

Press materials for *Ways of Seeing*

Press materials for *Kim Robertson: Constructions of Reality*

## **NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery Opens Ways of Seeing**

**The touring exhibition curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, with 26 internationally-acclaimed artists and artist collectives, will be on show from September 3 - November 17, 2018**

**The Abu Dhabi iteration includes new additions from Mona Hatoum, Lateefa bint Maktoum, Andreas Gursky, and Hassan Sharif**

**The Gallery's auxiliary venue, The Project Space, also launches *Kim Robertson: Constructions of Reality* on the same day**

**September 2, 2018, Abu Dhabi:** NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, the university's academic museum-gallery, opens its fall exhibition titled *Ways of Seeing* in the main gallery space tomorrow, September 3, 2018, with a public reception and curator-led tours from 6-8 pm.

*Ways of Seeing* is curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Founders of the multi-disciplinary curatorial platform Art Reoriented, Chairmen of the Montblanc Cultural Foundation, and Affiliate Curators at the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin. The exhibition brings together 26 artists through 41 works spanning a variety of media from painting, sculpture and photography to sound, film and installation. It first opened at ARTER – Space for Art in Istanbul and was later adapted for the Boghossian Foundation – Villa Empain in Brussels. The third iteration of *Ways of Seeing* premieres in Abu Dhabi and has again been adapted to include new works, by artists such as Andreas Gursky, Mona Hatoum, Lateefa bint Maktoum, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Hassan Sharif, Cindy Sherman, and Thomas Struth, among others.

For its third iteration at NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, the exhibition features a substantial number of new artists and artworks, while keeping core works from its previous presentations. Benefiting from the Art Gallery's setting within a university context, the exhibition themes will be further investigated through talks, workshops and screenings that draw on NYU Abu Dhabi's diverse academic disciplines.

Taking its cue from John Berger's 1972 ground-breaking BBC television series and his respective critical book on visual culture, *Ways of Seeing* invites the viewer to investigate the manifold ways by which artists accord forms and concepts that are otherwise familiar with renewed appearances and meanings. "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled," Berger wrote. Five decades later, his words remain as relevant as ever. In revisiting Berger's seminal treatise, the exhibition raises not only the possibility for diverse viewpoints to coexist, but also the necessity to safeguard art's ability to confront us with various points of view. Berger's thesis acquires increased agency within the context of the UAE, and its heterogeneous society that is grappling with questions of modernization and tradition against a backdrop of accelerated cosmopolitanism.

The exhibition includes a number of seminal works that relate to Berger's multilayered argument. By inviting the viewer to take a second look, upon which the contours of a new reality begin to

emerge, they reflect Berger's call for the viewer to be actively engaged in the act of seeing. A 1968 projection piece by James Turrell, a 1992 vertical construction installation by Fred Sandback, along with a 1966 mirror installation by Michelangelo Pistoletto, all blur the boundaries between the artwork and the space in which it is displayed. Video pioneers Paul and Marlene Kos's 1976 *Lightning* video, two of Gustav Metzger's 1996 *Historic Photographs*, and two photographic prints by Lateefa bint Maktoum from 2011 and 2014 respectively, play on the tension between presence and absence, providing the viewer with new ways of accessing the artwork and its corresponding subject matter. Works by Salvador Dali, Alicja Kwade, Hassan Sharif, and Andreas Gursky change our perception of familiar objects by altering their function, display context, or physical appearance, making us ponder the way in which narratives are constructed through what we see.

**Curator Sam Bardaouil** commented: "Artists use form and technique to express something about themselves and the world. Each of the artworks on display beckons us to take a second look, upon which the contours of a new reality begin to emerge."

**Curator Till Fellrath** said: "We encourage viewers to be active rather than passive in the way they look at the works in this exhibition. There is no one 'correct' way to look at art, and our wish is that our audiences should both be aware of and embrace their individual reactions and points of view, as these are borne of unique personal experiences."

**Maya Allison, Executive Director of the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery and Chief Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi** said: "This exhibition covers incredibly diverse art forms, from conceptual to Orientalist art, contemporary and historical. In many ways, it is a microcosm of what we seek to do in our overall exhibition program: provide dramatically different perspectives on art, from one exhibition to the next. We are investigating, through art, the diversity of human experience. We invite everyone to visit the gallery and explore their very own unique way of seeing these artworks, and by extension, the world."

*Ways of Seeing* calls for a return towards a vision of the artist as a maker of things, a skilled technician, who, through their understanding and handling of the formal properties of the creative process, relentlessly remind us that the connection between what we see and what we think we know is never that simple, and that seeing is, at its core, a political act.

#### **Publication:**

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated, bilingual English/Arabic 181-page catalogue, published by NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery and Akkadia Press, and edited by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath with contributions by Mary Acton, Maya Allison, Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, and Stephanie Moser. The catalogue will be available for purchase at The Art Gallery and at the NYU Abu Dhabi bookstore.

