The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery to Unveil New Works by American Sculptor and Artist-researcher Blane De St. Croix.

On the occasion of COP28 in the UAE, the artist will unveil a major new series based on research into the UAE environment.

Abu Dhabi, September 6, 2023: The NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Art Gallery's fall exhibition, Blane De St. Croix: Horizon, will open on October 3, unveiling a series of newly commissioned sculptures responding to the UAE’s landscape. The artist has spent the last year studying the UAE’s natural environment as part of a residency at The NYUAD Art Gallery, in the lead up to COP28, which will take place later this year in the UAE. He worked closely with faculty and interviewed resident scientists and scholars, producing a series of interview films to accompany the exhibition.

For his first exhibition in the Gulf, The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery has commissioned four major new works. One of these is Salt Lake Excerpt, a project that was developed in collaboration with NYUAD Arts Professor of Theater Joanna Settle. Together, the two artists are creating a 150-square-meter sculptural installation that gently moves with light and sound. Inspired by the salt lakes “sabkhas” and estuaries of the UAE, the sculpture is made from at least 50,000 plastic water bottles, in the form of PET flakes, a product of the recycling process.

The three other commissions developed during the artist's residency include a series of “infinite landscapes” based on the UAE’s deserts. This work was developed out of research exchange with NYUAD’s Research Visualization and Fabrication lab, and close work with the lab’s Assistant Director Jumaanah Alhashemi, who is also a transdisciplinary artist, designer, and researcher.

During his time studying the UAE, De St. Croix was announced as Co-PI (Principal Investigator) on a project funded by the US National Science Foundation (NSF). Together with two climate scientists and a curator, he will produce work around the impact of climate change on Yukon Arctic Indigenous communities.

Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Gallery Maya Allison, who curated the exhibition, commented: “The NSF award is in keeping with the nature of this artist’s work. We’re delighted that he has applied this same kind of rigor to his trips to the UAE over the past year. Having been to countless other powerful environments, from the Gobi Desert to the Arctic Circle, the desert here offers him new ways of seeing the interconnected challenges that face us with regards to the environment. We are excited that his collaborations with our faculty have resulted in this new body of work.”

She added: “In a sense, this exhibition not only reflects the UAE landscape, but also the intellectual landscape of our university and Abu Dhabi. These perspectives are valuable as COP28 approaches and we at NYU Abu Dhabi contribute to the debate around climate change solutions. We hope audiences will find this a vital new experience, as one of the defining characteristics of The Art Gallery is that each project is a new adventure that is much broader than any single curatorial framework or narrative.”
The exhibition is being held in the same period that NYU Abu Dhabi is chairing the Universities Climate Network (UCN). Comprising UAE-based universities and higher education institutions, the UCN collaborates on facilitating dialogues, workshops, public events, policy briefs, and youth participation in the lead up to and beyond COP28.

Blane De St. Croix: Horizon opens with a reception at 6pm on October 3 and runs through January 14, 2024, from Tuesday through Sunday, 12-8pm. For more details visit here.

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About COP28
● COP28 UAE will take place at Expo City Dubai from November 30-December 12, 2023. The Conference is expected to convene over 70,000 participants, including heads of state, government officials, international industry leaders, private sector representatives, academics, experts, youth, and non-state actors.
● As mandated by the Paris Climate Agreement, COP28 UAE will deliver the first ever Global Stocktake – a comprehensive evaluation of progress against climate goals.
● The UAE will lead a process for all parties to agree upon a clear roadmap to accelerate progress through a pragmatic global energy transition and a “leave no one behind” approach to inclusive climate action.

About Blane De St. Croix
De St. Croix’s working method emerges out of the history of Land Art – artwork that is composed directly on or in the natural landscape. This approach is combined with plein-air (painting outside) practices, thereby documenting landscapes to make them visible to new audiences. His most recent exhibition is a major solo presentation at MassMOCA (US) in 2021. He is a recent recipient of the Lee Krasner Award for Distinguished Lifetime Achievement, as well as the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Fellowship Award in Sculpture, and a Pollock-Krasner Award, among many other distinctions. He is also a Fellow of both MacDowell and Yaddo, and now a recipient of a National Science Foundation grant for research in the Arctic.

About Joanna Settle
Settle is a director of theater, opera and performance art, and has been with NYU Abu Dhabi for 6 years, serving as the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and Social Impact and an Arts Professor of Theater. Her work has been seen at PS122, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, MASSMoCA, all venues at the Public Theater, The Guthrie Theater, Arena Stage, the Wilma Theater, the Kimmel Center, Opera Philadelphia, Playwrights Horizons, NYUAD Arts Center, Joe’s Pub, Brooklyn’s American Can Factory, and other venues. Recent productions include: Sky on Swings: a world premiere new opera about Alzheimer’s disease, world premiere of Noura; and she co-created Al Raheel/Departure with Emirati writer Reem Almenhali. Most recently, Settle Directed the September 2023 Opera Philadelphia premiere of 10 Days in a Madhouse, an opera by Rene Orth and Hannah Moscovitch. She recently completed a residency with Cité Internationale des arts in Paris. Settle sees her artistry, teaching and residence as part of a whole approach to interpersonal and civic engagement. Since moving to Abu Dhabi, her creative and pedagogical practices have been tremendously influenced by the work, community she’s seen here, and by the potential of the UAE to become a central platform for knowledge generation in the field of Performance.
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About The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery

www.nyuad-artgallery.org

Established in 2014, The NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) Art Gallery is the Gulf's first of its kind, and among the only university galleries in the region with a program of scholarly and experimental museum exhibitions. Supporting the progress made by other arts institutions within the UAE, The NYUAD Art Gallery and the projects it supports serve the local arts community as a testing ground for new and innovative curatorial approaches that nourish the dialogue around exhibition practice in the Gulf. The program is recognized for mapping new territories and ideas, presenting exhibitions by internationally established artists, curators, and scholars. A regular book publication program is a core part of its curatorial frame within its academic mission. In addition, its auxiliary venue, the Project Space, is an exhibition laboratory for UAE-based artists and curators Situated within NYU Abu Dhabi, the community of which hails from over 125 countries, the Gallery, the Project Space, and the Gallery’s Reading Room collectively open up artistic opportunities and initiate regional and global dialogue.

About NYU Abu Dhabi

https://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/

NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and research campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly selective program with majors in the sciences, engineering, social sciences, arts, and humanities with a world center for advanced research. Its campus enables students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world, and to advance cooperation and progress on humanity's shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi's high-achieving students have come from over 125 countries and speak over 100 languages. Together, NYU's campuses in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai form the backbone of a unique global university, giving faculty and students opportunities to experience varied learning environments and immersion in other cultures at one or more of the numerous study-abroad sites NYU maintains on six continents.