

**SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM AND ROCKBUND
ART MUSEUM, SHANGHAI, PRESENT EXHIBITION OF
MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN ART FROM APRIL 15
TO JUNE 11, 2017**

***But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* marks eighth installation of Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative**

VENUE: Rockbund Art Museum (RAM)

LOCATION: 20 Huqiu Rd, Huangpu Qu, Shanghai, China, 200085

DATES: April 15–June 11, 2017

WEBSITE: rockbundartmuseum.org

(SHANGHAI AND NEW YORK, February 28, 2017)—The Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) is joining with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York to present *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa* from April 15 through June 11, 2017. The exhibition is the final installment of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative, a distinctive program that creates direct access to contemporary art and education through international exhibitions, acquisitions, curatorial scholarship, and public programming. *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* premiered at the Guggenheim Museum in April 2016; and the presentation in Shanghai will be one of the largest exhibitions of contemporary art from the Middle East and North Africa to be seen in China to date.

Organized by Sara Raza, Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa, in collaboration with the curatorial team at RAM, *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* features a wide range of artistic voices and critical concerns from a rapidly evolving region and its international diaspora. Works by 15 artists explore the intersecting themes of architecture, geometry, history, and migration through a wide array of mediums including installation, painting, photography, sculpture, and video. The presentation at RAM will be supported by dynamic public events and educational activities for audiences of all ages. Participating artists currently include: Lida Abdul, Abbas Akhavan, Kader Attia, Ergin Çavuşoğlu, Ali Cherri, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, Rokni Haerizadeh, Susan Hefuna, Iman Issa, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Gülsün Karamustafa, Mohammed Kazem, Hassan Khan, and Ahmed Mater.

“The Guggenheim has had a long interest in engagement with the art and artists of China and throughout Asia; it is now our pleasure to introduce new work from the Middle East and North Africa to audiences in Shanghai,” said Richard Armstrong, Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Museum. “This collection of work encourages us to reflect upon a vital region of today’s world at a critical time in history. It is a testament to the power of the MAP program that it offers us the opportunity to take art beyond the walls of our museums and build a bridge across multiple cultures. We are grateful to our long-term collaborator and supporter UBS, to curator Sara Raza, and to our colleagues at the Rockbund Art Museum.”

“We are excited to play an integral part in this international project by hosting the culmination of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative,” said Rockbund Art Museum Director Larys Frogier. “As the first museum in China devoted to supporting the production and celebration of contemporary art, the Rockbund Art Museum and its presentation of *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* defines an unparalleled opportunity for Chinese audiences to encounter and experience Middle Eastern and North African art. By hosting the project at RAM, we wish to further the MAP initiative’s aim to broaden exposure to contemporary art works at a global level. China’s own unique history with the Middle East and its sphere of cultural influence ensures that the exposition will undergo a recontextualization at Rockbund, thereby expanding and enriching an historically Western-centric perspective of art from these regions. Such a shift in perspective should yield exciting and novel insights into the geopolitical, social and cultural challenges facing the arts today. We are proud to collaborate with curator Sara Raza on an entirely new reading of a region often seen only through the lens of conflict, and hope our audiences will come away with a more nuanced understanding of artists’ perceptions of our neighbors to the west.”

According to Raza, “*But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* articulates current artistic strategies within the broader context of contemporary culture in the Middle East and North Africa. The range of artworks consider a fragmented and shifting geographical region through a cross-circulation of ideas drawn from science, mathematics, and philosophy that were originally developed in the area, as well as references to geometry as a metaphor for both physical and conceptual space. This expanded presentation at the Rockbund Art Museum complements the architectural splendor of the Art Deco building and includes several works that were not on view in New York. Through this fresh installation and programming developed for local audiences, we aim to continue the discussion and understanding of the complex and critical themes addressed by this group of esteemed artists.”

Li Qi, senior curator at Rockbund Art Museum, commented, “*But A Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* reveals a future-oriented recognition of arts and visual culture in the Middle East and North Africa, with each work reflecting a facet of the artist’s mindset. The Rockbund Art Museum is devoted to offering an accessible and comprehensive experience for our audience in Shanghai. In addition to guided tours by the curator and panel discussions joined by the artists, the museum is also launching an exciting series of public events including screenings, performances, workshops for children, and lectures in universities, as well as book clubs and food festivals for varied opportunities for interaction.”

