

Jameel Prize 4 – Shortlist Exhibition
8 June 2016 – 14 August 2016
Winner Announcement: 7 June 2016

Next month the Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey presents an exhibition of works by the eleven artists and designers shortlisted for the fourth edition of the prestigious Jameel Prize: David Chalmers Alesworth, Rasheed Araeen, Lara Assouad, CANAN, Cevdet Erek, Sahand Hesamiyan, Lucia Koch, Ghulam Mohammad, Shahpour Pouyan, Wael Shawky and Bahia Shehab. This is the first time that the V&A's Jameel Prize is launched at an external venue and the exhibition will in future rotate between the V&A and guest venues around the world.

Awarded every two years, the Jameel Prize, founded in partnership with Art Jameel, is a £25,000 international art prize for contemporary artists and designers inspired by Islamic traditions of art, craft and design. The winner of Jameel Prize 4 is announced at the Pera Museum on 7 June 2016.

V&A Director and chair of the Jameel Prize 4 judges, Martin Roth, said: "Since the V&A launched the Jameel Prize in 2009, the international touring exhibition has been seen by over 172,000 visitors around the world. To take the successful international element of the prize a step further we are delighted that the Pera Museum is the first host venue to announce the winner of the Jameel Prize. The V&A enjoys an excellent relationship with the Pera Museum which is well known for mixing Ottoman tradition with contemporary art and design."

Fady Jameel, President of Community Jameel International, said, "Over the centuries, Islamic culture provided many influential ideas that contributed to the formation of our world, and Islamic tradition continues to be a vital source of artistic ideas today. Our aim with the Jameel Prize is to encourage artists and designers around the world to explore this great heritage. With the Jameel Prize, too, we provide a forum for celebrating what has been achieved in art, craft and design inspired by Islamic tradition."

The exhibition features over 30 works that reflect the diversity of the shortlist. The works on show range from delicate paper collages and video work with marionettes to ceramics, sculpture and artist's books.

A series of specially commissioned short films on each artist and designer will be available online at www.vam.ac.uk/jameelprize4.

The Jameel Prize 4 exhibition is curated by Tim Stanley, senior curator for the V&A's Middle Eastern collection, with Salma Tuqan, the V&A's curator of Middle Eastern contemporary art and design.

The V&A announced the shortlist for Jameel Prize 4 in January 2016. Over 200 entries were received from countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Mali, Pakistan, Turkey and Thailand. A panel of judges, chaired by V&A Director, Martin Roth, selected the shortlist of eleven artists and designers.

One of the judges, Hammad Nasar, Head of Research and Programmes at Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong, commented: "This year's shortlist includes not just a diversity of practices from sound to film to minimalist sculptures, but also evidences a growing confidence in the artists,

many with strong reputations in the global art world, to assert their multiple identities – both contemporary *and* rooted in Muslim cultures. This is a welcome development, and suggests that platforms such as the Jameel Prize can contribute to expanding our collective ideas of what ‘global’ visual culture looks like.”

Since its launch in 2009, each edition of the Prize has been seen on international tour. Most recently, the Jameel Prize 3 exhibition visited the National Library in Singapore (2015); the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, UAE (2015); and two venues in Russia, the Hermitage-Kazan Exhibition Centre in Kazan and the New Manège in Moscow (2014). At the V&A and on tour in 2014 and 2015, the exhibition was seen by 183,178 visitors.

The Jameel Prize is a £25,000 international art prize for contemporary artists and designers inspired by Islamic traditions of craft and design. Launched in 2009, the winner of the first Jameel Prize was Afruz Amighi for her work *1001 Pages* (2008), an intricate hand-cut screen made from the woven plastic used to construct refugee tents. In 2011 Rachid Koraïchi was awarded the prize, for his work *Les Maîtres Invisibles* (*The Invisible Masters*, 2008), a group of embroidered cloth banners which display Arabic calligraphy and symbols and ciphers to explore the lives and legacies of the 14 great mystics of Islam. In 2013 the winner of Jameel Prize 3 was Dice Kayek, a Turkish fashion label established in 1992 by Ece and Ayşe Ege for their work *Istanbul Contrast*, a collection that evokes Istanbul’s architectural and artistic heritage. This was the first time the Jameel Prize was awarded to designers.

