

O-Contemporary in partnership with Baró Galeria Hosts Grand Opening for their New Contemporary Art Gallery in Abu Dhabi

The Other Side of the Moon | May 16 - Sep 1, 2025

Nahil Building - B - Shop# 2, Tawi Ar Riwaydah, Zayed Sports City, Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi



Abu Dhabi, May 16, 2025 – O-Contemporary, founded by His Excellency Dr. Obaid Al Ketbi in 2024 in partnership with Baró Galeria, founded by María Baró in 1999, proudly announces the launch of the first international contemporary art gallery in Abu Dhabi. This collaboration aims to create cultural bridges and foster dialogue between cultures, bringing together established and emerging artists from both the Middle East and the West, while also promoting regional art to an international level.

For the Grand Opening, the galleries invite you to *The Other Side of the Moon*, a group exhibition curated by Esmeralda Gómez Galera, Elena Belolípetskaia, and Mohammed Al Saqqa. *The Other Side of the Moon* marks the Grand Opening of a new cultural space in Abu Dhabi, inaugurated by Baró Galeria in collaboration with O-Contemporary. This group exhibition brings together artists from seven different countries, inviting visitors to follow a movement that shifts from the immediate landscapes around us to the distant realms of the cosmos.

Featuring works by artist such as Latifa Saeed, Adrian Pepe, Abdus Salaam, Mano Pernalva, Jorge Rosano Gamboa, Tamara Kalo, Gary Hill, Mohammed Kazem, Christopher Benton, Néstor García, Elias Crespín, Eduardo Kac, Rasheed Araeen, and more - The exhibition unfolds across three interconnected chapters: from the immediacy of sand, desert, and surrounding landscape, to the human experience of wonder and searching, and finally to the mysteries of the Moon and the universe beyond.

At the heart of the exhibition lies the concept of *Insān* — the human being as a seeker, defined by the constant quest for the unknown. Through sculpture, installation, video, and mixed media, the participating artists explore how this restless impulse shapes our relationship with the environment, memory, and the cosmos.

In the first chapter, visitors encounter works that engage directly with the tangible — the materiality of sand, the tension of gravitational forces, and the vastness of the desert. As the exhibition progresses, the focus shifts inward, toward human perception and longing: how we construct meaning through exploration, how absence, memory, and imagination shape what we see. Finally, the exhibition expands outward again, toward the sky — to the Moon as both a real celestial body and an enduring symbol of distance, dreams, and discovery.

Set in Abu Dhabi, under the light of the very Moon that has inspired poets, scientists, and dreamers for millennia, *The Other Side of the Moon* invites viewers to reflect on what connects the known and the unknown. The exhibition echoes, quietly but insistently, the spirit of exploration and reflection. In that subtle tension between technology and poetry, between outer space and inner gravity, it challenges us to reconsider what we choose to illuminate — and what we leave in shadow.

May 16 - Sep 1, 2025

9:00 - 17:30

Nahil Building - B - Shop# 2, Tawi Ar Riwaydah, Zayed Sports City, Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi



Latifa Saeed Diminishing Landscapes series, 2020 | Sand, glass panels (Each)

