

NEWS & REVIEWS

DESIGN CALENDAR



Best Of Art Dubai 2022

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In its 15th edition, **Art Dubai** < <https://www.artdubai.ae/> > this year had seamlessly integrated digital and real-life at the fair. This could be given their decision to go virtual in 2020 to host the fair, or perhaps an example of the art world's adaptiveness. This year, they embraced the idea that art today is also impacted by digital spaces. Their annual transdisciplinary summit, the Global Art Forum titled 'This is the Picture,' examined the idea that "online is no longer secondary to offline." In its place, they asked "are we now extensions of our screens?" Divided into four broad themes, each gallery at the fair spotlighted both local and global art by emerging, young artists and galleries from under-represented art capitals alongside established names. The four themes were Art Dubai Contemporary, Art Dubai Modern, Residents, and (added in 2019) Bawwaba. Here's what caught our attention at the fair –

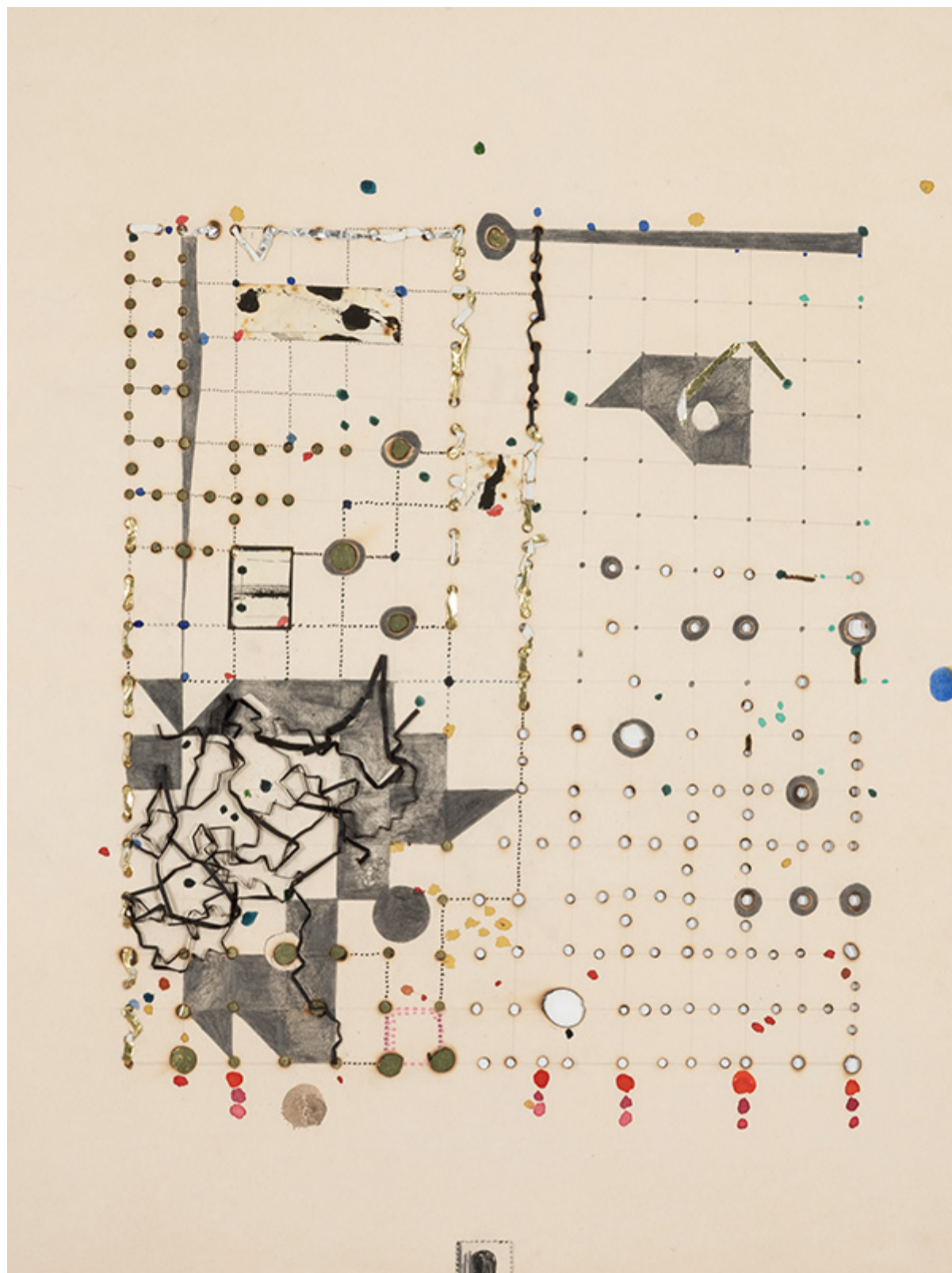


'Spy vs Spy' by Raghava KK (2022), Photo courtesy [Volte Art Projects < https://www.designpataki.com/must-visit-galleries-at-alserkal-avenue-dubai/>](https://www.designpataki.com/must-visit-galleries-at-alserkal-avenue-dubai/)

Raghava KK at Volte Art Projects (Digital)

The first Indian artist to launch an NFT at Sotheby's in partnership with Burning Man, Raghava KK is an artist and storyteller who works across mediums ranging from painting to performance. The subject of his work is timely and includes AI, neuro-feedback biohacking, video games, and cryptocurrencies-- the whole gamut. At the Volte Art Projects Gallery in Alserkal Avenue, KK is showing an exhibit titled 'The Guernica Project' that runs until April 16. It includes a painting measuring 3.5 x 8 meters long that is a phygital project which bridges the digital and physical through an interactive experience. It includes paintings, digital prints, and a large selection of NFTs that narrate Indian history through memes and cartoons based on the artist's research and lived experiences.

