

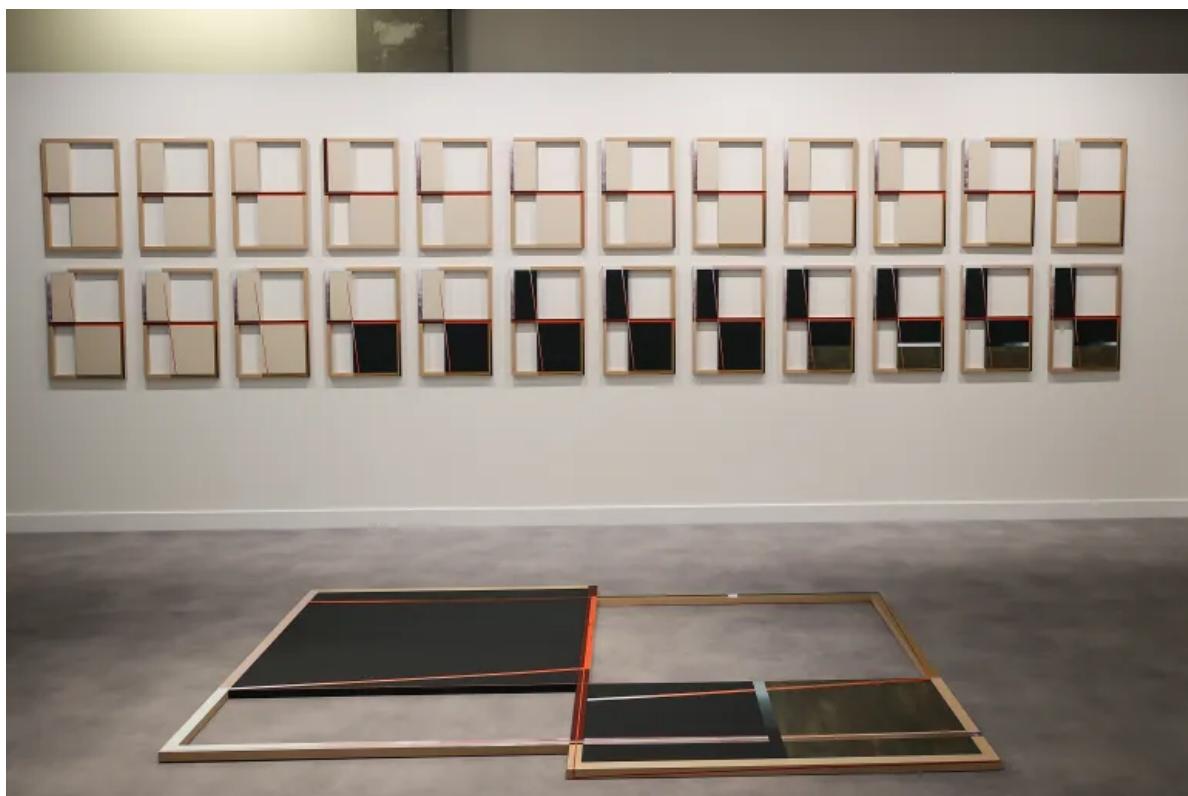
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## Art Basel Qatar: Making a new equilibrium in the Middle East

by Alia Chughtai and Showkat Shafi

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Sarah Al Mehairi's 'Off-centred' series at Doha Design District, Msheireb, Art Basel Qatar [Showkat Shafi/Al Jazeera]

Doha – The first-ever edition of Art Basel Qatar opened its doors with an exhibition-style art fair this week, first for VIPs and then the general public, along with a series of talks by eminent voices spread across upscale Msheireb in the Qatari capital, Doha.

This is the fifth event in Art Basel's calendar after the original Swiss edition, which has also hosted prestigious fairs in artistic epicentres Paris, Hong Kong and Miami, and is historic as the inaugural Art Basel event in the Middle East.

Sarah Al Mehairi, a 27-year-old Emirati artist, has a series of mixed media in paintings and sculptures in monochrome colours, making a dramatic exit from Gallery 2 of Doha's Design District.

Al Mehairi said Art Basel Qatar was not only memorable but groundbreaking for the Middle East.

"I would say that the region has always been serious and important for arts and culture, and with moments like these, Art Basel Qatar and Frieze coming to Abu Dhabi in November of this year, it's showing that, you know, this is the centre right now. This is where people should be looking," she said.