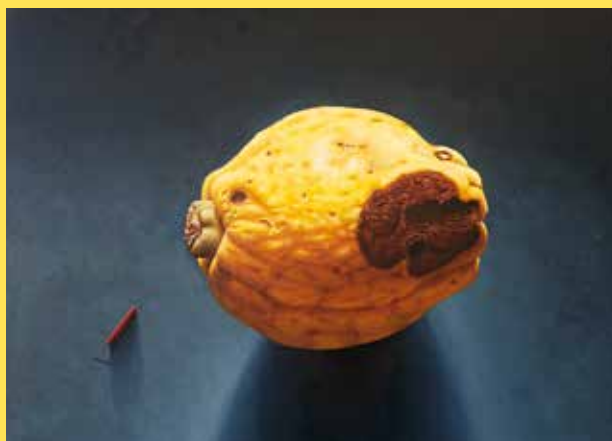


FANN A PORTER IS AIMING to widen a quiet path in the local art and design scene through adopting a new gallery model and launching a fresh initiative focused on sustainability, accessibility and transparency for, as its name suggests, all. “As a community engagement space, we receive broad audiences,” says Ghada Kunash, The Workshop owner and managing partner. Noting the lack of all-inclusivity for those outside of the creative world and market, she initiated Art For All Collective. Established to recalibrate the perception and engagement of the public, it will feature a people-centric philosophy and multi-disciplinary programming that will foster local and international cultural exchange via exhibitions, artist and studio tours, trips to global art institutions, and artist-hosted events. “The circle of life for a sustainable creative environment can only be maintained through support of artists, galleries and collectors,” she says, emphasising the criticality of egalitarian support of both emerging and established.

Aligning The Workshop’s efforts with visitor-friendly arts economy, “a sustainable creative environment is one built on long-term

commitment, an inclusive approach that not only caters to a small percentage of elite market, but to those who could set aside a monthly investment towards purchasing art,” she explains. “It should not be based on false impressions from hype, auctions or ‘branded’ artists and galleries.” Kunash’s straightforward approach applies equally to financials, of which AFA will incorporate bespoke installment plans

Othman Moussa. *Quince* from the *Terrorism* series. 2017. oil on canvas. 100x100cm.



as well as membership benefits. “There needs to be a transparent pricing model for art to prevent art bubbles—price manipulation causes distortions, shortages and inefficiency.”

Believing that the quality and reach of regional artists, international artists who show locally, and the number of collectors—burgeoning and established—are linked, Kunash reinforces that the outreach platform AFA provides can only be successful through the three tiers of availability, accessibility and affordability—in short, an antithetical model that combats collector fatigue and promotes arts awareness and education. AFA strategically blurs commercial and non-commercial boundaries in favour of a non-hierarchical approach to art education, production, appreciation and acquisition aimed to appeal to the public rather than just the art industry. “As the market shifts, the conversations shift too,” says Kunash. “We really need to listen to audiences and market demands. There is a demand for people that want to have flexibility. Abroad, we have art loans, which we don’t necessarily have here, but I think overall inclusivity is what we lack. We need to consider all different kinds of collectors, we don’t have to just direct a new collector to editions or low quality ‘affordable’ art.” She is quick to clarify that affordable art doesn’t equate compromised art, as is often connoted, and part of AFA’s mission is to illuminate this.

This new direction in a scene only beginning to tackle it has its challenges. “Many welcome the idea and show total cooperation and participation, while others are convinced that art is not for all,” reveals Kunash, which only strengthens her drive to foster an environment where art appreciation transcends deep pockets and industry savvy. “AFA will serve as an education link to anyone with an interest in art and collecting; it’s not an invitation-only club,” she says. “I am hoping others join us and adapt this model—it’s a collective endeavour to help good artists

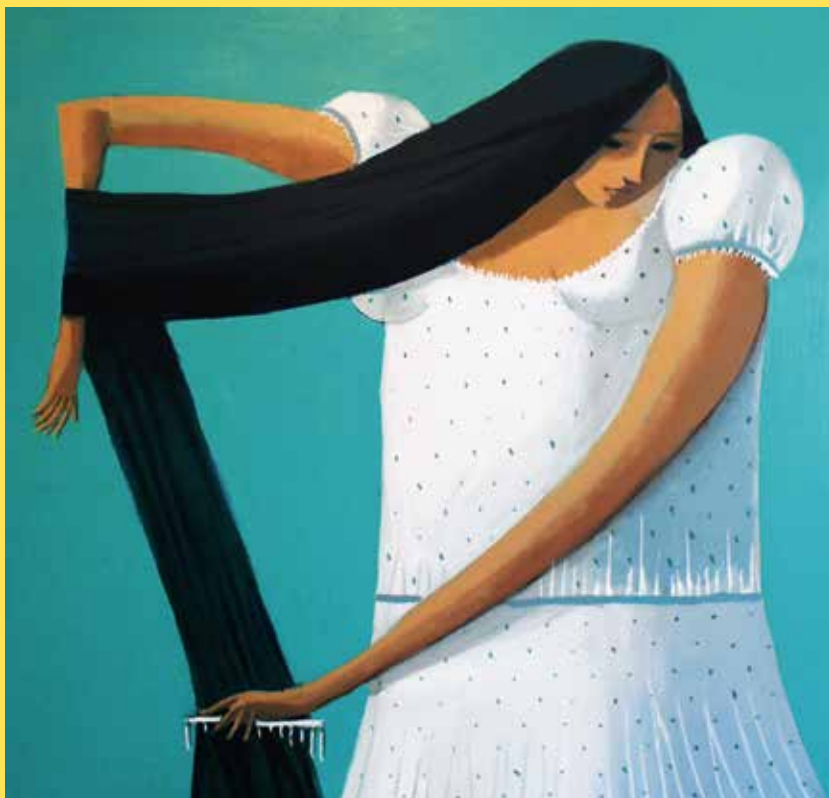
keep going and have more collectors emerge, existing galleries keep their doors open and new galleries appear.”

Continuing to build its programming, AFA’s inaugural September exhibition, AFA Collective (25 September-7 November) at Fann A Porter will showcase artists from the Middle East, Iran and Europe, then host a tour artist Majd Kurdieh’s Lebanon studio and a special design exhibition in Dubai in November 2019. ■

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RETHINKING SUSTAINABILITY

Dubai-based gallery Fann A Porter at The Workshop launches a new initiative rooted in sustainability, Art For All Collective (AFA), modeled on transparency and accessibility across the art and design spheres, reports Katrina Kufer



Annie Kurkdjian. *Untitled*. 2017. Acrylic on canvas. 80x80cm. Below: Ghada Kunash, Founder and Managing Director at The Workshop, Dubai



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