At the fair, you can see a series of his works titled 'Power Fluff Toys,' a selection of NFTs/3D phygital hologram sculptures that have a tinge of politics and a lot of humour. Take for instance his piece titled 'Spy vs Spy' that shows a body with two heads- one of Russian President Vladimir Putin with horns on his head and the other of former American President Donald Trump with a crown on his head. Bedazzled with small icon-sized dolls of the Powerpuff girls, it's impossible not to be amused by it.



'Stitched Cloth or a Thousand Stories,' (2020) by Mona Rai. Photo courtesy [Nature Morte](http://naturemorte.com/artists/monarai/)

Mona Rai at Nature Morte (Bawwaba)

An abstractionist from New Delhi, Mona Rai's work investigates ways to express various materials like metallic leaves, fabrics, glitter, sand, and ash on paper and in her paintings. Her process that oscillates between craft and ritual is long and works to bring out the distinct qualities of each of these materials. On display at the fair is a set of nine works that Rai made in 2021. She takes inspiration from her environment, the cosmic mystery of open space, light, and time.



'Kaal' Triptych (2010) by Mona Rai. Photo courtesy Nature Morte

Take for instance her three-panel work on canvas titled 'Kaal,' which deals with the subject of emotions and introspection. Using brocade fabrics, mirrors, metallic foils, strings, and screws, Rai takes viewers on a meditative adventure. This "painting" is also a reference to various textile traditions of India. Through each exploration, she uses the material to create a language within her works. Another work that stands out is one titled 'Stitched Cloth or a Thousand Stories,' made of mixed media on Fabriano paper. At first glance, it appears to be a collection of odds and ends on paper that resembles perhaps a circuit board or a game of 'dots and dashes' played with tactile materials. The work takes viewers in many directions and in this way Rai tells viewers a thousand stories in a language of her own.



