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ARTAFRICA

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10 Artists to Watch at Art Dubai 2022

ART FAIR 8 March 2022



Art Dubai is the Middle East's leading international art fair, taking place from the 11th until the 13th of March 2022

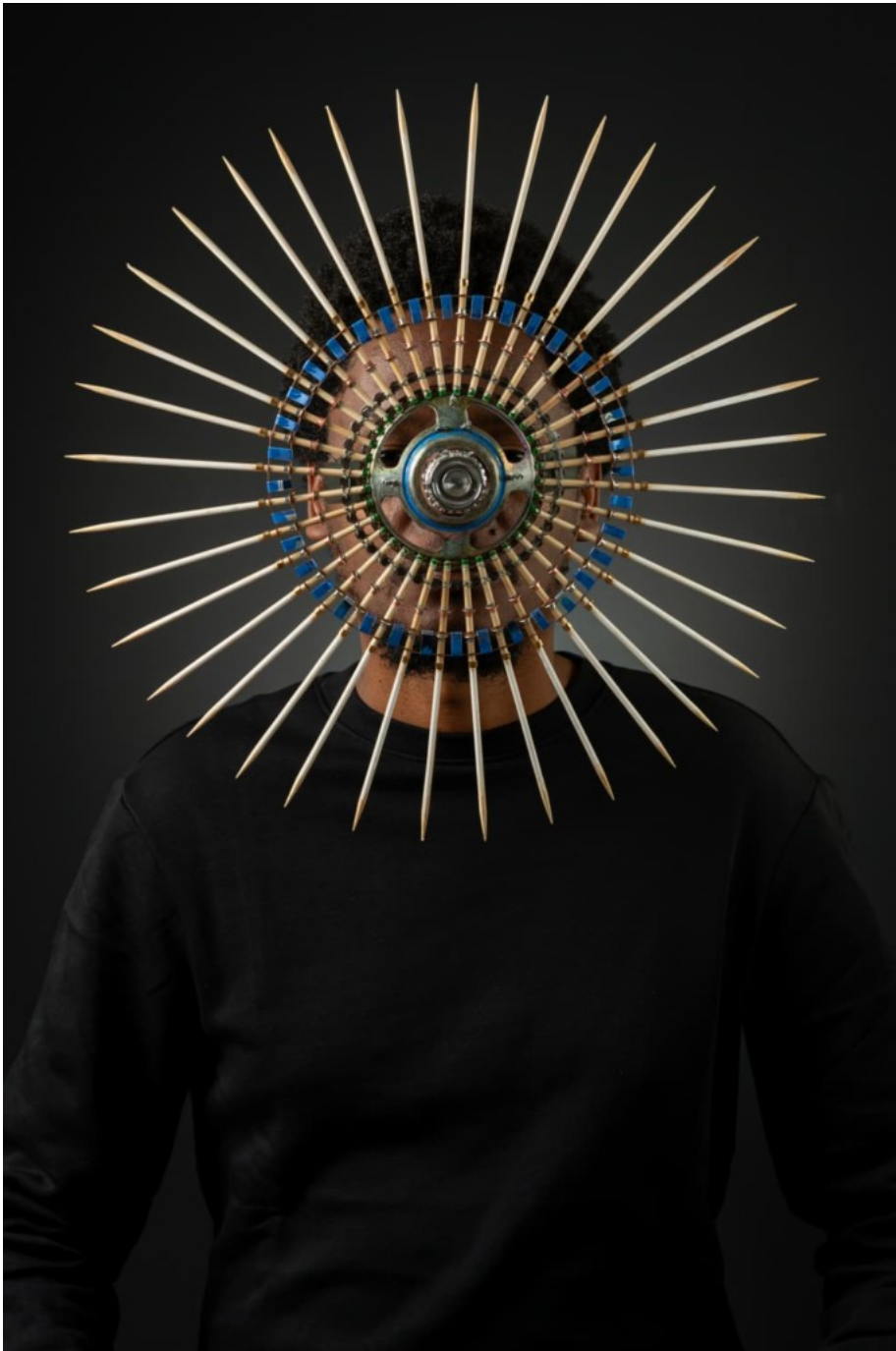
Over the past 15 years, Art Dubai has cemented its role in being a major catalyst in the local, regional and international conversations on art from the Middle East and surrounding region (MENASA – Middle East, North Africa & South Asia), and putting art from these territories onto the global map.