“The presentation of *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa* at the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai provides an exceptional opportunity for local audiences to encounter compelling ideas and artistic insights, and to engage in the kind of international dialogue that contributes to positive change,” said Dr. Eugene Qian, UBS Group China Country Head and President. “UBS invested early in mainland China. Our support of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative parallels our holistic approach to business relationships. We take pride in enabling our clients, employees, and the public to participate in the provocative and exciting creative community of the arts, much as we facilitate our clients’ informed involvement in the complex global economy.”

MAP builds upon and reflects the Guggenheim’s distinguished history of internationalism and UBS’s commitment to direct engagement with contemporary art and education. MAP projects focus attention on vibrant artistic practices in three regions—South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa—and foster new relationships among artists, institutions, scholars, and visitors. Extensive on-the-ground research by distinguished curators with expertise in each region underpins an institutional effort to diversify and enrich the Guggenheim’s collection of contemporary art from across the globe, which is unprecedented in scope, scale, and range. As with the two previous sets of exhibitions in the MAP initiative, which focused on contemporary art practice from South and Southeast Asia and Latin America, *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* features artworks that have been recently acquired for the Guggenheim’s collection.

About MAP

The Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative is a distinctive program that offers direct access to contemporary art and education on a global scale. Through in-depth collaboration with artists, curators, and cultural organizations from South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa, MAP has expanded the Guggenheim’s collection with more than 125 new works. Partnerships with cultural organizations such as the Rockbund Art Museum have been at the heart of the project throughout, extending its creative reach and impact both physically and digitally. Together, the Guggenheim and UBS recognize the power of contemporary art to connect and inspire communities, spark debate, enrich the present, and help shape the future. This long-term collaboration underscores a mutual commitment to supporting today’s most innovative artists by increasing visibility of their work across the globe. Learn more about the artists, curators, and exhibitions that bring these works to life at guggenheim.org/MAP.

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The Guggenheim network that began in the 1970s when the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, was joined by the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, has since expanded to include the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (opened 1997), and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (currently in development). The Guggenheim Foundation continues to forge international collaborations that celebrate contemporary art, architecture, and design within and beyond the walls of the museum, including the Guggenheim

UBS MAP Global Art Initiative and The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative. More information about the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation can be found at guggenheim.org.

About Rockbund Art Museum (RAM)

Rockbund Art Museum (RAM) is a contemporary art museum that plays an important role on the global art scene. Since its opening in 2010, RAM, the first museum in China devoted entirely to contemporary art, has achieved great renown for its exhibitions of acclaimed Chinese and international artists. RAM was established as a key component of the Rockbund Urban Renaissance project, which aims to renovate heritage buildings and revitalize the cultural milieu of the north end of the Bund through arts, fashion, business, and leisure programs. Thanks to substantial financial support devoted to the production of new works, RAM is able to pay close professional attention to maintaining the highest levels of quality in curatorial practice.

Rockbund Art Museum strives to promote humanistic values through art by offering audiences the best conditions in which to encounter artwork, and by dedicating itself to the study and dissemination of contemporary art. The museum's recently launched research and education platforms invite collaboration with universities, foundations, and colleges, and involve the co-organization of a wide range of educational programs including lectures, screenings, seminars, performances, and workshops.

About UBS

UBS provides financial advice and solutions to wealthy, institutional and corporate clients worldwide, as well as private clients in Switzerland. The operational structure of the Group is comprised of our Corporate Center and five business divisions: Wealth Management, Wealth Management Americas, Personal & Corporate Banking, Asset Management and the Investment Bank. UBS's strategy builds on the strengths of all of its businesses and focuses its efforts on areas in which it excels, while seeking to capitalize on the compelling growth prospects in the businesses and regions in which it operates, in order to generate attractive and sustainable returns for its shareholders. All of its businesses are capital-efficient and benefit from a strong competitive position in their targeted markets.