The Jameel Prize is supported by Art Jameel. The prize was conceived after the renovation of the V&A’s Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art, which opened in July 2006 and will be celebrating its tenth anniversary this summer. The gallery is an outstanding presentation of the rich artistic heritage of the Islamic Middle East, and the Prize aims to raise awareness of the thriving interaction between contemporary practice and the great historical legacy of the region. It has also contributed to a broader understanding of Islamic culture as well as its place in the contemporary world.

The late Zaha Hadid, award winning architect, was Patron of the Jameel Prize. The judges are:

Alan Caiger-Smith, potter

Ece and Ayşe Ege, founders of the fashion label Dice Kayek and winners of Jameel Prize 3

Rose Issa, curator, writer, publisher and producer

Hammad Nasar, curator, writer and Head of Research and Programmes at Asia Art Archive (AAA), Hong Kong

Martin Roth, Director of the V&A

END

The eleven shortlisted artists and designers:

David Chalmers Alesworth is a visual artist whose work over the last ten years has been based around his research on garden history and landscapes. He creates his ‘garden carpets’ by re-purposing worn Iranian and Pakistani carpets of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He overlays the original designs, which show abstracted, metaphorical gardens with maps of important European gardens. In *Garden Palimpsest* (2012) he embroidered an image based upon Abbe Jean Delagrive’s rendition of Versailles Palace Gardens in 1746 on to a 150-year-old Kerman carpet. *Hyde Park Kashan 1862* (2011) is based on a fragment of a Stanford map of London embroidered on to a large 75-year-old Kashan carpet. He does not intend these new Western cultural landscapes to obscure the original carpet designs, rather to see them as distantly rooted in the fabric of these garden carpets, growing out of the quintessential landscape beneath. Alesworth also shows three works from his series *Gardening the Archive* (2014), which are digital images made up of layers of historical texts and photographs of living plants from his own garden in Lahore. Alesworth has recently relocated to the UK from Pakistan, where he lived for more than 20 years.

Rasheed Araeen is recognised as a pioneer of Minimalist sculpture in Britain. Working also in painting and photography he invokes and celebrates the philosophy, science and art of Islam, attributing the traditional geometry and calligraphy of Islamic art to playing a central part in the history of modern art. Bahar Lye, *Khushiaan Lye: Spring Come, Happiness Come* (2015), is a sculptural work which is a resumption of his early works using geometry and colour. *Al-Ghazali* (2010–11) depicts in acrylic paint the name of the eleventh-century Muslim philosopher Al-Ghazali, inscribed four times on the canvas. Rasheed Araeen lives and works in London, UK.

Lara Assouad is a graphic and type designer whose interest lies in creating Arabic typefaces which speak or express a contemporary 'Arab' visual language. To create her modular alphabets and typefaces Assouad researches calligraphic styles from old manuscripts and abstracts their letters by 'stripping back' the ornate and intricate as far as possible without losing their legibility in an attempt to reach their underlying basic geometric structure. Assouad's display for the exhibition *The Modular Arabic Alphabet and Type Project* explores her continuing work with modular Arabic typography. The project started with *Tabati* (2011) a children's book, which demonstrates her award-winning geometric typeface *Tabati*, composed of simple geometric shapes and stamped out of wood blocks. The aim of the project was to introduce children to the Arabic language and alphabet in a playful, fun manner and get them more excited about learning it. It has also been used as a tool to teach young designers, Arab and non-Arab alike, about the basic rules of proportions, similarities and harmony in the Arabic scripts by taking the letters out of their cultural and historic context and exploring their symbolic 'icon' potential through abstraction and the principle of modularity. The graphic wall display *Modular Arabic Alphabet* brings to life her preoccupation with presenting Arabic letters through basic geometric shapes. Assouad lives and works in Dubai, UAE.