As one of the world's most international art fairs, Art Dubai has further expanded its commitment to cultivating a culture of discovery, offering exciting new global perspectives and broadening conversations about art beyond traditional western-led geographical scopes and narratives. The fair drives meaningful engagement with the rich cultural heritage and contemporary art practices of the region and extending to territories across Southeast and Central Asia, the African continent, and Latin America through presentations across its gallery sections.

In its role as talent incubator, Art Dubai has been the launch pad and development platform of the successful careers of artists, curators and art professionals, and continues to celebrate art excellence through its extended fair programming and initiatives. Art Dubai also works closely with its partners in producing innovative art programming and supporting the cultural community.

Art Dubai is part of a vibrant and dynamic local art ecology, and operates in close collaboration with institutions that are the heartbeat of artistic production in the UAE, such as the Jameel Arts Centre, Ishara Art Foundation, Sharjah Art Foundation, Maraya Art Centre, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Salama Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, Tashkeel, NYUAD Art Gallery and Alserkal Avenue among others.

Cyrus Kabiru (Kenya) presented by AKKA Project



Cyrus Kabiru, *Wearing European Masks*, 2021. AKKA Project. Fine Art Archival Print on FineArtPaper 310grs, 100% cotton rag paper, 70 x 70cm. Courtesy of the artist & AKKA Project.

Cyrus Kabiru was born in Nairobi, Kenya, where he currently lives and works. His intricate sculptural works push the boundaries of conventional craftsmanship, sculpture, photography, design and fashion. Kabiru makes reference to both his home in Kenya and to international countries and cities that he travels to. Kabiru's practice, which has changed in recent years, includes large scale sculptures, installation and documentary films. He is best known for his collection of eyewear, C-Stunners and his self-portrait photographs which capture him wearing his creations. Kabiru's work deals with imagination of the future and transformation of modernisation.

For more information, please visit [AKKA Project](#).

Eniwaye Oluwaseyi (Nigeria) presented by Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery



Eniwaye Oluwaseyi, *We moved with the tide*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100cm. Courtesy of the artsit & Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery.

Eniwaye Oluwaseyi's paintings portray Black subjects in vibrant settings so that they embody the term "person of colour," as he has explained. Inspired by Kerry James Marshall, Oluwaseyi depicts friends with skin tones rendered in insistently dark black hues. He began painting in 2015 while studying bioengineering in university, learning to create charcoal and graphite portraits by watching YouTube tutorials. Oluwaseyi paints individuals from African communities – many from his home state in Nigeria – often setting them against monochrome backgrounds or in interior spaces. His striking portraits respond to power struggles across the continent, from the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria to the persecution of Albino people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

For more information, please visit [Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery](#).

