



Hashel Al Lamki

Lucy, 2022

Painting and sound installation. Oil, natural pigment, oil pastels, ink, on linen, 55 x 77cm each, and 390 x 120 cm each. Sound editor, Yoichi Kamimura.

Installation view at HOTEL ACAO ANNEX, Atami, Japan. Part of "East-East: UAE meets Japan Vol.5, Atami Blues" curated by Sophie Mayuko Arni, 3 - 27 November 2022. Photo by Naoki Takehisa, courtesy of ATAMI ART GRANT.

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For East - East 東 - قورشلا: UAE meets Japan Vol. 5, Atami Blues, Emirati visual artist Hashel Al Lamki has produced a site-specific, immersive installation entitled *Lucy*. The body of work produced using natural pigments absorbed from the Middle East region on pillowcases and Haitian ceremonial cloth embodies dualities of luxury and hardship, labor and leisure, surrealism and reality.

While this exhibition aims to celebrate 50 years of cultural ties between the UAE and Japan, Al Lamki zooms out from this fixed period of time to explore the social, cultural and evolutionary shifts that have contributed to this context. Al Lamki takes the pearl, a reminder of the UAE's historic legacy of pearl diving, as his subject matter and point of departure for a journey that crosses generations, cultures, and geographies.

The title of this series, *Lucy* makes reference to the 3.2 million-year-old fossil skeleton considered to be the oldest example of a human ancestor, discovered in East Africa in 1974. Al Lamki moves on from early humanity to charter multiple modes of human expression and experiences from the Renaissance period to the rise of the leisure class. Interwoven throughout all of these works is the notion that the pearl is a subject of both lust and labor. It's an object that has most commonly been used for decorative purposes yet invested with ever-shifting social significance and asymmetrical human relationships. The pearl has been a symbol of purity, wisdom, wealth, regality, and mourning with these ideas shifting according to time and place yet it has also been the embodiment of labor and hardship for those tasked with capturing it.

Al Lamki ushers the viewer on dual journeys around a series of 16 hanging works painted with fluid jewel tones produced on non-conventional canvases. One side of the exhibition reveals a series of abstract works that have been produced upon pillowcases; a material that signifies the dreamlike state the artist enters into while producing. The other collection of works has been produced upon Haitian ceremonial cloth and offers up more realistic depictions laced with references to the pearl's historic significance and social role.

Among the representational works, one can encounter the artist's expressionistic reinterpretation of historic pieces such as *The Parable of the Precious Pearl* by Domenico Fetti and Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. By deconstructing such historic approaches to painting the artist aims to probe at hierarchies established in the western art canon. Other works reveal contemporary local scenes. One work depicts a *dhow* filled with pearl divers setting assail from the shores of Abu Dhabi; the piece forms a stark contrast to other depictions which include an antique natural pearl necklace bestowed upon Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum and a vintage 1914 Cartier pearl and diamond tiara, exhibited at the Louvre Abu Dhabi's 2019 exhibition *10,000 Years of Luxury*.

Al Lamki's installation is accompanied by an audio composition produced with the support of sound artist Yoichi Kamimura. The piece offers up the soothing rhythms of the sea layered upon the harmonies of the pearl divers' *fijiri* chants. The tradition of *fijiri* chants – or Arab sea music – comes from the pearl divers' songs at sea which are often interpreted as expressions of fraternity and faith, developed by the brotherly bonds that grew on dhow ships. These men, about to embark upon a hazardous three-month journey in search of pearls embody the notion that life is often invested with periods of struggle and hardship that human connection might help us to overcome. The setting that the exhibition takes place in, the hotel's Salon de Kinrin, which has seen many weddings and gorgeous pearl necklaces, signifies opposing facets of life: moments of celebration, ceremony, decadence, and indulgence.

