



**C. A. Xuân Mai Ardia**



Art Basel in Basel runs from 13 to 16 June 2019, featuring 290 leading galleries from 34 countries, 19 of which join the fair for the first time. With this edition, a new sliding-scale pricing system has been introduced, providing additional support for smaller and mid-size galleries, thus rejuvenating the show. While galleries from Europe continue to be strongly represented in Basel, the show also features returning and new exhibitors from across the globe, including Asia, Europe, North and South America, the Middle East and Africa. Among the 19 galleries that are participating for the first time in Art Basel in Basel are Barro Arte Contemporáneo from Argentina, Galeria Jaqueline Martins from Brazil, Temnikova & Kasela from Estonia, Vadehra Art Gallery from India and Marfa' from Lebanon.

*ASIA* brings you some highlights from Asia not to miss at this year's show in Basel.



Farah Al Qasimi, *After Dinner*, 2018, inkjet print, 102 x 74 cm. Image courtesy the artist and The Third Line.

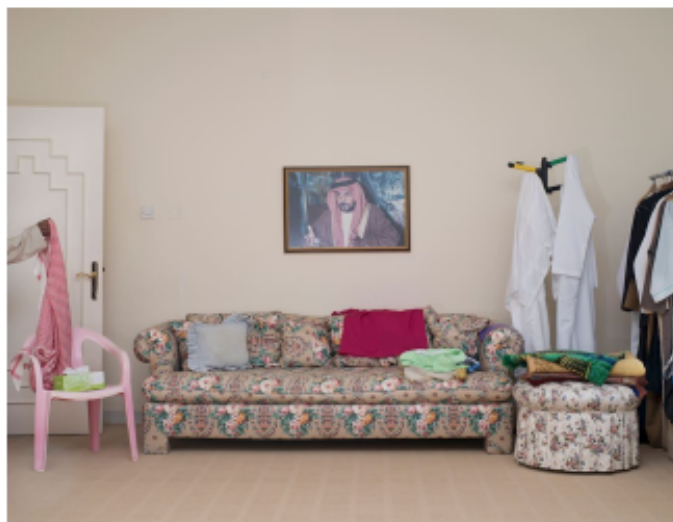
### **Statements: new solo projects by emerging artists**

Welcoming six galleries to the Basel show for the first time, the Statements sector will comprise 18 solo presentations by emerging artists, presented by young galleries from across the world. The emerging artists on show are eligible to receive the prestigious Baloise Art Prize. The 21st Baloise Art Prize will be awarded to up to two artists exhibiting in Statements, with recipients being announced at the media reception of Art Basel. The Baloise Group also acquires artworks by the award-winning artists, which it then donates to important European art institutions, who will hold solo exhibitions for the awardees. The 2018 winners were Suki Seokyeong Kang and Lawrence Abu Hamdan.



Farah Al Qasimi, *Aviary*, 2019, archival inkjet print, 114 x 152.5 cm. Image courtesy the artist and The Third Line.

New York- and Dubai-based Farah Al Qasimi (b. 1991, Abu Dhabi) will present a solo show with Dubai gallery The Third Line. She studied photography and music at Yale University, receiving her BA in 2012 and her MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2017. Selected exhibitions include "Artist's Rooms", Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, (2019); "No to the Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects", CCS Bard Galleries, New York (2017); "More Good News", Helena Anrather, New York (2017) and "Coming Up Roses", The Third Line, Dubai (2016). She has participated in residencies at institutions such as the Delfina Foundation, London (2017), and was recently awarded the New York NADA Artadia Prize and the Aaron Siskind Individual Photographer's Fellowship (2018). Her work is part of public collections including MACBA in Barcelona, Dubai's Jameel Arts Centre, and Sharjah-based Barjeel Art Foundation and Maraya Art Centre, among others.



Farah Al Qasimi, *bedroom (Baba)*, 2018, wall paper. Image courtesy the artist and The Third Line.

Al Qasimi works primarily with photography, video and performance. Her work examines postcolonial structures of power, gender and taste in the Gulf Arab states. Throughout her practice, she has moved between private and public spaces, while retaining a focus on locating the fantastic in the everyday. She also explores how consumer culture seduces people, and particularly women, with promises of beauty or self-improvement. In [a recent article](#) on *The National* about her ongoing exhibition at Jameel Arts Centre, she was quoted as saying:

*"I'm interested in questions of taste, influence and power. These things are present in all societies, but because I know the UAE, I can bring to light gestures and meaning that might not otherwise be apparent."*



Saba Innab, *Ephemeral Matter, Inscribed on Sight*, 2019, two pieces, claustra (concrete decorative blocks) and metal structure, 375 x 165 x 78 cm (combined). Installation view at Marfa', Art Basel in Basel 2019. Photo: Renato Ghiazza.

