



## **Jameel Arts Centre, designed by award-winning Serie Architects, opens in Dubai; Centre offers curated exhibitions, installations and commissions and acts as a hub for educational and research initiatives**

- Set on Jaddaf Waterfront, Dubai, the 10,000-square-metre space designed by Serie Architects responds to the surrounding urban landscape and the Centre's mission to be open and inclusive
- The contemporary arts institution features 10 gallery spaces; the UAE's first open-access arts library and resource centre; 7 desert gardens designed by landscape architect Anouk Vogel; commissions, studio and events spaces; a restaurant and shop
- Curated exhibitions and commissions are paired with knowledge-generating programmes such as talks, research projects and symposia
- An open-air sculpture park created by Dubai-based architects ibda design serves as a bridge between the Centre and the surrounding Jaddaf Corniche

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates | November 10, 2018** – Today marks the opening of the much-anticipated [Jameel Arts Centre](#), an innovative cultural destination developed by [Art Jameel](#), the independent organisation that supports arts, education and heritage in the Middle East. Designed as a 10,000-square-metre, three-storey, multi-disciplinary space by UK-based **Serie Architects**, Jameel Arts Centre is the first non-governmental contemporary arts institution of its kind in the Gulf.

The *kunsthalle*-inspired complex includes more than 1,000 square metres of dedicated gallery space, plus a 300-square-metre open-access research centre; events and screening spaces; a roof terrace; a restaurant; and a book and design shop. The Centre's adaptable-spaces reflect Art Jameel's commitment to diverse programming across mediums and nurturing artist careers, as the galleries are deliberately designed in a variety of sizes and volumetric proportions to allow a flexible range of settings for exhibitions, site-specific installations and new commissions.

Awarded to Serie Architects in 2014 through an international invitational competition, the design of Jameel Arts Centre was initially conceived of as a family of forms bounded by a low colonnade. Inspiration for the building's massing and spatiality draws from two regional architectural traditions on both intimate and community-wide scales: the early Emirati *Sha'abi* houses that featured a series of rooms circling a courtyard, and the *Madinat* style of city planning characterised by an accumulation of houses with courtyards. Through a repeated juxtaposition of geometric forms and gardens, the Centre's design fragments and tessellates the courtyard, continually layering a relationship between inside and outside, art and nature.

**Christopher Lee**, Principal of Serie Architects, explained “We worked very closely with Art Jameel, listening to their needs, responding with architectural ideas, and discursively refining them. The architecture that emerged is one that is able to accommodate a wide range of uses and continues to evolve with the city it serves. It acts as a background structure for the life of the centre to unfold, without disappearing from view. Positioning galleries around courtyard gardens and framed views of the waterfront also serves to create moments of rest and connection, while providing potential spaces for commissioned installations.”

Expanding beyond the static white cube experience, the Centre’s design emphasises a connection with the surroundings, a perspective lived out in Art Jameel’s programming. Set on a sliver of land that reaches out into Dubai Creek, Jameel Arts Centre is at once connected to and separated from the iconic skyscraper-filled skyline of Dubai. Colonnades create a porous interface between intimate gallery spaces and the social life of the public waterfront promenade, inviting visitors to navigate through and along the space. The decision to overlay galleries also serves to provide sightlines to several spaces from a single vantage point – be it a garden or another exhibition space – continually building connections between spaces and initiating conversation among viewers. The building’s surfaces incorporate an interplay between raw concrete and semi-reflective aluminium cladding, creating a subtle shimmer in response to the surrounding water and atmospheric changes, while its clustered form creates self-shading courtyards and allows for cross ventilation.

The series of courtyard desert gardens that punctuate the architecture ensure that alternating encounters of art and landscape remain integral to the experience of the building, encouraging moments of repose. Designed by renowned landscape architect **Anouk Vogel**, Jameel Arts Centre’s seven garden installations reflect specific local and global desert biomes, with 33 species represented. The gardens feature a collection of sculptural plants native to the world’s deserts, while striking vegetal textures, subtle mineral hues and unusual paving provide each garden with a unique character. The distinct vegetation includes several endangered plants facing loss of habitat that have been individually saved from sites marked for destruction; the rare transplants include a Sesame Bush that is between 220 and 300 years old.

Anouk Vogel, landscape architect, said “Plants grow according to geological and climatological borders, not political ones. Drawing connections across the globe, the individual gardens are inspired on the world’s major deserts: the Arabian, Australian, Chihuahuan, Namibian, Socotran and Sonoran deserts, as well as the Spiny Forest of Madagascar. The juxtaposition of their strong and radically different expressions enhance each space’s particular features, echoing the Centre’s focus on confluence and diverse communities.”

The gardens also provide inspiration to a range of commissions and interventions debuting at the opening. On the roof terrace is the winning *Art Jameel Commissions: Sculpture* installation by Kuwaiti



artists **Alia Farid and Aseel AlYaqoub**, entitled *Contrary Life: A Botanical Light Garden Devoted to Trees*. **Shaikha Al Mazrou** presents the first in an annual series of commissioned projects for the Artist's Garden, and a sculptural work by **Vikram Divecha** will be installed within the garden spaces in the coming months.