Hashel Al Lamki (b. 1986, Al Ain; based in Abu Dhabi)

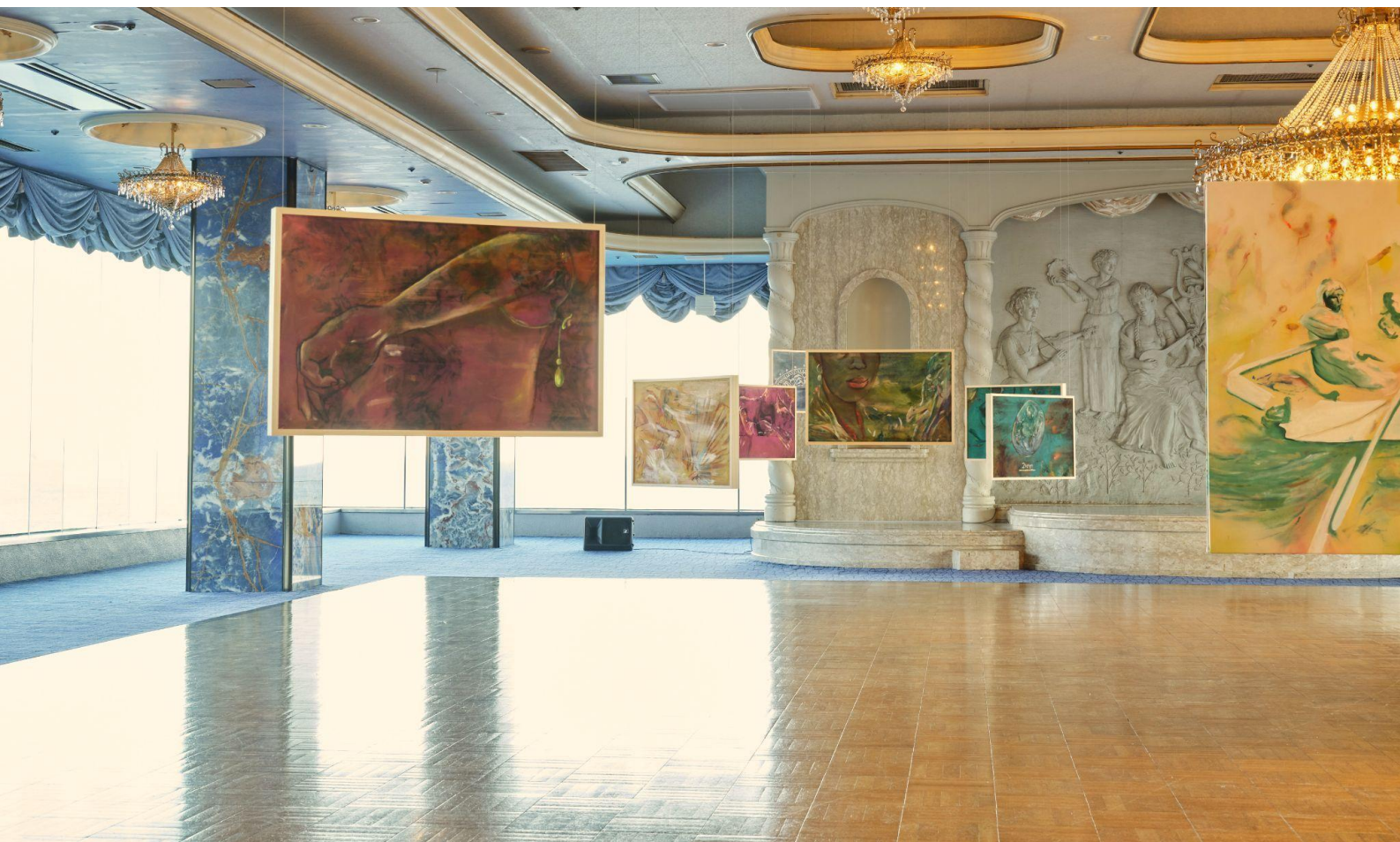
Hashel Al Lamki is a painter and multi-disciplinary artist, whose work unpacks the relationship between humankind and their habitat, the wild and constructed. Born in the shadow of the monumental Jebel Hafeet mountain in Al Ain, Al Lamki bore witness to the complex social and spatial dynamics that followed exponential development in the Gulf. Al Ain's Bedouin culture and distinct social values, its archaeological sites and rugged terrain formed a stark contrast to the rapid industrial and architectural growth that Al Lamki observed in the neighbouring Emirates. In 2011 Al Lamki received his BFA from Parsons School of Design The New School, New York City. After seven years in New York Al Lamki went on to live between Amsterdam, Netherlands and Taos, New Mexico where he immersed himself in solution-finding for post-consumerism waste. Lamki exhibited widely in the UAE and internationally, notably at the 16th Biennale de Lyon (2022) and with Beyond Emerging Artists with Abu Dhabi Art during the Venice Biennale (2022). His solo exhibitions include "Sensu Lato" at Tabari Art Space (Dubai, 2022), "Port Authority" at Foundry Downtown (Dubai, 2021), "Pulse" at Jossa by Alserkal (Dubai, 2021), and "The Cup and The Saucer" at Warehouse421 (Abu Dhabi, 2020).





