

## Wael Al Awar and Kenichi Teramoto of Dubai's ibda design will curate the National Pavilion UAE at the 2020 Venice Biennale

- *The exhibition will explore the use of salt as a sustainable local building material*
- *ibda design has worked on the architecture of cultural institutions including Jameel Arts Centre, Hayy: Creative Hub and Hai d3*
- *They were selected from 97 applications to the National Pavilion UAE's first curatorial open call*



### 25 September 2019, United Arab Emirates

Wael Al Awar and Kenichi Teramoto, Principal Architects of Dubai's ibda design, have been appointed as the curators for the National Pavilion UAE at the 2020 Venice Biennale following an open call that attracted close to 100 curatorial proposals. Their exhibition will explore sea salt as a traditional, locally-sourced building material, and its potential uses for developing sustainable habitation in desert environments like the UAE.

ibda design is a multidisciplinary architecture, landscape and urban design studio founded in Dubai. Known for addressing the social, environmental, economical and technological aspects of architectural projects, the firm has worked on prominent cultural institutions including Dubai's Jameel Arts Centre, Jeddah's Hayy: Creative Hub, and Hai d3.

"Our approach to design interweaves natural light, time, structure, and landscape with architecture. We are continually inspired by natural phenomena and the ways in which architects can adapt organic materials to create sustainable designs," said curators **Wael Al Awar and Kenichi Teramoto**, Principal Architects of ibda design. "We are honored to have been selected as the curators for the National Pavilion UAE, and we'd like to thank the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation for this opportunity to expand our research into this important global conversation. Salt is a geologically fascinating substance as well as one of the UAE's most abundant natural resources, and through our exhibition we'll explore its potential as an environmentally-friendly building material."

**Khulood Al Atiyat, Manager of Arts, Culture and Heritage at the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation**, commissioner of the National Pavilion UAE, said: “Curating a Venice Biennale pavilion is a balance between representing region-specific ideas and telling untold local stories, while remaining relevant to global themes and conversations that resonate with the Biennale’s diverse audience. ibda design maintains a uniquely cross-continental approach and its Principal Architects bring professional experience from Tokyo to Rotterdam, meaning they will be bringing a fresh perspective on the dialogue between the region’s architecture and the world’s to the National Pavilion UAE.”

The 2020 curators were selected following the National Pavilion UAE’s first open call, which invited designers, architects and thinkers based in the UAE and around the world to develop proposals for the 2020 exhibition. The 97 curatorial proposals submitted demonstrate diverse ideas and vibrant perspectives on local and global architecture from a variety of voices.

ibda design was selected from a final shortlist that included:

- *Al Sabkha: Measures of Coexistence* by a hypotheticaloffice (Fortuné Penniman + Hatem Hatem) + MERGe (Eleni Tzavellou & Maria Radjenovic)
- *Sees Beneath a Land*, Meitha Al Mazrooei (PhD Candidate at MIT, Founder and Editor of WTD Magazine), Faysal Tabbarah (Associate Professor of Architecture at the American University of Sharjah), and Dima Srouji (Architect and Artist based in Palestine)
- *Evolving Factories*, Dr. Anna Cornaro, Associate Professor, Chair of the Department of Architecture, American University in Dubai, COdESIGN + Valerio de Diveris (COdESIGN), Fikra Design, None Collective, Zahed Sultan.

The National Pavilion UAE will present ibda design’s exhibition at the 17<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition, from 23 May to 29 November 2020 (pre-opening 21 and 22 May). Curated by Lebanese architect Hashim Sarkis under the overall theme *How Will We Live Together?*, the 2020 Biennale will look at architecture’s ability to engage people and communities across increasing social, economic, political and digital divides.

The UAE’s current exhibition at the 58<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition is *Passage*, a 26-minute two-channel video installation by Emirati filmmaker and poet Nujoom Alghanem. It will remain on show until 24 November 2019.

The National Pavilion UAE is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development, with a permanent pavilion at the Venice Biennale’s Arsenale – Sale d’Armi. 2020 marks the UAE’s tenth exhibition at the Venice Biennale since 2009 and its fourth participation in the International Architecture Exhibition.

### About ibda design



ibda design is an architecture, landscape and urban design studio founded in Dubai with a multi-disciplinary approach to design. The studio addresses the social, environmental, economical and technological aspects of each project in order to tailor a highly specific concept to the given context.

The principals, Wael Al Awar (Lebanon) and Kenichi Teramoto (Japan), have unique stories that first led them away from their home countries, then later to collaborate in Dubai. They share a mutual ability to observe a city up-close and intimately, yet also from afar, with the attentive eye of an outsider.

