

Press Release

Art Jameel to celebrate the graduation of the 6th class of its Traditional Arts and Crafts Programme at the Fustat Traditional Crafts Centre

CAIRO, Egypt – August 21, 2016

In its 7th consecutive year, the highly successful Art Jameel Programme for Traditional Arts and Crafts will celebrate the graduation of a new generation of artists and artisans at the Fustat Traditional Crafts Center on Thursday August 25th, 7 p.m.

Established in 2009 by Art Jameel, a Community Jameel initiative, in collaboration with the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the Egyptian Ministry of Culture, the programme aims to train young Egyptians in the traditional arts, covering geometry, observational drawing, decorative floral patterns, painting, colour theory, and the crafts of woodwork, ceramics, gypsum & stained glass, and metalwork.

In line with Art Jameel's focus on preserving cultural heritage, including traditional arts in Egypt, the programme develops students' abilities to apply the foundational skills they learn during the programme to contemporary design and the restoration of monuments. The programme also focuses on securing job opportunities for its students within the fields of art and design, and some of its more than 55 graduates have gone on to teach at academic institutions, venture into the world of furniture design, and hold successful exhibitions of their artwork. This year's graduating class consists of 17 promising students over three specializations; ceramics, wood, and metal work.

"In order to encourage the creation of small businesses, we have also started to provide business courses to the students and to give alumni from the programme new opportunities to exhibit and sell works at an annual alumni exhibition," said Renata Papsch, general manager at Art Jameel International.

This year, the program placed a significant focus on the architectural environment of Islamic Cairo, with students actively engaging with historic monuments.

"In line with Art Jameel's commitment to cultural heritage protection, we are continuing to explore openings for the students to engage with the architectural heritage of Cairo and hope to find a future opportunity for the students to contribute a piece to the restoration of a major site," said Papsch.

The graduation ceremony will take place in the presence of students' friends and family, alumni from previous editions of the programme, as well as several distinguished guests from Egypt's cultural scene, including Dr. Neveen El-Kilany, head of the Cultural Development Fund at the Egyptian Ministry of Culture. The programme director, Mr. Mamdouh Sakr, and the director of the Prince's School of Traditional Arts, Dr. Khaled Azzam, will also be in attendance. Ms. Renata Papsch, will also attend. Community Jameel, the social enterprise organisation that includes Art Jameel among its initiatives, will be represented by Mr. George Richards, director of strategy development.

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The event will begin with a walk-through of the exhibition displaying the students' work, followed by a welcome address by Mr. Mamdouh Sakr. Dr. Khaled Azzam will then give a brief introduction to the program, followed by a speech by Dr. Neveen El-Kilany. The day will conclude with the presentation of diploma certificates to graduating students and a group photograph commemorating the event. The graduating students' work will be exhibited for a further week, from August 28th till September 1st from 10 am to 4 pm, at the Fustat Traditional Crafts Centre.

"We have three very unique pieces in this year's exhibition, a wooden minbar "pulpit", a large wooden door for a villa, in which the student carved and constructed all its different parts and a *sabeeel* (traditional drinking fountain) made of ceramics," said Mamdouh Sakr, director of the programme . "These are larger in size and more ambitious than previous years' projects and can be put to functional uses. They are bigger than being just souvenirs."

The Art Jameel Programme for Traditional Arts and Crafts is part of a developing network of Art Jameel projects focused on preserving cultural heritage. This includes other partnerships with the Prince's School of Traditional Arts at the House of Traditional Arts in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the Jameel House of Traditional Arts and Building Skills, currently under construction in Scotland.

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Art Jameel

Art Jameel, one of Community Jameel's initiatives, fosters and promotes contemporary art, cultural heritage protection, and creative entrepreneurship across the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey region, and beyond. In partnership with arts organizations worldwide, Art Jameel is developing two arts centres in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and cultural exchange programmes to encourage networking and knowledge sharing.

Art Jameel is the founding partner of Edge of Arabia, The Crossway Foundation, Jeddah Art Week, and The Archive. In partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, it awards the biennial Jameel Prize for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic traditions. Additional projects include: the Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art at the Victoria & Albert Museum; the Art Jameel Photography Award; the Jeddah Sculpture Museum, a public park established in collaboration with Jeddah Municipality; the Jameel Arts Education at schools; the House of Traditional Arts in Jeddah and the Art Jameel Programme for Traditional Arts and Crafts in Fustat, Cairo, both developed in partnership with the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London.

Community Jameel was established in 2003 to promote positive social change, and has been undertaking this through the establishment of long-term partnerships with international institutions, and the creation of initiatives in the fields of Job Creation, Global Poverty Alleviation, Arts & Culture, Education & Training, Health & Society, and Food & Water Security. More information on Community Jameel's considerable set of initiatives can be found online at www.cjameel.org.

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