UBS is present in all major financial centers worldwide. It has offices in 54 countries, with about 34% of its employees working in the Americas, 35% in Switzerland, 18% in the rest of Europe, the Middle East and Africa and 13% in Asia Pacific. UBS Group AG employs approximately 60,000 people around the world. Its shares are listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

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Editor's Notes

Richard Armstrong, Director, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation

Richard Armstrong has served as the Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation since November 2008. Armstrong works with senior staff to maximize all aspects of the foundation's operations: permanent collections, exhibition programs, acquisitions, documentation, scholarship, and conservation. Previously, Armstrong was The Henry J. Heinz II Director of Carnegie Museum of Art, where he also served as Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary Art. From 1981 to 1992, he was a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where he organized four Biennials, as well as several other exhibitions.

Larys Frogier, Director, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai

A curator, critic, and art historian, Larys Frogier is committed to tackling artistic and social challenges in a post-global context where social, economic, and cultural transformations demand new approaches to creativity. Previously the director of the contemporary art center La Criée in Rennes, France, he organized exhibitions, publications, residencies, and symposia to question the links and disjunctions between large-scale regions. Chair of the Hugo Boss Asia Art Award jury at Rockbund Art Museum since 2013, he conceives of the prize as part of an evolving platform designed to promote emerging artists and position Asia as a construction to investigate rather than a static, monolithic entity. Frogier taught art history and theory and curatorial studies at the University of Rennes; at the same time, he was a researcher at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) and at the Archives of Art Criticism.

Sara Raza, Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa

Sara Raza was selected by a committee of esteemed experts in the region as Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa. As a part of her two-year residency at the Guggenheim in New York, Raza is curating the third phase of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. Born in London in 1979, Raza earned a BA in English Literature and History of Art and an MA in Art History and Theory, both from Goldsmiths College, University of London. She also pursued studies towards her Ph.D. at the Royal College of Art.

Raza has curated exhibitions and projects for several international biennials and festivals, including the Tashkent Biennial: *Quotations from Daily Life*, Art Gallery of Uzbekistan (2011); *Rhizoma (generation in waiting)*, Collateral Event, Venice Biennale (2013); and Baku Public Art Festival: *A Drop of Sky*, Yarat Contemporary Art Space, Baku, Azerbaijan (2015). She also co-curated the Bishkek International: *In the Shadow of Fallen Heroes* at the Bishkek Historical Museum and Alto Square, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in 2005.

In 2008, Raza curated the group exhibitions *Cult of Personality* and *New Image Making*, which featured projects by artists including Yael Bartana, Ergin Çavuşoğlu and Erbossyn Meldibekov, for SH Contemporary, Shanghai. She has organized a number of exhibitions for Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE), including solo presentations of the work of Adel Abidin, Wafaa Bilal, and

Mohammed Kazem, and the group exhibitions *Migrasophia (migration + philosophy)* (2012) and *The Beginning of Thinking is Geometric* (2013). She co-curated Shezad Dawood's North American debut at the Plug In ICA, Winnipeg, Canada, in 2010, and organized Ergin Çavuşoğlu's UAE debut at The Pavilion Downtown, Dubai, in 2011.

Formerly, Raza was the head of education at Yarat Contemporary Art Space, Baku, Azerbaijan, founding head of curatorial programs at Alāan Artspace, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and curator of public programs at Tate Modern, London (2006–08). She was an educational advisor to Edge of Arabia's CULTURUNNERS US tour (2013–14) and a jury member for the 2014 Akbank Contemporary Artists Prize, for which she also curated the shortlist exhibition (2014). She was a nominator for the Jameel Prize of the Victoria and Albert Museum (2012 and 2015) and the Future Generation Art Prize of the Victor Pinchuk Foundation (2014). Raza was the winner of both the United Kingdom Arts Council's Emerging Curator's Award at the South London Gallery (2004) and the 11th ArtTable New Leadership Award (2016), and she was a finalist for the Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement (2015).

Sara Raza writes for numerous art publications and is the West and Central Asia desk editor of *ArtAsiaPacific*. She is the author of *Punk Orientalism: Central Asia's Contemporary Art Revolution*, which will be published in 2018 by Black Dog Publishing, London.