Latifa Saeed Dust Devil III [Air], 2023 | MixMedia

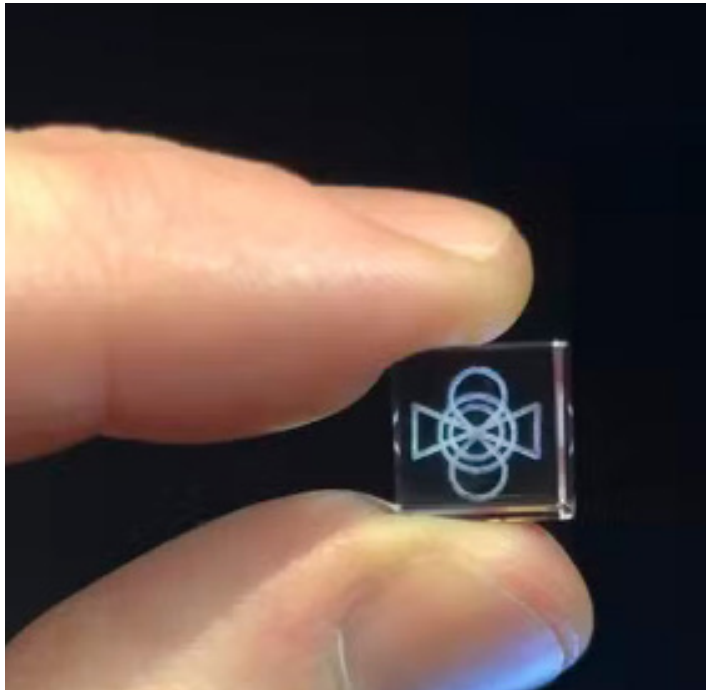
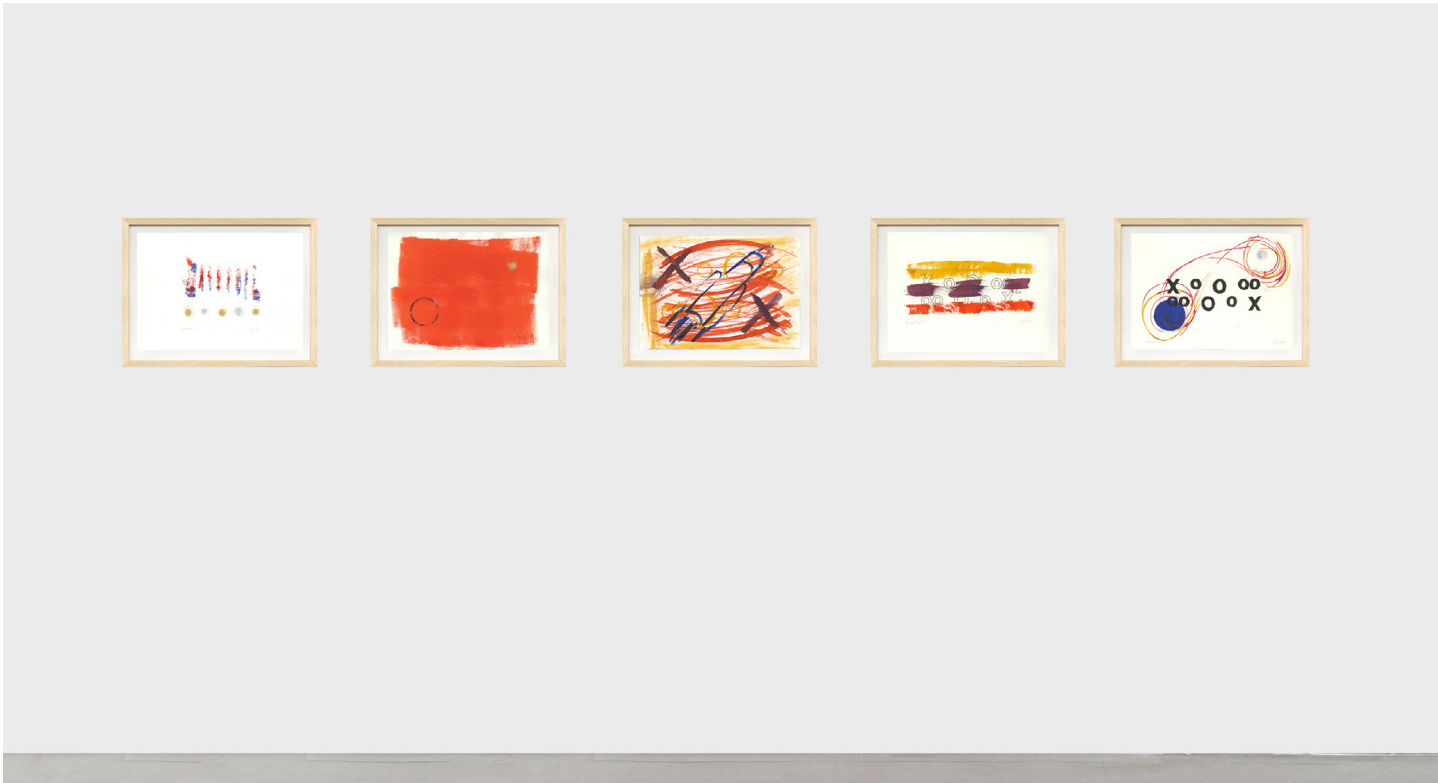
Latifa Saeed Portals series, 2024-2025 | Sand, graphite, charcoal, ink on linen canvas (Each)