'Neon polar bears' by Paola Pivi at Perrotin Gallery. Photo courtesy Design Pataki

Paola Pivi's Neon Bear at Perrotin Gallery < <https://www.designpataki.com/daniel-arsham-on-his-latest-collaboration-with-ikea-democratizing-art-and-taking-inspiration-from-popular-culture/> >

(Contemporary)

Italian artist Paola Pivi works with sculpture, video, photography, performance, and installation. Her series of life-sized neon polar bears made using urethane foam and embellished feathers with witty titles. Using animals as her protagonist, she adds to them human mannerisms like practising yoga, hanging from trapezes, or simply frolicking like children. Her work creates a feeling of wonder and curiosity in visitors because the bears are an easy gateway to deeper meditations on the entrapments of animals, the state of polar bears in the north pole, or simply taxidermied animals in natural history museums. Without becoming prescriptive, Pivi's work reinvents the way we perceive the world around us.



'Shadows Under My Sky,' (2022) print and woodblock by Soghra Khurasani at the TARQ booth, Photo courtesy [TARQ < https://www.tarq.in/>](https://www.tarq.in/)

Soghra Khurasani at TARQ and Ranbir Kaleka at Vadehra Art Gallery (Bawwaba)

A printmaker who explores themes of identity and unity through the landscape in her new series, 'Shadows Under My Sky,' [Soghra Khurasani < https://www.tarq.in/artists/49-soghra-khurasani/biography/>](https://www.tarq.in/artists/49-soghra-khurasani/biography/)'s works are based on observations from her studio in Baroda, India. Using nature as a grounding framework, Khurasani's works in these series are largely red, black, and orange woodcut prints and etchings.



'Not Anonymous, Waking to the Obscure, Fear of a New Dawn' by Ranbir Kaleka (2017-2019), Photo courtesy [Vadehra Art Gallery < https://www.vadehraart.com/>](https://www.vadehraart.com/)

A multi-media artist, for 'Not Anonymous-Waking to the Obscure Fear of a New Dawn,' **Ranbir Kaleka** <<https://rkaleka.com/>> works with animated two-dimensional canvases and experimental film narrative sequences. In this particular work, he uses a single-channel projection on 6 panels alongside a painted panel to show a 9 min 18-second film on the subject of climate change, political unrest, and economic inequality. An austere work of art, this body of work reframes globalized pictures to create a sensory overload of disparate but interconnected experiences.

Refik Anadol at Turkish Gallery Pilevneli (Digital)

A media artist, **Anadol** <<https://refikanadol.com/>> started creating sculptures and architectural data. Over time, his works address challenges and possibilities that computing has imposed on humanity. He is interested in exploring how our perception of time has changed radically since machines began to dominate our everyday lives through pieces known as data paintings. His works engage viewers through aesthetic and intensive research-based processes.

Take for instance his piece titled 'Melting Memories,' a four-minute AI data painting that contains augmented data and light projections made using data from EEGs (electroencephalogram) that measure changes in brain wave activity over time. Through this work, visitors can experience an aesthetic visual interpretation of motor movements inside of a human brain. Another one titled 'Symphony Dreams' is based on the Philadelphia Orchestra's virtual live performance in Oct 2020. This 16-minute data AI data painting uses a series of art history images of European architecture from the Renaissance period to self-generate pigments, shapes, and patterns in response to Beethoven's 7th Symphony piece.

Martha Fiennes's film Yugen

A film director, writer, and producer born in England, Martha Fiennes is best known for her feature film 'Onegin' (1999). However, since 2011 she has moved into generative computer technology projects that are expanding the concept of film as an artistic experience and the tech used to develop it as a medium. In this way she is changing the limitations of a motion picture and merging audiences of art and film. 'Yugen' (2018) starring Salma Hayek is a non-narrative short film that dives into a "mystical underworld that allowed the Frida star to unleash her inner performance artist." The title comes from the Japanese word denoting an appreciation of beauty and art. Through coding and CGI, Yugen does just that. Given her experience in motion pictures, there is a strong narrative in the film along with hypnotic music and a sound score written by her composer (and sibling) Magnus Fiennes. Along with the film, Fiennes is also minting a select number of 'Yugen' NFTs that will be dropped in collaboration with Art Dubai.