

# A SPECIAL MOMENT FOR THE ARTS IN ABU DHABI

Something remarkable happened in Abu Dhabi last month. Amid all the excitement surrounding Abu Dhabi Art, which normally focuses the public attention firmly on Saadiyat Island, an event took place in a forgotten corner of Mina Zayed that showed just how smart and vibrant Abu Dhabi can be.

Among the dusty warehouses that face the city's dhow harbour, the opening of the capital's latest arts and cultural institution, Warehouse421, was an exciting exercise in intelligent patronage.

The new space is sponsored by the

Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation. With its repeat sponsorship of the UAE National Pavilion at several Venice Biennales and announcement of Thomas Heatherwick's commission as the designer of the yet-to-be-built Al Fayah Park, the Foundation has shown that it has the imagination and nerve to foster creativity that is aesthetically and intellectually progressive.

That verve was further underlined by the opening of the new Bjarke Ingels Group-designed Warehouse421 and a display of work by the fellows from the Salama bint

Hamdan Al Nahyan Emerging Artists Fellowship, a partnership with the world-renowned Rhode Island School of Design.

The foundation's handling of the three-day street festival that accompanied the opening of Warehouse421 – complete with international musical performers, street art, food and public workshops – was proof not just of the taste it displays in the company it keeps, but of its ability to deliver the kind of cultural shot-in-the-arm that Abu Dhabi welcomes and needs.

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