Amman- and Beirut-based [Saba Innab](#) (b. 1980, Kuwait) will present a solo show with Beirut gallery Marfa'. The artist, of Palestinian and Jordanian origins, holds a Bachelor of Architecture from the Jordan University of Science and Technology. In recent years, she has exhibited at the Marrakech Biennale 6 (2016), Home Works 7 in Beirut (2015), "Lest the two Seas Meet" at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2015) and "Hiwar" at Darat al Funun in Amman (2013–2014). Her solo shows include "No-sheep's Land" at Agial Gallery in Beirut (2011) and "On-longing" at Darat al Funun in Amman (2012). Innab has worked as an architect and urban designer with UNRWA on a project for the reconstruction of the Nahr el Bared Camp in the North of Lebanon, which was nominated for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2013.

Innab is an architect, urban researcher and artist working in painting, mapping, sculpture and design. She is concerned with notions of urbanism, and the processes of space production and re-production. Innab's artistic practice draws from her architectural work and a critical examination of cities and places. She explores spaces that hover between temporality and permanence, and examines notions of dwelling, building, and language in architecture. This is evident in her work *Ephemeral Matter*, based on an image of a Gazan tunnel being partially exposed, or excavated. In sieged Gaza strip, the tunnel is a structure or a method of survival, says Innab, and when excavated, it becomes a sign of the coloniser. Innab writes in her statement that "The analysis of the architectural and formal reference here is part of a bigger attempt to analyze the fragility of the refuge, exile and siege, the fragility of the extraterritorial space. [...] To decontextualize the material, to construct the fragments, is a superimposition

between movement, dwelling and the impossibility of the two. The tunnel becomes another archetype of building and dwelling in the temporary.”

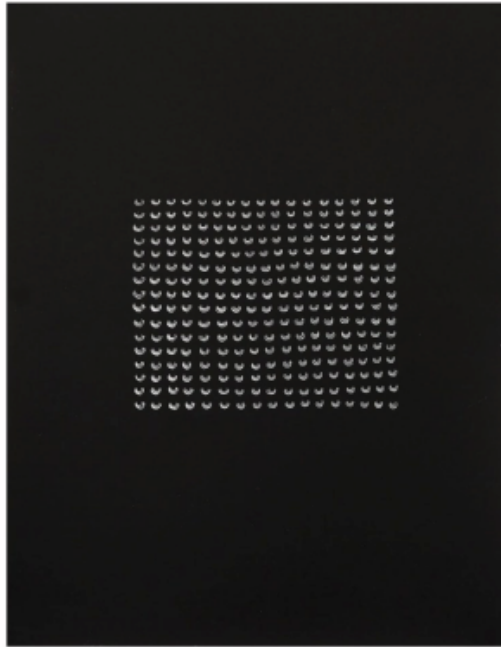


Saba Innab, *Ephemeral Matter, Inscribed on Sight*, 2019, two pieces, claustra (concrete decorative blocks) and metal structure, 375 x 165 x 78 cm (combined). Installation view at Marfa, Art Basel in Basel 2019. Photo: Renato Ghiazza.

In an interview on the occasion of her show during Milan Arch Week 2018, she told *domus* what “to build” means to her:

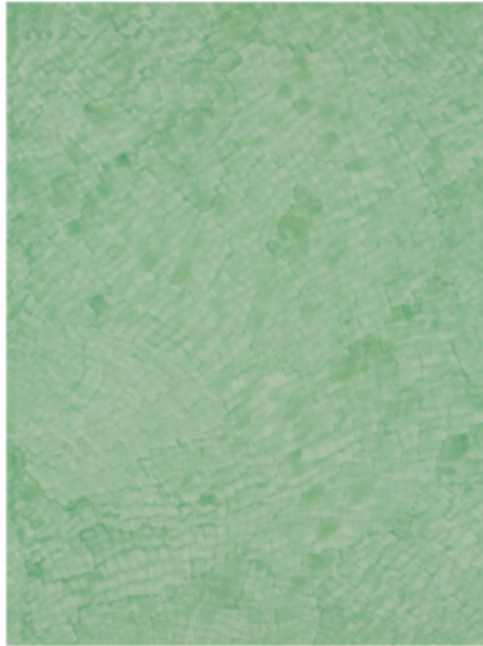
*“At the beginning, to build was never an abstract action to me. The confrontation with the act of building was very specific to the context and factor of the temporary. How to build while in suspension and what does it mean? With time, it became clear that the question is actually about the act of dwelling that is embedded within the act of building. Deterritorialization and alienation were enhanced by the rationality of modernity and its different forms of architecture. Little by little an unbridgeable gap grew between dwelling and modernity, and poetic dwelling is what is left. Another level of deterritorialization appears when we live in temporariness, in refuge, in exile. Gradually “to build” became about the relationship of construction and land to time, referencing the Palestinian refuge and exile; a temporariness that gradually transforms – or deforms – into permanence. So somehow, the question of building became connected to this notion. Dismantling the act of building is also crucial here; to understand how this act is embedded within different tools, i.e. mapping, language, drawing as well as design.”*





Ayesha Sultana, *Breath Count*, 2019, Clay-coated paper, suite of 4, 8.5 x 11 in each.  
Image courtesy the artist and Experimenter.

