

## On the road to Art Dubai 2015

Vivacious and ambitious, this year's Art Dubai commissioned series is curated by Lara Khaldi, a young independent curator based between Ramallah and Amsterdam.

Art Dubai Projects is a not-for-profit program of commissioned new works and performances and this year's chosen artists are Bradley and Chris Weaver, Jumana Emil Abboud, Maria Thereza Alves, Mehreen Muratza and the collective Umashankar and the Earchaeologists.

Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves chose to continue a project she has been working on since 2001 for Art Dubai.



Brazilian artist Maria Thereza Alves chose to continue a project she has been working on since 2001. (Photo courtesy: YBCA.org)

"It is a project she has been working on since 2001 where she goes to different cities and she takes soil samples and she plants the seeds she finds in greenhouses. She then does historical research on those plants and weeds and she traces where they come from and how they got there."

Tracing the roots of the plants often leads Alves to realize those plants are not indigenous to the area at all, but were transported via trade routes and the people who worked those routes.

The artists displays these "small histories of marginalized people" alongside the plants, noting that her analysis is "partly fiction partly historical."

In Dubai, however, the artists couldn't find seeds in the soil due to desertification and construction so instead she conducted research on plants that are considered indigenous to the area but actually aren't.

"She presents a huge amount of research on the history of the plant life in Dubai and how it connects to many places around the world, through seeds," Khaldi said.