

# KAMIAR'S MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL 2021 | DUBAI EDITION



Kamiar Maleki in front of Ian Davenport, presented by Waddington Custot at Art Dubai

“And we are back! When presented the

opportunity to go to the first in real life art fair in a year, I jumped at the chance to visit, regardless of the difficulties of coming back to the United Kingdom, as Dubai had been placed on a red list.”

This month, we follow Kamiar to Dubai, where he visits **Art Dubai** and new shows at the galleries at **Al Serkal Avenue**.

**Art Dubai** has always been a great fair to visit.

Situated in a vibrant cultural melting pot that is the UAE, usually right next to the beach in Jumeirah, people are excited to hit a fair that starts late in the afternoon and has a lot to offer. Due to Covid, Art Dubai had to push the dates a week later than usual and as well moved locations to the DIFC. This proved to be a master stroke. The Financial Area of Dubai is packed with Offices, Large Companies and Banks, hot restaurants, and a great gallery scene. Likewise, the accessibility of the DIFC enables visitors to attend the fair not just once but on numerous occasions throughout the week.

Even though the fair was paired down with only 50 galleries participating from 31 countries in three separate tents, it felt very curated, and every attention to detail in regards to current health regulations were met. Timed entrances and a busy first day did not deter the collectors from visiting. Everyone wore masks, though some hugged and kissed hello freely and even took off their masks for photographic poses. A large French, Belgian, and continental contingent were roaming through the aisles, and it was great to see friends again looking to snap up new art from the presentations.

Making it easier for galleries to attend this year, Art Dubai had opted for a ‘no payment upfront’ concept, in which Galleries would split sales 50% -50% with the fair until they met their booth price in sales. It most certainly is a generous procedure by Art Dubai and forces the hand almost on other fairs to follow suit. The fair also offered three months of free art storage afterwards to exhibitors.

## Among the highlights I took in at Art Dubai:

**Perrotin** who himself was present at this year’s fair exhibiting for the first time brought a strong booth of artists **JR, Daniel Arsham, Johan Creten** and more. Constant buzz was around his stand. **Custot Gallery** based in Dubai brought along some

fabulous pieces including **Ian Davenport**, a favorite artist of mine, and also had a very successful fair.

**Templon** focused its attention on **Abdelkader Benchamma** and brought some inspiring work by this fabulous artist working with charcoal. The gallery also brought Dubai veterans such as **Jittish Kallat, Sudarshan Shetty** and others. The never tiring **Dastan Basement** had two booths at the fair exhibiting artists from **Derakshani** to **Taba** and **Shooki**.

Notable VOLTA galleries participated in this edition, including: **Gallery 1957**, with a strong booth featuring a double presentation of **Joana Choumali** and **Abdoulaye Konate**. **SARADIPOUR Art Gallery** brought a solo presentation of **Mohslem Khezri**. **Vin Gallery** from Vietnam showed a dual presentation of



Lella Heller Gallery's artist Aref Montazemi with Kamiar Maleki at Art Dubai

**Yohei Yama** and **Karine Guillermin. Marc Hachem's** curated booth was very active throughout the show.

Elsewhere at the fair, **Leila Heller Gallery** featured a strong booth with artists such as **Aref Montazemi** whose mirror works drew a large crowd. **Experimenter** showing many great artists including **Aysha Sultana**, a Dubai veteran. **The Third Line** also had a strong booth showing the likes of **Nima Navabi**, **Monir Farmafarmaian** and **Rana Begum**.

Sadly we cant mention every great gallery here but all in all Art Dubai was a roaring success and it was great to be back at an in real life fair again. Congratulations to the team of Chloe Vaitsoy, Pablo del Val and Hala Khayat who gave us all hope for future fairs to happen later on this fall.



Collector Alain Servais with Eva Ruiz and Kamier Maleki



Opening night at Art Dubai



Carlos Cabral Nunes and Maryam al Qasbi from Perse Galeria Lisbon with Kamier Maleki

Dubai is of course not just about Art Dubai. It has a strong cultural art hub most notably in Al Serkal Avenue established in 2007 by Abdelmosem Bin Eisa Alserkal.



Al Serkal Avenue

**Al Serkal Avenue** has transformed the cultural landscape of Dubai and the UAE through the creation of a thriving, region-specific community of art galleries, visual, and performing arts organizations, designers and entrepreneur-led businesses. It also has fabulous restaurants, shops, co-lab offices and more.



Leila Heller Gallery presenting British artist Sacha Jafri

**Al Serkal Avenue** was a week of exhibitions, commissions, and talks occurring across the Avenue from 22 to 27 March 2021. Contemporary art galleries and not-for-profit spaces presented new exhibitions, and they welcomed Guest Projects and talks with artists and curators from the region throughout the week.

