



Gallery Elena Shchukina in London



Epicurian Magazine
'Fluid Thoughts'



Erna Goudbeek
'Ships of the Desert'

ISLAND ART GOES GLOBAL

In a bid to put this country's art scene on the map, ArtBahrain debuts this month with an exciting line-up of international artists and galleries. We speak to three participants in the event...

For its first ever year, ArtBahrain is going big. It's being held in a grand marquis at the prestigious Bahrain Bay and the organisers are expecting to host up to 200 international art collectors, 2,000 VIP clients and approximately 10,000 visitors. Following hot on the heels of 2014's 'Our Year of Art', and after Manama's title of Arab Capital of Tourism in 2013, this art fair aims to truly put Bahrain on the global art map. Now is the time for art-enthusiasts and budding artists alike to come out and experience the country's newest creative event. We speak to an organiser, gallery owner and artist, about what we can all expect at this dazzling new fair.

ARTBAHRAIN CO-FOUNDER KANEKA SUBBERWAL

It was back in 2007 that Kaneka Subberwal founded Art Select, a local initiative that aims to encourage and advise people and companies on art as an investment by

showcasing work from some of the most exciting artists from across South Asia and the Middle East. She now manages a portfolio of art investors, and has facilitated more than 50 exhibitions, and even expanded their services to include Art Select UK. We speak to Kaneka just as she prepares to launch the debut edition of ArtBahrain.

What can Bahrain's art enthusiasts expect from ArtBahrain?

There is much to be enthusiastic about at ArtBahrain, what with a complete immersion into global and local art on the anvil. It will be a matter of great pride to see the work of globally recognised artists and galleries being represented. It will be as if the art world is coming to Manama!

What do you ultimately hope to achieve with the fair?

The idea is to celebrate art from the

international arena and give a boost to the Bahraini art scene. Considering that Bahrain is such a vibrant and culturally inclined country, I want ArtBahrain to act as a growth facilitator for its under-represented artists. The secondary aim is to amplify the image of Bahrain as the arts capital of the Middle East.



Kaneka Subberwal

How do you aim to compete with other notable art fairs in the region such as Art Dubai?

I am looking at positioning ArtBahrain as the new and fresh perspective on the global art scene. Our aim is not to compete with other fairs, but to complement them. I believe every art fair in the Middle East has the best intentions of trying to promote our vibrant art scene, which is something I look to support. Art Dubai is quite simply an outstanding art fair and set the standard for projects in the region.



Erna Goudbeek
'Horse racing in Bahrain'



Jirapat Tatsanasomboon
'Red brushstroke'

What is your opinion on Bahrain's current arts scene?

I feel the Bahraini art scene is currently under-appreciated on a global scale. We are blessed with such talented artists whose reputations are great nationally and regionally, but there is immense scope for them to be projected globally. There is no doubt our artists are world-class and Middle Eastern art is an established sector known for its rich technicality and vibrancy. Being inclusive of global arts and intertwining them with the illustrious Bahraini scene will help promote our country's creative industry successfully.

What do you love about art?

Everything. I have great admiration of the process of creating art, the thought and emotion of it, what it invokes in me, how I respond to particular works. I have great respect for the intellectual freedom of the artists and it is my endeavour to position their works to the best of my ability.

What is your advice to new artists?

I would advise them to network within the industry as much as possible. In order to sell your art you would usually need to be featured with art galleries and the art world is a tight-knit group, so reputation is the key.

**GALLERY OWNER
ELENA SHCHUKINA**

Gallery Elena Shchukina enjoys an enviable base in Mayfair in London, UK. Led by Elena herself, the gallery brings emerging contemporary artists from across the globe, and from a range of different disciplines, to England's capital. They curate modern art exhibitions, lecture programmes, as well as an art consultancy service. Most importantly, two aspects inform Elena Shchukina

exhibitions – introducing artists who have mastered a skill or talent not yet shown in the UK; and a complex use of colour which is emotionally engaging.

In your experience, how does the European art landscape differ to the Middle East's?

There is a clichéd view of Middle Eastern art as being mainly 'white and gold and ornamental', which isn't correct. There is a shared history between the two art cultures – written histories of European art often begin with the art of the ancient Middle East. Artists from Europe, as much as the Middle East, are influenced by their culture and the cultures they experience. An artist from Lebanon has a very different heritage to an artist from Egypt, and an artist working in London or Paris will have very different influences as well.

What are you expecting to gain from participating in ArtBahrain?

I look forward to discovering new up-and-coming artists. It's exciting to be a part of something so new and full of promise. There is a Middle Eastern arts renaissance at the moment, meaning it's a fresh and vibrant scene to be involved in.

What will you be showcasing at the event?

At Gallery Elena Shchukina we are dedicated to promoting contemporary emerging artists, so to promote our artists' works to completely new audiences in the Middle East will be great. We will exhibit works by Miguel Kohler-Jan, Onyeka Ibe, Gianfranco Meggiato,

Paul Wright, Anyya Sand and Allan Forsyth. This is an incredibly diverse group of artists (they are Franco-Uruguayan, Nigerian, Italian, English, Kazakhstani and Scottish, respectively).

What constitutes a great work of art?

Art has to carry a specific ideology, as well as being attractive. There has to be an advanced level of technicality to the piece – knowing that an artist has poured their efforts into a piece makes you connect with it more.

