

## **SIKKA LIVE TALK : CELEBRATING OTHERS : A CREATIVE PATH TO A CIVILIZATION OF TOLERANCE AND FRATERNITY**

CHI-KA celebrates cross-cultural bridges that connect our civilization through its creative means.

As long as our investigative approach is linked with profound interest, compassion, excitement, openness, and a desire to learn and hear each other, we will renounce judgment and find that any two given cultural points of reference truly reveal our common human origins.

We have been connected since the beginning of time. Where others see walls we see bridges. Where others see differences we see complementarities. These bridges we highlight through art, design, performance, technology, food and other diverse collaborations - sourced from our mothership in Alserkal Avenue in Dubai. We have been incarnating this evidence by revealing the bonds, similarities, associations between Japan and the Middle East, only to prove the same stands for any other seemingly distant expression of human culture. There is something precious about celebrating another culture and its people.

Our civilization has made its greatest achievements by pioneers of tolerance celebrating our common human denominator and infinite diversity only to elevate Life to its true dimension. We have been blessed with an unparalleled opportunity in the UAE to reinforce this idea at these destined times. A bright future for Humanity is only made by hearts and minds that celebrate each other.

### **Talk Moderator :**

#### **Nemanja Valjarevic, Entrepreneur, Filmmaker, Co-Founder of CHI-KA**

On a personal level, Nemanja is interested in global citizenship and the building of world community. Originally from Belgrade, Serbia, Nemanja lived and worked in LA, Prague, New York, and Berlin. He currently resides in Dubai.

#### **Alisson Collins, Founder of Majlis Gallery**

The Majlis Gallery is the First Fine Art Gallery to be established in the UAE. Alison Collins hosted her first exhibition in this wonderful old house in 1979. She has been at the forefront of the UAE Art Movement ever since. Renowned for the wide scope of the artists it represents and the great variety of the materials and genres they work in.

#### **Amna Ali Al Darmaki, KHARSHA**

Amna is a cultural exchange lover, and her goal in life is to deepen the understanding of the cultural exchange between UAE and the world especially Japan. Founder of a

Japanese club, and organizer of home stay program, introducing Arab traditional houses for a private stay to Japanese students.

Member of Kharsha, an Emirati Japanese group that encourages the positive cultural exchange between the UAE and Japan in a different way through their drumbeats.

### **Alexia Weill, Artist**

Born in Paris, French-Swiss Alexia Weill is based in Montreux, Switzerland for over a decade. Her late grandfather owned one of the largest art galleries in Paris.

She studied at the Film academy of Paris (ESRA) and at the same time followed drawing and clay sculpture classes at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris.

She exhibited her sculptures in Switzerland, France, Spain, England, New York and most recently in Dubai at CHI-KA.

In Switzerland, her sculptures are installed in public gardens in different cities along the Geneva lake.

The artist brings out the spirit of a stone. Before sculpturing each poetic piece, the artist communicates with the raw stone. Each sculpture is a unique work- of-art that irradiates its energy in the weft and invites the elevation by the mineral presence. She prints in stone her emotions, her inner journeys in search of harmony.

She likes to dialogue with the stone which in itself expresses the inner language of our Planet.

### **Reina Lewis**

Centenary Professor of Cultural Studies at London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. Reina was consulting curator for Contemporary Muslim Fashions, at the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco in 2018. She is currently leading a research project on the impact of religiously related modesty dress codes on the working lives of women, regardless of their religious backgrounds or practices.

Reina's books include: Muslim Fashion: Contemporary Style Cultures (2015), Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem(2004), and Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation (1996). She is editor of Modest Fashion: Styling Bodies, Mediating Faith, (2013).

Reina is a frequent media commentator – most recently for the New York Times, le Monde, BBC World, BBC Radio, CBC radio, CNN, Buzzfeed, The Guardian, The New York Times, The Economist, The Times, Marie-Claire magazine, Elle Brazil, Businessoffashion.com, Fortune.com, and Huffington Post.

Reina Lewis convenes the public talk series Faith and Fashion at the London College of Fashion, see <http://www.arts.ac.uk/research/research-projects/current-projects/faith-and-fashion/>