Hashel Al Lamki, Lucy, 2022. Sound in collaboration with Yoichi Kamimura. Installation view at HOTEL ACAO ANNEX, Atami, Japan for ATAMI ART GRANT 2022. Part of "East-East: UAE meets Japan Vol.5, Atami Blues". Curated by Sophie Mayuko Arni. Photo by Muramatsu. Courtesy of ATAMI ART GRANT 2022.





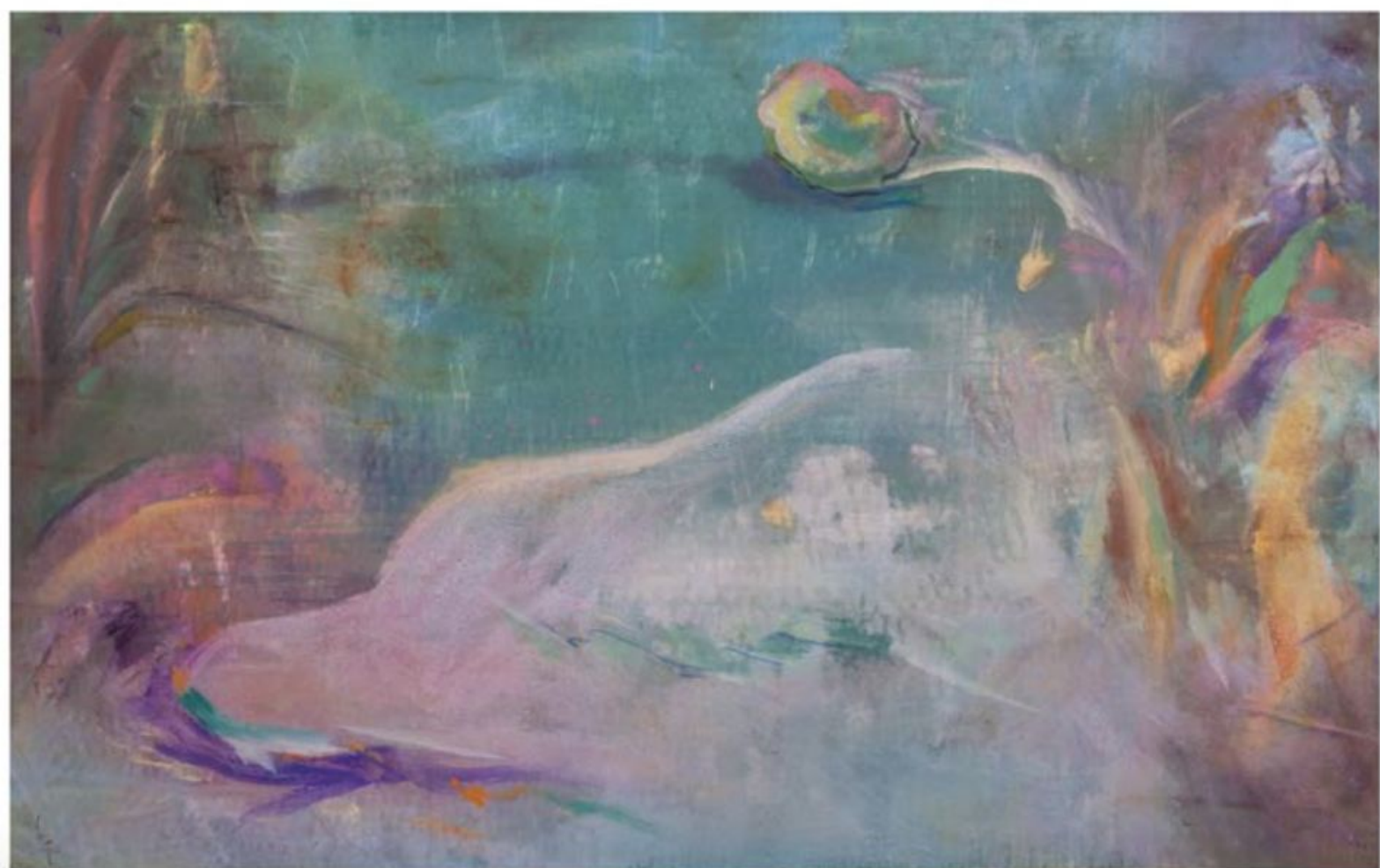
