



الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
جناح بينالي البندقية  
United Arab Emirates  
Venice Biennale Pavilion

Reference: 01/02

16 February 2009

**FIRST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UAE PAVILION FOR THE VENICE BIENNALE GIVES ITS  
ENDORSEMENT TO THE WORK OF THE NATIONAL PAVILION**

The United Arab Emirates has established its first official UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the world's most prestigious contemporary art event. This will be the 53<sup>rd</sup> Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition beginning June 7 through November 22, 2009.

In recognition of the emergence of the UAE as an important contributor to contemporary art, and because of the historic importance of the first national pavilion to be created by a Gulf state an executive committee has been established to advise and support the UAE Pavilion's efforts, this committee will then advise subsequent pavilions.

The UAE Pavilion is initiated 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 Executive Committee consists of a highly respected group of individuals who have contributed to contemporary art within the UAE throughout their careers: Zaki Nusseibeh (Chairman), Sheikha Lateefa Bint Maktoum, Sheikha Maisa Al Qassimi, Mubarak Hamad Al Muhairi, Safia Saeed Al Raqbani, Yasser Hareb and Omran Al Owais held their first meeting on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2009. (Biographies attached below).

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.

Dr Lamees Hamdan commented:

“The Executive Committee is an essential overseer of the work that is being carried out by the UAE Pavilion Office, we are extremely privileged to have such a high a caliber of people to be a part of our very first national pavilion. Not only will the committee members bring their valuable experience to the table, they will build capacity for our future pavilions and contemporary artists.”

“The exhibition the UAE is offering in the form of a physical design, live programmes and documentation will make a challenging artistic and intellectual contribution to the Venice Biennale.”

Zaki Nusseibeh, Chairman of the Executive Committee stated:

“Being a part of the UAE pavilion's Executive Committee is a great responsibility and privilege. It is very important to work towards nurturing the UAE Pavilion as a national treasure which we must develop and strengthen year on year. It is, of course, an honour to be associated with the very first Biennale that the UAE has taken part in and to ensure that the talent of the UAE can shine and grow in stature so as to achieve world recognition”

He went on to say:

“I am also very privileged to be given the role of Chairman, and to work alongside this very talented group of individuals who have the skills and expertise required to add real value to the growth of the pavilion.”

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.

-ENDS-

Media Contacts:  
UAE Media Requests  
Eliza Ilyas, Director of Communications  
UAE Pavilion Office for the Venice Biennale  
Mobile: +971 (0) 50 450 4236  
eliza@uaepavilion.org

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. **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 in the Arsenale for the UAE Pavilion.
2. **The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority** was launched in March 2008 by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to highlight Dubai as a dynamic culture, heritage and arts centre.

The Dubai Culture & Arts Authority aims to create, drive and support cultural strategies while preserving national identity. With a vision to create a vibrant Arabian, global city that shapes 21<sup>st</sup> Century culture and art in the region and the world, it will build upon Dubai's status as a multicultural city, inspiring and encouraging its more than 200 resident nationalities to contribute to its culture and arts renaissance. The Authority is responsible for developing best policies, institutional and regulatory framework and funding within the cultural industry of Dubai. It will create physical infrastructure to position Dubai as an overall culture, heritage and arts venue as well as increase awareness in cultural activities by initiating a robust dialogue with the public. It will nurture talent through development of culture, heritage and arts curricula in schools and through partnerships with leading educational institutions to attract artists and cultural professionals to Dubai and inspire local talent to travel abroad.

3. **Ministry of Culture, Youth & Community Development** The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development was launched in 2006 to highlight the UAE's fast-growing community and thriving youths while not losing sight of its heritage and cultural scene.

The Ministry aims to revive the UAE's heritage by inspiring and encouraging the creative talents abundant among the youths of today. It is responsible for promoting and investing in the energies of young people, inspiring them and adding to their artistic abilities. In doing so, the Ministry has raised much awareness towards the community's cultural practices and in turn, has promoted innovation and enrichment of cultural communication. It is constantly working at creating an integral framework for providing detailed information regarding the country's culture, youth and community development. In addition, the Ministry also organises ongoing activities and develops mechanisms to secure the necessary support required to achieve its goals.