Mustapha Akrim (Morocco) presented by Comptoir des Mines Galerie

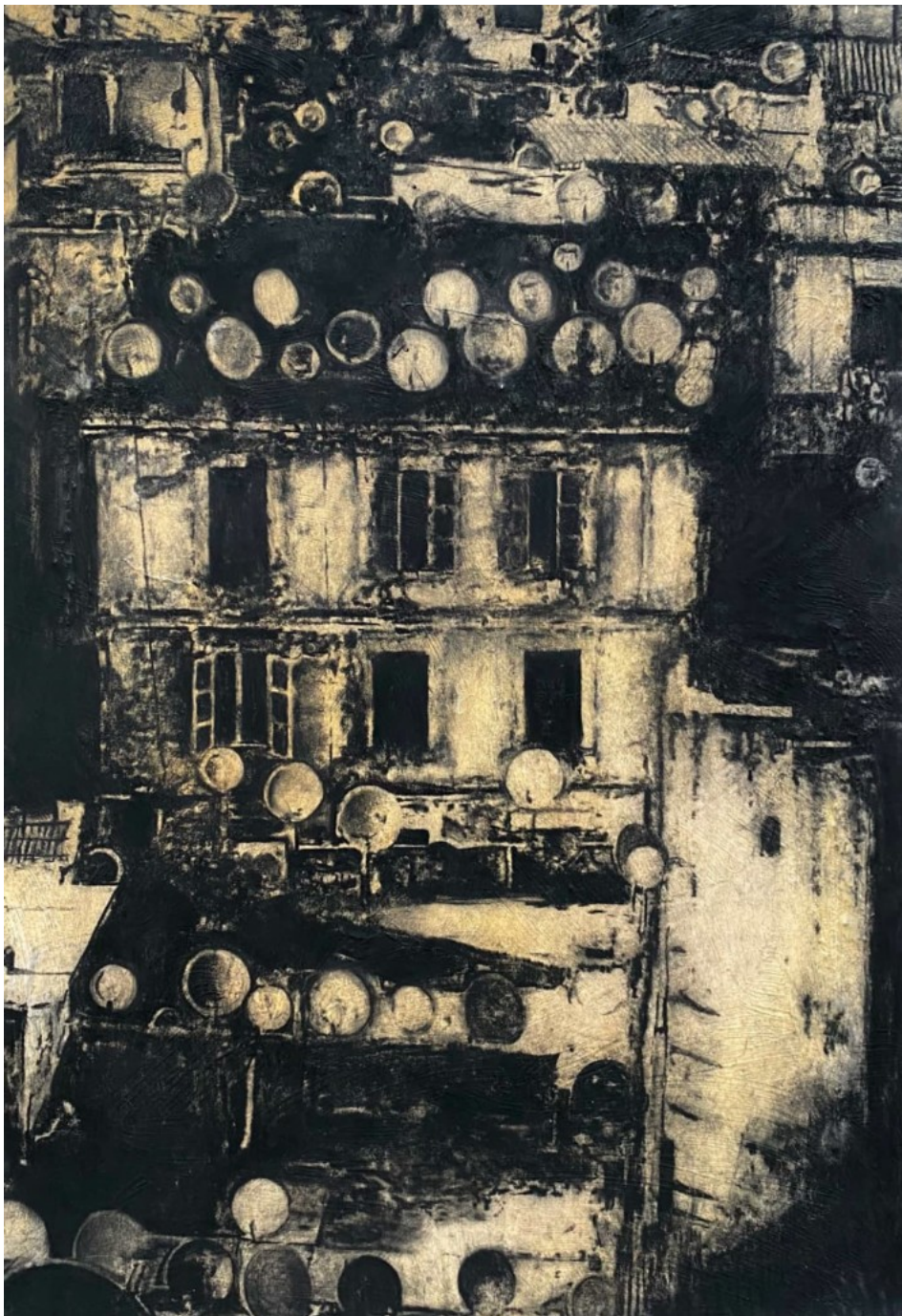


Mustapha Akrim, *Cent dirhams*, 2020. Mixed media on canvas, 120 x 244cm. Courtesy of the artist & Comptoir des Mines Galerie

Mustapha Akrim's installations question the nature of work and the difference between construction and creating art in light of society's state of constant change. He graduated from the Institut National des Beaux-Arts de Tétouan in 2008. He showed at L'appartement 22 and at the 3rd Biennale of Marrakech at Palais Bahia, and remarked in it as his first exhibition in a museum in Morocco. Akrim has participated in workshops in Namibia, Jordan, France, and Morocco, and has also been in residence at L'appartement 22 in Rabat. He is part of a generation of artists that are developing a new language with which to redefine the basis of expression in the visual arts in Morocco. With a nuanced understanding of history and the dynamics of power, this generation searches for a new freedom in its break from the aesthetics developed in the immediate post-colonial period and after.

