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ART EXHIBITIONS SAM BARDAOUIL TILL FELLRATH WAYS OF SEEING NYUAD ART GALLERY ART REORIENTED VILLA EMPAIN ARTER ISTANBUL LOUVRE ABU DHABI

Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath's 'Ways of Seeing' exhibition Makes Its Way To Abu Dhabi this September

BY

Katrina Kufer

TAGS

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[TILL FELLRATH \(/TAGS/TILL-FELLRATH\)](#)

[WAYS OF SEEING \(/TAGS/WAYS-OF-SEEING\)](#)

[NYUAD ART GALLERY \(/TAGS/NYUAD-ART-GALLERY\)](#)

[ART REORIENTED \(/TAGS/ART-REORIENTED\)](#)

[VILLA EMPAIN \(/TAGS/VILLA-EMPAIN\)](#)

[ARTER ISTANBUL \(/TAGS/ARTER-ISTANBUL\)](#)

[LOUVRE ABU DHABI \(/TAGS/LOUVRE-ABU-DHABI\)](#)



Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris/

Thomas Struth. Hermitage 2 St. Petersburg. 2005. Chromogenic print. 114 x 114.8 cm.

17
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The travelling exhibition, which opened at ARTER – Space for Art, Istanbul, before showing at Villa

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(<http://www.facebook.com/EmpanBoghossian>, <http://www.harpersbazaararabia.com/art/exhibitions/Ways-of-Seeing-exhibition-Makes-Its-Way-To-Abu-Dhabi-this-September?>)

Empan, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, will now come to Abu Dhabi's NYUAD Art Gallery with new works to remind the public there is always another side to the story



The 3 September opening of **Ways of Seeing** (<http://twitter.com/SamBardaouil> and <http://twitter.com/TillFellrath>) (<http://www.artreoriented.com/exhibitions/ways-of-seeing>), curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till

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Fellrath, independent curators and co-founders of **Art Reoriented** (<http://www.artreoriented.com>),

will mark the first collaboration for **NYUAD Art Gallery** (<http://nyuad-artgallery.org>) with external curators. Inspired by John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972), this travelling exhibition explores formalistic strategies that artists have used to reformulate the understanding and perception of the world.



"In his seminal text and TV Program titled *Ways of Seeing* from 1972, John Berger shifted the emphasis of art criticism away from the professional art-expert, and relocated it within the grasp of the layperson," explain Bardaouil and Fellrath. "In taking its cue from Berger's groundbreaking argument, this exhibition invites the viewer to actively engage with the artwork, and to investigate the manifold ways by which forms and concepts that are otherwise



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familiar can attain renewed appearances and meanings. We have included around 50 works by 26 artists and artist

beckon us to take a second look at what we think we are seeing, upon which the contours of a new reality begin to emerge.”

Upon learning of the project, Maya Allison, Founding Director and Chief Curator of **NYUAD Art Gallery** (<https://www.nyuad-artgallery.org/>) Till Felrath’s interest was immediately piqued.

works spanning 1000BC to the present showcase artists as technical makers and creators of objects which have the power to alter perspectives—thus reminding viewers how making, seeing and comprehending art are inherently political. “How do you put Hassan Sharif and Mona Hatoum in the same exhibition as Cindy Sherman and James Turrell, Salvador Dali and a 16th-century map-maker?” says Allison. “Each of them make historically-important works their own right, but their work isn’t generally grouped together. Sam and Till’s curatorial frame for this exhibition asks us, ‘What is art? And what does it do, how does it do it?’ Through their selection of work, they rehearse the many different ways that art invites us to see. Investigating how we see is a matter that every student and professor of art must think deeply on, of course, but so must scientists and humanists of all kinds—we cannot expect to see clearly without first becoming actively aware of how we are looking.”

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This edition will feature new additions by artists such as Mona Hatoum, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Hassan Sharif and Cindy Sherman. “Similar to the previous venues—**ARTER** (<http://www.arter.org.tr/>) in Istanbul and the **Villa Empain** (<https://www.villaempain.com/en/>) in Brussels—we have reconfigured several elements in the show to make direct connections with the context in which it is presented,” add the curators. “For this iteration in Abu Dhabi, we have included, for instance, a work by Andreas Gursky that he created upon visiting the UAE in 2007. We have also invited Lateefa bint Maktoum to participate with a series of photographs that depict people involved in the act of looking and raises questions about tradition and modernisation within the context of the UAE. Thomas Struth has also come on board upon our invitation with a number of works from his *Museum* series that provide a timely comment on the act of seeing within a museum context, which seems very relevant to the UAE at the time.”



Through the range of media, from painting and sculpture through to photography, film and installation, Bardaouil and Fellrath outline their intent. “What we are hoping to do is to make the viewer aware that there is always more than one side to every story, and that upon spending more time with an artwork, and by allowing it to engage our senses, to speak to our prior assumptions, some of which might not be without prejudice, we may well be confronted with a different account of something familiar that may well reveal to us an alternative way of accessing the topic at hand.” The exhibition will also resonate within the UAE public through another facet, Allison remarks. “*Ways of Seeing* is perfect for our teaching mission, for all of our many audiences,” says Allison. “Furthermore, it continues a conversation that our neighbors in the

Louvre Abu Dhabi

(<http://louvreabudhabi.ae>) have highlighted: cultural perspective both connects us, and distinguishes us from each other. We each have our own ‘way of seeing’ depending on our background and context. And yet, these objects and installations can speak to us, each in different ways, across cultural divides. My hope is that viewers will alternately enjoy and be challenged by the different

ways of seeing art that this exhibition offers, and leave the experience reflecting on their own different ways of seeing the world around us.”

Nyuad-artgallery.org (<http://Nyuad-artgallery.org>)

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