

Nadia Kaabi-Linke wins the 4th edition of the Ithra Art Prize

The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra)



Nadia Kaabi-Linke. Courtesy the artist and Ithra.

September 11, 2021

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Kaabi-Linke granted USD 100,000 to create original work to be unveiled at Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale

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The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) is excited to announce Nadia Kaabi-Linke as the winner of the 4th edition of the Ithra Art Prize, presented in collaboration with Diriyah Biennale Foundation. The Tunis-born,

Berlin-based conceptual artist was selected by an esteemed panel of international art experts for her proposed project under the working title *E Pluribus Unum – Modern Fossil*.

Organizers say the judges were impressed by the standard of submissions for this year's prize. "The standard of submissions for the 4th edition of the Ithra Art Prize was as high as we've come to expect from the Prize, while the international element added further provocative perspectives," said Farah Abushullaih, Head of Ithra Museums. "We are thrilled with this year's competition, and Nadia Kaabi-Linke is a worthy winner. We look forward to seeing her realize this dream project."

One of the most significant art prizes in the world, Kaabi-Linke will receive up to 100,000 USD to bring her proposal to life. The piece will be unveiled at Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale, the Kingdom's first biennale, in December before joining Ithra's prestigious permanent collection.

"Through the Ithra Art Prize I am thrilled and grateful for the opportunity to realize this ambitious project that is important to produce in times of uncertainty which also mean possibility and potential change," said Kaabi-Linke. "With the opening of archeological sites home to some of the most precious treasures in world history, new museums, art centers, and foundations, the future of art and culture in Saudi Arabia promises to be diverse and open to the world, while connected to a rich local past."

"I once had the honor to produce a site-specific installation in the country and found a creative and promising young art scene. I am looking forward to witnessing future contributions from Saudi Arabia to the international art scene and being a part of that dialogue."

Previously only open to Saudi artists, this edition saw artists from 22 Arab countries eligible to apply. "The Ithra Art Prize at Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale supports the development of the art industry in the Kingdom and beyond while fostering cross-cultural engagement through the exposure of talent from the Arab world on an international platform," said Abushullaih. "We are delighted to offer the opportunity at a Saudi-led event to a much bigger pool of applicants, and encouraged by their response – we received 1,500 entries from Arab artists and artists based in Arab countries beyond our borders."

E Pluribus Unum explores the impact of the global pandemic through looking at the aviation industry as a marker of economic growth while highlighting humanity's shared experience of being grounded on Earth. Kaabi-Linke grew up in Tunis, Kyiv, Dubai and Paris, and earned a PhD at Université Paris-Sorbonne in 2008. She has a personal history of migration that has greatly influenced her work. Her art gives physical presence to that which tends to remain invisible, be it people, structures, or the geopolitical forces that shape them. Using various materials and methods, Kaabi-Linke often works in dialogue with the place of production and exhibition. She has rendered visible the bodily traces of people waiting at Berlin bus shelters and subway stations, the scars of domestic violence victims in London, and paint chips scraped from city walls throughout North Africa and Europe.

Becoming the fourth winner of the Ithra Art Prize, Kaabi-Linke joins the ranks of previous winners Ayman Zedani (*Meem*, 2018), Dania Al-Saleh (*Sawtam*, 2019) and Fahad Bin Naif (*Rakhm*, 2020).

For more information on the Ithra Art Prize and Ithra's regular programs, visit our website.