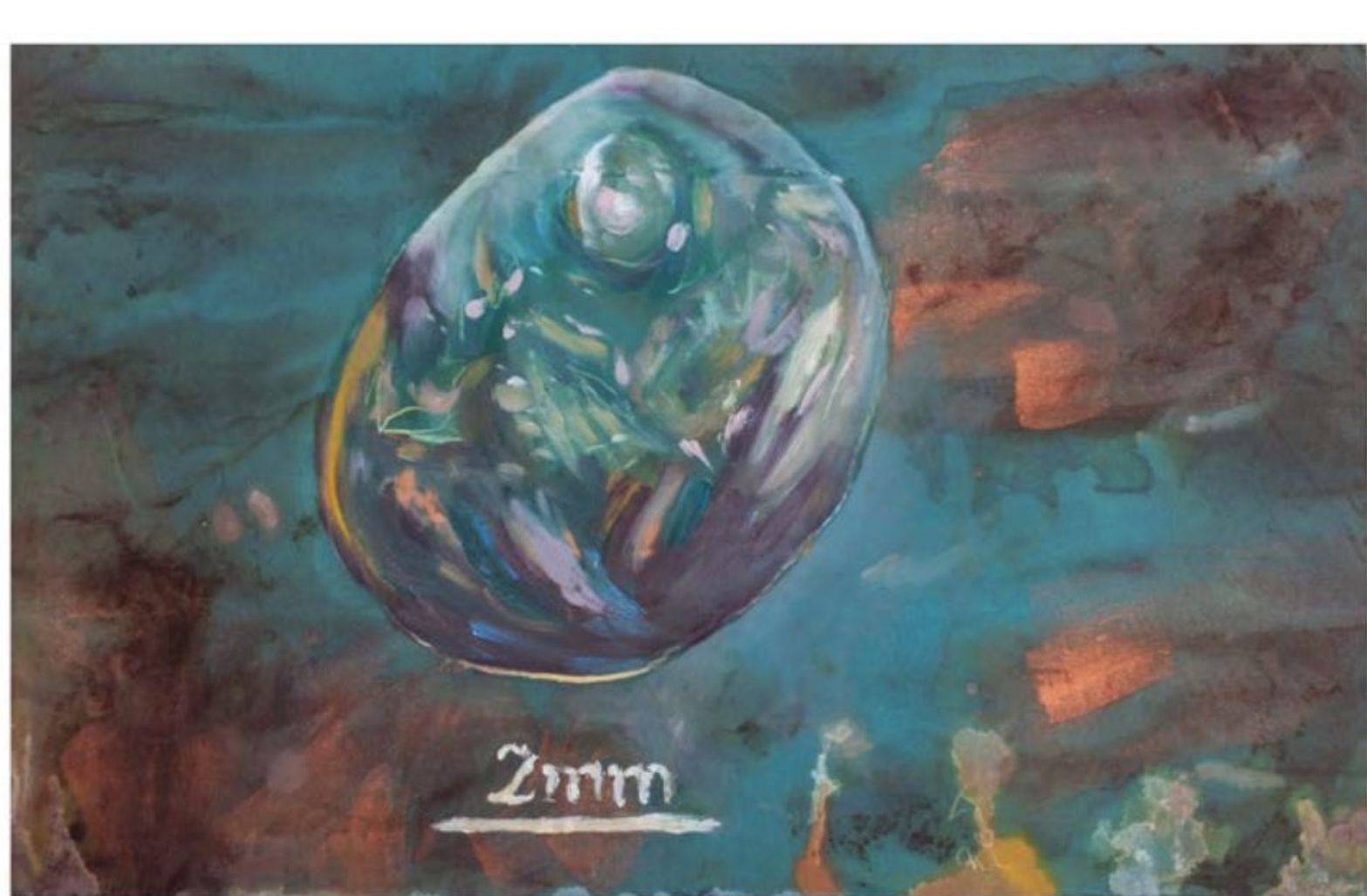
Hashel Al Lamki, Lucy, 2022. Sound in collaboration with Yoichi Kamimura. Installation view at HOTEL ACAA ANNEX, Atami, Japan for ATAMI ART GRANT 2022. Part of "East-East: UAE meets Japan Vol.5, Atami Blues". Curated by Sophie Mayuko Arni. Photo by Muramatsu. Courtesy of ATAMI ART GRANT 2022.