The colonnade is an active social space, framing gardens and enlivening the waterfront promenade. The combination of garden and art continues outside to Jaddaf Waterfront Sculpture Park, the first open-air art park located in the heart of the city, and a collaboration between Art Jameel and Dubai Holding, the master-developer of the wider Jaddaf Waterfront area. Created by the award-winning, UAE based architecture studio **ibda design**, the park serves as a bridge between the public corniche circling Jaddaf Waterfront and Jameel Arts Centre. Its undulating forms curve around large-scale installations, echoing the flow of the waterfront around the building itself. Inaugural sculptures positioned in the Park include works by **Helaine Blumenfeld, Talin Hazbar and Latifa Saeed, Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim, David Nash, and Slavs and Tatars**.

Antonia Carver, Director of Art Jameel, reflected, "Our first permanent space, Jameel Arts Centre ushers in a new phase of development for Art Jameel, allowing us to expand our programmes, develop new partnerships and share the Collection with wide audiences. We've worked exceptionally closely with Serie Architecture and ibda design, developing the Centre and Park as flexible, open spaces that foreground the needs of artists and audiences. The collaborative, innovative approach of the architects sets up Jameel Arts Centre to fulfill its mission -- to present dynamic, thought-provoking exhibitions, act as a hub for educational and research initiatives, and continue to engage in partnerships with local, regional and international artists, curators and organisations."

Further details on **Jameel Arts Centre** can be found [here](#).

Further details on **Jaddaf Waterfront Sculpture Park** can be found [here](#).

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For more information visit [www.artjameel.org](http://www.artjameel.org) and [jameelartscentre.org](http://jameelartscentre.org) and join the conversation:

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### **About Art Jameel**

Art Jameel supports artists and creative communities. Current initiatives include running heritage institutes and restoration programmes, plus a broad range of arts and educational initiatives for all ages. The organisation's programmes foster the role of the arts in building open, connected communities; at a time of flux and dramatic societal shifts, this role is understood as more crucial than ever.

Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include [Delfina Foundation](#), the [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#), the [Prince's School of Traditional Arts](#) and [the Victoria and Albert Museum](#). Locally, the organisation works with individuals and organisations to develop innovative programming that embraces both ancient and new technologies, and encourages entrepreneurship and the development of cultural networks.

Art Jameel is positioned alongside [Community Jameel](#), and complements its sister organisation's work in promoting positive social change, job creation and poverty alleviation across the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey.

[www.artjameel.org](http://www.artjameel.org)

### **About Jameel Arts Centre**

One of the first contemporary arts institutions in Dubai, [Jameel Arts Centre](#) presents curated solo and group exhibitions, drawn both from the Jameel Art Collection and through regional and international collaborations. The Centre is a 10,000-square metre, three-storey, multi-disciplinary space designed by UK-based practice Serie Architects. The building is punctuated by seven gardens, designed by landscape architect Anouk Vogel, which reflect local and global desert biomes.

Located by the creek in Dubai's Jaddaf Waterfront neighbourhood, the Centre's galleries are complemented by the Jameel Library, an open-access research centre dedicated to artists and cultural movements in the Gulf states and beyond. The Centre also includes project and commissions spaces, a writer's studio, a restaurant and shop.



The Centre serves as a hub for educational and research initiatives for diverse audiences. Its wider programming embraces partnerships with local, regional and international artists, curators and organisations.

#### **About Serie Architects**

United Kingdom-based Serie Architects, led by Christopher Lee, is an international practice specialising in architecture, urban design and research, whose portfolio includes projects in the UK, Singapore, India, China, and the Middle East. Serie has gained a reputation for designing distinctive buildings in the public realm, with a special focus on cultural, civic and educational building. Serie has won a number of high profile design competitions, including the BMW London 2012 Olympic Pavilion, the Singapore State Courts Complex, and the National University of Singapore School of Architecture. In 2010, Serie Architects won the 'Young Architect of the Year Award'.

For further information: <http://www.serie.co.uk/>

#### **About Anouk Vogel**

Anouk Vogel's work focuses on international and cultural projects ranging from gardens to pavilions, bridges, furniture, temporary installations, sculptures and autonomous work. Swiss-born, she studied landscape architecture in England before moving to the Netherlands. In 2007 she founded her own practice in Amsterdam. In 2009 she won the competition for the new furniture of the Vondelpark, a Dutch National Heritage Site and in 2010 she was one of the finalists of the prestigious Prix de Rome for Architecture. For the Expo in Milan 2015 she designed the National Pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain in collaboration with Studio Anne Holtrop. Anouk Vogel has taught at several design schools, including at the Eindhoven Design Academy and the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture.

For further information: <http://www.anoukvogel.nl/>