



The Jameel Prize 2011 – Shortlist Exhibition

21 July to 25 September 2011

ADMISSION FREE

Winner Announcement: 12 September 2011

The V&A presents an exhibition of works by the 10 artists and designers shortlisted for the prestigious Jameel Prize: **Noor Ali Chagani, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Bitá Ghezelayagh, Babak Golkar, Hayv Kahraman, Aisha Khalid, Rachid Koraïchi, Hazem El Mestikawy, Hadieh Shafie and Soody Sharifi.**

Awarded every two years, The Jameel Prize is a £25,000 international art prize for contemporary artists and designers inspired by Islamic traditions of craft and design. The winner of The Jameel Prize 2011 will be announced at the V&A on 12 September 2011.

The exhibition features over 20 works that draw strongly on the artists' and designers' own local and regional traditions, celebrating particular materials and iconography with strong references to traditional Islamic art. The works on show range from felt costumes to sculpture made from hand-made terracotta bricks and from mirror mosaic to digital collages inspired by traditional Persian miniature paintings. In much of the work there is an underlying reference to the artists' own 'hybrid' cultural identity; the mix of old and new, minimalism versus ornament, tradition and modernity, and home versus exile.

The 2011 Jameel Prize exhibition is curated by Tim Stanley, senior curator of the V&A's Middle Eastern collection, with Salma Tuqan, V&A's Middle East curator of contemporary art.

The V&A announced the shortlist for the Jameel Prize 2011 earlier this year at Art Dubai. Almost 200 nominations for the Jameel Prize 2011 were received, from countries as diverse as the United States, Spain, Nigeria, Egypt and Pakistan. A panel of judges, chaired by the then V&A Director, Sir Mark Jones, selected the shortlist. Launched in 2009, the winner of the first Jameel Prize was Afruz Amighi for her work *1001 Pages* (2008), an intricate hand-cut screen made from the woven plastic used to construct refugee tents.

The Jameel Prize is conducted in partnership with Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALICI). The prize was conceived after the redesign and redisplay of the V&A's Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art, which opened in July 2006. The gallery is an outstanding presentation of the rich artistic heritage of

the Islamic world, and the prize aims to raise awareness of the thriving interaction between contemporary practice and this great historical heritage. It has also contributed to a broader understanding of Islamic culture and its place in the world.

Award-winning architect Zaha Hadid is Patron of the Jameel Prize. She says: *"It is a very exciting time for artists working in Islamic art tradition, there is a real spirit of innovation and creativity in the air. Their work now goes beyond established painting, sculpture and calligraphy to explore new media and reflect the diverse cultures and histories of the region. This work has evolved with its own characteristic voice, exploring future possibilities, yet is derived from rich cultural traditions and a timeless history. For millennia, the Islamic arts and sciences have bridged the cultural divide between East and West, teaching us that these worlds are not mutually exclusive, but rather layered upon each other and profoundly interlinked. The Jameel Prize gives us a very promising outlook to the future and I am pleased to see the region's artists pushing new boundaries."*

The judges:

Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Director, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Qatar

Navid Akhtar, Executive Director, Gazelle Media

Afroz Amighi, artist and winner of the Jameel Prize 2009

Dina Bakhoun, Conservation Programme Manager, The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Egypt

The 10 shortlisted artists and designers:

Noor Ali Chagani is showing *Life Line* (2010) and *Infinity* (2009); two sculptural works made from miniature terracotta bricks. Chagani translates his training in the principles of Mughal miniature painting into sculpture by using miniature hand made bricks to imitate large building blocks. Both works refer to the fundamental desires of man to provide a house for shelter. The curves and movements of the bricks in *Life Line* are like a piece of cloth, serving as protection, as clothes provide a second skin, yet made of brittle and hard bricks they define the toughness and hardships of life's daily struggle. *Infinity* continues Chagani's interest with bricks creating the illusion of an endless series of walls each made from hundreds of handmade bricks. The work reflects a view of history, the broken walls and homes of an ancient civilisation and the endless hurdles and obstacles faced by man. Noor Ali Chagani was born, lives and works in Pakistan.

