



NATIONAL PAVILION UNITED ARAB EMIRATES LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA CLOSES EXHIBITION AT 56TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION. '1980 – TODAY: EXHIBITIONS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' TO TRAVEL TO SHARJAH FOLLOWING CRITICAL ACCLAIM

The exhibition, which features over 100 diverse works by 15 Emirati artists, closed yesterday, marking the end of the 56th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

26 November 2015 – Abu Dhabi, UAE. The National Pavilion United Arab Emirates la Biennale di Venezia have closed their exhibition, *1980 – Today: Exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates*, marking the end of the 56th International Art Exhibition. The exhibition is now due to travel to the UAE, where it will be hosted by the Sharjah Art Foundation from February 20th until May 20th 2016.

The 56th International Art Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia ran from May 9 – November 22, 2015 and received over 500,000 visitors.

The National Pavilion UAE is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and supported by the UAE Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development. The exhibition was presented in the UAE's permanent pavilion in the Arsenale – Sale d'Armi.

Curated by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, President and Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation, *1980 – Today: Exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates* was a retrospective on contemporary art exhibitions in the Emirates over the last 40 years. Through an unprecedented grouping of over 100 works, Sheikha Hoor structured the exhibition to create dialogues between artists and across practices, highlighting the diversity and the history of the art scene in the UAE.

The exhibition featured work by fifteen Emirati artists: Ahmed Al Ansari, Moosa Al Halyan, Mohammed Al Qassab, Abdul Qader Al Rais, Abdullah Al Saadi, Mohammed Abdullah Bulhiah, Salem Jawhar, Mohammed Kazem, Dr. Najat Meky, Abdulraheem Salim, Ahmed Sharif, Hassan Sharif, Obaid Suroor, Dr. Mohamed Yousif, and Abdulrahman Zainal.

"For our fourth exhibition at the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia we were delighted to have worked with curator Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi," said Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, Founder of the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and the Commissioner of the National Pavilion UAE. "Thanks to her vision we were able to share essential works from this key period in the UAE's art scene as well as to build links for future generations. I applaud her contributions to the development and advancement of the larger discourse on art from the region."

Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi's research relied heavily on the public archives of the Emirates Fine Art Society (EFAS), a non-profit association formed in 1980 in Sharjah, which has long served as a galvanizing incubator for the UAE's art scene. The archives included a trove of English and Arabic books on visual arts, theatre and literature, as well as catalogs, photo albums and copies of *Al*



Tashkeel, EFAS's quarterly newsletter, which has been published since the 1980s.

A publication on the exhibition featuring a series of essays and contributions by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi and some of the participating artists, as well as some archive material, is now available for sale online on Koenig Books' [website](http://bit.ly/koenigde) <http://bit.ly/koenigde> (order #1536407).

1980 – Today: Exhibitions in the United Arab Emirates will now return to the UAE where it will be hosted at the Sharjah Art Foundation between February 20th – May 20th. Further details will be revealed soon by Sharjah Art Foundation. www.sharjahart.org

The Curator

Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi is President and Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation. She is a practicing artist who received her BFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2002), a Diploma in Painting from the Royal Academy of Arts (2005) and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London (2008). In 2003 she was appointed curator of Sharjah Biennial 6 and has continued as the Biennial's Director since that time. She is Chair of the Advisory Board for the College of Art and Design, University of Sharjah; and Member of the Advisory Board of both the Khoj International Artists' Association, India and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing. She serves on the Board of Directors for MoMA PS1, New York; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; the International Biennial Association, Gwangju; and Ashkal Alwan, Beirut. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi is the first Emirati to be appointed as the curator for the National Pavilion UAE la Biennale di Venezia.

National Pavilion UAE - la Biennale di Venezia

The National Pavilion UAE – la Biennale di Venezia endorses the UAE's contemporary art and architectural practices on an international platform and promotes the nation's diverse and developing cultural scene, through the organization and management of the UAE's participation in the exhibitions of la Biennale di Venezia. The UAE's participation at la Biennale di Venezia commenced in 2009 with a national pavilion at the 53rd International Art Exhibition, and has continued in subsequent editions of the art exhibition since. 2014 marked the UAE's first participation at the International Architecture Exhibition.

The National Pavilion UAE la Biennale di Venezia is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, and supported by the UAE Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development.

For more information visit www.nationalpavilionuae.org

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