For more information, please visit [Comptoir des Mines](#).

Nasreddine Bennacer (Algeria) presented by Rhizome



Nasreddine Bennacer, *EL BAHDJA*, 2022. Pastel and ink on Japan paper mounted on canvas with reliefs, 210 x 140cm.
Courtesy of the artist & Rhizome.

Nasreddine Bennacer, born in Algeria, has been living and working in Paris for over 20 years. The artist tackles questions on the evolution of links between civilisations and cultures. He also looks deeply at the ambiguity that exists in human relationships and interaction. This exploration focuses on the forms of manipulation and exploitation of conflicts, either for the individual or at a more global scale: Is the aggressor always the one demonstrating power or influence, or do either political and economic forces interfere through sentiment and the intellect, creating tensions between an ideology and its realisation? Nasreddine Bennacer experiments with and mixes different techniques and media: ranging from drawing to sculpture, painting on plexiglas to installations, depending on which medium is best attuned to his thinking. The impact of his work relies on observations delivered in an instinctive and trenchant style. His work derives from complex and disarming situations, sometimes tinged with violence. Behind a scrupulous and often poetic aesthetic, the artist denounces a world increasingly hostage to manipulation and rationalisation.

For more information, please visit [Rhizome](#).

Tonia Nneji (Nigeria) presented by Rele Gallery



Tonia Nneji, *A Bottle for my trouble*, 2022. Acrylic and oil on canvas, 48 x 54 inches. Courtesy of the artist & Rele Gallery.

Born in Imo State, Nigeria, artist Tonia Nneji comes from a long line of traditional carvers and masquerade carriers. Following the family tradition of artistry, she graduated with a B.A (Hons) in Visual Arts from the University of Lagos, Nigeria in 2016. Known for her use of bold colours and intricate patterns, Nneji's work explores the relationship between trauma and the female body. Drawing from her experience in dealing with personal health issues, she confronts a culture of suppression and silence on issues around women's physical and mental health, body autonomy and sexual harassment in a bid to create safe spaces where conversations could be held freely. Her recent paintings show women's bodies in various stages of movement draped with colourful, intricately detailed swathes of print fabric. This preoccupation with body forms and textile material navigates cultural and social meanings of fabric in contemporary African societies while exploring the protective qualities of clothing. She notes, "I use drapery as a tool of hiding, to represent protection, a safe place".

For more information, please visit [Rele Gallery](#).

Kiluanji Kia Henda (Angola) presented by Jahmek Contemporary Art



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *A City Called Mirage I (Maleha Desert)*, 2014-2022. Inkjet print on cotton paper, Single Edition + 1AP, 160 x 94,5cm. Courtesy of the artist & Jahmek Contemporary Art.

Kiluanji Kia Henda, born in Angola, is a self-taught artist who has a deep stepping stone into the realm of art growing up in a family of photography enthusiasts. His conceptual avant-garde was sharpened by diving into music, avant-garde theater and collaboration with a collective of emerging artists in the Luanda art scene. In his practice, he uses art as a method of transmitting and constructing history. More than putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle of different historical episodes, Kia Henda explores photography, video, performance, installation and the object-sculpture to materialise fictional narratives and displace facts to different temporalities and quarrels. Using humour and irony, he interferes with themes such as identity, politics, perceptions of postcolonial and modernism in Africa. Working in perverted complicity with the historical legacy, Kia Henda sees the process of appropriation and manipulation of public spaces and structures and as different representations that make collective memory, as a relevant complexion of her aesthetic construction.

For more information, please visit [Jahmek Contemporary Art](#).

