

Bassam Freiha Art Foundation marks one-year anniversary with a state-of-the-art expansion and student showcase

The anniversary marked the launch of the Education Gallery, a hub for artists, students and the community to enrich their minds with cultural experiences.

ABU DHABI, ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, April 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This week, [Bassam Freiha Art Foundation](#) (BFAF), the private art foundation on Saadiyat Island, proudly celebrated its one-year anniversary.

Honoring one year of encouraging artistic expression, cultural exchange, and creative dialogue, the anniversary symbolized a significant milestone for the foundation and was marked with a variety of activities and showcases.

Landmark extension

Celebrated with a stunning reception on April 12, the highlight of BFAF's anniversary was the opening of the Education Gallery, the foundation's newly completed expansion. Featuring exhibitions, workshop areas and an outdoor auditorium, the expansion reflects BFAF's commitment to nurturing artistic talent, and its ambition to provide an inspiring space where artists, students and the public can enrich their minds with meaningful cultural experiences.



BFAF marks one-year anniversary with state-of-the-art expansion



Anniversary reception was attended by dignitaries and ministers

New exhibitions

In addition to the first look of the Education Gallery, the anniversary event also featured the launch of a new student showcase by Cranleigh Abu Dhabi, and a sculpture by world-renowned Italian artist Lorenzo Quinn.

Entitled First Impressions, the student showcase brings together diverse and richly imaginative works created by Cranleigh Abu Dhabi students during a series of BFAF art workshops. Inviting youth to explore a variety of artistic approaches, from figurative realism to abstraction, each session was guided by practicing artists and educators. Designed to encourage experimentation and self-expression, the exhibition is available to view until May 11, 2025, and is the first of many similar student showcases which will be exhibited over the coming months and years.



The event marked the launch of the Education Gallery

Meanwhile, the LOVE by Lorenzo Quinn features a monumental sculpture created from stainless steel wire mesh and LED lights. Featuring two hands suspended in an embrace, the sculpture evokes a powerful sense of unity, tenderness, and shared humanity. Designed to reflect the spirit of shared responsibility that embodies the UAE's Year of Community (2025), it offers a visual reminder of the ties that bind us to our communities, and it will be available to view until August, 31, 2025.

A year of success

The anniversary also provided the ideal opportunity for BFAF to look back and reflect on the successes of its first year.

Recognised for its impactful design and vision, and the skillful way it integrates art, culture, and architecture into a cohesive and inspiring space, the foundation was awarded the Design Middle East Award 2024 for Cultural Project of the Year, while its packed program of mentorship sessions, workshops, and educational initiatives continues to be well attended by community members of all ages.

Committed to empowering local, regional and international artists by providing them with a platform for their work, and growing Abu Dhabi's thriving artistic scene, the foundation has also hosted many pivotal exhibitions since its launch in March 2024.

For instance, one of its most memorable collections was Hour Eternal – 20 Years of Emirati

Abstraction. Created in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Culture, and a number of regional artists, collectors, and galleries, it provided audiences with a profound exploration of contemporary Emirati abstract art.

Fascinating Western portrayals of the Orientalist movement from the private collection of H.E. Bassam Freiha were also depicted in the Visions of the Orient: Highlights from the Bassam Freiha Art Collection exhibition, while Mineral Garden featured a thought-provoking exhibition presented in partnership with the Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Most recently, the foundation introduced two new exhibitions by Stefano Simontacchi, the visionary Italian artist more commonly known as 'The Prism'. Curated by PhD philosopher and contemporary art theorist Marco Senaldi, the exhibitions Project Oneness and Trust, Gratitude and Love Journey feature dynamic interplays between form and color, circular compositions, and reflective surfaces. Accompanied by a program of wellness experiences, including sound healing sessions, guided meditations, yoga experiences, artist talks and interactive workshops, The Prism is available to experience until August 31.

Michaela Watrelot PhD, Curator and Director of Exhibitions at Bassam Freiha Art Foundation, said: "It is with immense pride that we celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Bassam Freiha Art Foundation. Over the past 12 months, we have demonstrated the transformative power of art through a variety of world-class exhibitions, educational initiatives, and public workshops, which have helped to support the growth of our artistic community since we first opened our doors. Our new expansion demonstrates our commitment to showcasing the work of the region's emerging talents in front of a global audience, and our dedication to making art accessible to all, fostering emerging talent, and developing Abu Dhabi's creative community. With this new facility we will be able to offer incredible experiences than ever before, while our new student showcase marks the beginning of a series of other similar student exhibitions that shine a light on the emirate's young and emerging talents. I want to thank everyone who has supported us on our journey so far, and I look forward to embarking on another exciting and successful year at the Bassam Freiha Art Foundation."

For more information, please visit the foundation's website: bfaf.ae.

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