

On September 17, 2016, **The Institute of Arab and Islamic Art (IAIA)** gathered a close group of supporters at its first benefit dinner. Founder and director **Mohammed Al-Thani** welcomed guests and spoke about the need to fill a gap in the cultural landscape of New York City by providing a new venue for the exploration, creation, and understanding of art from the Arab and Islamic worlds.

Keeping with the innovative, youthful, and unexpected spirit of **IAIA**, guests were invited to a lavish dinner in an oasis created inside a former mechanic garage in the far West Village of Manhattan, punctuated by a performance by **Rashed Al Nuaimi**, the virtuosic Emirati singer who combines global pop and jazz with traditional Arabic music influences.

Leaders from both the New York art community as well as cultural champions and officials from the Arab and Islamic worlds all joined together to be among the first to hear about **IAIA's** plans to create a world-class exhibition space in New York City that will focus on exhibitions, residencies, collaboration, and knowledge building across cultures. Prominent guests included artist **Zarina Hashmi**, Swiss Institute Director **Simon Castets**, Art Dealer and curator **Jeffrey Deitch**, Director of Independent Curators International **Renaud Proch**, publisher and editor **Karen Marta**, curator and founder of *Bidoun* **Negar Azimi**, Phillips head of Contemporary Art and former Director of Public Programs at the Qatar Museums Authority **Jean-Paul Engelen**, independent curator **Omar Berrada**, and art historian and writer **Claire Davies**.

Over \$100,000 was raised to support **IAIA**. To those of you who joined us we offer our sincerest thanks, and to those of you who were not able, we hope you will be able to join us on the road to building the first permanent home for **IAIA** in New York City.