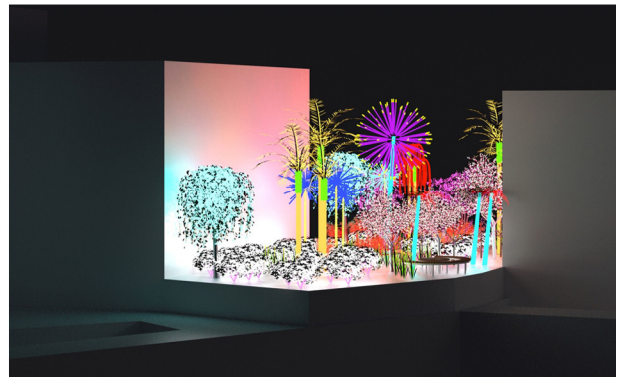


*For Immediate Release*

## Artists Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub awarded the inaugural ‘Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture’

- The 2018 commission is the first in a multi-year programme that reflects Art Jameel’s commitment to supporting artists and art in the public realm
- Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub’s major, immersive installation will be revealed when the Jameel Arts Centre opens in Dubai this coming winter
- The Kuwaiti artists won for their proposal to use light technologies to create a botanic garden of specially-created hybrid trees, reflecting on our relationship with the natural world
- Artists shortlisted for and reaching the final stage of the commission include Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub, Mohammed Kazem, Anahita Razmi and Mounira Al Solh
- The focus of the second Art Jameel Commissions (2019) will be research, with an Open Call to launch summer 2018, followed by a commission for drawing and painting in 2020



Detail Renderings (Left during daytime; Right at nighttime) of *Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees* (2018) by Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub, Commissioned by Art Jameel for the Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai. Images courtesy of the artists.

Dubai, United Arab Emirates | February 26, 2018 – [Art Jameel](#), an organisation that supports heritage, education and the arts, today announces that Kuwait-based artists **Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub** are awarded the inaugural **Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture**. The commission by Farid and AlYaqoub will be revealed at the opening of the [Jameel Arts Centre, in Jadaf](#), on the Dubai Creek, later this year.



Farid and AIYaqoub's winning proposal riffs on our relationship with the natural world; their site-specific installation acts as a community botanical garden, albeit one made up of artificial, hybrid trees and flora.

The announcement follows a highly popular call to artists in 2017 that garnered diverse applications from more than 57 countries. Given the calibre of proposals received, the jury decided to expand the shortlist to include four artists -- **Mohammed Kazem**, **Anahita Razmi** and **Mounira Al Solh** as well as Farid and AIYaqoub; all four artists developed further their concepts and a final jury deliberation settled on the Kuwaiti artists as the winners.

Responding to the seven desert-themed courtyards designed by landscape architect Anouk Vogel for the new Jameel Arts Centre, Farid and AIYaqoub's installation – ***Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees*** – will incorporate artificial light trees alluding to native plant species, as well as artist-imagined hybrid species. Built on the elevated terrace that connects both wings of the Jameel Arts Centre and dotted with seating, the immersive installation will feature detailed species and climate information for each 'plant', evocative of a formal arboretum. Farid and AIYaqoub will receive a production budget of USD 70,000 to realise the piece, as well as support from a network of architectural, engineering and technical experts.

The jury – which included writer and curator **Shumon Basar**; independent curator and art historian **Reem Fadda**; **James Lingwood**, Co-director, Artangel; **Elvira Dyangani Ose**, Senior Curator at Creative Time and Lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London; and **Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi**, President, Sharjah Art Foundation; as well as representatives of Art Jameel – chose the piece for its thoughtful treatment of the site and its exploration of the human orchestration of nature.

"We were impressed by Alia Farid and Aseel AIYaqoub's thoughtful environmental and social research in the development of the work," described the Art Jameel Commissions jury in their statement about the selection. "AIYaqoub and Farid's installation reflects on regional symbology, flora and popular culture, as well as the specific design of the Jameel Arts Centre building. *Contrary Life* also responds to the ebb and flow of community, providing a space for communal gathering and individual reflection – the perfect first commission for a cultural centre with the mission of engaging with diverse audiences and conceptual practices."

One of the first contemporary arts institutions in Dubai, the **Jameel Arts Centre** - a three-storey multi-disciplinary space designed by UK-based firm **Serie Architects** - will present curated exhibitions and act as a hub for educational and research initiatives. Located at the tip of Dubai's Culture Village, overlooking the Dubai Creek, the Centre includes more than 1,200 square metres of dedicated gallery space, a 300-square metre open-access research centre, flexible studio and events spaces, a café and bookshop.

**Antonia Carver**, Director of Art Jameel, said, "We are delighted with both the quality and quantity of proposals received in our first Commissions programme, and that so many artists rose to the challenge of working in the medium of light technologies, in such innovative ways. Congratulations not only to Alia Farid and Aseel AIYaqoub, but also to the shortlisted artists, who delivered such diverse and compelling ideas for major new works. Art Jameel Commissions furthers our long-standing commitment



to supporting artists in creating public works, and we're thrilled that this programme has allowed us to work with two upcoming artists on a work that engages directly with the community."

