

Emirati Photographer Farah Al Qasimi Wins Big at the NADA Art Fair

by KHAOULA GHANEM

New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) has selected young Emirati photographer Farah Al Qasimi as this year's New York NADA Artadia Prize winner. The accolade was given out at the opening day of the seventh edition of the NADA fair. Al Qasimi, who is known for her beguiling portraits depicting materialism and gender relations in the United Arab Emirates, took home US \$5,000 (approximately AED/SAR 18,000). The prize is awarded to one artist showing at the fair each year.

Al Qasimi's work, which featured photographs of a falconer's gloved hands holding up a bird, butterflies sitting on an orange slice, and a man dressed in a crisp white thobe slouched on a bed, was brought to the fair by Helena Anrather gallery. The gallery also gave the Yale School of Art graduate her first New York solo exhibition, entitled "More Good News," late last year.

The New Museum's associate curator, Natalie Bell, who also juried the prize, says of Al Qasimi's work: "In spite of their directness, Farah's photos function on a number of levels and in a very simple sense, I find them interesting both for what they allude to – here, the aesthetics and material culture of hospitality (from upholstery to the soap bar on the bidet) – and what they obscure, which is often the specific identity of the sitters."

Al Qasimi's vivid photography has previously been on display in Paris and London, as well as in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.