Hashel Al Lamki, Lucy, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.



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East-East: UAE meets Japan Vol.5, Atami Blues

Foreword

Walking through the halls of ACAO SPA & RESORT made me reflect on the afterlife of luxury resorts. Materiality in all its grandeur – here, we celebrate the afterlife of man-made ornaments decorating a 19-floor hotel, an architectural wonder built off a cliff in Atami, Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan.

Atami is a historical seaside resort town, famous for its onsen hot springs, appreciated by many for over a thousand years. We are here today in ACAO SPA & RESORT, founded almost 60 years ago, which stands as one of the most famous hotels built in Atami during Japan's postwar economic boom. Atami's economic growth and transportation routes have increased tourism and led to the construction of magnificent hotel structures on grounds that have developed naturally over thousands of years.

The same can be said about the Arabian Peninsula today. Stepping into this hotel reminded me instantly of the United Arab Emirates, a place I called home for many years. The UAE has seen the construction of multiple luxury resorts built since the country's unification in 1971. The coasts of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, but also Fujairah, and Ras al Khaimah resonate with Atami's baroque, luxurious interiors, and dramatic natural landscapes.

In this context, this exhibition brings together artists based in the UAE and Japan to come together in Atami, in a time capsule of bubble-era Japan which interestingly mirrors the taste of homes and hotels built in the UAE from the 1980s to today.

Inspired by the title of the 1962 Donald Richie's short film, *Atami Blues* sets forward a cinematic exhibition. We invite you to discover site-specific installations by eight artists spanning hotel rooms from onsen baths to royal suites to grand dining halls. Behind shiny chandeliers, elaborate wallpapers, and velvet sofas, artists will show us there is more than meets the eye.

The works in this exhibition highlight stories of migration, childhood, language, innovation, and community-building on the shores of the Arabian Gulf and the Pacific Ocean. Throughout installations unfolding like a film script written by artists, the exhibition showcases different ways Arab and Japanese artists have interacted with their sea shores, from meditating on their movement to building interiors and bathhouses, diving for pearls, and researching new materials made out of the sea's natural gifts.