Bangladeshi artist Ayesha Sultana (b. 1984, Jessore, Bangladesh) presents a solo exhibition titled “Still...Moving in Pursuit of Form” with Kolkata-based gallery Experimenter. She received a BFA in Visual Arts (2007) and subsequently a Post- Graduate Diploma in Art Education (2008) at the Beaconhouse National University in Lahore, Pakistan. She has exhibited around the world, including at the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2018); “New Configurations” at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; Lahore Biennale 01; “Planetary Planning”, Dhaka Art Summit; Queens Museum, New York; and 11th Gwangju Biennale, among others. She completed a curatorial research residency at Gasworks, London in 2013 and in 2014 she received the Samdani Art Award.



Ayesha Sultana, Strata Study, 2019, marker on paper, suite of 4, 9.5 x 12.5 in each.  
Image courtesy the artist and Experimenter.

“Still...Moving in Pursuit of Form” is an exploration of form, space, material and movement through sculpture, drawing and painting. In the exhibition, Sultana explores spatial modes of expression that reflect upon her urban surroundings in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The bustling capital finds itself in a constant state of flux, and for the artist, navigating through the city is “an exercise of understanding and finely balancing one’s own body in relation to the built environment”, as Experimenter explains.



Ayesha Sultana, *Untitled*, 2019, teak, 22 x 18 in. Image courtesy the artist and Experimenter.

Sultana generally works with drawing, painting and sculpture using both conventional and found materials to investigate properties of form, space and colour. She refers to her work as a verb, in which mark-making, repetition and movement are essential elements. There is an apparent dissonance between reality and appearance. Her graphite works play with illusions of depth and rigidity, blurring the line between two- and three-dimensionality, and resemble abstract architectural forms. Her handmade objects have the appearance of something metallic, machine-made, recalling minimalist sculpture, and are reflections on transience, balance and weight. Experimenter expands about the show:

*“The exhibition is an exercise in contemplating how physical space conveys an emotive force. In her nuanced explorations of tempo and repetition, Sultana refers to that first moment when things start to coalesce in the understanding of the whole as opposed to the singular.”*





Huma Bhabha, *We Come In Peace*, 2018, painted and patinated bronze, 417 x 122 x 122 cm, edition of 2+1AP. Image courtesy the artist and Salon 94.

### **Unlimited: large-scale artworks around the art fair**

Unlimited is curated for the eighth and final year by Gianni Jetzer, Curator-at-Large at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C. The 2019 sector will feature 75 large-scale projects by renowned and emerging artists, including among others, Andrea Bowers, Jonathas de Andrade, Monica Bonvicini, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Kapwani Kiwanga, Jannis Kounellis, Lawrence Lek, Sarah Lucas, Antony Gormley, Paul McCarthy, Giuseppe Penone and Franz West. Alongside the many American, European and African artists, there are also various artists from Asia.

Pakistani-American sculptor Huma Bhabha, presented by Salon 94, features a 2018 work entitled *We Come In Peace*. The over four-metre tall sculpture looks like an alien creature. It is an amalgam of abstraction and figuration, a hybrid of post-modern associations and references to ancient Greek kouroi, Gandhara Buddhas, African sculpture, and Egyptian pharaohs. Bhabha's work addresses themes of colonialism, war, displacement and memories of place. Her narratives draw from television, sci-fi, horror movies, current events and popular novels. She uses found materials and the detritus of everyday life to create "haunting human figures that hover between abstraction and figuration, monumentality and entropy".



Chen Chieh-jen, *A Field of Non-Field* (video still), 2017, black-and-white and colour, sound, single channel video, 61min:07sec. Image courtesy the artist and Long March Space.

Long March Space presents Taiwanese artist Chen Chieh-jen's *A Field of Non-Field*, a 2017 moving image work that examines the "financial-technological capitalist system" and its resulting "corporatocracy" that manipulates contemporary society. In the film, Chen utilises a woman character whose voice narrates how her brother has disappeared without a trace from the hospital where he had been recovered for days after attempting suicide. In the video, she says, according to what her mother keeps telling her, "My brother just went somewhere far away, beyond the west." In a later part of the film, she says that her mother changes her response to "Your brother is just on his way back." In various sequences of the film, actors perform her brother, while other travel away and come back. Chen draws from Mādhyamaka Buddhist philosophy, to create a narrative of neither going, nor returning, which suggests the possibility of a "crevice" in the impossibility of escaping from an all-pervasive control technology. Chen intimates that no system is absolute or unbreakable, and that this "crevice" can be transformed and re-transformed, suspended in a constant state of waiting. *A Field of Non-Field* is the first chapter of Chen Chieh-jen's long-term project *Her and Her Children*. Chen's original inspiration of creating this video work comes from his eldest brother's experiences of being unemployed.



Abdunasser Gharem, *The Safe*, 2019, insulated quilted synthetic leather walls and door, stainless steel basin, plastic awning, stamps, 600 x 400 x 400 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Galerie Brigitte Schenk, Cologne; Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne.

