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جناح بيلالي البندقية
United Arab Emirates
Venice Biennale Pavilion

For Immediate Release

SIGNALING ITS EMERGENCE AS A NEW CULTURAL HUB, THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO PRESENT A *UAE PAVILION* AT THE 2009 VENICE BIENNALE

UAE Will Be the First Arabian Gulf Country to Create a National Pavilion At the World's Pre-Eminent Contemporary Art Exhibition

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, November 26, 2008 – His Excellency Abdul Rahman Mohammed Al Owais, Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, today officially announced plans to create the first UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Universally recognized as the world's most prestigious contemporary art event, the Venice Biennale will present its 53rd International Art Exhibition from June 7 through November 22, 2009. In recognition of the emergence of the UAE as a cultural hub, and of the historic importance of this first national pavilion to be created by a Gulf state, the Biennale has provided a large and highly visible site for the UAE Pavilion.

“There is growing international awareness that individual Emirates—including Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah—have been welcoming cultural exchange on their soil with an impressive array of projects,” Minister Al Owais commented. “Now, through its national pavilion, the UAE will take pride in sending its own work out to the world, showing visitors to the Venice Biennale

that the UAE is also a place of artistic ferment.”

“We offer the United Arab Emirates a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the International Art Exhibition,” stated Paolo Baratta, President of the Venice Biennale. “The theme that has been announced for this 53rd exhibition, *Making Worlds*, speaks of the potential of art to bring new realities into being. It is all the more appropriate, therefore, that the Biennale will include the pavilion of the UAE, a nation that is fast becoming one of the significant new realities in the world of art.”

The development and presentation of the UAE Pavilion is being organized by Dr. Lamees Hamdan, Commissioner of the Office of the UAE Pavilion, a member of the Board of Directors of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority. Serving as curator for the UAE Pavilion is Tirdad Zolghadr, who is internationally respected as a curator (7th International Sharjah Biennial; Kunsthalle, Geneva; Cubitt Gallery, London), critic (*frieze*, *Parkett*, *Bidoun*), professor (Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York) and filmmaker (*Tropical Modernism*). The UAE Pavilion will be designed through a partnership of Rami Farook (founder of the UAE's Traffic design gallery) and the exciting young Belgian architectural collective of D'haeseleer & Kimpe & Poelaert, known for its collaborations with visual artists.

According to Dr. Hamdan, “The UAE Pavilion will do more than celebrate the emergence of the United Arab Emirates on the cultural stage. Through its exhibition, its physical design and its live programs and events, it will make a challenging artistic and intellectual contribution to the Venice Biennale—one that will reflect, and encourage, a global shift in critical thinking and artistic practice that is only now making itself felt.”

Details of the featured artists and the exhibition will be announced in March 2009.

The UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennial is initiated and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, and is

sponsored by the Emirates Foundation and the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (DCAA).

“The Venice Biennale is universally recognized as the most prestigious contemporary art exhibition in the world,” stated Mr. Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh, Managing Director of the Emirates Foundation. “The Emirates Foundation takes pride in helping to launch our nation’s participation in this incomparable international event.”

“Art is a crucial medium for building bridges and bringing different cultures and nationals closer together through increased mutual understanding,” said Saeed Al Nabouda, Chief Projects Officer of the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority. “Dubai and the UAE as a whole exemplify the success of cultures working together and gaining an understanding of one another. Our support of the UAE Pavilion is an effort to reflect this positive experience in an exciting and new artistic setting.”

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