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## PRESS RELEASE

**UAE's first Pop-Up Piano collaboration to be unveiled at The Ripe Night Market**  
#PopUpPianoUAE launch event on 23rd January at Al Barsha Pond Park will feature local talents Majid Alyousef, Maan Hamadeh and Teeba Alkhudairi

Dubai, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Banafsajeel, a creative platform supporting art and design across the Gulf, is getting set to launch the region's first ever Pop-Up Piano in collaboration with Ripe Market, UAE's hugely popular community food & craft market, on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January at Al Barsha Pond Park. Conceived as an interactive public art installation, the Pop-Up Piano will be an art and music attraction for Ripe market visitors who come together to share their love of organic food and live entertainment. The piano will remain in Al Barsha Pond Park for a few weeks, available for the public to play and enjoy.

"Pop-Up Pianos" where a piano 'pops up' in the city, might be a familiar concept in other parts of the world, but the UAE has never before witnessed an interactive art installation of this nature. Banafsajeel has curated #PopUpPianoUAE featuring a piano customized with the artwork of renowned UAE-based artist and calligrapher Majid Alyousef. The chosen artwork from the artist's popular *Mondrian series* is an Arabic calligraphic representation of the word "Love". #PopUpPianoUAE will be launched at the Ripe Night Market, Al Barsha Pond Park through a live performance on Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January featuring a collaboration by two local talents. Lebanese pianist Maan Hamadeh and Saudi "flow artist" Teeba Alkhudairi will be presenting a bespoke performance reinterpreting a classic Arabic love song.

Talking about the project, Noor Aldabbagh, Curator and founder of Banafsajeel, said, *"I curated the project to reflect the city of Dubai and its people; it has the spirit of fusing East and West and reinventing the old to create something new. Through this project, I wanted to make art engaging to the community at large. I hope #PopUpPianoUAE creates spontaneous interactions and beautiful experiences"*

An opportunity to give back to the community is what motivated private patron Abdulrahman Hammad to commission this project. *"I love music. I wanted the joy of making music accessible to everyone in Dubai. And to bring to our busy lives here a pause that is beautiful to see and hear. I'm happy to support a collaboration that is a tribute to the UAE's spirit of unity and cultural diversity,"* said Hammad.

Newfound Pianos has extended in-kind support to the project in the hopes of offering Dubai's creative community an inspiring experience at the start of 2016.



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Pianist Maan Hamadeh first became famous when a video of his performance on a pop-up piano in Prague Airport went viral on YouTube. Known for his unique style of fusing and East and West, Maan will be playing a remixed version of the classic Egyptian love song *Ahwak* by Abul Halim Hafiz for the launch on 23rd January. Flow artist Teeba Alkhudairi will present a performance interpreting the song through dance with her hula-hoop. Teeba has been spearheading the Flow Arts movement in the UAE since 2014.

*"We are happy to host a platform for local creatives to share their talent with the community. It gives the public a chance to experience music and art in an unexpected setting in a manner that is spontaneous and organic,"* said Charlotte Brewer, Head of Markets and Events, Ripe ME

Al Barsha Pond Park will be home to #PopUpPianoUAE for at least 4 weeks, giving local musicians and aspiring pianists a free hand to showcase their talent. The project aims to give the public an opportunity to experience and enjoy art and music in a spontaneous manner. At the end of the project #PopUpPianoUAE will be donated to a local music school.

**\*\*Ends\*\***

**#PopUpPianoUAE Performance** Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January – 4:30pm

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### **About Banafsajeel**

Founded by Noor Aldabbagh, Banafsajeel is a curatorial platform facilitating the exchange of ideas and inspiration through creative collaborative projects. The name Banafsajeel is derived from the Arabic word for the color violet and also translates from "in the breath of a generation". The organization curates an annual exhibition highlighting artists and designers in the Gulf, as well as cultural experiences and collaborations for creatives from the region. Based between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, Banafsajeel also offers private consulting services within the creative industries and cultural sector.

[www.banafsajeel.com](http://www.banafsajeel.com)

### **About Ripe**

Founded by Becky Bladerstone, Ripe is about great food made with the best ingredients, about friends & family, about fun & festivity, about community living, about health & wellbeing, about adopting more sustainable habits and about supporting local farmers and other local artisans. The Ripe Night Market, held under the patronage of The Dubai Crown Prince, HH Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, runs every Saturday from 4pm-9pm, inside the main entrance to Al Barsha Pond Park – nearest to the School.

[www.ripeme.com](http://www.ripeme.com)



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### **About Newfound Pianos**

Founded in 2003 by Karim Dannawy, Newfound Pianos is an established full-fledged piano dealer and service company with operations across the GCC.

[www.newfoundpianosgulf.com](http://www.newfoundpianosgulf.com)

### **About the Featured Artists**

#### **Majid Alyousef**

A Saudi contemporary artist and Arabic calligrapher based in Dubai, Majid Alyousef has been practicing Arabic calligraphy for more than 25 years and acquired mastery in the challenging Thuluth script. His work can be identified by a unique marriage of intricate craftsmanship and experimental composition that frequently blurs lines between Islamic art and Abstraction, Cubism and the stylized Arabic alphabet.

[www.majidalyousef.com](http://www.majidalyousef.com)

#### **Maan Hamadeh**

Lebanese musician Maan Hamadeh started playing the keyboard at the age of 4 and the way he played was by ear. He started performing at the age of 14 and developed his music repository listening to various kinds of music genres and playing them. Across the world he is more likely to be known as the talented piano player in a spontaneous video that went viral in August 2014 with 17 million views in less than two months.

[www.maanhamadeh.com](http://www.maanhamadeh.com)

#### **Teeba Alkhudairi**

Founder of flowground, the UAE's first and only flow arts centre in the UAE, Saudi-Iraqi Teeba Alkhudairi specializes in hoop and poi flow. A biomedical engineer by education, a graduate of Harvard Business School, a certified Elemental Hoop dance instructor, and Chief Hoop Fairy at flowground, Teeba wears many feathers in her cap. She discovered the art of hoop dance at the Burning Man festival in 2011 and has been hooping ever since. She then found flowground in November 2014 with the aim of sharing her joy and love for hooping with the world.

[www.flowground.com](http://www.flowground.com)