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian is one of Iran's most celebrated artists with a career spanning more than five decades. She is exhibiting *Birds of Paradise* (2008), a work that demonstrates her distinctive style of adapting and combining Iranian traditions of mirror mosaic and reverse glass painting techniques with a modern aesthetic. Mirrors are cut and set in geometric patterns and integrated with coloured glass, referencing a range of influences in Islamic art, architecture and science. This particular work is inspired by the many feathers left by sparrows on her balcony in Tehran. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian was born in Iran, spent many years in the USA, but currently lives and works in Tehran.

Bitá Ghezelayagh works in the traditional Iranian craft of felt-making. She is showing three pieces from her *Felt Memories* series (2007-9), inspired by the Islamic tradition of talismanic coats, worn to protect the wearer from misfortune. Ghezelayagh uses metal keys, crowns, tulips (symbols of martyrdom), machine guns and other street symbols combined with printed Persian phrases to cover the surface of her pieces. The juxtaposition of urban imagery with a rural craft tradition creates a new visual language which embraces both tradition and modernity. Bitá Ghezelayagh was born in Italy and now lives and works between London and Tehran.

Babak Golkar is showing a new piece entitled *Negotiating the Space for Possible Coexistences No.5* (2011). Golkar's multi-disciplinary work often examines socio-cultural issues experienced from living in both the Middle East and Canada. This work is part of a series that uses the pattern of Persian carpets as a blueprint for architectural scale models. The model sits on top of the carpet so that the relationship between the two forms is accessible to the viewer, creating a conceptual connection between the traditions of Modern and Postmodern architecture and the traditions of nomadic society. The work also challenges the spatial economies of the two traditions, offering a space for cross-cultural dialogue. Babak Golkar was born in the USA and now lives and works in Canada.

Hayv Kahraman is showing two paintings from the Waraq series, *Migrant 8* (2010) and *Migrant 1* (2010) and *Asad Babil* (2011), a new work from a series based on Assyrian Lion Hunt relief sculptures. Kahraman's work is inspired by her experience of living in Baghdad, Europe and the USA. Waraq means 'playing cards' in Arabic and references a popular Iraqi pastime. Kahraman has invented a suit of cards to explore the lives of people who personify the Iraqi Diaspora and their stories of assimilation, alienation and discovery in their new homes. The work also references the so called 'Archaeology awareness playing cards' - 40,000 decks of cards which were sent to American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2007 to highlight important archaeological sites and to discourage illegal trade in artefacts. *Asad Babil* depicts an injured life-sized lion painted in Islamic geometric patterns and black and red paint. Instead of blood, a set of 'diasporic' playing cards gushes from the lion's mouth, referencing the fall of Iraq and the wounded people as its victims and prey. Hayv Kahraman was born in Iraq and now lives and works in the USA.

Aisha Khalid is showing *Name, Class, Subject* (2009), an artist book inspired by the exercise or 'copy books' used by government schools in Pakistan to teach writing in Urdu and English. The book draws on Khalid's experience as a child growing up in a society shaped by a bilingual culture. Khalid has painted each of the 280 pages of the book in the Mughal style of miniature painting, to look like a ruled exercise book. There are 'errors' in the Urdu pages, reminders of the mistakes Khalid used to find in her printed text books in Pakistan, such as missing text and lines or badly cut margins. In the middle of the book both English and Urdu page lines are blurred and overlapping, referencing the tensions underlying Pakistan's past and present. She is also showing *Kashmiri Shawl* (2011), a subversion of the popular pashmina shawl. On one side the delicate embroidery of the gold-plated steel pin heads form a traditional Kashmiri paisley pattern and on the other side the pin ends are

menacingly visible, referencing the struggle of generations of Kashmiris. Aisha Khalid was born, lives and works in Pakistan.

Rachid Koraïchi is showing a selection of embroidered cloth banners from a series entitled *Les Maitres invisibles (The Invisible Masters, 2008)*. Koraichi uses Arabic calligraphy and symbols and ciphers from a range of other languages and cultures to explore the lives and legacies of the 14 great mystics of Islam. The work aims to show that the world of Islam, in contrast to contemporary perceptions of crisis and violence, has another side entirely, evident in the tolerant and sophisticated writings of great Muslim thinkers and poets such as Rumi and El Arabi. These 'masters', whose fame has spread even to the West, left an imprint on successive generations and their message is just as relevant today as when first written down. Rachid Koraïchi was born in Algeria and now lives and works between Tunisia and France.

