

Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award 2020 winning installation now live virtually

Haweia, a sculptural installation inspired by notions of identity, is now available for viewing online

Abu Dhabi, April 04, 2021: Under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Shamsa bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), in partnership with Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF), have unveiled the winning submission for [The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award 2020](#).

Titled *Haweia*, the installation, conceived and built by three architecture students from the American University of Sharjah (AUS), is now live in a 360-degree view on [The NYUAD Art Gallery's website](#), along with a [time-lapse video](#) of the winning work being installed on NYUAD's campus. The innovative virtual gallery was developed in response to ongoing social distancing measures.

Haweia, an Arabic term meaning "identity", was designed and constructed by Laura AlDhahi from Kuwait, Sara Mohamed from Egypt, and Sahil Rattha Singh from India. The sculptural installation with a smooth exterior façade of folded aluminum converges at an oculus, which accentuates a focused moment in time and space. This contrasts with a complex interior of reflective surfaces and fins oriented to frame different perspectives. The installation thus serves as a lens through which visitors can contemplate their inner selves and discover different configurations of their *haweia* as they move virtually around and inside the piece.

H.E. Huda I. Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, said: "ADMAF is committed to continuing this valuable cultural work in partnership with NYUAD in spite of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award reaffirms the importance of arts and culture as well as ADMAF's mission to invest in our nation's youth and unlock creative potential. 'Haweia' celebrates the unity of the participating artists from diverse backgrounds. Joined together in the creation of an artwork, they embody the power of art, culture and knowledge to create dialogue and openness toward others."

She added: "The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award was established nearly a decade ago, along with the late Christo, to cultivate creativity in the UAE that is inspired by his and Jeanne-Claude's work. Through the award, we continue his legacy, providing young artists with the opportunity to realise their project and showcase their work."

Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Gallery and the University's Chief Curator Maya Allison added: "Each year, The Christo Award ventures into new territory on the journey of bringing a major public artwork into existence. A global pandemic certainly took this eighth edition into even more unexpected territory than usual, but our winners found a way to bring their concept to life. The journey we all undertook to reach this point, in a new time signature, in a new virtual way of working, and the completely different kind of context for unveiling a work, reflects the core of our mission: to learn by doing."

Director of The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award Emily Doherty added: "Our winning team faced university campus closure, having to create home studios – sometimes in different countries – and now the launch of *Haweia* in a virtual setting. And yet, throughout the competition, they have shown their mettle by leaning into the challenges and continuing to work intensively. Congratulations to them all."

Doherty also paid tribute to Christo, who died in 2020, aged 84. “Christo and Jeanne-Claude’s relationship with the UAE spanned forty years, and it was Christo’s desire to support the emerging arts scene in 2012 that resulted in the creation of an award in his name. Christo sought to encourage a new generation of artists to find inspiration in creativity and bring joy to others, although it might be said that his true legacy was one of tenacity: in the pursuit of his vision, he never gave up. And in the context of the past year, this approach to life will chime with many.”

The winning artists were supported throughout the process by experts including artists’ mentor, Associate Professor at AUS Jason Carlow, The NYUAD Art Gallery, NYUAD’s Visual Arts faculty, and the award team at ADMAF.

Members of last year’s selection committee included H.E. Huda Al Khamis-Kanoo, former NYUAD Provost Fabio Piano, Director of Abu Dhabi Art Dyala Nusseibeh, artist Azza Al Qubaisi, and guest juror Kevin Jones.

The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award is open to UAE-based students and recent graduates and was established as a launch pad for visual artists across the Emirates, encouraging new artwork and offering winners an insight into professional life as an artist from commission to exhibition.

Winners are awarded USD 10,000 to complete their installation, working closely with [The NYUAD Art Gallery](#) alongside their mentor, Associate Professor at the American University of Sharjah’s Department of Architecture, Jason Carlow. At the end of their exhibition, the artists are gifted USD 5,000 by the Christo Estate to fund future artistic projects, study, or work experience.

For more information visit nyuad.nyu.edu/christo.

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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 more than 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.

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 and only university gallery with a program of scholarly and experimental museum exhibitions. The program seeks to map new territories and ideas through presenting exhibitions by internationally established artists, curators, and scholars at its main space. Its auxiliary venue, the Project Space, is an exhibition laboratory for the university community, and for emerging artists and curators. Situated within NYU Abu Dhabi, the community of which hails from over 115 countries, The Art Gallery organizes free public programs and guided tours in conjunction with its groundbreaking exhibitions. It also produces scholarly publications, which are a core part of its curatorial frame and reflect its academic mission. Collectively, with the Gallery’s

Reading Room, these welcoming, intimate spaces open up artistic opportunities and initiate regional and international dialogue.

About Christo and Jeanne-Claude

For half a century, internationally acclaimed artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude created highly celebrated works of art around the world. Together, they changed the concept of “public art” by creating temporary works that were truly transitory by design. Jeanne-Claude passed away in November 2009, and Christo sadly died on May 31, 2020.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude never accepted any subsidies, royalties, grants, or sponsorships. They funded all of their temporary public works, and the artists’ income was derived from the sale of original works of art by Christo to museums, galleries, and private collectors. For more information, visit www.christojeanneclaude.net

Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation

Founded in 1996, ADMAF is one of the oldest, not-for-profit cultural organisations in the Arabian Gulf. Pioneering new artistic practices, it seeks to deepen global cross-cultural dialogue and inspire a renewed interest in the creativity of the UAE and Arab world. Often in partnership with leading national and international institutions, it delivers multidisciplinary initiatives for people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities through the Abu Dhabi Festival, year-round youth platforms and community programmes.

For more information, please visit www.admaf.org