Art Gallery Unveils 2016 Fall Exhibition

Press Release

September 21, 2016

The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi is pleased to announce its Fall exhibition, Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents, officially opens its doors to the public tomorrow, September 22, with an evening reception from 5-8 pm.

Running through December 31, the exhibition explores the tensions that emerge in our everyday interactions with technology, looking at issues such as isolation vs. connectedness, and privacy vs. social media exposure. Invisible Threads features three newly-commissioned works alongside key historic works by 15 international artists: Ai Weiwei, Jamie Allen, Aram Bartholl, Taysir Batniji, Wafaa Bilal, Liu Bolin, Jonah Brucker-Cohen, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Michael Joaquin Grey, Monira Al Qadiri, Evan Roth, Phillip Stearns, Siebren Versteeg, Addie Wagenknecht, and Kenny Wong.

Through the artworks in this exhibition, the curators hope to generate dialog and reflection around our use of everyday technological tools. Addie Wagenknecht’s XXX.XXX exposes a part of our daily use of technology that we cannot normally see. The five-meter-wide sculpture reveals network traffic via blinking lights, showing us a brief moment in time
where we can see the piece registering the Wi-Fi data traveling through the air, from one inbox to another.

Akin to something out of a dystopian future that is closer than we might prefer, Heather Dewey-Hagborg’s Stranger Visions presents the viewer with an eerie collection of faces that could be any of us. The artist extracts DNA from items collected in public places, such as strands of hair, or discarded pieces of chewing gum, and uses it to create renderings of what the face of the person who left the item behind might look like, in the form of 3-D masks.

The curators did not limit the show to works that use contemporary technology, but focused on our experience of technology and its effect on our interactions. Using pencil on graph paper, artist Taysir Batniji creates the pixelated effect of a low-resolution photo to render his subjects, a series of blindfolded men, from internet footage. For him, this is a study of how technology distances us from humanity, even as it makes images of humans immediately accessible. This work is on loan to the exhibition from the collection of the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.

Co-curator Bana Kattan, Assistant Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, commented: “One of our missions at the Art Gallery is to address topics that are both globally significant and locally relevant and right now, a key topic globally and locally is our increasingly dependent relationships with technology. The artworks in this exhibition explore the subject matter in such varied and creative ways, and I believe Invisible Threads will connect with a broad audience as this is a subject that affects us all.”

Notably, Invisible Threads inaugurates one of NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery’s unique program strategies: inviting scholars and specialists from across the academic spectrum to guest-curate a major exhibition.

Co-Curator Professor Scott Fitzgerald, Program Head of Interactive Media at NYU Abu Dhabi, said: “It’s satisfying to see this come to fruition, particularly as an extension of my academic work. Curating this exhibition has been a unique and special opportunity for me. I am humbled to be the first guest curator from the University, and it has been incredibly rewarding working with the amazing staff of the NYUAD Art Gallery. Their dedication to new forms of collaboration is inspiring. The issues we are trying to address in the show are important as we try and situate ourselves in a new technological era, and I’m grateful to the gallery for enabling us to explore these themes in the exhibition.”

The opening reception is on Thursday, September 22, from 5-8pm, and the public is welcome. Then, this Saturday, September 24 at 5pm, artists from the exhibition will discuss the show with Shumon Basar, curator of the Global Art Forum and co-author of The Age of Earthquakes. Invisible Threads will be complemented by a full public program of events and talks for all ages, taking place throughout the duration of the exhibition. For more information, please visit The Art Gallery’s website at www.nyuad-artgallery.org.

Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents
22 September – 31 December 2016

The Art Gallery at NYU Abu Dhabi

Visitor hours: Monday – Saturday, 12 pm – 8 pm (closed Sundays)

Admission: The NYUAD Art Gallery is free and open to the public

Notes to Editors

About the Curators

Bana Kattan is a curator at the New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery and the manager of the NYUAD Project Space (http://nyuad-artgallery.org/en_US/arts-center-project-space/). During her graduate work at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she worked with the Performance Department at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Curatorial Department of the Guggenheim- Abu Dhabi Project in New York. She also worked as a project manager for artist Michael Rakowitz. Kattan was one of the 2015 recipients of the Getty-CAA International Program Grants. She is born and raised in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Scott Fitzgerald is an artist and educator working with software and physical systems. He is currently an Assistant Arts Professor and head of the Interactive Media program at New York University Abu Dhabi. His work has been exhibited internationally, including permanent site-specific work at the University of Oslo and temporary public work in New York City’s Times Square. He has been a researcher with the audio art group Locus Sonus, and an adjunct professor at NYU’s ITP in Tisch. Scott is a partner in Lightband Studios, a bespoke glass and lighting design company with commissions in Asia and the United States. He regularly runs workshops on using technology in the arts and was previously the head of documentation for Arduino.

arts

About NYU Abu Dhabi

NYU Abu Dhabi is the first comprehensive liberal arts and science campus in the Middle East to be operated abroad by a major American research university. NYU Abu Dhabi has integrated a highly-selective liberal arts, engineering and science curriculum with a world center for advanced research and scholarship enabling its students to succeed in an increasingly interdependent world and advance cooperation and progress on humanity’s shared challenges. NYU Abu Dhabi’s high-achieving students have come from 115 nations and speak over 115 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.

Contact

General inquiries
Email: nyuad.public.affairs@nyu.edu

Reem Fekri
Associate Director, Public Affairs and Communications
Email: reem.fekri@nyu.edu

Maisoon Mubarak
Public Affairs and Communications Manager
Email: maisoon.mubarak@nyu.edu

Aya Sakoury
Public Affairs and Communications Manager
Email: aya.sakoury@nyu.edu