Latifa Saeed works between installation, sculpture and design. Her environmental approach articulates different ecosystems including natural, urban and technological. Her works most often seek a specific poetics of science; inviting us to dwell between the city, the desert and the stars. Her new installation Dust Devils, offers a never seen before technological and sensory experience based on a fundamental cosmogonic narrative. Referring to the mysteries of nature in the age of global warming, rooted in a cultural language that has evolved from the UAE's distinct desert landscape, the installation organizes in three different devices: a smoke machine, LCD screen and an electro-magnetic device. Each translates an atmospheric phenomenon that can be experienced in the desert, through various whirlpools and tornados, where water tornado, air tornado, electromagnetic sand tornado and fire tornado come together. These natural elements metaphorize in a special soundscape composed by the artist and spread at each side of the installation space. Saeed invites us into an sensory experience made of vibrations and spectral images more than anthropomorphic or recognizable representations. In doing so she presents a reminder of the fragility and resilience of the traditional landscape in the critical age of Anthropocene.



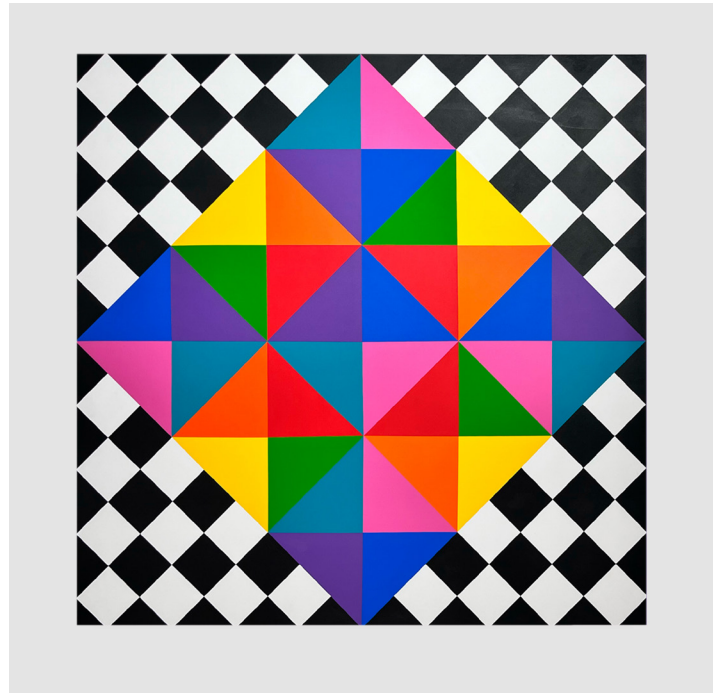
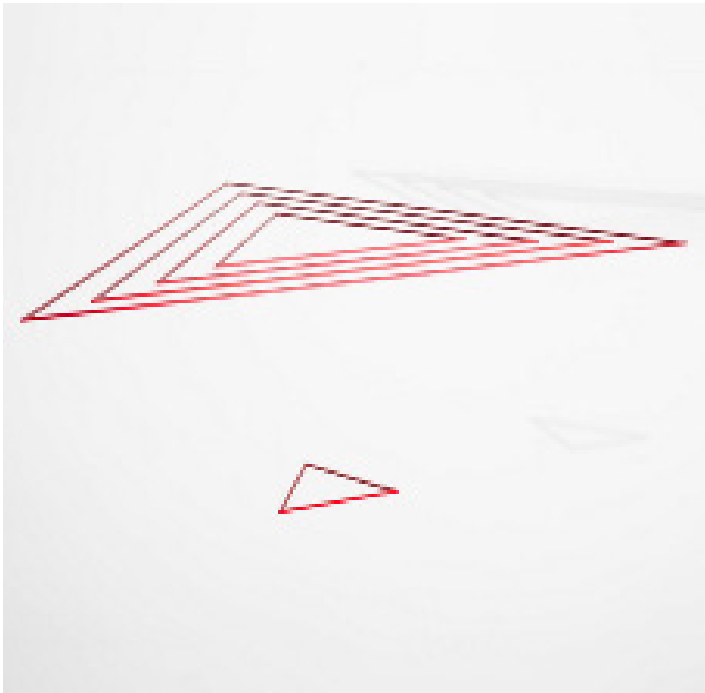
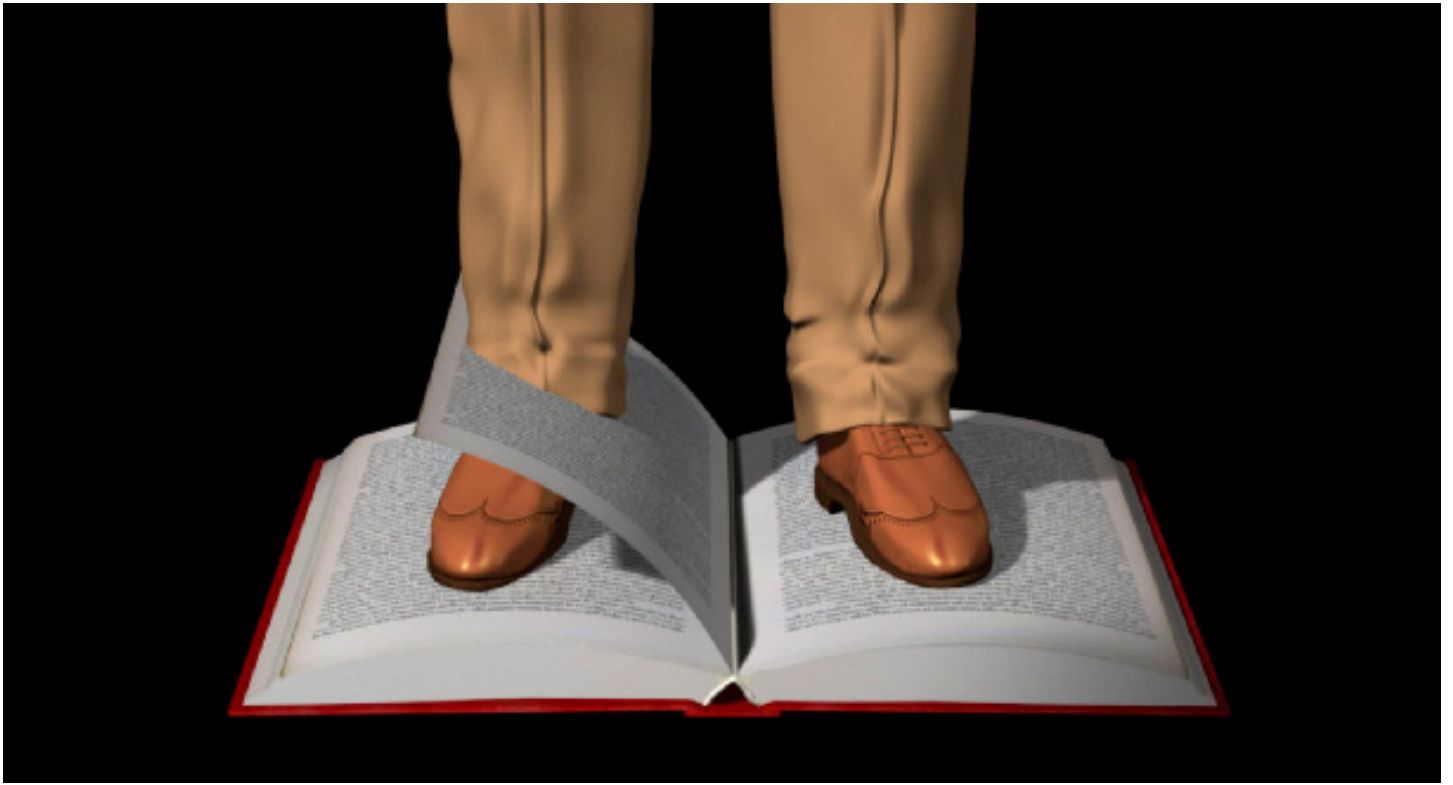
Abdus Salaam Insaan: human being Chapters 1 – 3 series, 2022

The word Insaan translates as human being. The word's roots are *uns*, meaning 'intimate' or 'love', and *nasyia*, meaning 'forgetful', defining the human being as both the intimate one and the forgetful one. Its poetic fragrance is often alluded to by the mystics and scholars of Islam as it so poignantly delivers us to the essence of humanity being that of love, a reality that we often forget within our terrestrial, ethereal and Divine planes. His body of work, made over the course of six weeks in residence during the month-long fast of Ramadan, ties this land and its hominid remains, this river and its polluted state, notions of our global environmental shortcomings alongside intimate and personal moments. It asks if perhaps love — or the reminder of it, being the essence of our being and therefore our sanctuary across multiple planes — might ease the anxieties, tensions, and personal fears that we project outwardly into the echo chamber of forgetfulness.



