



EXHIBITION

# Sharjah Biennial 15: Thinking Historically in the Present

Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates  
07 Feb 2023 - 11 Jun 2023



Mleiha, Sharjah. Photo by Ali Omran

**Conceived by the late Okwui Enwezor and curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah Biennial 15 (SB15), titled *Thinking Historically in the Present*, reflects on Enwezor's visionary work, which transformed contemporary art and established an ambitious intellectual project that has influenced the evolution of institutions and biennials around the world, including the Sharjah Biennial. Bringing together more than 150 artists from over 70 countries, SB15 will take place in 16 venues across the emirate of Sharjah.**

For Enwezor, the contemporary art exhibition provided a means to engage with history, politics and society in our global present. He envisioned the invitation to curate this edition of Sharjah Biennial as a way to reflect on and contribute to the Biennial's history and that of the overarching Foundation, and their role in addressing the need for institutional models outside of the West that support dialogue and the production and presentation of contemporary art responsive to our times.

Enwezor proposed commissioning 30 works for SB15 to celebrate Sharjah Biennial's 30-year anniversary and to activate this critical platform through the development of new productions. In line with this framework, 30 artists have been invited to embark on commissions for SB15: John Akomfrah, Kader Attia, Sammy Baloji, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Carolina Caceydo, Destiny Deacon, Manthia Diawara, Coco Fusco, Hassan Hajjaj, Mona Hatoum, Lubaina Himid, Isaac Julien, Amar Kanwar, Bouchra Khalili, Mohammed Ibrahim Mahama, Kerry James Marshall, Steve McQueen, Almagul Menlibayeva, Aline Motta, Wangechi Mutu, Philippe Parreno, Doris Salcedo, Berni Searle, Yinka Shonibare, Vivan Sundaram, Fatimah Tuggar, Hajra Waheed, Barbara Walker, Nari Ward and Carrie Mae Weems.

More than 150 artists from diverse cultures will build on Enwezor's idea of the postcolonial constellation and offer instances of critical reimagination of the

history as well as the present. The participating artists will offer unique perspectives that interconnect regions, histories and practices. A robust programme of film, music and performance, to be announced later this year, will accompany the exhibition.

### **Sharjah Biennial 15 participating artists**

Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme, Maitha Abdalla, Fathi Afifi, Hoda Afshar, John Akomfrah, Hangama Amiri, Brook Andrew, Malala Andrialavidrazana, Rushdi Anwar, Kader Attia, Au Sow Yee, Dana Awartani, Omar Badsha, Natalie Ball, Sammy Baloji, Mirna Bamieh, Pablo Bartholomew and Richard Bartholomew, Shiraz Bayjoo, Bahar Behbahani, Asma Belhamar, Rebecca Belmore, Black Grace, Diedrick Brackens, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Cao Fei, Carolina Caycedo, Ali Cherri, Wook-kyung Choi, Iftikhar Dadi and Elizabeth Dadi, Solmaz Daryani, Annalee Davis, Destiny Deacon, Manthia Diawara, Imane Djamil, Anju Dodiya, Kimathi Donkor, Heri Dono, Rehab Eldalil, Ali Eyal, Marianne Fahmy, Brenda Fajardo, Raheleh Filsoofi, Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani, Coco Fusco, Flavia Gandolfo, Theaster Gates, Gabriela Golder, Gabrielle Goliath, Yulia Grigoryants, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Hassan Hajjaj, David Hammons, Archana Hande, Fathi Hassan, Mona Hatoum, Rachid Hedli, Lubaina Himid, Laura Huertas Millán, Saodat Ismailova, Isaac Julien, Saddam Jumaily, Patricia Kaersenhout, Robyn Kahukuiwa, Reena Saini Kallat, Hanni Kamaly, Amar Kanwar, Adam Khalil and Bayley Sweitzer with Oba, Bouchra Khalili, Naiza Khan, Tania El Khoury, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Ayoung Kim, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Hiroji Kubota, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Lee Kai Chung, Faustin Linyekula, Ibrahim Mahama, Nabil El Makhroufi, Jawad Al Malhi, Waheeda Malullah, Maharani Mancanagara, mandla, Lavanya Mani, Kerry James Marshall, Moza Almatrooshi, Queenie McKenzie, Steve McQueen, Marisol Mendez, Almagul Menlibayeva, Helina Metaferia, Kimowan Metchewais, Meleanna Meyer, Joiri Minaya, Tahila Mintz, Roméo Mivekannin, Tracey Moffat, Aline Motta, Marwah AlMugait, Wangechi Mutu, Eubena Nampitjin, Dala Nasser, New Red Order, Pipo Nguyen-Duy, Mame-Diarra Niang, Shelley Niro, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, Elia Nurvista, Okwui Okpokwasili, Kambui Olujimi, Zohra Opoku, Erkan Özgen, Pak Khawateen Painting Club, Pushpakanthan Pakkiyarajah, Hyesoo Park, Philippe Parreno, Angela Ponce, Prajakta Potnis, Anita Pouchard Serra, Jasbir Puar and Dima Srouji, Monira Al Qadiri, Farah Al Qasimi, Michael Rakowitz, Umar Rashid, Wendy Red Star, Veronica Ryan, Doris Salcedo, Abdulrahim Salem, Sangeeta Sandrasegar,

Varunika Saraf, Khadija Saye, Berni Searle, Mithu Sen, Nelly Sethna, Aziza Shadenova, Smita Sharma, Nilima Sheikh, Yinka Shonibare, Felix Shumba, Semsar Siahaan, Mary Sibande, Kahurangiariki Smith, Mounira Al Solh, Inuuteq Storch, Vivan Sundaram, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Obaid Suroor, The Living and the Dead Ensemble, Hank Willis Thomas, Akeim Toussaint Buck, Fatimah Tuggar, Hajra Waheed, Barbara Walker, Wang Jianwei, Nari Ward, Carrie Mae Weems, Nil Yalter.

As another integral part of Enwezor's plans, the 2022 and 2021 iterations of March Meeting—the Foundation's annual convening of artists, curators and arts practitioners to explore critical issues in contemporary art—served as a collective prelude to the upcoming SB15. March Meeting 2021: *Unravelling the Present* examined the 30-year history of the Sharjah Biennial and the future of the biennial model while March Meeting 2022: *The Afterlives of the Postcolonial* discussed the legacies of colonialism as well as emerging issues that have impacted recent global cultural, aesthetic and artistic practices. March Meeting 2023, scheduled from 9 March to 12 March, will continue the exploration of the SB15 themes while the exhibition is on view.

SB15 is curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, with the support of the SB15 Working Group, comprised of Tarek Abou El Fetouh (independent curator); Ute Meta Bauer (professor and Founding Director of NTU CCA Singapore); Salah M. Hassan (professor and art historian, Cornell University, and Director of The Africa Institute, Sharjah); Chika Okeke-Agulu (professor and art historian, Princeton University); and Octavio Zaya (independent curator, art writer and Executive Director of the Cuban Art Foundation). Al Qasimi and the Working Group are overseeing the development and implementation of the Biennial with an Advisory Committee that includes Sir David Adjaye (architect) and Christine Tohmé (Director, Ashkal Alwan, Beirut).

sharjahart.org (<https://www.sharjahart.org/biennial-15>)