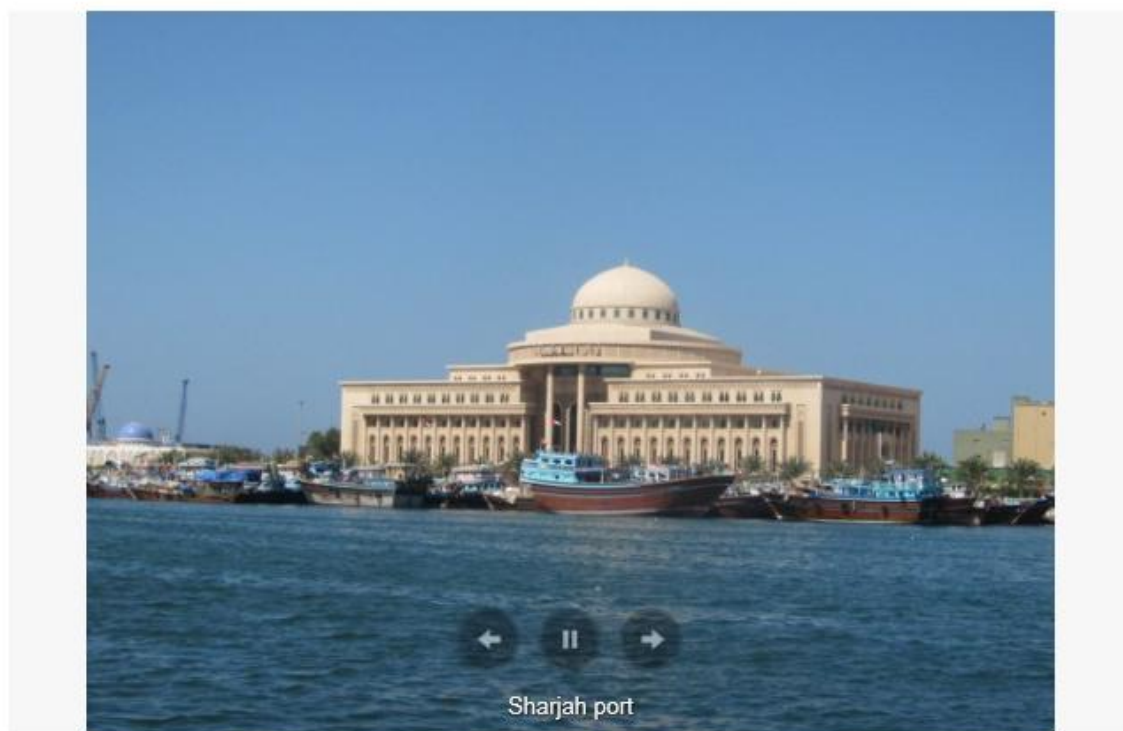


Sharjah Biennial 12 Opening Day March 5, 2015. (1st Visit, Day 1).

📅 March 5, 2015 👤 Stephanie Neville

How exciting! Today sees the opening of the 12th Sharjah Biennial. I am allowing myself a break from my own art creating, an hour a day, to get inspiration and take in this marvelous event. With the weather still amazingly gorgeous outside, I parked next to the creek/ docks in front of the beautiful blue mosque as usual – just missing the traffic jam as the Sheikhs were leaving at 11 am.



The theme this year is “The past, the present, the possible”. Curated by Eungie Joo and Ryan Inouye, the exhibition reflects “what have long been the core values of the [Sharjah Art] Foundation: an engagement with place and community, a focus on education and support of artistic production”.

With a duration of 3 months, and with all the other events like Art Week, Design Days and Art Dubai happening in March too, I am looking forward to spending short bursts of time at each event, avoiding the dreaded art overload, over-stimulation and exhaustion. I am allowing myself time to take it all in, ponder and appreciate.

Here are my finds for today. I started at the Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces.

