

Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, celebrates its opening week with close to 11,000 visitors

- Jameel Arts Centre's debut week included two opening nights, dedicated children's preview, continual series of artist-, curator- and architect-led tours of the building and exhibitions, plus the Middle Eastern/Asian premiere of the world-acclaimed immersive outdoor light installation WATERLICHT
- The Centre is an innovative new cultural hub for the region, opening with an ambitious set of exhibitions and programmes including a major group exhibition, four solo shows, several site-specific installations and new commissions, the inauguration of a pioneering Youth Assembly and the launch of an open-air sculpture park adjacent to the Centre

Dubai, United Arab Emirates | November 21, 2018 – Last week marked the opening of the much-anticipated [Jameel Arts Centre](#), an innovative cultural destination developed by [Art Jameel](#), the independent organisation that supports arts, education and heritage in the Middle East. Designed as a 10,000-square-metre, three-storey, multi-disciplinary space by UK-based **Serie Architects**, Jameel Arts Centre is the first non-governmental contemporary arts institution of its kind in the Gulf. The Centre, which was officially inaugurated on November 8, 2018, by **His Highness Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum**, Deputy Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai, opened to the public on November 11, with an opening week of programming designed for all ages.

The opening week programme saw 10,940 visitors through the Centre's doors – more than double the expected attendance. The packed preview evening included a welcome by **Her Excellency Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi**, the Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, and a special Malid performance, as well the debut of the Centre's exhibitions featuring 40 artists.

Leaders from the fields of culture, government, business and philanthropy in the UAE and the Gulf were all in attendance, plus international guests, including the directors and curators of the V&A, British Museum, Delfina Foundation, Whitechapel Gallery, Royal College of Art, from London; Louvre, Centre Pompidou, Musee Rodin, Musée D'Orsay, from Paris; plus the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Getty, Los Angeles; Aga Khan Museum Toronto; Ashkal Alwan, and National Museum, Beirut, among others.

Jameel Arts Centre's first public day kicked off with a dedicated Children's Opening offering more than 300 teens from across the seven Emirates guided tours led by curators and exhibiting artists; for most, this was their visit to a museum. Rounding out the rich cultural experience, these young visitors aged 12 to 14, also had hands-on opportunities to explore mediums and themes from the exhibitions and works on view.

Artist-, curator- and architect-led tours were available to visitors throughout the week; with dedicated



tours for international participants and guests of partner events including Al Burda Festival, Dubai Design Week, Global Grad Show, Abu Dhabi Art and Fikra Graphic Design Biennial.

Through the week, capacity audiences of more than 10,000 flocked to Jameel Arts Centre and its adjacent Jaddaf Waterfront Sculpture Park to see exhibitions and experience the regional premiere of **WATERLICHT**, an immersive light installation by renowned Dutch artist and innovator **Daan Roosegaarde**, presented by **Dubai Holding** and held over three evenings.

Antonia Carver, Director of Art Jameel, said, “Five years of planning and building, and 1.4 million man and woman hours have gone into creating the Jameel Arts Centre, and we are thrilled and overwhelmed by the incredible response — from international museum directors and artworld colleagues to “the curious” of the UAE. On Thursday evening, the Centre’s galleries hit capacity and we were forced to limit access, with queues forming around the building. Art Jameel’s mandate is all about supporting artists and providing access to the arts for all; we couldn’t have hoped for a better way to debut our first Centre. We’d like to thank our government and private sector partners, as well as the community-at-large, for supporting us in bringing this dream alive.”

Reflecting the institution’s commitment to dynamic programming that resonates with a diverse audience, Jameel Arts Centre launches with a broad-ranging lineup of exhibitions, commissions and events. Spread across five galleries, the inaugural group exhibition, ‘Crude’, curated by **Murtaza Vali**, considers the complex theme of oil within both historic and contemporary contexts. Artist’s Rooms, an on-going collaborative series of exhibitions that focus on a single artist represented in the Art Jameel Collection, opens with a series of four solo shows by eminent artists from the Middle East and Asia: **Maha Malluh**, **Lala Rukh**, **Chiharu Shiota** and **Mounira Al Solh**. A selection of large-scale installations and sculptural works, several newly commissioned, are on view on the Centre’s roof terrace and within a series of permanent gardens designed by landscape architect **Anouk Vogel**. Gallery 9 focusses on artist’s film and video, starting with a work by **Jumana Manna**.

Jameel Arts Centre is a venue for ongoing research, education and programming. **Jameel Library**, the UAE’s first open-access contemporary arts library and resource centre, opens with a bilingual collection of nearly 3,000 books, journals, catalogues and theses. Knowledge-generating Library programmes will include talks, research projects, symposia and reading groups. **The Youth Assembly**, a pioneering peer-to-peer programme serving and led by the next generation of creatives, opens its Inaugural session from November 2018 through April 2019. The initiative will lead to the production of art, design, research, interventions and public events specifically geared towards youth aged 18-25.

The Centre’s opening also marked the launch of **Jaddaf Waterfront Sculpture Park**, Dubai’s first open-air art park, crafted by UAE-based **ibda design** and developed by Dubai Holding. The initial installation



includes sculptures by **Helaine Blumenfeld, TalinHazbar and Latifa Saeed, Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, David Nash and Slavs and Tatars.**

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Further details on **Jameel Arts Centre** can be found [here](#)

Further details on **Jameel Arts Centre opening exhibitions** can be found [here](#)

For more information visit www.artjameel.org and jameelartscentre.org and join the conversation:

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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.

[Jameel Arts Centre](#), an innovative contemporary institution in Dubai, UAE, opened on November 11, 2018; [Hayy: Creative Hub](#), a major complex for the creative industries in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is set to launch in 2020.



Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include [Delfina Foundation](#), [the Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), the [Prince's Foundation School of Traditional Arts](#) and [the Victoria and Albert Museum](#). 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.

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.