**“Optical Variations” exhibition of stunning kinetic sculptures by Damien Bénéteau, at the MB&F M.A.D.Gallery from 27th February – 26th April 2017**

Dubai, UAE – 27 February, 2017: The MB&F M.A.D.Gallery is pleased to host “Optical Variations”, an exhibit by French artist Damien Bénéteau, featuring six of his illuminated, hypnotizing monochromatic mobiles. The exhibition will run from 27th February to 26th April, 2017.

A photographer by training, Bénéteau creates art dedicated to light, capturing it in a way that renders it nearly tangible.

“My work is intimately related to my background in photography,” says Bénéteau. “In this form of minimalist kinetic sculpture, I am using all I know about light to sculpt it. Much like in photography, I use light to achieve a certain optical effect.”

And he does. The outcome of his light sculpting is at once playful and energetic, yet full of contrast and yielding a mesmerizing visual effect.

M.A.D.Gallery Founder and Creator Maximilian Büsser said, *‘*’Damien is a dreamer and an incredible self-taught artisan. To follow his vision of mechanical/optical sculptures, he left all behind and taught himself a whole set of new skills. His machines are one of the reasons the M.A.D.Gallery exists. His mobiles and his creative philosophy are the epitome of what we defend in our curation.  We are so proud to be able to showcase his talent.”

The impetus for Bénéteau’s kinetic art came out of one of his photographic series in which white balloons were suspended in a white room lit only by a skylight. This jumpstarted the photographer’s fascination with how an object’s volume is perceived in various lighting situations. Once he added movement to the equation, “Optical Variations” was born.

“I have always been interested in mechanics and machines,” says Bénéteau. “My greatest influences come from minimalist sculpture, seen in the mixture of geometric aesthetics, austerity and simplicity found in my work.”

Beginning his artistic process on paper, Bénéteau first draws different forms and experiments with the optical effects these forms take in various lighting situations. He then inputs these ideas into a computer, enabling him to formulate the technical details of his sculpture. Next comes the long process of realization.

According to Bénéteau, “to make one sculpture, it requires between three and six months of work. Most of this time is spent experimenting with the effects of light on the piece.”

Bénéteau prefers to work with aluminum because anodizing the surface of this lightweight metal creates a deep black. When illuminated with LED lights, this deep black shows a full spectrum of all the nuances of grey.

Working from his own atelier, Bénéteau, a connoisseur of machinery, uses milling, polishing and metal turning machines to create his structures, “a critical aspect”, he says, of his creative process.

In his installations for the M.A.D.Gallery, the French artist plays with pendulums, pairing their oscillating movement with light to create a duo of mesmerizing phenomena.

In “Spatial Variations” and “Spherical Variations”, a slowly undulating metal ball ticks along its defined course, while throwing light and shadows on the surrounding space, almost as if the light is alive and breathing.

“Length Variations” plays with a moving light source as it passes through a concave structure, catching and reflecting the light in a brilliant flash, similar to a signal from a lighthouse.

Additionally, in “Dark Variations” and “Elliptical Variations,” the light emerges gracefully from the center of the sculpture, spilling over the surface outwards. This is due to a mechanical system that sets in motion the light from front to back, allowing the light rays to illuminate the central shape. While “Dark Variations” takes a circular shape and “Elliptical Variations” possesses an oblong form, both reflect an impression of inner light pouring outwards.

About this exhibition, Bénéteau says, “… the notions of time, space and impalpable forces are present,” as the artist explores the cyclical nature of light moving across and through objects.

His hope is that people viewing his work don’t get too caught up in the details and technique, but are rather able to observe the abstract nature of his work and the unique effect that his light sculptures create.

Elliptical Variations and Spatial Variations are limited to three pieces each.

Dark Variations is a limited edition of five pieces.

Spherical Variations is limited to seven pieces.

Length Variations comes in two different sizes (large and small), each in a limited edition of three and seven pieces respectively.

**Damien Bénéteau Biography**

Damien Bénéteau was born in France in L'Haÿ-les-Roses in 1971.

After receiving his degree in photography, Bénéteau joined a press agency, MPA, specializing in portrait photos. During this time he also worked under famed French conceptual artist, Yann Kersalé, compiling photographic reports on subjects such as the Pont de Normandie and “Parabola” in Cahors, France.

Bénéteau then moved onto photographing architectural projects and in 1998, founded “Les Cyclopes”, a collective of photographers with a focus on fashion. Images from this collective have been published in magazines and newspapers worldwide.

After switching from photographer to light sculptor, Bénéteau’s work garnered the attention of Galerie Mathias Coullaud in Paris, where he has exhibited.

About future directions for his art, Bénéteau says, “I plan to pursue my research on moving light and tiny variations of volumes and materials in minimalist sculpture.”

Bénéteau is currently living and working in the Parisian suburb of Ivry-sur-Seine.

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**About M.A.D.Gallery:**

The MB&F M.A.D.Gallery is a captivating universe of kinetic art where Horological Machines and Mechanical Art Devices reign supreme. The first M.A.D.Gallery opened in 2011 in Geneva on Rue Verdaine, a stone’s throw from MB&F’s offices and atelier in the heart of the city’s old town. A second location opened in 2014 in Taipei then a third in Dubai in 2016. Inside the galleries, you have the pleasure of discovering carefully-curated pieces – or, as we like to call them, Mechanical Art Devices – from around the world, each one making your heart beat that little bit faster. You exhale, only then to find the complete range of MB&F Horological Machines and Legacy Machines.

**About MB&F:**

Based around one very simple and fundamental ideal: to assemble dedicated collectives of talented horological artisans, artists and professionals – all friends – to design and craft each year a radical and original horological masterpiece. By nurturing teams of talented individuals, harnessing their passion and creativity and crediting each individual's essential role, MB&F uses their synergy to become much greater than the sum of its parts. MB&F is above all a human adventure... a human adventure with just one goal: to create incredible horological machines. 10 years of hyper-creativity; 11 remarkable calibres forming the base of the critically acclaimed Horological Machines and Legacy Machines for which MB&F has become renowned.

**About Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons:**

Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons is the Middle East’s most trusted destination for luxury watches and jewellery, representing more than 60 of the leading timepiece brands across a retail network of 65 locations in the UAE. Established in 1950 through, Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons is recognized among the leading retailers in the region, advising and enabling both established and emerging watch enthusiasts to increase their passion and understanding of the art of watchmaking. From the most complicated, limited edition timepieces created by the world’s most respected watchmakers to the latest collections of high-end jewellery brands, the company aligns with its customers’ needs to offer the region’s most expansive collection for the coveted collector.

Dedicated to a superlative customer service experience, Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons has persistently curated and invested in a highly skilled, culturally aware team for the last six decades. From expert pre-sale insight from its sales consultants to the internationally recognized aftersales offered through the Swiss Watch Services, Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons is the Middle East’s only retailer which offers its clients a full lifecycle for luxury watches and jewellery. The passion and credibility of the second, third and fourth generation of Seddiqi family members managing the organization deliver a living legacy and dynamic commitment to preserve and grow the tradition of watchmaking for decades to come.

The story of Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons contributes to the Middle East’s status as a hub for international trade and economic development. As a pillar of the Gulf’s retail landscape, Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons has significantly enhanced trade opportunities with key markets while developing substantial career development opportunities for both nationals and expatriates. Through its ongoing work with the region’s education and cultural communities, Ahmed Seddiqi & Sons is creating a sustainable platform for watchmaking, servicing, and collecting for the entire Middle East.

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