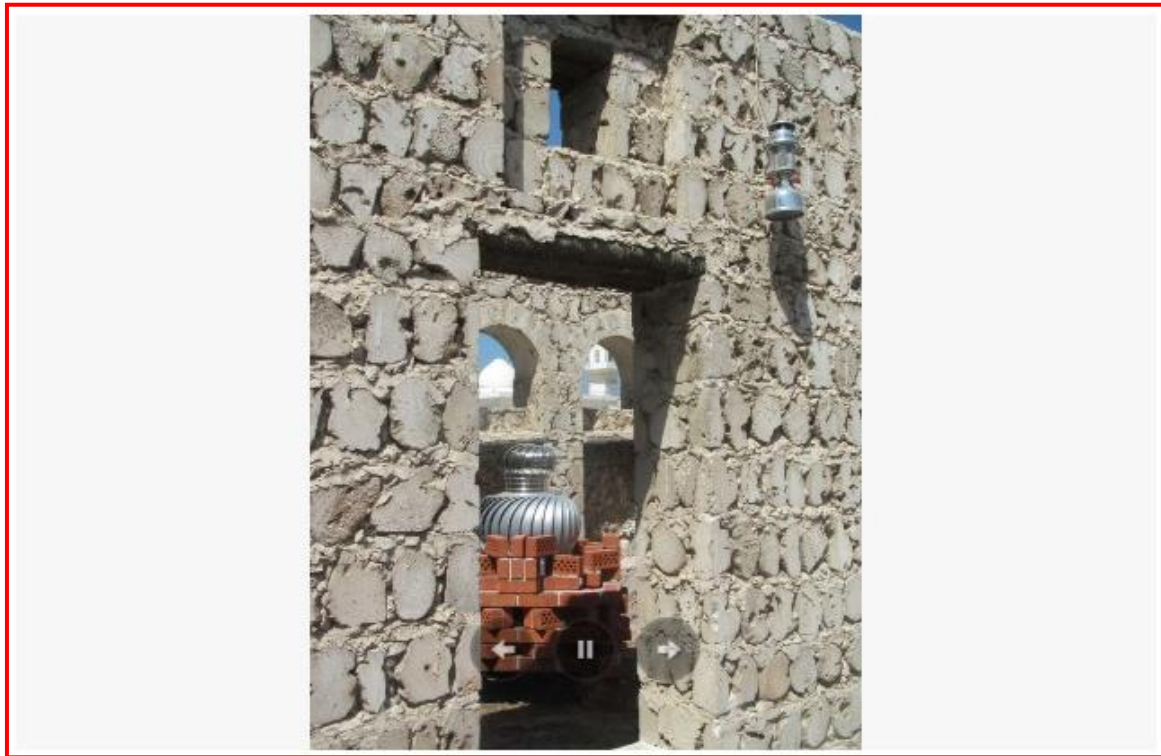


The second installation is called *Come to where the flavors are* (2015), which includes dozens of cardboard boxes used to ship cigarettes and tea. Their boxes. With painted logos in gold. Yawn.

Haegue Yang

b. 1971, Seoul, Korea. Lives and works in Seoul and Berlin.

Using readymade objects such as fans, humidifiers, venetian blinds and various industrial building materials, Yang created this outdoor installation called *An Opague Wind* (2015). Being a huge fan of the SAF architectural features and its use of the traditional building techniques with the coral and organic elements embedded in the walls, mixed with the clean, white, modern gallery spaces- to me, the success of the work lies within its setting. This juxtaposition between the cold steel, shiny silver construction materials vs the warm natural organic building is a match made in heaven. Situated outside using the 'winter' breeze, allows for the movement in the work to echo its intended meaning. The work deals with "the geo-economic history of Korea and the Gulf region since the 1970s, through which Korean labour and dreams of industrialisation lent thousands upon thousands of fathers, uncles and brothers to construct the oil infrastructure that drives today's political economy".



Lynette Yiadon-Boakye

b. 1977, London, UK. Lives and works in London.

