

Diana Al-Hadid: Phantom Limb



Diana Al-Hadid's "Phantom Limb" exhibition at the NYUAD Art Gallery, on display from March 5 to May 28, 2016.

Diana Al-Hadid: Phantom Limb First major solo exhibition in the Arab World

Press Release

November 23, 2015

The Art Gallery at New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD Art Gallery) is pleased to announce a major solo exhibition of work by internationally-renowned sculptor Diana Al-Hadid will open in March 2016. Al-Hadid's work transforms Renaissance and classical imagery into contemporary sculptural forms that appear to be decaying or resurfacing, often in a cascade of white, melting gypsum. Her towering sculptures, spectral wall pieces, and surreal bronzes will fill the 7,000 square foot gallery.

The exhibition takes its title from a central work, Phantom Limb, a term referring to the sensations that a missing arm or leg is still present, and able to move. The title captures the

character of much of Al-Hadid's work, which evokes memory and long cultural history through a visceral, materially-focused working technique. The theme of memory and its physical manifestations in art and architecture runs throughout Al-Hadid's work.

The monumental sculpture of Phantom Limb is framed by two major wall insets: The Sleepwalker and Still Life. The first draws from the 4th Century BC bas-relief Gradiva, while the latter is a reworking of Hans Memling's 1475 painting Allegory of Chastity. This ensemble travels from the artist's recent show, The Fates, at the Secession Vienna. These "fates" anchor a series of related sculptures, alongside the world-premiere of an epic new triptych of wall panels. For these brightly colored, shimmering wall panels, Al-Hadid responds to the Renaissance triptych, Battle of San Romano by Paolo Uccello. Like Uccello, Al-Hadid experiments and expands the pictorial space in her panels, oscillating between painting and sculpture.

Artist Diana Al-Hadid said: "It's an absolute privilege to work with Maya and the NYU Abu Dhabi gallery staff. They have a deep respect for artists' needs and a tremendous depth of appreciation for the work itself. I'm confident the exhibition will come together beautifully in their capable hands and will reflect their ambition and generosity of spirit. It is imperative that university galleries maintain a high standard so students can continually have direct access to challenging work that can be discussed in a critical context. This is a time for students to be fearless and develop a voracious appetite for experimentation, discovery and risk. I am honored to have my work in this environment and I hope it will stimulate some engaging conversations."

Maya Allison, founding Director of the Art Gallery at New York University Abu Dhabi, and Chief Curator at NYU Abu Dhabi said: "I'm delighted that we have this opportunity to present a major solo show of Diana Al-Hadid's work. Art is always better seen in person, and Al-Hadid's sculptures in particular have a remarkably visceral presence in the gallery. She uses source imagery from ancient and Renaissance art, and one has the sense that she has worked every element by hand, channeling some ancient shared artistic memory. The mix of art historical references and creative immediacy will bring many different audiences into dialogue -- and that is at the core of why the Art Gallery exists: to generate both intellectual and creative activity around museum-quality exhibitions."

To accompany the exhibition, NYUAD Art Gallery will publish a scholarly catalogue, with texts by Renaissance and contemporary art historians and curators: Reindert Falkenburg (NYU Abu Dhabi), Alistair Rider (University of St. Andrews), and Sara Raza (Guggenheim).

The exhibition derives in part from an exhibition at The Secession in Vienna, where Al-Hadid premiered the Phantom Limb sculpture. The NYU Abu Dhabi publication is paired with the sketchbook catalogue published by The Secession, and is in collaboration with Brown University's David Winton Bell Gallery, where a different version of this exhibition is planned in the following year.

The exhibition Phantom Limb opens March 6 and will be on view through May 28, 2016.

2016 Exhibition program:

In September, 2016 NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery will launch Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents; an exhibition of over a dozen artists whose work explores institutional and aesthetic frameworks of control found in contemporary, everyday technologies. The anxieties surrounding these tools are often related to the implicit promise of living with them, and their failure to enhance our existence. This exhibition is co-curated by Scott Fitzgerald and Bana Kattan and includes work by; Jamie Allen, Aram Bartholl, Liu Bolin, Jonah Bruckner Cohen, Michael Joaquin Grey, Evan Roth, Phillip Stearns, Siebren Versteeg, Addie Wagenknecht, and Kenny Wong.

The exhibition Invisible Threads: Technology and its Discontents opens September 26 and will be on view through December 22nd of 2016.

Join the conversation on Facebook (NYUAD Art Gallery), Twitter (@NYUADArtGallery), and Instagram (@NYUADArtGallery) and use the hashtags #DianaAlHadid and #PhantomLimb when posting.

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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.

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