



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



la Biennale di Venezia

54. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Partecipazioni nazionali

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***The Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates at the 54th International Art Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia features "Second Time Around"***

The United Arab Emirates participates with its second National Pavilion in the Arsenale proudly presenting the work of three Emirati artists to the international community

Venice, Italy – Under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development and with the support of the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy and Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC), the Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates presents *Second Time Around* at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia. The *Second Time Around* exhibit features three Emirati artists: Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa bint Maktoum who present individual concepts set in same-size spaces that are actually islands on their own.

The exhibit is developed and presented under the leadership of its Commissioner, Dr. Lamees Hamdan and Curator Vasif Kortun, an internationally respected writer and Director of Research and Programs, SALT, Istanbul.

**Second Time Around**

The 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 extensive and curious demands, which it addressed with a humorous self-criticality. The second Pavilion is, in turn, a sign of slowly coming of age. Purposefully modest, *Second Time Around* refers to the barebones of the exhibition. The attitude adopted in choosing the title is also echoed in the approach to the exhibition, where each artist's work is presented in a dedicated setting.

Vasif Kortun elaborated, "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. The Pavilion is not curated around concepts, but around artistic positions, as if three independent projects form a coherent exhibition structure pivoting around the works of the artists, Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa bint Maktoum."

### **The Artists**

*Second Time Around* presents the work of three artists: One an incorrigible artist who does not care one way or another if he is in any exhibition as long as he is able to work in his own precise way (Abdullah Al Saadi), the second a very young artist whose installation practice speaks to the UAE in the most novel way probable (Reem Al Ghaith), and third an artist who has assimilated, and deconstructed the transformation of her environs (Lateefa bint Maktoum).

The Emirati artists selected by Kortun represent the UAE through displays of an installation, mixed-media sculpture, and photography.

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 of the subject.

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 Khor Fakkan, 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.

### **Scenography**

The curator selected Superpool to help him realize the exhibit presentation. Together, they created three independent yet equally sized exhibition "islands" which emphasize the unique practice of each artist without detracting from the common themes that underlie each of their works.

Superpool is a multidisciplinary design firm based in Istanbul. Headed by Selva Gurdogan and Gregers Tang Thomsen, they met at Rem Koolhaas' studio Office for Metropolitan Architecture – OMA – in 2003, where they worked until establishing Superpool in 2006.

### **Design Materials**

Möbius Design Studio, a Dubai based collective led by Riem Hassan, Hala Al-Ani and Hadeyeh Badri, was commissioned to create a simultaneous Arabic and English language visual experience for the exhibition. The three person team is comprised of recent graduates from the American University of Sharjah. Their work focuses on bringing conceptual elements to primarily Arabic language design.

### **Venice Internship**

A specialized internship program has been developed for the National Pavilion with the aim to create a legacy of skilled art practitioners in the UAE learning through interaction and exposure to top international artists and curators.

A select group of twenty-four Emiratis and long-term residents of the UAE are serving as exhibition managers for the National Pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia from 31 May to 27 November 2011. The interns work alongside distinguished curator Vasif Kortun and the team of the UAE Pavilion office while engaging in a comprehensive art educational program based on the extraordinary art and cultural institutions in Venice and the temporary exhibitions of the Biennale.

## Supporting Partners

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).

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### NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. 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 organizes ongoing activities and develops mechanisms to secure the necessary support required to achieve its goals.
2. 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 program-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)
3. 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 program, 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 program to further engage audiences in the Saadiyat Cultural District institutions, vision and concept.

4. 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.

5. Superpool is a multidisciplinary design firm based in Istanbul. 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.