Abdunasser Gharem's *The Safe*, presented by Germany's Galerie Nagel Draxler, is a 2019 installation that alludes to the assassination of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Istanbul. The work is a soundproof padded cell, similar to those used for solitary confinement in prisons or psychiatric clinics. The white walls of the cell are insulated and rubberised, with the Saudi Arabian flag in reversed form very subtly 'stamped' on the wall. The Saudi artist employs rubber stamps as subjects and material for his work, as objects with hidden messages that are read backwards. The stamps are ideas of bureaucratic approval, certification and symbols of power. Upon entering the cell, visitors, ushered in by guards at 40-second intervals, can hear classical music playing, and can pick a stamp from a stainless steel basin to stamp the wall, or alternatively, can write a statement by hand. The stamps bear phrases originating from politics and historic epics of violence.



Suki Seokyeong Kang, *Black Mat Oriole*, 2017, mixed-media installation: painted steel, plastic wheel, steel bolt, thread, three-channel video with sound, 8min:46sec, dimensions variable. Image courtesy the artist and Kukje Gallery / Tina Kim Gallery.

Presented by Kukje Gallery / Tina Kim Gallery, Korean artist Suki Seokyeong Kang's 2017 multimedia installation *Black Mat Oriole* comprising sculpture, painting, video and performance. The work is based on five years of research, analysing contemporary society through the lens of classical Korean poetry, craft and dance, and specifically *chunaengmu*, a solo dance on a square mat traditionally performed for the Korean aristocracy. The work engages the viewer through the power and politics of movement within physical space, the dance requires adherence to a strict code of court etiquette reflecting social strata. By grounding the work in the present, and using diverse media, Kang brings attention to the invisible social parameters through which we carefully navigate in our daily lives.



Do Ho Suh, *Hub, 260-7 Sungbook-Dong, Sungbook-Ku, Seoul, Korea*, 2017, installation; polyester fabric and stainless steel, 314 x 1022 x 151 cm. Image courtesy the artist, Lehmann Maupin and Victoria Miro.

Do Ho Suh's *Hub, 260-7 Sungbook-Dong, Sungbook-Ku, Seoul, Korea*, is a 2017 work presented by Lehmann Maupin and Victoria Miro that is part of the artist's "Hub" series. The 'hubs' are

“transitory, connecting spaces between rooms, such as vestibules and corridors” and are metaphors for the movement between cultures and the blurring of public and private, as well as reflections on the passage of the artist’s own life. The ‘hub’ becomes both a physical – where body and space interact – and a psychological territory, which holds memories and personal experience.



Fiona Tan, *Elsewhere*, 2018, HD installation, colour, stereo, dimensions variable.  
Loop duration: 16min:10sec. Image courtesy the artist, Frith Street Gallery, London  
and Peter Freeman Inc., New York.

Presented by Peter Freeman, Inc. and Frith Street Gallery, Fiona Tan’s film work *Elsewhere* is a meditation on time and memory, human needs and desires. The 2018 video captures the passing of time, from day to night, in the city of Los Angeles. Beginning at dawn, with a cityscape enveloped by mist, a voice full of admiration sketches a utopian society. The landscape gradually becomes visibly imperfect, with its ubiquitous pollution and smog and its endless traffic, while the narrator’s utopian images become increasingly out of place. The two opposing elements clash, the visual depicting something far off from an ideal world, while the audio transporting the viewer to a dreamlike location. The sense of dislocation is emphasised by the installation’s floating projection screen, as if the viewer is hovering above a metropolis.



Thu Van Tran, *Penetrable*, 2019, painted walls: rubber and pigments, 60 m2. Image  
courtesy the artist and Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle.

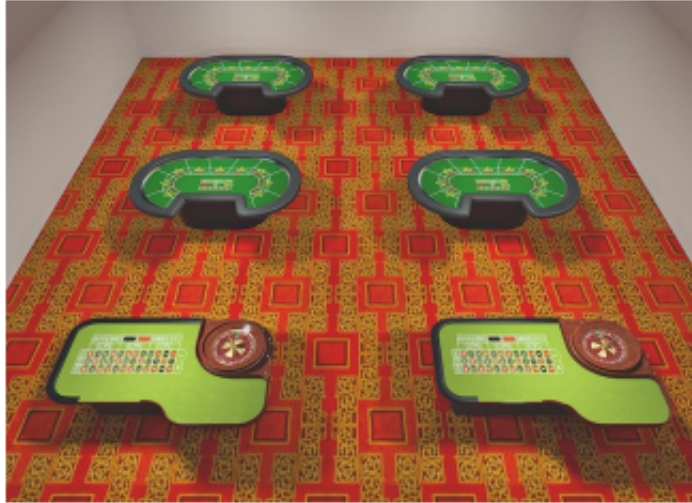
Thu Van Tran's *Penetrable*, presented by Galerie Rüdiger Schöttle, is a 2019 60-square-metre painting. For the site-specific painting, the artist utilises a special blend of rubber and chemical pigments to cover the surface of a white wall. Like much of her work that takes inspiration from her mixed cultural background – her native Vietnam and adopted France – the work draws on the history of the late 19th century, visualising it through poetic symbolism. In the 1840s that demand for latex rubber was huge. Prices increased manyfold, while people risked their lives to get the material from rubber trees. The work speaks to the colonial past of France and Vietnam, and in subtle and poetic ways portrays the deficiencies and irrationality of human nature, and the possibility of transforming our fate based on our history.