To me, the definition of great art is a piece that is multi-lingual and breaks all barriers between cultures. The piece should be open for interpretation from the viewers, as well as depict the artist's voice and ideas.

Today, what separates an average artist from a successful one?

In terms of an artist that sells well, I believe the role of galleries play a key part in artist recognition and marketing. Gallery support is essential for an artist's career, as it gives the artist a platform for growth and development through curated exhibitions.

What exciting new trends are you seeing across the art markets at the moment?

We are seeing a growing number of young collectors who are looking to purchase their first piece or add to their collection. People seem to be veering away from the household contemporary names and are now looking to explore new artists whose works tell a story. It is these younger collectors who start a dialogue with the up-and-coming artists, which leads to their continued success.





Allan Forsyth 'Tranquilizer'

PHOTOGRAPHER ALLAN FORSYTH

Scottish photographer Allan Forsyth is unique in the fact that he doesn't always like using a camera. The skills he has developed and demonstrates through his works are unusual – he uses old and new techniques such as analogue and digital exposures, computer generated imagery, photograms and collages, and has even moved into animation with moving 'lenticular' portraits. His works are inspired by the drama of nature – perhaps thanks to his being born in the Highlands of Scotland – and his images of animals and flowers tend to depict a surreal quality. He is coming to Bahrain with Gallery Elena Shchukina and art lovers can bank on seeing something never-seen-before in Bahrain. We find out more...

'Lenticular'

The technology of lenticular printing is used to give the illusion of depth or to make images look as though they're changing or moving when it's viewed from different angles.

What made you pursue a career in the arts in the first place?

I was working full time and nobody at work knew I was doing it. I was actively producing works and always had the sense that I needed to do something bigger. I saved some money and I took a stand at an art fair in London. It was a big financial risk for me at that point, just to get the artworks on the wall. The show went well and I was taken on by art agents and a gallery. I handed in my notice on Monday morning to dedicate my time to my art career.

What influences you most on a daily basis as an artist?

The garden I created. It's a bit of a muse for my floral and photogram works.

Can you tell us more about the different processes you use in your work?

I use a number of different mediums and processes ranging from 3D lenticular

work to photograms. The truth is every technique is very different. The abstracts are panoramic images. I use the image as a pallet of colours which I then render and manipulate into something else, a bit like digital purity. In contrast, the analogue photograms are made without cameras and with only one flash of light onto light-sensitive paper to capture the negative image. The lenticulars are shot in different ways, depending on if the piece is going to be a moving or 3D work. I begin by capturing single frames for the motion works – either through rapid fire or time lapse techniques – then all the frames shot have to be sequenced to give the image the most natural look.

Some of your pieces capture a moment in time, such as the butterfly landing on a flower in 'Pull Through'. How hard was this to achieve?

All the works are studio based so construction of 'Pull Through' was created in smaller set-up sections then merged together. I begin with a very loose idea for the picture at the start and then during the process the concept grows quite organically. It may be surprising but since most of my subjects are taxidermy, it is actually making the picture look alive that is the hard part.

What are you bringing to Bahrain?

I will be exhibiting a 200x91 centimetre abstract 'Hejira' and some of my 3D and motion lenticulars from my 'Pride & Glory' series, featuring owls, buzzards and a moving butterfly.

What do you want viewers of the works to take away with them?

I would hope that students of photography and art who come to see the show would leave with the inspiration to experiment with different techniques. I would also like the surreal perspective of my work to strike a chord with people and help them look at nature with fresh eyes.

Galleries to see

From Bahrain

Bahrain Arts Society
Busaad Art Gallery
Hend Gallery
Amina Gallery
Artdivano

Of the world

A2Z Gallery, France
GPL Contemporary, Austria
Gallery One – Samar Martha, Palestine
Diani Beach Art Gallery, Kenya
Samer Kozah Gallery, Syria
Salwa Zeidan Gallery, UAE
El Marsa Gallery, Tunisia
Gallery Elena Shchukina, UK
Ward Gallery, Egypt
Trade Art Gallery, Italy
Albemarle, UK
Dubai Art Fans, UAE
Arabian Collections, Saudi Arabia
Thavibu Gallery, Thailand
Artspace Hamra, Lebanon

Artists to see

From Bahrain

Marwa bint Rashid Al Khalifa
Lulwa Al Khalifa
Jamal Abdul Rahim
Mariam Fakhro
Uzma Dadabhai
Fuad Al Palmah
Fayeeeka Al Hasan

Of the world

Anna Dudchenko and Alia Farsi, Oman
Radhika Hamlai, Oman
Ugo Nespolo, Italy
Mattar bin Lahej, UAE
Satish Gupta, India
Sacha Jafri, UK
Janet Rady, UK
Erna Goudbeek, UK
Christine Alison, UK
Nasr Warour, UAE
Jaideep Mehrotra, India
Sujata Bajaj, France
Binoy Vargheese, India

The event in brief

What? Plenty of activity including exhibitions, workshops, forums, collecting and networking opportunities.

Where? In a 50-metre grand marquis at Bahrain Bay featuring artists' and galleries' pavilions, a lifestyle section, and a lounge.

When? October 13-16, 11am-7pm.

www.art-bahrain.com.