

Dubai gallery Firetti Contemporary to inaugurate Praxis of Change show

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Under the patronage of Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, Firetti Contemporary, Dubai, is presenting its inaugural opening show, Praxis of Change, displaying works by regional artists as well as artists exhibiting for the first time in the region (Sept. 22 – Nov. 24).

Praxis is defined as an accepted practice or custom, or an idea translated into action, or something in reality rather than something in theory.

Designed to inspire artistic appreciation and a desire to respond to environmental challenges, the goal of the exhibition is to view art through ecological glasses: How the environment is represented in images and sculptures, as well as how the role of humans on Earth is depicted.

There's a crescendo of interest in both art that is itself in connection with the environment and art that is self-consciously environmental, ultimately drawing attention to anthropogenic global warming. The dialogue between art and ecological systems surface, where the interconnection of humans and nature can be observed.

The exhibition aims in bringing individuals together outside political affiliation and dive into a world that allows empathy. In alliance with the passion and desire of artists who grapple with environmental degradation, Praxis of Change amalgamates these ideas.

The show is a manifesto stating that saving the planet is a collective effort, even as it demands individual responsibility. Wherever you are right now and whatever you have, there are roles you can play.

This is a subject which can be impacted by every single person on Earth. “We need to start changing the way we live and focus on a life which aims to help the climate fight, rather than battling against it. Praxis of Change provides a visual and perceptive insight into the realm of sustainable actions,” says the gallery.



Fatiha Zemmouri's work from the Mother Earth series.

The event is in line with the core values of Expo 2020 – Connecting Minds and Creating the Future – through sustainability, mobility and opportunity.

The exhibition showcases the works of ten artists – a number that invites a countdown to action – and challenges the viewers to implement ten initiatives towards a more sustainable way of living.

Those taking part include Charbel Samuel Aoun (Lebanon), Catherine Latson (USA), Laura Lappi (Finland), Rachel Libeskind (USA), Irvin Pascal (UK), Ghizlane Sahli (Morocco), Arjan Shehaj (Albania), Collin Sekajugo (Uganda), Eltjon Valle (Albania) and Fatiha Zemmouri (Morocco).

In his work, Aoun combines his education as an architect and his passion for nature, experimenting with different materials and elements. He creates a system that both examines and questions social and environmental realities.

Latson's work embodies curiosity, patience and close observation. It is inspired by sea anemones and the motion of a water-bound world, exploring forms that blur lines between animal and plant, realism and fantasy, sculpture and specimen. Lappi is interested in observing and examining how architecture and spatial environments influence our perceptions and affect reality; in particular, her focus is on the experience and emotional charge of different places and the fluid boundaries between reality and fiction.

Her sculptural practice explores the relationship between physical spaces, man-made structures and the human mind – the psychogeography of places.

Libeskind is a multidisciplinary artist whose research-based practice examines the construction of history and the enduring power of images.

Working across collage, installation, video and performance, the artist appropriates and recontextualises images in order to disrupt imposed boundaries – between the personal and public, ancient and contemporary, societal and cultural – revealing unexpected parallels.

From performance work to arresting sculptural work constructed from ebonised wood, through to paintings which utilise his own unique material Pascollar, Pascal's work is a direct reflection of his experiences as an artist, boxer and a man of African and Caribbean roots.

His multidisciplinary practice explores the representation of the black body, the nature of masculinity, sexuality, personal agency, the place of community and the reverberations of art history. Sahli imagines poetic, dream-like worlds where she can experiment and create bridges between her three passions – space and volume, stemming from her architecture studies; silk thread, from her involvement with embroidery and the environment, from her personal interrogations regarding durable development and the future of the planet.

Shehaj was born in Albania. At age fourteen, he travelled from Albania to Greece and finally to Italy to complete his artistic studies, attracted by the Italian Renaissance tradition.

He made the first part of that journey crossing the forests of Greece for four days on foot. The raw earth elements of branches, trees and roots have remained as a persisting symbol in his mind and work. Through his experiences on this journey, his work was born.

Utilising elements of collage, precisely defined by colour, and sweeping, energetic hand-drawn lines in his works, Sekajugo, as a fervent critic of ethnocentrism in all its forms, draws on multiple cultural sources to create images that engage the viewer simultaneously with a sense of familiarity and strangeness. Each work is a plea for tolerance, a statement against racism, violence and discrimination.

Using art as an outlet, Valle projects the importance of battling against the overexploitation of land, along with the environmental impacts of pollution.

Zemmouri leads an in-depth reflection on the notions of construction, deconstruction, regeneration and transformation. She develops an elaborate work where natural phenomena (water, fire, earth) and materials such as wood, coal and earth, hold an essential place.

At Firetti Contemporary, art and creative concepts align from the region and beyond, encouraging global engagement through creating meaningful and sustainable collections.