The annual Art Jameel Commissions is foundational to the **Jameel Arts Centre's** future programming, reflecting the institution's aims to be a multidisciplinary, exploratory space. The second in the Commission's three-year cycle focuses on research and lecture series (2019), with applications open from summer 2018. The third Art Jameel Commissions (2020) will explore drawing and painting. Art Jameel Commissions is open to artists from or based in the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey, as well as those from around the world with an interest in and familiarity with these regions.

Until the **Jameel Arts Centre** launches, Art Jameel's temporary **Project Space** in Alserkal Avenue, Dubai, hosts a dynamic programme of exhibitions, projects, talks and events. Past exhibitions have presented works by artists **Maha Maamoun, Hazem El Mestikawy and Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme**, among others. In collaboration with [Delfina Foundation](#), Art Jameel next presents **Plan for Feminist Greater Baghdad**, a solo exhibition by **Ala Younis**. The exhibition includes a major new installation co-commissioned by the two organisations and runs in London until March 24 and in Dubai, March 1 to April 14, 2018.

Full details on **Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture** can be found [here](#)

**END**

Further information on **Jameel Arts Centre** and renderings of the building are available on request.

For renderings of the winning artwork and photos of artists, please check below: (Courtesy of the artists)

- [Photo of Alia Farid](#)
- [Photo of Aseel AlYaqoub](#)
- [Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees \(2018\) by Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub \(daytime\)](#)
- [Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees \(2018\) by Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub \(nighttime\)](#)
- [Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees \(2018\) by Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub \(aerial nighttime\)](#)

For more information visit [www.artjameel.org](http://www.artjameel.org) and join the conversation on Instagram [@art\\_jameel](#) | Facebook [Art Jameel](#) | Twitter [@Art\\_Jameel](#) using the hashtag #artjameeldxb

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**About Art Jameel**



Art Jameel supports artists and creative communities. Current initiatives include running heritage institutes and restoration programmes, plus a broad range of arts and educational initiatives for all ages. The organisation's programmes foster the role of the arts in building open, connected communities; at a time of flux and dramatic societal shifts, this role is understood as more crucial than ever.

Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include [the Victoria & Albert Museum](#), the [Prince's School of Traditional Arts](#) and the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#); locally, the organisation works with individuals and organisations to develop innovative programming that embraces both ancient and new technologies, and encourages entrepreneurship and the development of cultural networks.

In 2018-2019, Art Jameel is set to open two new cultural centres: [Hayy: Creative Hub](#), a major complex for the creative industries in Saudi Arabia, and the [Jameel Arts Centre](#), a contemporary arts institution in the UAE.

Art Jameel is positioned alongside [Community Jameel](#), and complements its sister organisation's work in promoting positive social change, job creation and poverty alleviation across the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey.

[www.artjameel.org](http://www.artjameel.org)

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## **Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture 2018 Winning Artist Biography**

### **Aseel AlYaqoub**

Aseel AlYaqoub (b. 1986) was born and raised in Kuwait, where she continues to live and work. She graduated from Chelsea College of Art and Design with a BA in Interior and Spatial Design. After four years in the architecture industry, AlYaqoub pursued a Masters in Fine Arts from Pratt Institute (Sculpture). Her work offers an inspection of Kuwait's past and how it emerges into the present. Using nostalgia as an instrument for critical thought, rather than the longing for the past, AlYaqoub's practice investigates the invention / reinvention of heritage and tradition in a recently born nation-state. This often results in an examination of both the human need for conclusive stories and the question of how anecdotes come to represent history. Her work has been exhibited at Edge of Arabia (London), Boiler Room (New York), A1 Gallery (Dubai), Design Terminal (Budapest), Museum of Modern Art (Kuwait City), Contemporary Art Gallery (Kuwait City) and The Sultan Gallery (Kuwait City). She has given talks about her work at the Nuqat conference (2015) and Abu Dhabi Art (2017).

### **Alia Farid**

Alia Farid (b. 1985) works at the intersection of art, architecture and urban anthropology through video, spatial installations, drawings and other mediums. She obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts from La Escuela de Artes Plásticas de Puerto Rico (Viejo San Juan), a Master of Science in Visual Studies from the Visual Arts Program at MIT (Cambridge) and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Critical Theory from the Programa d'Estudis Independents at MACBA (Barcelona). Farid curated the Pavilion of Kuwait at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of at La Biennale di Venezia. She has completed residencies at Beta Local (San Juan), Casa Árabe in conjunction with Delfina Foundation (Córdoba), Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art (Doha), Davidoff Art Initiative (La Romana), The Serpentine Galleries (London), La Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris) and marra.tein (Beirut). Recent and upcoming shows include participation in the 32nd Bienal de São Paulo (2016); the 20th Contemporary Art Festival by SESC Pomépia and VideoBrasil (2017); and solo shows at NC-arte, Bogota (2018) and Galerie Imane Farès, Paris (2017). Farid lives and works in Kuwait and Puerto Rico.