Omar Ba (Senegal) presented by **TEMPLON**

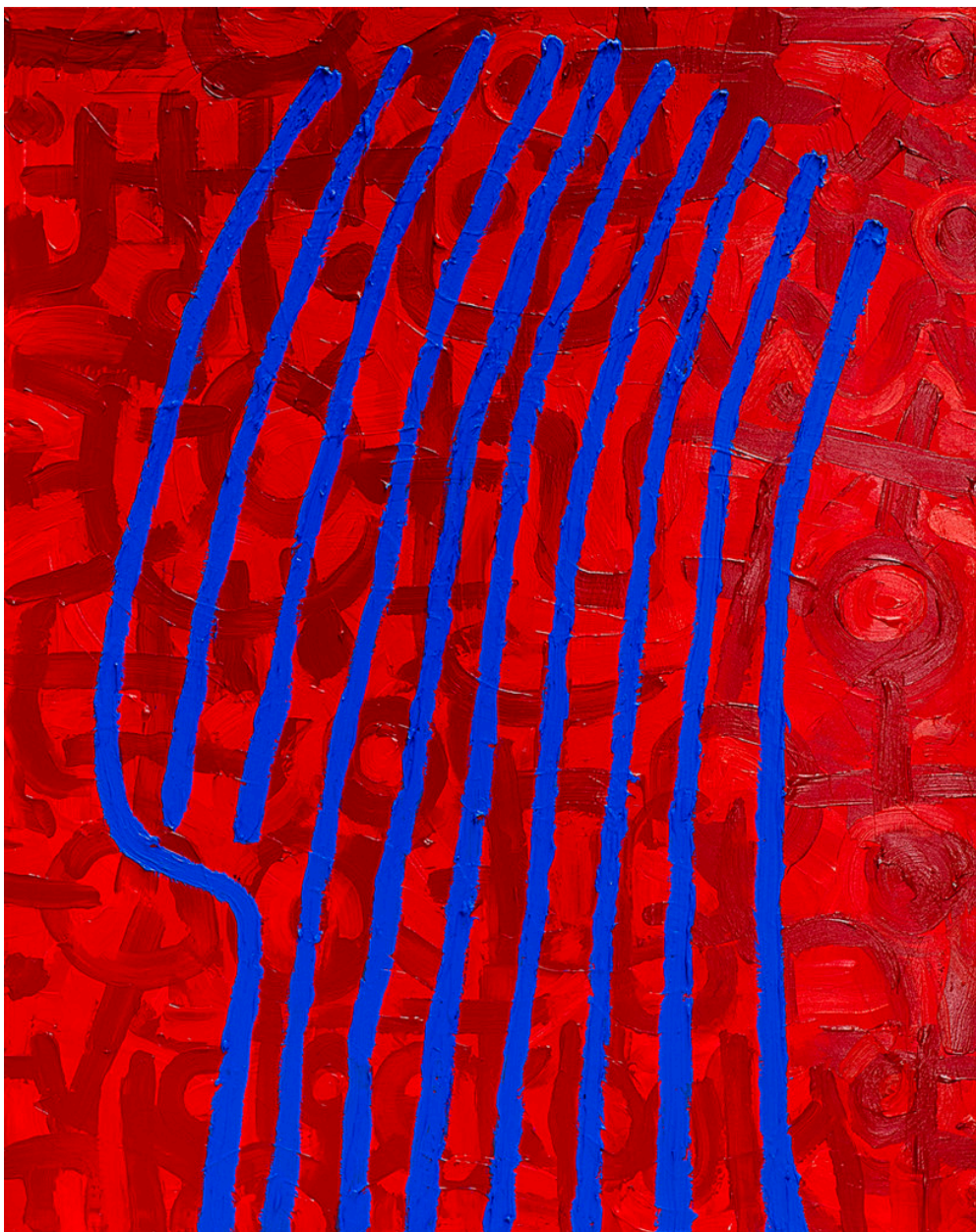


Omar Ba, *Between yesterday and today 1*, 2017. Drawing on newspaper, 43 x 29cm. Courtesy of the artist & TEMPLON.