This exhibition is held in 2022, celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates and Japan. It is also the fifth edition of the "East-East: UAE meets Japan" exhibition series I started in 2016 in Abu Dhabi to bridge the UAE and Japan through artistic exchanges. As artists and I have inhabited this hotel space and discovered new senses of self, we also hope for the audience to create their new souvenirs based on these interiors, to build their own East-East escapades.

Sophie Mayuko Arni



About Sophie Mayuko Arni

Sophie Mayuko Arni (b.1995, Geneva, Switzerland; based in Tokyo) is a curator and editor whose work centers on the globalization of contemporary art practices. She is the curator of the "East-East: UAE meets Japan" exhibition series, which she has brought to NYU Abu Dhabi Project Space (Abu Dhabi, 2016), CHI-KA Space (Dubai, 2016-17), HB Nezu (Tokyo, 2021), ILY Hub (Tokyo, 2021), and BLOCK HOUSE (Tokyo, 2021). As Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *Global Art Daily*, she oversees the publication of digital publications on the art scenes of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Tokyo, New York, and Istanbul, amongst other cities. Sophie graduated with a B.A. in Art & Art History from New York University Abu Dhabi and graduated with an MPhil in Arts Studies and Curatorial Practices from the Graduate School of Global Arts at Tokyo University of the Arts.



Atami Blues

Title

East - East UAE meets Japan, Vol. 5: Atami Blues

Curator

Sophie Mayuko Arni

Artists

Bady Dalloul, Rintaro Fuse, Lamya Gargash, GROUP, Shaikha Al Ketbi,
Hashel Al Lamki, Nimyu, waiwai research and design agency

Date

November 3 – 27, 2022

Venue

HOTEL ACAO ANNEX,
1993-250 Atami, Atami City, Shizuoka Prefecture 413-855, Japan

Supported by

ATAMI ART GRANT 2022, part of PROJECT ATAMI

Media Partner

Arab News Japan

Endorsement

Official Recognition by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Commemorative Event
for the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between
Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)



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Exhibition Installation

TRNK

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PROJECT ATAMI SECRETARIAT,
Hazumi Takeuchi, Nanana Kammuri, Haruka Ito

About ATAMI ART GRANT 2022

ATAMI ART GRANT 2022 is an art festival held throughout the city of Atami, from Thursday, November 3rd, to Sunday, November 27th, 2022, in Atami's ACAO area, station area, and Ginza-cho area. Held under this year's theme of "渦 Spiral ATAMI", ATAMI ART GRANT 2022 is organized by PROJECT ATAMI. Atami is a historical seaside resort town, famous for its onsen hot springs, appreciated by many for over a thousand years. The art festival gives opportunities for artists to express and transmit the charm of Atami from various angles, through collaboration and exchange. This year, 30 artists and art collectives were selected by the ATAMI ART GRANT 2022 Jury, including acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma and curator Fumio Nanjo, to exhibit new site-specific installations throughout different venues in Atami.



Hashel Al Lamki

Lucy, 2022 - Press, Atami Art Grant 2022



Top: H.E. Shihab AlFaheem, Ambassador of the UAE to Japan, at the opening reception of ATAMI ART GRANT 2022, November 4 2022. Photo by Muramatsu. Image courtesy of ATAMI ART GRANT.
Bottom: ATAMI ART GRANT 2022 Opening day at HOTEL ACAO ANNEX, Atami, Japan. Photo courtesy of ATAMI ART GRANT



GENERAL NEWS

Rediscovering mystique of Atami through art

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By Ryuzo Suzuki / Yomiuri Shimbun Senior Photographer

The installation "Lucy," by Hashel Al Lamki, is on display in the dance hall overlooking the sea in the former Hotel New Akao, the main venue of "Atami Art Grant 2022."

By Ryuzo Suzuki / Yomiuri Shimbun Senior Photographer

11:55 JST, November 20, 2022

ATAMI, Shizuoka — Known since the



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BY THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN

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Dubai TV Coverage, “East-East: UAE meets Japan Vol.5, Atami Blues” - Atami Art Grant 2022 Opening Ceremony November 4, 2022