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## **Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture 2017-2018 Jury Biographies**

### **Shumon Basar**

Shumon Basar is a writer, curator and cultural critic. He is co-author of *The Age of Earthquakes: A Guide to the Extreme Present* with Douglas Coupland and Hans Ulrich Obrist. He is Commissioner of the Global Art Forum in Dubai, Editor-at-large of *Tank* magazine, Contributing Editor at *Bidoun* magazine, Director of the Format program at the AA School, and a member of Fondazione Prada's Thought Council.

### **Elvira Dyangani Ose**

Elvira Dyangani Ose is Senior Curator at Creative Time, Lecturer in Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, member of the Thought Council at the Fondazione Prada and an independent curator. She was part of the curatorial team of the Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2016 in Geneva, Curator of the eighth edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary art (GIBCA 2015) and Curator of International Art at Tate Modern (2011 – 2014). Previously, Dyangani Ose served as Curator at the Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno and the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, as Artistic Director of Rencontres Picha, Lubumbashi Biennial (2013), and as Guest Curator of the triennial SUD, Salon Urbain de Douala (2010). She has curated, among others, the retrospective exhibition '*Carrie Mae Weems: Social Studies*' (2010) and the interdisciplinary project '*Across the Board*' (2012–2014). Dyangani Ose has contributed to art journals such as *Nka* and *Atlántica* and has served as guest editor of *Caderno Sesc\_Videobrasil 10*.

### **Reem Fadda**

Reem Fadda is an independent curator and art historian. From 2010 to 2016, Fadda worked at the Guggenheim Museum as Associate Curator, Middle Eastern Art, Abu Dhabi Project. From 2005 to 2007, Fadda was Director of the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA), Ramallah and served as Academic Director for the International Academy of Art Palestine, Ramallah, which she helped found in 2006. She has curated many international exhibitions and biennials, including 'Jerusalem Lives (Tahya Al Quds)', The Palestinian Museum, Birzeit (2017); 'Not New Now', 6<sup>th</sup> Marrakech Biennale (2016); and the United Arab Emirates National Pavilion, 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2013). She is also a guest curator of Sharjah Biennial 13 Act II in Beirut co-organised by Sharjah Art Foundation and Ashkal Alwan. Fadda was awarded the eighth Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement in 2017, and she received a Fulbright scholarship to pursue her PhD in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies, Cornell University in 2008. She is based between Amman and Ramallah.

### **James Lingwood**

James Lingwood is, together with Michael Morris, Co-Director of Artangel. Ground-breaking works produced by Artangel over the past 25 years include Rachel Whiteread's *House* (1993), Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's *The Palace of Projects* (1998), Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), Steve McQueen's *Caribs' Leap/Western Deep* (2002), Francis Alys's *Seven Walks* (2005), Roni Horn's *Library of Water* (2007), Mike Kelley's *Mobile Homestead* (2010), Cristina Iglesias's *Tres Aguas* (2014), Ryoji Ikeda's *spectra* (2014) and *Inside: Artists and writers in Reading Prison* (2016). He has curated numerous exhibitions for museums around the world including surveys of the work of Vija Celmins, Luigi Ghirri, Douglas Gordon, Susan Hiller, Juan Munoz, Thomas Schutte, Robert Smithson and Thomas Struth.

### **Hoor Al Qasimi**

President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, Hoor Al Qasimi was curator of Sharjah Biennial 6. Recent curatorial projects include *Hassan Sharif: I Am The Single Work Artist*, *Yayoi Kusama: Dot Obsessions*, *Farideh Lashai*, and *1980-Today* (UAE Pavilion, Venice Biennale). She is President of the International Biennial Association and serves on Boards including MoMA PS1, Darat al Funun and KW Berlin. Scholar-in-Residence at



Cornell University, she served on numerous juries including the Maria Lassnig Prize (2017), Hepworth Wakefield (2016) and the Benesse Prize (2013).

**Fady Jameel**

Fady Mohammed Jameel is President of Art Jameel. His passion and appreciation for art has led him to create a number of successful art collaborations and partnerships, including the Jameel Prize and Jameel Gallery at the V&A, London, as well as an institutional partnership with the Met, New York. He is a member of the Director's Council of the Dia Art Foundation, New York, and the council at the Centre Pompidou, Paris. He is also President of Community Jameel International, Art Jameel's sister organisation, which is dedicated to sustainable social and economic enterprise across the MENAT region through a wide range of programmes, including job creation, education, and health and social initiatives.

**Antonia Carver**

Antonia Carver is Director of Art Jameel. Previously Director of Art Dubai (2010-2016), she led its development into the leading international fair for the Middle East and South Asia. Based in the UAE since 2001, Carver has written extensively on Middle Eastern art and film. In 2004, she joined *Bidoun* as an editor and later became the director of the organisation's projects division. Carver has also served strategy and programming roles at the Dubai and Edinburgh international film festivals, the Institute of International Visual Arts, and Phaidon.