Born in 1977 in Senegal, Omar Ba lives and works in Dakar and New York. His paintings, produced using a variety of techniques and materials, represent political and social motifs open to multiple interpretations. His artistic vocabulary raises historical and timeless questions while formulating a wholly contemporary artistic message. Omar Ba's iconography features personal metaphors, ancestral references and hybrid figures. This combination of heterogeneous elements illustrates his desire to abolish boundaries and categories. His work, with its enigmatic nature and poetic intensity, rejects all forms of didactic narrative, seeking instead to express his subconscious and his symbolic interpretation of the real.

For more information, please visit [TEMPLON](#).

Victor Ekpuk (Nigeria) presented TAFETA



Victor Ekpuk, *Royals and Goddesses, series no.4*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 152 x 121cm. Courtesy of the artist & TAFETA.

Victor Ekpuk is an internationally-renowned Nigerian-American artist based in Washington, D.C. His paintings, drawings, and sculptures reimagine the ancient Nigerian communication system, Nsibidi, to explore a diverse spectrum of meaning addressing historical narratives, the contemporary African diaspora, and humanity's connection to the sacred. In recent years, Ekpuk has added large-scale murals, installations, and public art projects to his portfolio.

For more information, please visit [TAFETA](#).

Pascale Marthine Tayou (Cameroon) presented by GALLERIA CONTINUA



Pascale Marthine Tayou, *Dirty Mirror SENZA TITOLO (E)*, 2013. Painting under glass, 120 x 248 x 5cm. Courtesy of the artist & GALLERIA CONTINUA.

Pascale Marthine Tayou was born in Yaoundé (Cameroon) in 1967. He began his career as an artist in the 1990s, when he changed his name, taking a double name in the female form: Pascal(e) Marthin(e). Exhibitions in Cameroon were soon followed by shows in Germany, France and Belgium, the country where he currently lives. His work is deliberately mobile, elusive of pre-established schema, heterogeneous. It is always closely linked to the idea of travel and of coming into contact with what is other to self, and is so spontaneous that it almost seems casual. The objects, sculptures, installations, drawings and videos produced by Tayou have a recurrent feature in common: they dwell upon an individual moving through the world and exploring the issue of the global village.

For more information, please visit [GALLERIA CONTINUA](#).

Mohamed Melehi (Morocco) presented by Dar a'art



Mohamed Melehi, *Composition*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 160cm. Courtesy of Dar d'art.

The leader of Moroccan modern art and cosmopolitan artist Mohamed Melehi was born in Assilah, Morocco in 1936. The work of Mohamed Melehi has helped to shape the aesthetic of postcolonial and pan-Arab artists' networks through his geometrical experiments and the cultural revolution operated by the Casablanca School, as well as his work as a photographer, editor, designer, graphic designer, and muralist.

Mohamed Melehi, the precursor of a new form of painting, began his artistic path at a very young age. He was only 19 when he entered Seville's Academy of Fine Arts in 1955. He would transfer to Madrid the following year. In 1958, when the artist left Spain for Italy, he mounted his first individual show at the American Legation in Tangier. He showed radically abstract constructions, using stitched and printed burlap bags as supports, or woven woollens traditional used to make djellabas. He played with the expressive values of these materials and their symbolic resonance with the local visual culture. With the approach, audacious at that time, Melehi confirmed his emancipation from academism and his affiliation with informal art, the dominant pictorial style of post-war Europe. This exhibition demonstrated a radical position by which the artist fully embraced his own modernity, in a newly-independent Morocco. It also heralded the artistic vision that would guide Melehi in all of his works, marked by his pursuit of a pictorial modernity in interaction with his culture and speaking in a universal aesthetic language.

For more information, please visit [Dar d'art](#).

For tickets please follow this [link](#). For more information, please visit [Art Dubai](#).

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