During the week, **Al Serkal Avenue** unveiled **Study for an Incision**, the first phase of **Tania Ursomarzo's** 2021 public art commission at The Yard. Over the spring, Ursomarzo began a careful study of the environment of the Yard, a shared community space at Alserkal Avenue. In preparation for a more substantial future intervention, conditions were measured through space-making and space-shaping elements designed to capture wind, hold light, dampen sound, and cast shadow onto the most exposed area of the Yard—the grass footprint of the former Nadi al Quoz. As light and air move through the space of the Yard over the course of the day, these test elements trace the path of the sun, with a view to carving out fluid and hospitable spaces for social activity.

They also held Open Studios and Lecture Performances for Spring 2021 artists-in-residence with Alserkal Arts Foundation: **Wilf Speller**, **Dorota Gawęda**, and **Egle Kulbokaite**.

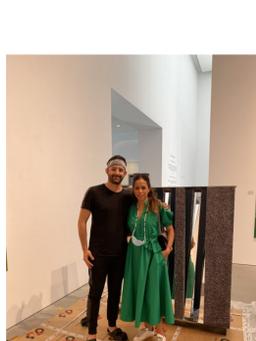
Palestinian artist **Hazem Harb** took over one of their warehouses, welcoming visitors to his 'moving' studio—a nomad temporary studio where drop-in guests will experience a moment of an artist's life in this inner creative sanctum.

In collaboration with **Gulf Photo Plus**, ASA hosted the inaugural **Disappearing Art Show**, designed to encourage a younger audience to collect art, this show proposes art as accessible to everyone by selling works at 1,000 AED each. Interested collectors and art enthusiasts acquired art from galleries in Alserkal Avenue and the Al Quoz district, as well as emerging artists and art collectives participating in The Disappearing Art Show's debut exhibition. The participating galleries, artists, and collectives were:

**Aliyah Al Awadhi**, **Almaha Alkelabi**, **Ana Escobar**, **Bait 15**, **Gulf Photo Plus**, **Seeing Things**, **Cinema Akil**, **Kave**, **Zawyeh Gallery**, **Nahla Tabaa** and **Lena Kassicieh**, **Daftar Asfar**, **Amina Yahia**, **1x1 Gallery**, **101.art**, **Zayed University**, **Rare Magazine**, **Postscript**, and **Sa Tahanan Collective**. Other Guest Projects included Lebanese artist **Marwan Sahmarani's** pop-up exhibition called **Before the Blast** by **Leila Heller Gallery**.



The artist Sacha Jafri with Leila Heller and Kamier Maleki



The artist Aref Montazemi and Sanaz Ameri at Leila Heller Gallery



Collector Sho Choudhury with Kamier Maleki

Of course aside from the side projects each of the galleries in **Al Serkal** had new shows open during the fair. **Carbon 12** who for the first year did not participate at Art Dubai showed **Monika Grabuschnigg**'s third solo exhibition at the gallery. **Zawyeh Gallery** presented in pursuit of Utopia, a solo show by **Nabil Anani** who paints the picturesque hills of Palestine. **The Third Line** had two shows **Tarek Al-Ghoussein**'s showing a selection of new works and a show by **Yasin Bey**, an audio and video installation. **Leila Heller** showed works by the talented **Sacha Jafri** and **Aref Montazemi**. **Lawrie Shabibi** presented **Ishmael Randall Weeks**' hugely anticipated sculptures. **Green Art Gallery** showed beautiful works by Pakistani artist **Seher Shah**.



Jameel Arts Centre on Dubai Creek



Artwork by Hiwa K: Do you remember what you are burning? at Jameel Arts Centre

Following an amazing journey through this cultural hub I made my way to the **Jameel Arts Center** nestled at the Jadaff Waterfront in Dubai. This independent institution is dedicated to exhibiting contemporary art to the public and engaging communities through learning, research and commissions.

Amongst the art on show from **Conrad Shawcross** in their sculpture park, There is a fabulous curated exhibition called 'The age of You'. It is an exhibition about how you've been morphing into something else. Curated by Shumon Basar, Douglas Coupland and Hans Ulrich Obrist, with graphic design by Daly & Lyon, it includes over 70 visual contributors from the worlds of art, design, filmmaking, photography, technology and electronic music. My personal favorite exhibition though was **Hiba K's** *Do you remember what you are burning?*

Moving on to some more gallery spaces in town I went to the **Foundry** close to the Dubai Mall to see not only **Harif Guzman**'s show but also **Adil Aubekero**, a Russian artist curated by my friend Dina Baitassova.

As you see aside from the regular tourist attractions, the buzz and hype of being able to eat at a restaurant again, Dubai truly is a place that not only is vibrant and energetic but is dedicating a lot of its energy into promoting not only local but international culture to their audiences. I can't wait for next year's edition.

Text and images: Kamior Maleki



Artist Abdellader Benchamma, presented by Galerie Templon, during a dinner with Kamior Maleki



Curator and former Artistic Director at Contemporary Istanbul Anissa Touati with Kamior Maleki

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Artist Nabil Anani, presented by Zawyeh Gallery at Al Serkal Avenue

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