4. **About the Emirates Foundation:** The Emirates Foundation is one of the UAE's foremost philanthropic organizations. It offers financial and technical support to projects that enrich the lives of people in the Emirates, particularly in the areas of youth development, knowledge creation, and national society and heritage.

The Foundation facilitates links between commercial businesses and the public sector to devise new projects and strengthen existing non profit initiatives throughout the country. Its funding comes from annual donations and an endowment fund supported by the Abu Dhabi government and private companies. Its six key areas of interest are Education; Science and Technology; Arts and Culture; Social Development; Environmental Awareness and Public Awareness.

Launched on April 12 2005 by H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, its Board of Directors is chaired by H.H.Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Presidential Affairs. Further information from: [www.emiratesfoundation.ae](http://www.emiratesfoundation.ae)

5. Biographies of the Board Members:

#### **Dr Zaki Nusseibeh**

Zaki Nusseibeh graduated from the University of Cambridge with a masters degree in economics and began his career in Abu Dhabi as a journalist in 1967, writing for several Arabic and international news agencies and papers.

He began translating for Shaikh Zayed in 1968, becoming his personal interpreter, while working at the same time as Director of the Abu Dhabi (later Federal) Department of Information. Nusseibeh edited The Abu Dhabi Times the first English newspaper to be published by the Abu Dhabi government and participated in establishing Al Ittihad the government's first Arabic newspaper.

He also worked as a broadcaster and programme producer and helped develop Abu Dhabi's broadcasting and media services.

He moved exclusively to Shaikh Zayed's court in 1975, becoming at the same time Director of his press office.

At present he works as adviser in the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and as interpreter to President His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

He holds a number of other positions, such as Deputy Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage Authority, member of the Permanent Higher Executive Committee of the Shaikh Zayed Book Award, and a member of other Boards of Directors such as the Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, the Documentation and Research center Abu Dhabi, and the Emirates National School. He is also a Trustee of the International Arab Booker Literary Award, President of the Abu Dhabi Wagner Friendship Society, and of the Abu Dhabi Concerts Committee.

He has received several Arab and International Awards and Decorations including the Abu Dhabi Award 2007.

#### **Sheikha Lateefa Bint Maktoum**

Sheikha Lateefa Bint Maktoum studied BA in Art and Design at Zayed University, Dubai and worked on the technical and production team for the Sharjah Biennial 2007, she was

the curator of the exhibition: "Minus Reality", Art Attack Gallery Dubai. She has developed many exhibitions of emerging artists living and working in the Gulf, including a vast number of her own exhibitions since graduating. She is currently the Director of "Tashkeel", an independent resource for artists and designers living and working in the United Arab Emirates. Tashkeel is committed to facilitating art and design practice, cross-cultural dialogue and creative exchange.

### **Sheikha Maisa Al Qassimi**

Sheikha Maisa Al Qassimi is a member of the board of directors for Dubai International Arts Centre. She is primarily a mixed media artist and has taught photography at Sharjah University College of Fine Arts, having studied at American University Dubai where she obtained a degree in fine arts and visual communication. She has also studied a number of design disciplines at Central Saint Martins College of Art, such as Experimental Printmaking, Silkscreen Printing, Jewelry Design and Life Drawing and Painting. She also studied photography at The Edinburgh College of Art. She was awarded "Woman of the Year" by Emirates Woman Magazine and has participated in numerous exhibitions. She is currently exhibiting for Emirati Expressions - Gallery One, Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi. She was also a participant at the Dubai World Cup Art Auction. Sheikha Maisa's work has been auctioned at Christie's for the Nokia "Fonetography" Charity Art auction.