Eduardo Kac Adsum drawing series, 2022 | Ink on Sennelier D340 paper | 30 x 40 cm
 Adsum, 2019 | Glass sculpture conceived for the Moon (Landed on the Moon in 2025) | Edition: 3 of 5 + AP | 1 x 1 x 1 cm

Adsum is an artwork created by Eduardo Kac in 2019 that explores presence beyond the Earth through the medium of space travel. The title Adsum (Latin for "I am here" or "I am present") encapsulates the core idea of the work: affirming human presence across cosmic distances. In 2024, Adsum was transported to the Moon as part of a private lunar mission. Its successful landing on the Moon marked a groundbreaking moment in the history of space art. By sending a work of art to the lunar surface, Kac expanded the notion of artistic presence, redefining the limits of where and how art can exist. Adsum not only engages with themes of space exploration and communication but also represents a poetic extension of humanity's cultural presence beyond Earth, offering a visionary bridge between art, science, and extraterrestrial environments.



Gary Hill *Big Legs Don't Cry* 2005 | Single-channel video installation, silent.

Elias Crespín *Trianguconcentricos Alu Rouge 50*, 2021 | Painted Aluminium, nylon, motors, computer, electronic interface | 50.5 x 43.5 cm

Rasheed Araeen *Opus TA2* 2016 | Acrylic on Canvas



Adrian Pepe *Malus Sieversii*, 2021 | Awassi wool, silk textile, Chubut Wool, embodied thread

Mano Penalva *Bisel III: como arredondar quinas*, 2023 | Wooden beads, cable and metal rings

Jorge Gamboa *Nenepilli. New Blood Tongue*, 2025 | Wool tapestry dyed with cochineal, made on a pedal loom

Christopher Joshua Benton *Weaver, Machinist, Upholsterer, Garbage Man*, 2021 | Chinese-made majlis fabric offcuts dumpsterdived from shuttered carpet souk store, safety pins



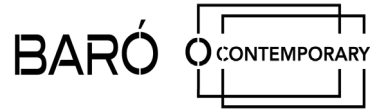
H.E. Dr. Obaid Al Ketbi

His Excellency Dr. Obaid al Ketbi has had a fruitful career; having served as a military general, ambassador to four different countries, and deputy Commander-in-chief for the Abu Dhabi police, among other notable roles distinguishing him as a highly esteemed individual in the region. Today, the former diplomat serves as the founder and chairman of Dr. O Holding Group. Throughout his many titles and roles, Dr. Obaid has always held a profound appreciation for the arts.



Maria Baró

Established in 1999 by the spanish Maria Baró in São Paulo, Brazil, Baró Galeria has become a prestigious international contemporary art gallery, renowned for its influential and pioneering exhibitions. Under Maria Baró's leadership, the gallery has flourished through close collaborations with institutions and artists. Presently representing more than 25 artists from 15 different nationalities, Baró Galeria is dedicated to showcasing contemporary works that resonate on a global scale.



About the Partnership

O-Contemporary, founded by H.E. Dr. Obaid Al Ketbi in 2024, and Baró Galeria, founded by María Baró in 1999, proudly announce the official launch of their new partnership in Abu Dhabi. Following a soft opening earlier this year, the Grand Opening marks a new phase in their collaboration, bringing together internationally acclaimed artists and emerging talents with the exhibition *The Other Side of the Moon*.

This partnership aligns with Abu Dhabi's ambition to become a leading global hub for culture and creativity. Together, O-Contemporary and Baró Galeria combine their expertise to foster meaningful artistic dialogues, connecting global contemporary art practices with the UAE's dynamic cultural landscape.

By connecting global artists with regional talent, this collaboration also supports the vision of Abu Dhabi's Year of the Community 2025, declared by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE. This national initiative highlights the importance of fostering unity, inclusion, and cultural dialogue within the emirate. Through this exhibition, O-Contemporary and Baró Galeria contribute to this vision by creating a space where artistic exchange strengthens community bonds and enriches Abu Dhabi's cultural landscape.