CANAN's artistic practice is informed by her position as one of the leading defenders of women's rights in Turkey. CANAN uses performance, miniature, video and photography to make a commentary on present day Turkey and its recent history. The two works on show *Resistance on Istiklal Street* (2014) and *Bosphorus Bridge* (2014) use the visual language of the Ottoman miniature. The first is a representation of the resistance during the Taksim Gezi Park protests in Istanbul in 2013. The city is depicted as inspired by the works of Ottoman cartographers. The second miniature illustrates a moment when a group of protestors succeeded in crossing the Bosphorus Bridge to reach Gezi Park despite the use of water cannon and tear gas by the police. CANAN lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey.

Cevdet Erek is an artist working specifically with sound, space and rhythm. In his series *Rulers and Rhythm Studies*, Erek converts the ruler into an instrument that measures time instead of space. *Ruler Day Night* (2011) uses the Muslim daily prayer times to mark the sequence of day and night as a repetitive and subtly changing black and white pattern. *Ruler 100 Years* (2011) is a visual record of a century in which two major changes took place in Turkey. In 1926 the Islamic calendar was replaced by the Gregorian and in 1928 the script changed from Arabic to Latin. Erek is also presenting a new work, a recent development from his *Sound Ornamentation* series, the aim of which is to give sonic form to repeated architectural ornamentation. Erek lives and works in Istanbul, Turkey.

Sahand Hesamiyan is a sculptor whose work presents a contemporary interpretation of traditional Iranian geometrical shapes. He is showing two works which demonstrate the way he dissects Iranian architectural forms into freestanding sculptures. *Khalvat* (2014) is a series of maquettes, their forms based on the triangular shapes in rasmibandi vaulting. *Khalvat* refers to a 'sanctum' or 'place of solitude' to which the mystic withdraws to seek the Truth. Hesamiyan also shows the imposing steel work *Nail* (2012). This single large nail substitutes the original four small nails as an emblematic and arresting symbol of the crucifixion. Hesamiyan lives and works in Tehran, Iran.

Lucia Koch creates architectural interventions by covering façades, skylights and windows with translucent materials and filters, through which she investigates issues of light and spatiality. She is concerned with screens that evoke the taste for the patterns of tiles and latticed window coverings, which filled Brazilian houses from the 16th century onwards, when the Portuguese settlers brought Islamic traditions with them. In her series Construction Materials (2012) she uses cut out plexiglass to create screens that are framed on sliding and overlapping panels, in order to create a multiplying effect on the patterns, and affect the vision of the onlooker. The two screens on display Showcase (acrylic-colour) and Showcase (acrylic-mirror) (both 2012), are mostly samples of materials used in her previous interventions, for example the materials she employed in the Turkish hamam for the Istanbul Biennial in 2003, the ones installed onto a window for Tokyo's Contemporary Art Museum in 2008 or in the doors of a courtyard house, which she worked on for the biennial in Sharjah in 2013. Koch lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil.

Ghulam Mohammad is an artist who uses words and language as a medium to create paper collage. By 'freeing' language from the page and attempting a playful reconstruction, Mohammad aims to enrich it with a new aesthetic meaning. The five works Untitled (2014) on show demonstrate his highly intricate work, taking individual paper cuttings of Urdu script and adding components of gold and silver leaf and ink to complete his collages. Mohammad lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

Shahpour Pouyan works with different media, including ceramic and metal. The decorative nature of his work is inspired by traditional Islamic art, but the unclear function of the object allows interpretation of the object from different perspectives. His series of ceramics The Unthinkable Thought (2014) shows different forms of domes – architectural structures long used as expressions of power. Pouyan uses traditional Islamic pottery techniques to make his models of a variety of domes from Europe and the Middle East. Some are detailed, scaled-down reproductions of specific buildings such as the Pantheon in Rome; others are simpler, almost typological, and draw on Iran's rich architectural history, one example being the turquoise dome of Isfahan's famous Mosque of the Shah (now Masjed-e Emam). Pouyan lives and works between Tehran, Iran and New York, USA.