With no shared first language, Wael and Teramoto communicate through the process of architecture itself, using a clear, simple, and deliberate approach. The projects combine their individual design sensibilities into a layering of considerations, resulting in an architecture of natural light, time, structure, and landscape. By aligning with these natural phenomena, they seek an architecture that is more than a man-made fabrication, but rather, an architecture open to adaptation and appropriation. The spaces that emerge from this approach encourage unexpected experiences, activities, and behaviors, while being resolved as site-specific provocations to their context.

ibda design has been recognized by Architectural Record in 2018, by Design Vanguard as a top emerging firm in the world, and by Architectural Digest as a Top 50 office within the Middle East in 2017.

ibda design has won numerous awards for its projects, including the 2018 AIA Middle East Honor Award, 2018 Hong Kong Design Award (Gold), and 2018 New York Design Award (Silver) for Hayy: Creative Hub; the 2018 Arab Architects Award and 2016 Faith and Form Religious Architecture Award for Al Warqaa Mosque; and 2016 London Design Award for Hai d3. In 2016, ibda design was shortlisted in the international competition for Beirut Museum of Art.

ibda design has a partner studio in Tokyo called waiwai.

### About Wael Al Awar

Wael Al Awar founded ibda design in 2009 after moving back to the Middle East from Tokyo. He has extensive experience in designing projects of various scales and programs, including art centres and parks, school and university campuses, mixed-use developments, private villas and mosques.

With interests in natural phenomena, landscape and formless diagrams of relations, Wael has a multi-disciplinary approach to design and is always looking to challenge conventional processes to push the boundaries of design.

Wael has worked in the Middle East, the West and for several years in Tokyo, working with renowned Japanese architects. He has developed a strong cultural understanding and geographical sensitivity to different project contexts, and offers the perspective of a permanent outsider working with no geographical boundaries.

Wael holds a B.Arch from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

### About Kenichi Teramoto

Kenichi Teramoto joined ibda design as a principal architect and partner to Wael Al Awar in 2012.

Previously, Teramoto worked with renowned architects in Tokyo and Rotterdam, on local and international projects, building an extensive design experience in both Asia and Europe. His architectural design proficiency includes a diverse range of projects including art centres and parks, school and university campuses, mixed-use developments, private villas and mosques.

Teramoto's working experiences have trained him to develop an understanding of culture, geography and materiality. His approach to design is multi-disciplinary, and he has a deep interest in natural phenomena and structure. He is always re-questioning the design approach with the aim of delivering a distinctive design.

Teramoto holds a M.Arch from Tokyo University of Science, Japan.

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#### Notes to Editors

##### National Pavilion UAE la Biennale di Venezia

Through participation at La Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale), the National Pavilion United Arab Emirates - La Biennale di Venezia (NPUAE) supports the arts and architectural practices of the UAE on an international platform, and promotes a cultural dialogue between the UAE and the international community.

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. It is currently participating for the third time in the International Architecture Exhibition, which runs until November 25, 2018.

The National Pavilion UAE also organizes the Venice Internship, offering opportunities to young residents of the UAE through a one-month internship on site in Venice acting as custodians and docents of the National Pavilion. Rotated on a monthly basis throughout the six months of the biennale, the different intern groups oversee the daily operations of the exhibition and participate in

an educational program, run in partnership with Ca' Foscari University and other cultural institutions in the UAE and Venice.

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 and Knowledge Development.

#### **Commissioner: The Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation**

The Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation (SHF) is a private not-for-profit foundation committed to the cultivation of a more creative, connected and thriving UAE community. Based in Abu Dhabi, SHF oversees a diverse portfolio of not-for-profit programs and initiatives spanning the arts, culture, heritage, human development and early childhood development in the UAE and internationally. Underpinning SHF's activities is a common ambition to invest in the knowledge and capabilities of the UAE people in order to support them to unlock their full potential.

#### **Supporter: Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development**

The Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development is a leading governmental authority focused on setting the UAE's cultural agenda and nurturing creative talent. The Ministry's objective is to preserve the UAE's national identity and promote its position on the global cultural map through innovative and creative development of the UAE's cultural sector. This objective falls in line with the strategic objective and goals of the UAE Vision 2021, which charts the next stage in the country's journey with a focus on preserving its rich heritage, sharing knowledge, and innovating.

Given their role in supporting economic development, the Ministry is dedicated to championing, cultivating and supporting the UAE's creative industries. These encompass disciplines as diverse as cultural intangible heritage, cultural tangible heritage, literature, visual arts, performing arts, design, audiovisual media and digital innovation.

The Ministry' works with several entities including the federal and local governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, and media institutions to protect the country's cultural heritage and cultural issues.

For more information, please visit <https://mckd.gov.ae>