ABOUT BARÓ GALERIA

Established in 1999 by Maria Baró in São Paulo, Brazil, Baró Galeria has emerged as a prestigious international contemporary art gallery, recognized for its influential and pioneering exhibitions. Maria Baró has cultivated a gallery that thrives on close collaborations with institutions and artists. Representing 25 artists from 15 different nationalities, Baró Galeria is committed to showcasing contemporary works that resonate globally.

Baró Galeria made a substantial impact on the Brazilian and Latin American art scene, hosting exhibitions for celebrated artists such as Lygia Clark, David Medalla, Hélio Oiticica, Wilfredo Prieto, and Song Dong. The gallery also featured works by prominent figures like Christian Boltanski, Tatiana Trouvé, Roman Signer, and Dennis Oppenheim, establishing itself as a vital platform for both established and emerging artists.

Expanding its presence, Baró Galeria opened two new spaces in Mallorca in 2021. Located in a historic 17th-century building in Palma's vibrant center, the gallery continues its dynamic program with five major openings annually. This expansion allows Baró to further its mission of showcasing impactful art while fostering dialogues between the Global South and the Mediterranean art scene.

In 2025, Baró Galeria, in partnership with O-Contemporary, marked a new chapter in its history with the opening of a branch in Abu Dhabi. This significant step reflects the gallery's long-standing dedication to the Middle East, strengthened by collaborations with key collections and cultural institutions, as well as participation in the region's main art fairs. The new space not only strengthens Baró's presence in the region but also opens doors to new possibilities, expanding its programming and fostering meaningful connections with both established and emerging local artists. With engaging and inspiring exhibitions, the gallery hopes to reflect the energy and creativity of the Middle East's cultural landscape while staying true to its commitment to artistic innovation and supporting its talented roster of artists on a global stage.

Baró Galeria is an active participant in numerous prestigious international art fairs, including, ARCOmadrid, Art Basel Miami, The Armory Show, Art Dubai, Abu Dhabi Art, ArtBO, ArtRio, Frieze New York, Frieze Masters, Zona Maco, and SP-Arte. This active participation underscores the gallery's dedication to promoting its artists and engaging with the global art community.

REPRESENTED ARTISTS

Rasheed Araeen, Daniel Arsham, assume vivid astro focus, Ayako Rokkaku, Bruno Novelli, Abdus Salaam, Eduardo Kac, Artur Barrio, Lygia Clark, Elias Crespin, Lourival Cuquinha, Jiri Georg Dokoupil, Felipe Ehrenberg, Eugenio Espinoza, mounir fatmi, Sidival Fila, Gary Hill, Zhanna Kadyrova, David Medalla, Erwin Olaf, Oscar Abraham Pabón, Violeta Quispe, Pablo Reinoso, Fernando Renes, Amparo Sard, Citra Sasmita, José María Sicilia, Pablo Siquier, Joana Vasconcelos.

For more information:
www.barogaleria.com

ABOUT O-CONTEMPORARY

O-Contemporary was founded by His Excellency Dr. Obaid Al Ketbi, inspired by Abu Dhabi's vision to invest in and foster the art and culture landscape. With a mission to celebrate the region's rich artistic narrative and amplify the voices of both local and international artists, the initiative was established as a bridge for cultural exchange. It reflects Abu Dhabi's commitment to nurturing artistic excellence and creating meaningful connections that transcend borders.

Based in Abu Dhabi, O-Contemporary is an art platform and advisory forum dedicated to safeguard and promote contemporary art from the MENA region and beyond. Its mission is to support and elevate the works of artists while reflecting the city's universal identity through impactful initiatives. By fostering creativity, collaboration, and innovation, the platform unites artists, collectors, and audiences, enriching Abu Dhabi's cultural landscape and fostering a thriving dialogue with the global art community.

Looking ahead, O-Contemporary aims to strengthen Abu Dhabi's role as a global hub for arts and culture by cultivating partnerships with leading international institutions, developing transformative projects, and engaging the public. With a focus on empowering local talent within the global art scene, the platform strives to leave a lasting legacy, cementing Abu Dhabi's place as a central force in shaping the narrative of art and culture worldwide.

For more information and press request:

elena@ocontemporary.ae

www.ocontemporary.ae