

[Downtown Contemporary Arts Festival: Press Release](#)

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Bringing in artists from all over the world, unearthing local and regional talent, and featuring six diverse programs, the third edition of the Downtown Contemporary arts Festival (D-CAF) promises to fill the three weeks between 20th March and 11th April with an eclectic selection of independent art events catering to all tastes.

A production of Studio Emad Eddin, D-CAF works to reinvigorate Downtown by bringing all genres of arts to its street corners, entering and revitalising spaces and venues that have been neglected for years, and acting as a catalyst for the creative energy increasingly emanating from this part of the city.

This year's inaugural event will feature a screening of Salma El Tarzi's film "Underground/On the Surface," which shows glimpses of the lives of Shaabi Musicians on the rise, Okka and Ortega, followed by the first act of D-CAF's music program, a performance by Dutch-South African duo Skip&Die.

The festival's six programmes – Performing Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Film, Urban Visions, and Special Events, will feature world premieres, international collaborations, as well as a special visual arts survey show.

Curated by D-CAF's artistic director, Ahmed El Attar, the Performing Arts segment of D-CAF 2014 brings dynamic international and locals performances to the Falaki Theatre and Hotel Viennoise, amongst other venues. These include the dance installation *Art of Movement*, which will prompt audiences to question their perceptions of reality and *C'est du Chinois*, a performance that challenges language barriers. Stemming from the region, *It Happened Tomorrow* by Syrian theatre company, Damascus Theater Lab (DTL) will show at Talee'a Small Theatre, while *Violence Lointaine*, directed by Omar Ghayatt (Egypt) will make its world premiere at Talee'a Large Theatre. Egyptian choreographer, Mohamed Shafik, will also present his piece *An House Empty of Hospitality* for the first time in the Arab world.

On the hunt for musicians who draw on different music structures and genres to create new sounds, D-CAF's music curator, Mahmoud Refaat, has compiled a music programme that offers experimental, psychedelic, new pop and electro shaabi concerts. Kasr El Nil theatre, once a platform for such renowned singers as Umm Kulthoum, will host this year's music program highlight, a concert by Lebanese singer Yasmine Hamdan, followed by the sounds of vocalist Fayrouz Karawya and music producer Ismael, who will be debuting their new collaborative project. The theme of collaboration features heavily in this year's music program, with a concert by London's [RINSE.FM](#) and Cairo's 100Copies, performing under the name 'Cairo Calling.'

Internationally celebrated Hassan Khan dominates the Visual Arts programme this year, with a major survey of his work exhibited within the Kodak Passage on Adly Street, which underwent extensive renovations by CLUSTER in preparation for its debut as an exhibition space. Curated by Beth Stryker, the exhibited works range from the start of Khan's career in the mid 90s until today. The exhibition, which opens on March 30, exemplifies what D-CAF strives to accomplish; bringing art into public spaces and, through that process, applying new perspective to the streets of Downtown Cairo.

The shorts film programmer at International Francophone Film Festival of Namur (Belgium), Hervé Le Phuez, will curate D-CAF's 2014 film program; his selection of strictly francophone cinema, made up of five features and nine shorts, hail from a number of countries including Romania, Switzerland, Canada and Portugal.

Bringing site-specific dance performances to Downtown's streets, the Urban Visions programme has been a unique, and highly successful, feature of D-CAF in past editions. This year, the festival welcomes back last year's Dance duo, The100Hands (Netherlands) debuting their collaborative piece, *Running Nucleus*. D-CAF also happily welcomes contributors to the 2012 edition, Ex Nihilo (France) with their piece, *Mashy*. The programme will also feature the choreography of local talent, Ezzat Ismail, who will present his piece, *Invisible Boundaries*. Taking place in front of El Borsa (the Egyptian Stock Exchange), on Alfy Bey Street and at the GrEEK Campus, most of these performances will also be presented in Alexandria.

Finally, the Special Events programme offers a mash-up of events ranging from a concert by the French group, Jazz Nomads, titled *La voix est libre*, to a four part discussion series under the banner of *Is Art Important?* (Iraq/Syria).

In a bid to encourage local aspiring filmmakers, D-CAF's smART Mobile Film Festival will showcase the culmination of a series of workshops held in four cities across Egypt, where participants produced one to three minute films. A selection of the best films will be screened in special booths around Downtown during the festival.

D-CAF's final week will bring the focus back to regional artists. Dubbed 'Middle East Focus' the week spanning 3-7 April will feature Arab artists from all over the region with the purpose of showcasing regional talent in all its forms to international festival programmers, who have been invited to D-CAF expressly for this purpose.

On the brink of its third edition, D-CAF continues to engage with, and contribute to, the independent arts scene both locally and regionally, and for the three weeks of its duration, it will transform Downtown Cairo into a cultural buffet of visual art, music, dance, theatre, and film, waiting to be consumed by eager audiences.