

Firetti Contemporary pays tribute to UAE with public art in Dubai



Pillar of Fortitude by Helidon Xhixha.

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On the occasion of the UAE 50th National Day on December 2, Firetti Contemporary, a gallery which represents both established and emerging artists from all over the world, installed a monumental sculpture at DIFC, Dubai. Pillar of Fortitude by Albanian born artist Helidon Xhixha, is dedicated to the celebration marking the nation's milestone Golden Jubilee.

The sculpture measures seven metres in height, alluding to the numeric 7, representing the unity of seven Emirates of the UAE. The work stands tall and soars upwards into the sky, indicating it aims for a prosperous and limitless future. As His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, said: "Year of the 50th represents a historic defining moment in our journey that started immediately after the declaration of the UAE's union in 1971.

“It’s an acknowledgement of the resolute will and strong determination our Founding Fathers had while building up their nation.” This is the third monumental installation across the city by the gallery as on December 13, the official private inaugural ceremony of IMPRINT took place, with the support of Dr Saeed Mubarak bin Kharbash, CEO of Arts and Literature at Dubai Culture and Art Authority (Dubai Culture). IMPRINT: Art for Public Spaces features the placement of two monumental sculptures standing as a manifesto, supporting the awareness of global warming and the melting of polar glaciers.



Earth by Helidon Xhixha.

The continuance of IMPRINT in Jumeirah Golf Estates features the installation of two monumental sculptures titled ICEBERG and EARTH, also by Xhixha, within the JGE community, embracing the message behind IMPRINT. The collaboration also aligns with the core values of Expo 2020 — Connecting Minds and Creating the Future through sustainability, mobility, and opportunity. The installations are in line with Dubai Culture’s sectoral pillar to attract creative individuals from around the world across the arts and culture sector, to showcase their work and to position the Emirate as a coveted destination of choice by arts and culture enthusiasts.

The aim is to make Dubai a beacon of cultural diversity for international talent, and an epicentre for creativity and cultural dialogue. Dr Saeed Mubarak bin Kharbash said: “Dubai Culture believes in cross-cultural collaboration and is developing international partnerships to strengthen its global footprint and attract global talents through new initiatives that aim to develop the creative sector in Dubai and boost its contribution to the national economy under the overarching Dubai Creative Economy Strategy. “Therefore, it gives us great pride to be welcoming Helidon Xhixha, whose work has captured the imagination of the art world and will add a valuable aesthetic element to the Jumeirah Golf Estates community.” ICEBERG was first exhibited in the middle of the Venetian lagoon during the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.

The four-metre-high stainless-steel sculpture captivated audiences, garnering attention from industry professionals and media alike, as it floated through the Canal Grande and the lagoon. The reflective sculpture made a statement about global warming and the potential impact it could have on a place like Venice in the near future. The public can imagine this floating metal block as an actual small iceberg that has detached itself from an icecap and, floating astray, has arrived in the Arabian Gulf. The view may be shocking, but is aesthetically fascinating and represents an alarm bell against ecological warming. The UAE is classified among the countries with the highest vulnerability rate to the potential effects of climate change, resulting in warmer weather, fewer precipitations, and higher sea levels.

The country recognises the global responsibility it is committed to and has integrated climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. The installation supports the country's fight against this disastrous phenomenon, for the well-being of future generations. Parallel to the environmental message, EARTH provokes thoughts on the impact of climate change - a global problem that will affect every individual on each of the world's seven continents. The installation works in conjunction with ICEBERG, acting as its terrestrial counterpoint and memorialising the continued damage we inflict upon the planet. Firetti Contemporary strives to build a multidisciplinary art space with a strong identity as an international platform.

It also focuses on monumental, open-air exhibitions on an international scale, recently placing sculptures in the luxurious setting of Pertra Segreta Resort, Sardinia, Italy. Set across 1,119 hectares of lush green landscape, Jumeirah Golf Estates anchors 1,000 families and more than 2,000 homes. It currently comprises 16 communities, which overlook two of the world's finest golf courses, Earth and Fire. It also hosts the annual DP World Tour' Championship. Xhixha, currently based in Milan and Dubai, is known for his stainless steel sculptures, which is often fused with other mediums such as marble or brass. He has affirmed his position as a leading figure in the contemporary art scene, with his work going on to receive much critical success on global platforms. His monumental examples of public art seek to redefine the relationship between a sculpture and its environment

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