



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



la Biennale di Venezia

54. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni nazionali

## **For Immediate Release**

### **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES REVEALS ARTISTS FOR THE UAE PAVILION AT THE 54<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA, 2011**

**الذاتانية لمررة / "Second Time Around"**

**Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa bint Maktoum will  
represent the UAE as chosen by Curator Vasif Kortun**

**United Arab Emirates, March 10, 2011** – Building on its 2009 debut, the United Arab Emirates is emerging as an important contributor to the world of contemporary art, and will welcome visitors once more to its Pavilion in Venice from June 4 through November 27, 2011.

Established in 1895, the Venice Biennale today encompasses the official pavilions of more than 70 nations. Its International Art Exhibition draws more than 375,000 influential visitors from around the world. It is widely regarded as the most important international art fair.

The UAE Pavilion has been initiated and supported by His Excellency Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Owais, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy and the Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC). The UAE Pavilion is being developed and presented under the leadership of its Commissioner, Dr. Lamees Hamdan. Serving as curator for the UAE Pavilion for 2011 is Vasif Kortun, an internationally respected curator and Director of Research and Programs, SALT, Istanbul.

**الذاتانية لمررة / "Second Time Around"**

The title of the exhibition for this year's UAE Pavilion is **"Second Time Around / الذاتانية لمررة"**.

This title refers to the UAE's debut appearance at the biennial in 2009. A newcomer to the la Biennale di Venezia, the UAE Pavilion found itself in a position of answering demands and curiosities which it addressed brilliantly with its cheerful self-criticality and

artistic strength. The second Pavilion is in turn a sign of slowly coming of age. The title "Second Time Around" is in fact purposefully modest and refers to the barebones of the exhibition. The same attitude adopted while choosing the title is echoed in the approach to the exhibition.

In a statement about his curatorial concept, Kortun elaborated, "The first years of the emergent art scene in the UAE have been of remarkable frenzy. This scene that had been earlier propelled by galleries, art fairs, museum projects and curious professionals is now developing into a more established set of structures, inline with the necessities of a contemporary globalized hub. The effects of a vertical urbanization that every citizen has to answer day in and day out constituted the rapid transformation of the nation. Likewise, UAE artists were called upon to perform the role of chroniclers and represent the burdens of this sea of change. However, they are now negotiating and processing the complexities of what is becoming a predominantly visual culture."

"No longer contextualized in what have become the absolute clichés of the international reception of the UAE, the UAE Pavilion for 2011 does not aim to treat the exhibition as curatorial conceit; but rather chooses to realize the theoretical foundation in the immanence of the works in the exhibition," Kortun notes. "The Pavilion will not be 'curated' around concepts but around artistic positions, as if three independent projects form a coherent exhibition structure pivoting around the works of three artists, Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa bint Maktoum."

### **The Artists**

Kortun visited the UAE on numerous occasions in 2010 and interviewed over 30 Emirati artists about their artwork and their art practice.

Three Emirati artists were selected by Kortun for exhibition in the UAE Pavilion. Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa Bint Maktoum will represent the UAE through displays of an installation, drawings and photography respectively.

Reem Al Ghaith holds a BSc in Visual Communication from the School of Architecture and Design, American University of Sharjah, UAE. Her work examines changes in the urban and social landscape of the UAE, often with sophisticated all-around installations that relate to tradition and history, yet do not fall into banal representations and fascinations of the subject. The intertwined structure of her work deliberately places itself far away from being representative.

Abdullah Al Saadi holds a degree in English Literature from United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain. From 1994 -1996 he studied Japanese painting at Kyoto Seika University in Japan. He lives and works in Khorfakan, outside the art world and untethered by its demands and daily routines. His work is a daily practice of recording, inventing normative groupings, and documenting species that are beyond "scientific inquiry."

Lateefa Bint Maktoum holds a B.A. in Visual Arts from Zayed University, Latifa College. Her practice largely consists of composite, digitally manipulated images based on highlighted, enhanced, and conflated realities from her immediate memories as well as the distant past. Her compositions combine an aestheticism of British painting with enhanced local fauna and flora that sit in stark opposition to images of urbanization. Maktoum is also a curator and Founder and Director of Tashkeel, a public studio providing specialist facilities for artists and designers living and working in the UAE.

### **Additional plans for the UAE Pavilion**

The architecture firm SuperPool has been selected to create the scenography of the UAE Pavilion exhibition.

Headed up by Selva Gurdogan and Gregers Tang Thomsen, in addition to the UAE Pavilion, the firm is currently engaged in TailorCrete, a European Commission funded research grant for incorporating robotics into concrete construction technology. Superpool has recently completed Mapping Istanbul, a book commissioned by Garanti Gallery with nearly a hundred maps and information graphics. The book is a resource for architects, planners and policy makers invested in the city's future.

Möbius Design Studio, based in the creative resource centre, Tashkeel - UAE, will be developing the visual for the exhibition theme as well as designing the catalogue and related materials.

In 2009, the UAE became the first gulf nation to exhibit at the prestigious la Biennale di Venezia. For la Biennale di Venezia in 2011, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Iraq are expected to also participate with their own national pavilions.

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### **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 54<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition from June 4 through November 29, 2011. In recognition of the emergence of the UAE as a cultural hub, the Biennale has provided a large and highly visible site in the Arsenale for the UAE Pavilion.
2. **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.

3. **About the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy** 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 society and culture.

The Foundation facilitates links between commercial businesses and the public sector to devise new projects and strengthen existing nonprofit initiatives throughout the country. Its funding comes from programme-rated contributions and a capital reserve supported by the Abu Dhabi government and private companies.

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 Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Further information from:

[www.emiratesfoundation.ae](http://www.emiratesfoundation.ae)

4. **About TDIC** Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC) is a master developer of key cultural, residential and tourism destinations in Abu Dhabi. The principal goal of its cultural programme, including the creation of the Saadiyat Cultural District - the world's largest single concentration of premier cultural institutions - is to establish an international platform in the UAE for arts and culture. Unprecedented in scale and scope, the Saadiyat Cultural District will include museums such as Zayed National Museum, Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi.

One of TDIC's missions is to engage the community in the capital's urban, cultural and artistic development and help build professional skills and knowledge in the community through a dialogue with representatives from the world's leading cultural organisations.

Alongside this, TDIC presents a diverse series of art exhibitions and public programmes to further engage audiences in the Saadiyat Cultural District institutions, vision and concept.

5. **About Möbius Design** Möbius Design Studio was founded in 2010 by a group of female designers, all graduates from the American University of Sharjah, UAE, from different parts of the Middle East, whose expertise range from visual communication, multimedia design, and architecture.

The studio is based in Tashkeel, Dubai - an independent resource for artists and designers living in the UAE.

Their interest in the design field encompasses research, concept development, mapping information, typology, identity, spatial and structural design for exhibitions, in addition to multimedia and time-based design. The main approach they use to tackle design projects is based on the notion of experimental processes, conceptual and formal investigations.