

National Pavilion UAE to highlight human-scale architectural and urban landscapes at 2018 Venice Biennale exhibition, curated by Dr. Khaled Alawadi

- *Lifescapes Beyond Bigness* will explore the interplay between the physicality of architecture and places, and the dynamic choreography of everyday life
- Dr. Khaled Alawadi is an Emirati scholar, educator and trained architect and urban planner, currently Assistant Professor of Sustainable Urbanism at Abu Dhabi's Masdar Institute, part of Khalifah University of Science and Technology
- 16th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale) will take place from 26 May to 25 November 2018

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The National Pavilion UAE will present *Lifescapes Beyond Bigness*, an exhibition exploring human-scale architectural landscapes, at the 2018 Venice Biennale.

The exhibition aims to highlight the role of architecture and urban design in forming the choreography of people's daily routines. It particularly investigates the role of 'quotidian' (everyday) landscapes in accommodating, enhancing, and facilitating social activities across different places in the UAE.

The everyday life or the choreography of informal, un-programmed lifescapes in the UAE will be explored through a curatorial selection of different typologies and places from the UAE's diverse landscape, such as neighborhoods, urban blocks, streets and alleyways, squares and public spaces, mountains and agrarian settings.

Through sophisticated site observation and mapping research techniques, the exhibition will present an exploration of their physical characteristics and typologies; behavioral rhythms and informal patterns of life; and the architectural and design traditions that have shaped them. It will also invite visitors to experience important landscapes that are often overlooked in common perceptions about UAE's megadevelopment discourse.

Lifescapes Beyond Bigness is curated by Dr. Khaled Alawadi, an Emirati scholar and architect, and Assistant Professor of Sustainable Urbanism at the Masdar Institute in Abu Dhabi, part of Khalifah University of Science and Technology.

"The late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE's founding father, believed that urban planning should aim to support happiness and social cohesion by putting human needs at the centre of design. In line with this principle, many of the UAE's pre-1990s urban and non-urban 'quotidian' landscapes were socially responsive and facilitated the development of diverse, vibrant communities," says **Dr. Khaled Alawadi**. "This exhibition is an excursion into these humane and under-celebrated areas of the UAE, highlighting the interplay between the physicality of architecture

and places, and the dynamic choreography of everyday life. The exhibition weaves an array of original observations about different sites and lifescapes in the UAE, enriching our understanding of what UAE's urbanism are about outside bigness”.

Khulood Al Atiyat, Manager of Arts, Culture and Heritage at the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, commissioner of the National Pavilion UAE, says: “Rather than focusing only on the design and physicality of the architecture itself, Dr. Alawadi’s research encompasses human behavior and social life to paint a rich picture of the UAE which will challenge preconceptions. His important original research will make an invaluable contribution towards understanding the region’s architecture and urban development.”

The 16th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale will take place from 26 May to 25 November 2018, under the theme of *Freespace*. The Biennale’s curatorial direction has been set by Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara of Grafton Architects, and each National Pavilion will respond to their overall aim to reveal the capacity of architecture to connect with history, time, place, and people.

Dr. Khaled Alawadi

The first UAE national scholar to specialize in the design of sustainable cities, Dr. Alawadi is Assistant Professor of Sustainable Urbanism at the Masdar Institute in Abu Dhabi, part of Khalifa University of Science and Technology, where he founded the MSc. in Sustainable Critical Infrastructure program. He is a trained architect, planner and urban designer whose research is devoted to urban design, housing and urbanism, especially the relationships between the built environment and sustainable development.

Dr. Alawadi recently served as Visiting Assistant Professor at MIT’s Center for Advanced Urbanism, and previously worked as an architect for Dubai Municipality and as an Assistant Professor at UAE University.

He holds a PhD in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Austin.

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