

# The National



Pulse Corniche. Mona Al Marzooqi/ The National

## Why you need to check out the Pulse Corniche exhibit

[Anna Seaman](#)

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We live in a society that defines us by our differences. Race, gender, religion, political beliefs and many other factors may separate us, but the true joy of humanity is when we can embrace and enjoy individuality and allow it to shape our understanding of life. Art is one of the few fields that gives us a chance to do this.

Good art rarely offers answers – it often leaves us asking more questions because it is, by its very nature, inconclusive. It offers us an opportunity to see from someone else's point of view or to ponder the otherwise unexplainable or intangible elements of our existence. That's why we can return to a piece of art again and again and find something new in it every time.

Many people don't understand this about art. They feel intimidated or shy when they can't make a deduction and sometimes this feeling is associated with the entire gallery environment – thus putting off a newcomer or hesitant enthusiast before they have even stepped through the door.

This is why public art is so important. Public art is more often than not interactive and striking. When you see it regularly and in a familiar place, it

becomes part of your daily routine and you become fond of it. Interaction also means involvement and this leads to using other senses rather than just your eyes, and soon, you are emotionally attached.

However you feel about it, positive or negative, that is how it is supposed to make you feel – an artist's biggest failure is eliciting no reaction at all – and with public art there is no pressure to share these reactions with anyone.

In the UAE, we have very few pieces of public art. In Dubai, there are sculptures installed on Emaar Boulevard and in Abu Dhabi, at the recently opened Yas Mall, there is a fantastic installation depicting falcons in flight by the South African artist Marco Cianfanelli.

But there could be many more.

Installing Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Pulse Corniche in the capital is a commendable decision by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi team.

The interactive art piece will project a canopy of powerful light beams into the sky by some of the world's strongest robotic searchlights. The beams' brightness and orientation will be controlled by the heart rate of visitors. People are free to participate by holding a sensor placed in the centre of the East Plaza along the Corniche that will convert the electrical activity of their hearts into a unique lighting sequence. The intensity and direction of the lights will project the different biometric rhythms of each participant.

When asked if there is a spiritual dimension to his work, Lozano-Hemmer said it helps unite us beyond our differences and focus on our shared life force.

So go down to the Corniche to experience this artwork for yourselves and make the most of it – it is only here for 10 days.