Akram Zaatari, *The End of Love*, 2013, 150 black-and-white inkjet prints, 30.5 x 23.5 x 3 cm each, edition of 3+2AP. Image courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery.

Thomas Dane Gallery and Sfeir-Semler Gallery present Akram Zaatari's *The End of Love*, an installation of 150 black-and-white inkjet prints presented as found object. In 1997, Zaatari co-founded the Beirut-based Arab Image Foundation (AIF), which collects, researches, preserves, interprets and exhibits photography from the Arab region. The AIF extensive collection was made possible by the research of artists like Zaatari. Drawing from the archive of photographer Hashem El Madani, owner of Studio Sheherazade, a studio in Saida, Lebanon, operational between 1953 and 2017, Zaatari has produced a body of work that furthers Madani's practice by working it into new configurations, such as films, installations and publications. *The End of Love's* black-and-white photographs were found in a box labelled "weddings" at Madani's studio. In the images are wedding couples as well as individuals alone, whose presence remains enigmatic.





XU ZHEN®, *Nirvana*, 2019, installation, performance; sand, wood, acrylic, mixed materials, edition 1 of 3. Image courtesy the artist and Perrotin.

Presented by Perrotin, XU ZHEN®'s *Nirvana* is a large-scale, site-specific installation and performance piece. The work comprises a number of baccarat and roulette tables set on a casino carpet. During the fair, the installation will see two to three performers at each table constructing the game pattern as if creating a sand mandala, used by Tibetan Buddhist monks to depict processes of creation and destruction. XU ZHEN®'s work thus suggests both an age-old, spiritual practice of meditation, and a symbol of capitalistic greed and productivity. Switching out traditional mandala patterns for the designs of table games, XU ZHEN® connects the two juxtaposed activities, exploring similarities in their rules, ceremonies, and the passage from existence to non-existence. The playful nature of the installation and performance “liberates” the gambling and religious rituals from their usual significance, introducing a new interpretation and assigning new values to both realities.



Tetsumi Kudo, *Sans titre*, 1972, plastic flowers, plastic bucket, resin, glue, cellulose, paint, soil, resistances, valve amplifier, wood base, etc. 63.5 x 46 x 37 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard.

### **Feature: projects from established and historical artists**

Featuring 24 projects this year, the Feature sector will present ambitiously curated exhibitions by both historical and contemporary artists, with 11 galleries completely new to the show. Highlights from Asia and its diaspora include Tetsumi Kudo, Carl Cheng, Benodebehari Mukherjee and Hassan Sharif.



Tetsumi Kudo, *Promenade in the heredity, Chromosome*, 1979, plastic, metal cage, wood panel, wool threads, soil, resin, glue, cellulose, paint, 27 x 34 x 19 cm. Image courtesy the artist and Galerie Christophe Gaillard.

Pioneering Japanese artist Tetsumi Kudo (1935-1990), associated with the Neo-Dada movement, is presented by first-time participant Galerie Christophe Gaillard. Kudo was born in Osaka into a family of artists, and received a traditional art education at the University of the

Arts in Tokyo. He was mainly active in his country in the 1950s when Japan enjoyed rapid economic recovery and political stability following the World War II. In the 1960s, he began creating provocative works in response to the restless climate of the time, which would become his trademark style. After moving to Paris in 1962, he created an installation that combined artificial fragments of the body with clocks, thermometers and laboratory flasks. Kudo was adamant about the fact that the western world should learn from oriental artists, and in his works, he tried to underline the pathologies and contradictions of post-war European society. Kudo explored “the existential possibilities for humanity in an increasingly polluted and consumption-driven world”. During the 1980s, Kudo became more reflective, creating more abstract and contemplative works.



Carl Cheng, *Erosion Machine No.2*, 1969, Plexiglas, metal racks and fittings, plastic, water pump, LED lights, black light, pebbles, 4 erosion rocks, wood base, 15 x 25 x 9 in, 38.1 x 63.5 x 22.86 cm. Image courtesy Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles.

Philip Martin Gallery features a solo show by Asian-American artist Carl Cheng, titled “John Doe Company Invites You To An Exhibition Of Products By Carl Cheng 1966-1981”. The Los Angeles-based artist (b. 1942) is one of the first Asian-American artists who worked in LA in the 1960s. Cheng’s material and conceptual approach pushes the boundaries of traditional object making, post-minimalism, systems and environmental art. Through his work, he conducts a critique on the corporate world, while using his heightened sense of technology to create works that express a deeply experimental vein and reveal the complex US-Asia relationships emerging during the post-war period and beyond. On show in Basel are some works created by Cheng under the name John Doe Co., his corporate AKA he created in 1965. The fictitious company allowed him to critique corporations by acting as a corporation. At the same time, as an Asian-American, John Doe Co. gave him a sense of anonymity in the context of American Vietnam War-era racism. His expanded photographic works are experimentations using moulded plastic and photographic film as a basis for sculpture and photography. Cheng’s “Nature Machines” imagine future natural environments that may be entirely controlled or made by humans. Some of his “Art Tools” will also be on display, alongside works from the “Liquid/Solid” series, reflective of his travels to Japan, India and China in the 1970s and 1980s.