Wael Shawky presents the film Cabaret Crusades: The Path to Cairo (2012). This film is the second chapter of the film trilogy Cabaret Crusades which recounts the histories of the Crusades from an Arab perspective. Shawky uses drawings, objects and marionette animated films inspired by the book The Crusades Through Arab Eyes by Amin Maalouf (1983) to describe the specific horrors of these religious wars, with meticulously crafted characters, music, scenography and speech. Shawky lives and works in Alexandria, Egypt.

Bahia Shehab is an artist and associate professor of graphic design at the American University in Cairo. Her work focuses on historic Arabic script and how it might be used to solve contemporary design issues. During the Egyptian uprising of 2011-13 Shehab sprayed the word la – "No" in Arabic – in different forms on the walls of the city. The word la is written using the Arabic letters lam and alif. A Thousand Times No (2010) is a Plexiglas curtain that traces the history of lam-alif using a thousand different shapes of the word in Islamic history. On display alongside will be the accompanying artist's book – a visual documentation of Shehab's extensive research into the different lam-alifs presented chronologically, stating the places she found them, the medium and the patron who commissioned the work. The project evokes the richness of the evolution of the Arabic script. Shehab lives and works in Cairo, Egypt.

For further PRESS information please contact Henrietta Sitwell in the V&A press office on 0207 942 2503 or email h.sitwell@vam.ac.uk (Not for Publication)

A selection of high resolution images are available to download from <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>

Notes to Editors:

Please see separate sheet for biographies of the judging panel and shortlisted artists and designers.

About the V&A Exhibition

- The exhibition of work by the eleven artists and designers shortlisted for Jameel Prize 4 will be on show at the Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey from 8 June 2016 – 14 August 2016.
- The winner will be announced on 7 June 2016.
- Please visit www.peramuseum.org/Visit/7 for admission information.

About the V&A's Islamic Art Collection

The V&A has specialised in collecting Islamic art since the 1850s, and was the first institution in the world to collect Islamic art as part of a mission to reform British industrial design. The Museum's founders considered Islamic art and design to be superior to most Western production, and they acquired examples to guide public taste and to provide models for contemporary manufacturing. The Museum's collection is reflected in much later design, and through the Jameel Prize the V&A is able to show that Islamic art of the past still provides inspiration today. The Jameel Prize is also part of the V&A's programme of activities designed to develop cultural links around the world and promote cultural understanding.

About the Jameel Prize

Leading curators, designers, artists and cultural figures from across the world were invited to nominate applicants to the Jameel Prize. Over 200 entries were received from countries as diverse as Puerto Rico, Mali, Pakistan, Turkey and Thailand. A panel of judges, chaired by V&A Director, Martin Roth, selected the shortlist of eleven artists and designers.

About Art Jameel

Art Jameel, one of Community Jameel's initiatives, fosters and promotes contemporary art and creative entrepreneurship across the MENAT region. In partnership with arts organisations worldwide, Art Jameel is developing two arts centres 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: Art Jameel Photography Award; Jeddah Sculpture Museum, a public park established in collaboration with Jeddah Municipality; 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 and culture, education and training, health and social, and food and water security. More information on Community Jameel's considerable set of initiatives can be found online at www.cjameel.org

About the Pera Museum

Pera Museum was established by Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation in 2005. Located in the historic Tepebaşı quarter of the city; the museum's building, once the famous Bristol Hotel, has been transformed into an impressive new site of galleries housing both the Foundation's permanent collection and a programme of national and international temporary exhibitions. As a modern cultural centre in a vibrant part of the city, the museum also aims to provide its visitors

with a broad range of cultural events that include educational, film, conference and music programmes. www.peramuseum.org