The first painter I viewed this morning, I would say I found it a little unfair to the artist to be tucked in her own little corner gallery and it seems a little flat viewing paintings after such huge installations. But, giving myself enough time to view the works before dismissing them, I do enjoy the exploration of light and colour in this series of paintings *The Women Watchful* (2015). She conducted studies of light during her residency in Sharjah, summer 2014. “Yiadom-Boaky’s works disrupt traditional approaches to romanticism in figurative painting, seeking to transcend social relations to consider interiority and the sublime”.



Rayyane Tabet

b. 1983, Ashqot, Lebanon. Lives and works in Beirut.

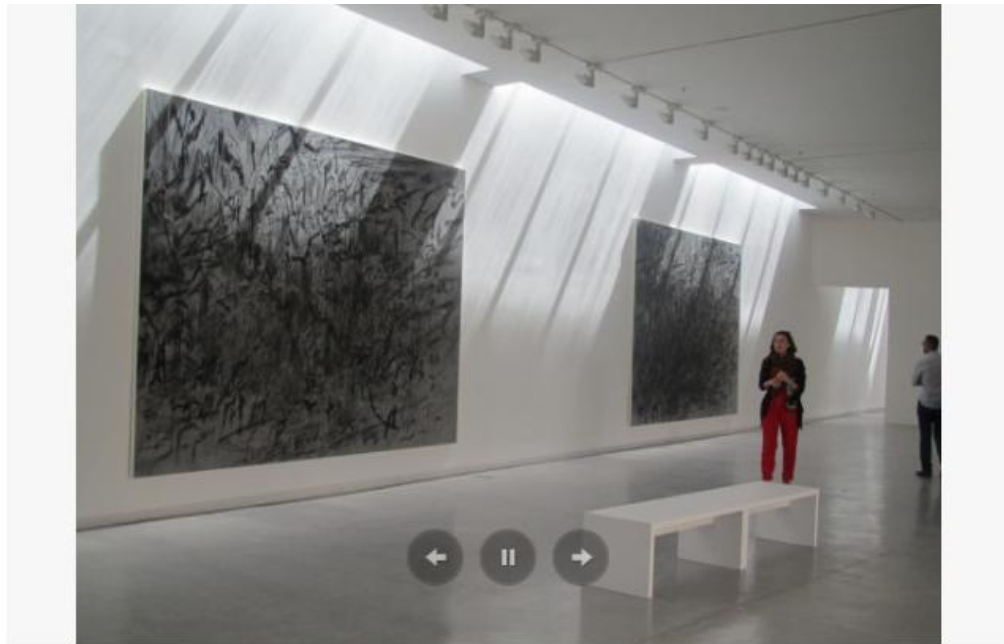
Cyprus (2015) is Tabet's 4th work in a series called *Five distant memories: The Suitcase, The Room, The Toys, The Boat and Maradona* (2006 -). Trying to capture his earliest memories, this boat (the actual vessel) is the memory of his family's failed attempt at fleeing Lebanon. I particularly enjoy the tension in this large heavy object floating in the air, like the dreams and hopes of an unobtainable freedom/ future. I also love the floating anchor, like a refusal to settle down or signaling the idea of diaspora.



Julie Mehretu

b. 1970, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Lives and works in New York.

These large scale paintings really caught my attention. I am not usually one for abstract art but Mehretu's *Invisible Sun* (2014) series attracts me deeper in to the works. I am particularly spellbound by the variety of mark-making she incorporates on to these huge canvasses with mixed media of oil and graphite. I can spend quite a long time staring at these works. "The sense of reflection, personal agency and struggle in these works is punctuated by moments of sanctuary and release- a space of emergent potentiality".



Byron Kim

b. 1961, La Jolla, California. Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

I love, love, love these works. Documenting his Sunday skies since 2001, Kim paints a portrait of each Sunday sky and adds personal details, thoughts, activities to each canvas, recording his life. "Sunday Paintings embody a personal cosmology that contrasts the everyday against the everything". I would also add that the placement of these works just fall so perfectly into place within this section of the gallery, having the skylights beam bright light down the corridor with matching blue skies, giving the feeling of an interconnectedness and time for contemplation on ones own day, and what is worth recording on this day.