Carl Cheng, *Art Tool Paint Experiments, Dip and Drip in Display Box*, 1972, wood, paint, metal clasp, 11 x 26 x 9.5 in, 27.94 x 66.04 x 24.13 cm. Image courtesy Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles.

Vadehra Art Gallery presents a solo exhibition of works by Benodebehari Mukherjee (1904-1980), focusing on a rare collection of the artist's papercuts, produced from 1957 into the late 1960s. Benodebehari Mukherjee is a pivotal figure in the history of Indian art, who studied at Kala Bhavana (Institute of Fine Arts at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan) established by Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore. He later became a member of the teaching faculty, and played a central role with Nandalal Bose and Ramkinkar Baij in making Santiniketan the most important centre for art in India. Mukherjee showed early interest in the art of murals, which provided an ambitious scale to present a comprehensive view of the world. One of the most important he created was in 1946-47 on three walls of the Hindi Bhavan at Santiniketan, based on the lives of the medieval saint-poets.



Benodebehari Mukherjee, *Reclining Man*, 1957, collage on paper, 7.5 x 9 in. Image courtesy Vadehra Art Gallery.

Mukherjee suffered from a childhood illness that impaired his vision, leaving him only with one functioning eye, and eventually leading him to complete blindness in 1957. His sensorial loss did not discourage him from continuing to make art, through drawings, papercuts, small clay

sculptures, and even a large murals. His papercuts were made with coloured paper pasted on boards, cut into individual motifs or pictorial signs. After becoming blind, he gradually moved to collage, adding subtlety and textural nuances to his work by using new materials like newspaper, cord and fabric. Of his condition, he once said: “Blindness is a new feeling, a new experience, a new state of being.”

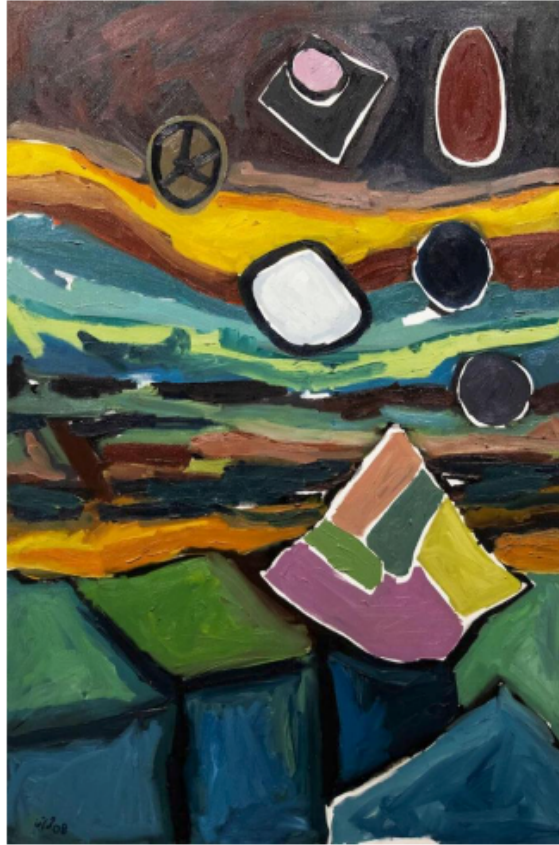


Benodebehari Mukherjee, *Woman with Fan*, 1957, collage on paper, 11 x 8.2 in.

Image courtesy Vadehra Art Gallery.

Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde features a solo exhibition of works by Emirati artist Hassan Sharif (1951-2016). “Redundant Repetition” includes a selection of important works from his *Objects* and *Semi-Systems*, as well as works on paper and paintings. Sharif was a pioneer of conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East, leaving an important legacy through 40-year art practice encompassing performance, installation, drawing, painting and assemblage. Sharif was also a supporter of younger generations of artists in the Emirates. He was a founding member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society (founded in 1980) and the Art Atelier in the Youth Theatre and Arts in Dubai. In 2007, he was one of the four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution for promoting contemporary Emirati artists.





Hassan Sharif, *The Flying House 32*, 2008, oil on canvas, 150 x 100 cm. Image courtesy the Estate of Hassan Sharif and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde.

Prior to leaving the UAE to study in London in 1979, where he graduated from The Byam Shaw School of Art (now part of Central Saint Martins) in 1984, Sharif gained attention for his cartoons published in the UAE press. His work was an ironic, outspoken critique of the rapid industrialisation of the Emirates and political deadlock of 1970s Arab Nationalism. As an artist, he rejected the dominant calligraphic abstraction that was popular in the Middle East at the time, instead following a purely contemporary vocabulary, drawn from Fluxus and influenced by Marcel Duchamp. Sharif turned his attention to the ordinary and the commonplace, to investigate the artistic potential of banal objects and everyday actions.