Hazem El Mestikawy is exhibiting a sculptural installation made from recycled cardboard, newspaper and glue entitled *Bridge* (2009). El Mestikawy has created an intricate and geometrical sculpture by reusing equal extracts of Arabic and English newspaper to form 7 movable units which can be arranged to form 'bridges'. The work is a continuation of his exploration of the socio-political issues of North versus South and East versus West. El Mestikawy defines the space between different regions, both geographically and metaphorically. His practice assimilates ancient Egyptian and Islamic art and architecture, as well as contemporary and minimal art philosophies. El Mestikawy was born in Egypt and lives and works in between Egypt and Austria.

Hadieh Shafie is showing two new works, *22500 Pages* (2011) and *26000 Pages* (2011) which are a continuation of her signature paper scroll works. Made up of 22,500 and 26,000 strips of paper, each scroll is marked with printed and hand-written Farsi (Persian) text, and then tightly rolled into concentric circles, concealing or revealing different elements of the text. The concentric forms of both text and material take their inspiration from the dance of the whirling dervish. Shafie's paper scroll works demonstrate a constant element of her work which is the significance of process, repetition and time, all rooted in the influence of Islamic art and craft. Hadieh Shafie was born in Iran and lives and works in the USA.

Soody Sharifi is exhibiting two prints, *Frolicking Women in the Pool* (2007) and *Fashion Week* (2010). Her work often explores the accommodation of modernity within a traditional society, particularly referencing Muslim youth culture in Iran and the United States. In these collages from her 'Maxiature' series, Sharifi has enlarged scans of traditional Persian miniature paintings and interjected them with her own photographs to create layered narratives which reflect either her own personal experience or the storyline of the original miniature painting. Soody Sharifi was born in Iran and lives and works in the USA.

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Notes to Editors:

Please see separate sheet for biographies of the judging panel and shortlisted artists and designers.

About the V&A Exhibition

- The exhibition of work by artists and designers shortlisted for the Jameel Prize is on show at the V&A from 21 July until 25 September 2011
- The winner will be announced on 12 September 2011
- **ADMISSION FREE**

About the V&A's Islamic Art Collection

The V&A has specialised in collecting Islamic art since the 1850s, and was the first institution in the world to collect Islamic art in a systematic fashion. In the late 1800s the V&A was very interested in contemporary practice in the Middle East particularly through the work of Robert Murdoch Smith in Iran. The V&A has revived that interest through the Jameel Prize. The Jameel Prize is also part of the V&A's programme of activities designed to develop cultural links around the world and promote cultural understanding.

About the Jameel Prize

Leading curators, designers, artists and cultural figures from across the world were invited to nominate applicants to the Jameel Prize. Almost 200 nominations were received from which a shortlist of 10 artists and designers was drawn up by the judging panel.

About Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALICI)

Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALICI) is committed to furthering and promoting opportunities for thousands of young Saudi men and women each year through its job creation initiative called BAB Rizq Jameel (BRJ). BRJ has created more than 45,010 jobs in 2010 and has created more than 175,101 jobs since inception in 2003. The Jameel Prize tour is one of its increasing numbers of international initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa. More information is available at www.aljci.org.

International Tour

After the V&A, the Jameel Prize 2011 exhibition will embark on an international tour including the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in winter 2011/12, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in autumn 2012, and Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University in winter 2012/13. The exhibition will tour to other venues across Europe and the United States and more details will be released at a later date. The Jameel Prize 2009 exhibition visited six venues across the Middle East – Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Damascus in Syria, Beiteddine in Lebanon, Sharjah in the UAE, Istanbul in Turkey and Casablanca in Morocco – and was seen by a total of 49,161 visitors. The Jameel Prize 2009 was the first V&A exhibition to visit Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the UAE and Morocco.

For further PRESS information please contact Cathy Sutton in the V&A press office on 0207 942 2503 or email c.sutton@vam.ac.uk (Not for publication)