### **HE Mubarak Hamad Al Muhairi**

Mr. Al Muhairi was appointed Director General of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) on its creation in 2004. He is also a board member of Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) and Managing Director of Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC), where he oversees the creation of many Abu Dhabi Development projects such as Saadiyat Island containing the Louvre Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum.

### **Safia Saeed Al Raqbani**

#### **Director of Development – Zayed University**

Safia Saeed Al Raqbani is responsible for the design and execution of core development strategies and implementing essential functions that assist the University in achieving its long-term goals. These include bolstering revenue diversity and securing private resources to support a range of ongoing University operations.

In her prior role as Strategic Planning Manager in Emirates National Oil Company Ltd. (ENOC), Al Raqbani was responsible for the preparation & implementation of the business plans and budgets for ENOC Group, evaluation of the performance of the Group and development of new business opportunities.

She has also established her own business of event management with specific focus on corporate events, family fun days and children's entertainment.

A holder of an MBA from the American University of Sharjah, she also has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Higher Diploma in Accounting from the Dubai Women's College.

Along with her work she is involved in several charities.

## **Yasser Hareb**

### **Vice-President of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, Culture Sector**

Yasser Hareb is the Vice-President of the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation, Culture sector. He leads the Foundation's efforts in achieving cultural development in the Arab World, one of the strategic goals of the Foundation.

Since he joined the Foundation in December 2007, Mr. Hareb has been playing an important role in supporting and developing the Foundation's programmes and initiatives locally and regionally. He has supervised the launch of many important cultural and intellectual programmes, such as "Oktub" which intends to nurture talented authors in the Arab World by helping them realise their dreams of publishing their works, and

"Tarjem" which seeks to enrich Arabic library through translation from other languages.

Before joining the Foundation, Yasser Hareb was the Special Projects manager at the Executive Office in Dubai. He was also the Coordinator General for the Arab Strategy Forum in 2006. Hareb had started his career path as a Project Manager at the Dubai eGovernment before moving to the Dubai Institute for Human Resource Development as a Business Development and Marketing Manager.

Yasser Hareb is an active member of the UAE cultural community. He is a board member of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, which aims to establish the global role Dubai plays in forming and developing the cultural atmosphere in the 21st Century. He is also a board member of the College of Business & Economics at the United Arab Emirates University.

Yasser Hareb is the Chairman of the Dubai International Children Book Fair. He is a member of the Executive Committee for Princess Haya Special Education Award. He is also a member of the Supreme Committee of the Dubai International Poetry Festival.

Yasser writes a weekly article in a number of leading Arabic newspapers such as Al Bayan in the UAE, Al Watan in Saudi Arabia and Al Waqt in Bahrain.

Hareb's first book entitled "Towards a New Thinking" was published in 2006. The book details the renaissance of thinking and how to benefit from the experiences of developed countries to improve education, economy, administration as well as other issues.

Yasser Hareb holds a Bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems from the UAE University. He is a graduate of the Mohammed bin Rashid Programme for Leadership Development. He has also attended several training programmes including the Global Leadership Training Programme at INSEAD, France.

## **Omran Al Owais** **CENTIMETERCUBE**

Omran Al-Owais is a Dubai-based architect and designer. After graduating in architecture from the American University of Sharjah, he established CENTIMETERCUBE in 2003. As the company's Creative Director, Mr. Al-Owais works in various fields of design, including architecture, publishing, and more. His contemporary architectural designs and international publications continue to make a great impression across the Middle East.

He is also a member of Mohammed bin Rashid Establishment for Young Business Leaders

CENTIMETERCUBE, is a Dubai-based architecture and urban development company, which combines the best of traditional architecture and design with the latest, contemporary trends. This exciting fusion of old and new, results in more valuable, appealing, and environmentally sustainable buildings and developments in the United Arab Emirates as well as other areas of the Middle East. Combining architecture with urban development means CENTIMETERCUBE is in a unique position to create projects that are financially feasible as well as exciting in terms of design.

Omran also launched and is editor and chief of Apple Lifestyle Magazine called Shufflegazine as part of the new Publishing Division that was set up in 2007.