Hassan Sharif, *Rug*, 2016, rug, emulsion paint, glue and cotton rope, 260 x 145 x 10 cm. Image courtesy the Estate of Hassan Sharif and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde.

Sharif returned to the UAE soon after graduation, and started creating his *Objects* using found industrial materials or mass-produced items purchased in markets and stores. The earliest known Object is the now lost *Nylon Rope* (1982), a piece of rope dangling off a hook on the wall, with knots of varying size tied at irregular intervals. The artist rarely transformed the raw materials used in his works, which remained identifiable in their form and function, like in *Rug* (2016). The work consists of hanging bundles of strips of household linen, dipped into tempera paint, woven and braided. *Rug* makes an explicit link to Sharif's characterisation of his practice as "weaving", which he made in a mid-2000s essay. Weaving is identified as a female activity, thus connecting the artist's practice to a feminist aesthetic and ethic of labour and care. His process-driven work also positions itself as a "nonproductive machine" in a capitalist consumer society, which with "redundant repetition", is "perversely re-enacting through a human body the conditions of mass production".



Hassan Sharif, *Cadmium Yellow No. 2*, 2014, wood, coir, papier-mâché, wire and acrylic, 101 x 48 x 17 cm. Image courtesy the Estate of Hassan Sharif and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde.

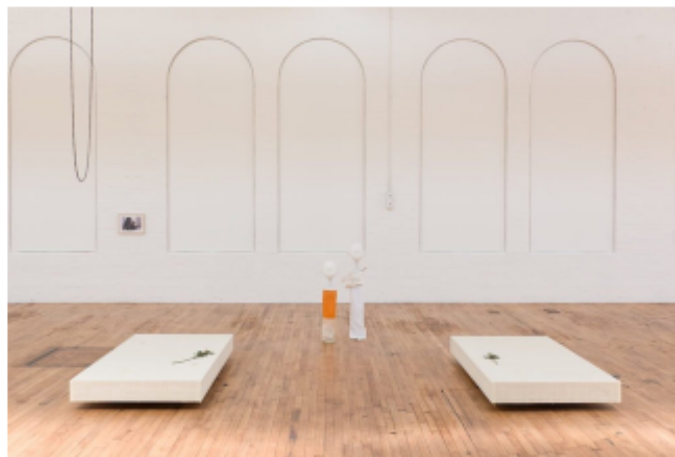
His *Semi-Systems*, started in the 1980s, were initially informed by the British Systems Group, and particularly Kenneth Martin's notion of 'Chance and Order'. He invented a set of rules to create line drawings that transform within a grid and colour studies on paper, which allowed for a degree of chance and human agency in their strict use of mathematics, systems and structures. Mistakes were part of the work, as Sharif believed that "Art' is a result of errors." In *One to Nine* (2010), draft papers explaining the experimental parameters used in the work accompany the main drawing.



Hassan Sharif, *Images No. 8*, 2013, gouache and pencil on paper, 42 x 29.5 cm. Image courtesy the Estate of Hassan Sharif and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde.

In the two 2013 drawings entitled *Images*, Sharif depicts small Jeeps in close repetition, to reflect on the proliferation of images in our times. Sharif, as quoted by the gallery, once proclaimed:

*“Images, particularly photographic, are everywhere – constant and yet ephemeral like ghosts. They are fast, often coming from distant places, from a number of sources: the computer, TV, even the radio....Each image holds the potential of a new self. This is everywhere, not just the UAE, but perhaps here billboards are more present and numerous than in other cities. So there is this cycle: you work in order to buy, you spend and then you need to work again. I don’t criticise this per se, but I am keen to show or remind the viewers that this is now our reality. Through this work, I am saying ‘These are images I am subjected to. What are yours? Do you recognize yourself in these?’”*



Cathy Wilkes, *Untitled*, 2018, installation. Image courtesy the artist and The Modern Institute.

### **Parcours: site-specific artworks around Basel’s Münsterplatz**

Now in its 10th edition, *Parcours* is curated for the fourth year by Samuel Leuenberger, Founder of SALTS, a non-profit exhibition space in Birsfelden, Switzerland. The 2019 sector, titled “The Impossibility of Being a Sculpture”, features 20 site-specific artworks located in the greater Münsterplatz area. Leuenberger explains that “This year’s *Parcours* proceeds from the reconsideration of inanimate objecthood, using it to open up the ways in which sculpture interacts with people within an urban context.” *Parcours* includes the work of two West Asian artists, Lawrence Abu Hamdan and Hassan Sharif, alongside Paweł Althamer, Dan Graham, Laurent Grasso, Camille Henrot, Germaine Kruip, Ron Terada, Daniel Turner and Cathy Wilkes, among others.



Lawrence Abu Hamdan, *The Recovered Manifesto of Wissam (inaudible)*, 2017. Image courtesy the artist and Maureen Paley.

