), Raed Yassin (Lebanon) with Guest Curator Nat Muller.

Taysir Batniji (Palestine, b. 1966): Born in Gaza in 1966, Batniji studied art at Al-Najah University in Nablus on the West Bank from 1985-92. In 1994 he was awarded a fellowship to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Bourges, France, where in 1997 he graduated with a DNSEP (Higher National Diploma in Plastic Expression). Since then he has divided his time between France and Palestine, developing an interdisciplinary practice including drawing, painting, installation and performance often closely related to his heritage. Since 2001 he has focused on photography and video. He has participated in numerous international exhibitions in Europe and beyond, in 2011: 'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)', Istanbul, Turkey; 'Future of a Promise',

collateral event of the 54th Venice Biennale, Italy; 'Seeing is Believing', KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany and 'Le monde n'est pas arrivé', Galerie Eric Dupont, Paris, France. Previous exhibitions have included: 'This is Not Cinema!', Fresnoy, France (2002), 'Contemporary Arab Representations', the 50th Venice Biennale, Italy (2003), 'Transit', Witte de With, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2004), 'The World is a safer place', Globe Gallery, Newcastle, UK (2005), 'Wanderland', Kunstmuseen, Krefeld, Germany (2006), 'Heterotopias', Thessaloniki Biennial, Greece and Sharjah Biennial, UAE (both 2007). During the 52nd Venice Biennale Batniji was part of 'Palestine c/o Venice' (2009) and the following year 'La Biennale Cuvée', Linz, Austria (2010). Taysir Batniji is represented by Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Hamburg/Beirut and Galerie Eric Dupont, Paris. He lives between Paris and Gaza.

Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige (Lebanon, b. 1969): Hadjithomas and Joreige are artists and filmmakers.

For the last 15 years they have focused on the images, representations and history of their home country, Lebanon. Together they have directed documentaries such as *Khiam* 2000-2007 and *El Film el Mafkoud* (The lost film), and feature films such as *Al Bayt el Zaher* (1999) and *A Perfect Day* (2005). Their last feature film *Je veux voir* (I want to see), starring Catherine Deneuve and Rabih Mroue, premiered at Cannes Film festival in 2008 and was awarded 'Best Singular Film' by the French critics. Their films have been enthusiastically received, won many awards in international festivals and have enjoyed releases in many countries. They have created numerous photographic installations, among them: *Faces*, *Lasting Images*, *Distracted Bullets*, *The Circle of Confusion*, *Don't walk*, *War Trophies*, *Landscape of Khiam*, *A Fareway Souvenir* and the multifaceted project *Wonder Beirut*. Their artwork has been shown in museums, biennials and art centers around the world and are part of important public and private collections, such as Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, FNAC France, Guggenheim, New York, US, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France and the Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE. They presented their most recent art project, *Lebanese Rocket Society*, *Elements for a Monument* (2011) at the Sharjah Biennial and Biennale de Lyon. They are the authors of numerous publications and university lecturers in Lebanon and France, members of the board of Metropolis Cinema and co-founders of About Productions with Georges Schoucair. Hadjithomas is also a board member of the Ashkal Alwan Academy, Home Workspace. They live between Beirut and Paris.

Wael Shawky (Egypt, born 1971): Shawky studied fine art at the University of Alexandria before receiving his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000. He lives and works in Alexandria. In 2010 he launched MASS Alexandria, the first Independent Studio Program for young artists in the city. Shawky has received international acclaim for his work as an artist and filmmaker, his work largely explores transitional events in society, politics, culture and religion in the history of the Arab world. He has had numerous solo shows including: Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2011) Galerie Sfeir-Semler, Beirut, Lebanon



Wael Shawky, *A Glimpse of Clean History*, 2012, Ceramics, wood & velvet

(2010), Cittadellarte, Italy (2010), Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2009). *Cabaret Crusades: The Horror Show File* (2010) at 'Untitled (12th Istanbul Biennial)' (2011). He has also exhibited at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2011), Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Brussels, Belgium (2011), New Museum and Queen's Museum of Art, New York, UK, SITE Santa Fe Biennial, Santa Fe, US (2008); 3rd Riwaq Biennale, Ramallah, Palestine (2009), 3rd Marrakech Biennale, Morocco (2009), 'Disorientation II', Abu Dhabi, UAE (2009), 2nd Moscow Biennale, Russia (2007), 50th Venice Biennale, Italy (2003) among others. His work is included in the collections of Tate Modern, London, MACRO Museum, Rome, Darat Al Funun, Amman and Mart Museum Collection, Rovereto. Shawky has received Egyptian and international prizes such as the Ernest Schering Foundation Art Award, Berlin, (2011). He has participated in several international residency programmes.



