

## YASSER ELSHESHTAWY TO REPRESENT NATIONAL PAVILION UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AT THE 15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITION AT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2016

### APPLICATIONS FOR PRESTIGIOUS VENICE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME NOW OPEN

**20 October, United Arab Emirates:** The National Pavilion United Arab Emirates (UAE) la Biennale di Venezia has appointed Yasser Elsheshtawy, Associate Professor of Architecture at the United Arab Emirates University, as the curator for the UAE's participation in the 15<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition at la Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale), from May 28th to November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Applications for the 2016 Venice Internship program, which will run for the six-month duration of the exhibition, are now open to Emiratis and long-term residents aged 21 and above.

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

*"We are very proud that the UAE will once again participate in the International Architecture Exhibition at la Biennale di Venezia, and that Yasser Elsheshtawy will be our curator", says Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, Founder of the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation. "This is one of the world's most significant architectural moments and we feel confident that his exhibition will expertly represent our nation's architectural identity, and further reinforce the emergence of the UAE as a global hub for arts and culture."*

Yasser Elsheshtawy, a leading authority on urban planning and architecture in the region, said of his appointment, *"It is an honor to be asked to represent the UAE at the Venice Biennale. The urban landscape of the UAE is notable for its humane aspect as well as unrivalled technical achievement, resulting in a truly memorable architectural environment. Developing a curatorial vision for the Biennale platform is both challenging and rewarding, and I hope to successfully share the unique characteristics of the UAE's architecture and culture on the world stage."*

Selected interns will spend one month in Venice during the biennale, acting as custodians and docents of the National Pavilion UAE at la Biennale di Venezia, where they will get hands-on experience managing the exhibition. The internship starts in the UAE ahead of their deployment to Venice, where the interns undergo a comprehensive educational program based on partnerships with leading cultural institutions in the UAE.

*"We are delighted to open applications for our 2016 internship program," says Angela Migally, Executive Director and General Counsel at the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation. "The program is a unique platform for individuals who aspire to a career in arts and culture to hone their talents, experience cultural exchange, and work alongside leading figures in the local and international architecture communities on a renowned project. We are honored to provide this opportunity for these emerging art and architecture professionals who will go on to contribute so much to the UAE's developing cultural scene."*



Since its inaugural participation at la Biennale di Venezia in 2009 the National Pavilion UAE has worked with over 100 interns, many of who have pursued successful careers in the arts since their participation in the program.

### About Yasser Elsheshtawy

Yasser Elsheshtawy is an Associate Professor of Architecture at the United Arab Emirates University, where he has taught since 1997. He established the Urban Research Lab in 2012 which has become a significant center documenting the urban and architectural landscape of the UAE. Elsheshtawy's work focuses on the city, aiming to capture the urban and architectural experience of city dwellers. Specifically his scholarship deals with urbanization in developing societies, informal urbanism, urban history and environment-behavior studies, with a particular focus on Middle Eastern cities. Elsheshtawy has authored more than 70 publications in leading international journals and publishing houses, including *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle*. Additionally he edited *The Evolving Arab City and Planning Middle Eastern Cities*, all of which have become main references on urbanism and architecture in the region. He has been invited to present his research at numerous international institutions such as Columbia University, Harvard Graduate School of Design, the ETH/Zurich, the Louvre Auditorium/Paris and the Canadian Center of Architecture/Montreal. Additionally his multimedia work has been exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum and New York University. Elsheshtawy is also responsible for a number of online initiatives, including dubaization.com — a blog on Dubai, hailed by the *Guardian* newspaper as one of the leading blogs in the world; and uaemodern.com which explores the modernist urban and architectural landscape of the UAE.

### About the Venice Internship Program

The internship program is open to Emiratis and long-term residents of the UAE who are over 21 years of age, and have an interest or background in Art, Architecture or a related discipline. Selected interns will attend training sessions in the UAE and spend a month in Venice between May and November 2016, where they will work side-by-side with Italian interns, through a partnership with Ca'Foscari University in Venice. This partnership has been developed to foster a true exchange of cultures between the interns and to allow the UAE participants to engage with Italian customs, language and knowledge during their experience in Venice.

Applications for the 2016 internship program are now open. To apply, please visit [nationalpavilionuae.org/venice-internship/](http://nationalpavilionuae.org/venice-internship/). Applications will close on November 28, 2015.

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