#### **Artists:**

Ghada Amer, Frédéric Borgella, James Casebere, David Claerbout, Salvador Dali, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Andreas Gursky, Mona Hatoum, Paul and Marlene Kos, Alicja Kwade, Lateefa bint Maktoum, Gustav Metzger, Shana Moulton, Vik Muniz, Grayson Perry, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Fred Sandback, Markus Schinwald, Hassan Sharif, Cindy Sherman, Jojakim Cortis and Adrian Sonderegger, John Speed, Thomas Struth, Kim Tschang-Yeul, James Turrell, and James Webb.

#### **Programs:**

*Ways of Seeing* will open with a public reception in the gallery from 6-8 pm on 3 September, during which English and Arabic-language curator-led tours will be held. The exhibition's run will

be accompanied by a full program of public events, including talks, workshops, and family-friendly activities. For more information please visit the Art Gallery's website at [www.nyuad-artgallery.org](http://www.nyuad-artgallery.org).

### ***Kim Robertson: Constructions of Reality at The Project Space***

The Project Space, the community-driven exhibition space housed within the NYU Abu Dhabi Arts Center and managed by the NYUAD Art Gallery team, launches new exhibition *Kim Robertson: Constructions of Reality*, on display from September 3-17. There will be a public opening reception in The Project Space on September 3 from 6-8 pm, at which the artist will be present.

Abu Dhabi-based artist Kim Robertson's exhibition investigates the notion of fantasy within our reality, with her work revolving around panoramic photographic images taken with a mobile phone. In creating poor, low quality images that offer movement and blurring, the artist specifically looks for the point of failure within the image, where voids and fissures are created, and clarity gives way to abstraction. By inverting the images, Robertson challenges the audience's perception of reality, inviting them to contemplate the filter by which they view the world, thereby hinting at an alternate interpretation.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

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#### **Follow NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery on social media channels:**



**[www.nyuad-artgallery.org](http://www.nyuad-artgallery.org)**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

**About NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery**

**[www.nyuad-artgallery.org](http://www.nyuad-artgallery.org)**

The NYUAD Art Gallery is an academic museum-gallery that presents work by internationally- established artists, curators, and scholars, to serve the intellectual and creative dialogue among the university and wider communities, via topics of regional relevance and international significance. The platform supports scholarly and experimental installations, artists' projects, guest curators, and landmark exhibitions, with an emphasis on projects that engage the uniquely non-commercial, experimental, and scholarly role of a University.

### **About Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath**

[www.artreoriented.com](http://www.artreoriented.com)

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath are internationally recognized independent curators and academics, and the co-founders of Art Reoriented, a multidisciplinary curatorial platform based in Munich and New York. Since 2016, they are also the co-chairmen of the Montblanc Cultural Foundation in Hamburg. In addition, they are curators at large at the Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin. Over the past decade they have jointly curated numerous critically acclaimed exhibitions in renowned museums and institutions worldwide.

Most recently, Bardaouil and Fellrath have curated *Art et Liberté: Rupture, War and Surrealism in Egypt (1938 – 1948)* that was recently shown at the Centre Pompidou in Paris (2016/2017), the Reina Sofia in Madrid (2017), the Kunstsammlung K20 in Düsseldorf (2017), the Tate Liverpool (2017/2018), and currently on view at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm.

Bardaouil and Fellrath are the authors and editors of more than 20 international publications, including recently the academic monographs *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the Art and Liberty Group* (I.B. Tauris, 2016), *Summer, Autumn, Winter... and Spring: Conversations with Artists from the Arab World* (Skira, 2014), *When Process Becomes Form: Dansaekhwa and Korean Abstraction*, and *Tea with Nefertiti: The Making of the Artwork by the Artist, the Museum, and the Public* (Bloomsbury, 2012 and Skira 2013 / 2014).

### **About the Project Space**

[www.nyuad-artgallery.org/en\\_US/project-space](http://www.nyuad-artgallery.org/en_US/project-space)

The Project Space is managed by the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery team and housed within the campus' Arts Center. It is dedicated to exhibitions generated by the communities in and around NYU Abu Dhabi, including the annual Capstone Festival, faculty exhibitions, and projects by artists based in the UAE. Its mission is to provide a non-commercial platform for experimentation and exploration.

### **About Kim Robertson**

Kim Robertson is a recent graduate from the Royal College of Art in London with an MA in fine arts specializing in print and has been based in Abu Dhabi for 10 years. She works across photography, print, video and installation and her most recent works have taken the form of the digital panoramic print. She exhibits both in the UAE and London and regularly teaches in the UAE.

### **About NYU Abu Dhabi**

[www.nyuad.nyu.edu](http://www.nyuad.nyu.edu)

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.