Risham Syed, *The Seven Seas*, 2012, 7 quilts

Risham Syed (Pakistan, b. 1969): Syed's practice critically focuses on the remains of cultural/historical inheritance and its perceived authenticity in present-day Pakistan. She received a BFA in Painting from the National College of Art, Lahore (1993) and an MA from the Royal College of Art, London (1996). Solo shows include: 'Lahore 2010', Rohtas Gallery, Lahore (2010), 'And the Rest is History', Talwar Gallery, New York (2010), Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2008). Her work has been exhibited in group shows including: 'The Rising Tide', Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi (2010-11), Art Dubai, (2010), 'Resemble/Reassemble', Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, India (2009), 'Emperor's New Clothes: Dress, Politics and Identity in Pakistani Art', Talwar Gallery (2008), 'Conversations 1', Elementa Gallery, Dubai (2007), 'Landscape and Outside the Cube', National Gallery of Art, Islamabad, (2005), '58 Years of Pakistani Art', Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore (2004), 'Playing with the loaded gun', Apex Art, New York (2002) & Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany (2004) 2nd Fukuoka Triennial, Museum of Asian Art, Fukuoka, Japan (2002), in 'Threads, Dreams

and Desires', The Harris Museum, Preston, UK (1998). She was awarded the Stephenson Harwood Award (1996), Charles Wallace Trust Scholarship, UK (1996) and the Cite' International des Arts, Paris, France (1995). She is currently an Assistant Professor at the School of Visual Art, Beacon house National University, Lahore, Pakistan, where she continues to live and work.

Raed Yassin (Lebanon, b. 1979): Yassin was born in Beirut in 1979. He graduated from the theatre department of the Institute of Fine Arts in Beirut in 2003. An artist and musician, Yassin's work often originates from an examination of his personal narratives and their position within a collective history, through the lens of consumer culture and mass production. He has exhibited and performed his work in numerous museums, festivals and venues across Europe, the Middle East, the United States and Japan, including The New Museum, New York (2012), Sharjah Biennial 10 (2011), Delfina Foundation, London (2010-11) where he completed a residency program, Manifesta 8, Murcia (2010-11), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2011), De-Ateliers,



Raed Yassin, China, 2012, 7 Porcelain Vases

Amsterdam following a 2-year residency, *Home Works 5*, Beirut (2010) and *Photo Cairo 4* (2008). Yassin was awarded the Fidus Prize for The Best of Sammy Clark at Beirut Art Center's 'Exposureexhibition' (2009), the AFAC grant for production (2010), the YATF grant for production (2008) and the Cultural Resource grant for production (2008). Yassin is one of the organizers of IRTIJAL Festival, has released 10 music albums and founded production company Annihaya in 2009. He is also a founding member of Atfal Ahdath a Beirut based art collective. He currently lives and works in Beirut.

Nat Muller (Curator, The Netherlands, b. 1974): Muller is an independent curator and critic based between Rotterdam and the Middle East. Her main interests include the intersections of aesthetics, media and politics, media art and contemporary art. She has held staff positions at V2-Institute for Unstable Media in Rotterdam and De Balie, Centre for Arts & Politics in Amsterdam. Muller is a regular contributor for Springerin and MetropolisM. Her work has been published in many publications such as *Art Papers*,

Bidoun, *Contemporary Practices Art Journal*, *ArtPulse*, *X-tra*, *Majalla Foreign Affairs Magazine*, *De Volkskrant*, *The Daily Star*. She has curated video screenings for projects and festivals in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Berlin, New York, Istanbul, Copenhagen, Grimstad, Lugano, Dubai, Cairo and Beirut. With Alessandro Ludovico she edited the *Mag.net Reader2: Between Paper and Pixel* (2007), and *Mag.net Reader3: Processual Publishing, Actual Gestures* (2009), based on a series of debates organized at Documenta XII. She has taught at the Willem de Kooning Academy (NL), ALBA (Beirut), the Lebanese American University (Beirut), AUD. in Dubai (UAE), and the Rietveld Academy (NL). She has served as an advisor on Euro-Med collaborations for the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), the EU, and as an advisor on e-culture for the Dutch Ministry of Culture, and is currently art and new media advisor to the Dutch city of Utrecht. She serves on the advisory board of the Palestinian website project *Arterritories* (Ramallah), the arts organization TENT (Rotterdam), and is on the selection committee of the Mondriaan Fund (NL), The Netherlands largest fund for the arts.