Maureen Paley is presenting Beirut-based Lawrence Abu Hamdan's *The Recovered Manifesto of Wissam (inaudible)*, a 2017 installation located at the Staatsarchiv in Basel. Hamdan (b. 1985) is an artist and "private ear", whose work centres around sound and its intersection with politics. His audio investigations, conducted as part of his research for Forensic Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London, have been used as evidence at the UK Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and as advocacy for organisations such as Amnesty International and Defence for Children International. In his statement about the work in *Parcours*, he explains:

*"In the Chouf Mountains of Lebanon, old cassette tape is wrapped around fruit trees as a vernacular technique to ward off birds and insects. One day, one tree, deep in an orchard, stood out to me. The tape that was protecting this tree's clementines was much thinner – it was mini-cassette tape, the kind used in small Dictaphone recorders or answering machines. I collected all the tape from the tree and harvested the voice that was magnetized to its surface. After listening to the opening lines, I eventually heard the voice identify itself as Wissam [inaudible], and understood from Wissam that I was listening to an audio recorded manuscript for a book or a manifesto on the elusive concept of taqiyya. Taqiyya is an esoteric Islamic juridical concept that is widely understood as the right to lie."*



Hassan Sharif, *Copper No. 32*, 2015, copper wire, 75 x 315 x 70 cm. Image courtesy the Estate of Hassan Sharif and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, gb agency, Richard Gray Gallery.

Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, gb agency and Richard Gray Gallery present late Emirati artist Hassan Sharif's 2015 copper wire sculpture *Copper No. 32* at Erasmushaus, an antiquarian bookshop in central Basel. Hassan Sharif (1951-2016) is considered the pioneer of contemporary art in the Gulf region, where he introduced the use of recycled materials and mass-produced objects as sculpture. Copper is a material associated with the rapid industrialisation and modernisation of the United Arab Emirates, with the country's hyper-consumeristic culture, its skyscrapers and countless factories. Sharif re-purposed, cut and bent copper in such a way to suggest the fragility of what seems strong, yet is manipulated, much like his homeland's rapid rise into modernity. Presented in the bookshop, the *Parcours* work expands from being an interrogation of materiality into a literal exploration, in line with the artist's affinity towards language and the written word. The three-dimensional shape is an intersection of lines and void, forming an organism, a cocoon that elicits interpretations merging lexicon, material and form.



Cao Fei, *Prison Architect*, 2018, film still. Image courtesy the artist and Vitamin Creative Space.

## Films and Conversations

The Film sector always provides, alongside the Conversations, a breather from the hectic walking around the art fair. Curated by Maxa Zoller and Marian Masone, the 2019 programme reflects on the complex role of media in today's global world. Highlights by Asian artists include Cao Fei and Fiona Tan. Cao Fei's *Prison Architect* (2018) will be opening the programme on 10 June at 9pm, followed by a Q&A session with Hu Fang and Maxa Zoller. Presented by Vitamin Creative Space, the 59-minute film created a dialogue across time and space, and explores societal notions of the relationship between freedom and the self. Cao Fei deconstructs and brings together parallel realities, inhabited by two protagonists who slowly draw closer as the film unfolds. One is a Chinese political prisoner living in British colonial-era Hong Kong, while the other is a modern-day architect who struggles with her commission to design a new prison.



Frith Street Gallery and Peter Freeman, Inc. will present Fiona Tan's *Ascent*, a 2016 homage to Japan's Mount Fuji. Screened on 13 June at 7pm, and followed by a Q&A with the artist, the 80-minute work is a photo-film made by animating single images using sound and narration. The meditative film is an apt celebration of the colossal mountain, as it comprises 4000 individual photographs taken over 150 years. With the monumental series of images, Tan evokes the culture of memory surrounding the mystical destination.



Fiona Tan, *Ascent*, 2016, 77 min. Image courtesy the artist, Frith Street Gallery, London and Peter Freeman Inc, New York.

Throughout the art fair, there will be a programme of Conversations curated by Berlin-based artist and e-flux co-director Julieta Aranda, with some not to miss events that feature important figures from the Asian art scene. The “Collector Talk | The Collector as Expert” (Thursday 13 June, 1-2 pm) with Dana Farouki, Abdullah K. AlTurki and Alia Al-Senussi aims to shed light on the extensive knowledge of well-established collectors, in this case experts in art from the Middle East. The panel “Artworld Talk | New Nationalism(s)” (Wednesday 12 June, 3-4 pm) will see curators Kodwo Eshun, Anjalika Sagar, Zeynep Öz, Nicolaus Schafhausen and Zdenka Badovinac share and discuss their experiences navigating the new political conditions of the 21st century in their respective regions. “Artist Talk | Zones of Conflict – Responding to Realities” (Friday 14 June, 5-6 pm) will feature artists Manal Al Dowayan, Otobong Nkanga, Javier Téllez and Pelin Tan. With all of them originating from regions of conflict and different cultural backgrounds, the talk will reflect upon the situation in their respective places of origin and how they incorporate it in their works.

***Art Basel in Basel runs from 13 to 16 June 2019 at Messe Basel. Private Days are on 11 and 12 June, with the Vernissage on 12 June, both by invitation only.***