



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

For Immediate Release

**THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES REVEALS PLANS FOR
THE UAE PAVILION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT THE 2009 VENICE BIENNALE
In partnership with Takatof**

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, March 17, 2009 – Emiratis and UAE residents are being recruited to welcome visitors at the UAE's first national pavilion at the international Venice Biennale June 7–November 22 in Venice, Italy.

Volunteers will serve as gallery managers and assistants in the UAE Pavilion, working 21-day shifts beginning in May to help with the building of the Pavilion itself, for this major international exhibition, which showcases the art of more than 70 countries. Housing, meals and small stipends will be provided, and volunteers will participate in an arts and culture program that includes free admission to Venice's museums and cultural attractions.

"This is a unique opportunity to broaden the artistic and cultural exposure of UAE volunteers and we are delighted to have Takatof partner with us on this very important program" according to Dr Lamees Hamdan, Commissioner of the UAE Pavilion.

"Students, practitioners of the arts and anyone interested in the UAE's art, architectural scene is welcome to apply. The volunteer program is designed to demonstrate to would-be artists, parents, teachers and the public that art is a serious career vocation."

Takatof will provide a core of the volunteers taking part in Venice. Takatof is a voluntary nationwide social program, developed by the Emirates Foundation to create a culture of volunteering throughout the UAE.

The word 'Takatof' means 'shoulder-to-shoulder' in English, and Takatof volunteers work across key areas of community need – disaster relief, health visiting, school rehabilitation, engaging children with special needs and a popular Ramadan welfare campaign. The organization was established in 2005 under the patronage H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

Maytha Al Habsi, Director of the Emirates Foundation's Takatof Initiative, explained: "Selected Takatof volunteers will serve as guides and cultural ambassadors at the UAE Pavilion. The Venice Biennale is a highly prestigious international art event – it is appropriate that young nationals are prominent in showcasing the nation and its artistic ambitions."

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and demonstrate a serious interest in the arts. Applicants under 21 years of age must have a parent or guardian's signature to apply.

Application forms will be available at UAE National Pavilion manned booths housed at Art Dubai in the Madinat Jumeriah Conference Hall from March 17–21, at the Sharjah Biennial March 19–21, and at the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi on March 26. Applications are also available at Al Ain and Zayed Universities.

Initiated and supported by His Excellency Abdul Rahman Mohammed Al Owais, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, the UAE Pavilion is being developed and presented under the leadership of its Commissioner, Dr. Lamees Hamdan, a member of the Board of Directors of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority. Serving as curator for the UAE Pavilion is Tirdad Zolghadr, an internationally respected curator, critic, professor and filmmaker.

The UAE Pavilion will be titled "It's Not You, It's Me," a playful and provocative name for the country's first pavilion at the world's most prestigious contemporary art event.

Built in a large and prominent location in the Arsenale—one of the two main areas of the Venice Biennale—the UAE Pavilion will combine scenographic elements and architectural design by the partnership of Rami Farook (founder of the UAE's Traffic design gallery) and the Belgian architectural collective D'haeseleer & Kimpe & Poelaert, known for its collaborations with visual artists.

The UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is initiated by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, and is supported by the Emirates Foundation and the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (DCAA).

If you would like to volunteer please contact: volunteer@uaepavilion.org or UAE Pavilion Office: +971 (0) 4 705 0436 or call Takatof directly on: 800 TAKATOF (8252863)

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Please note image: Dr Lamees Hamdan Commissioner for the UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2009 (in pink). Maytha Al Habsi Director of the Emirates Foundation's Takatof Initiative (in black).
2. **UAE Pavilion at the Venice Biennale** Universally recognized as the world's most prestigious contemporary art event, the Venice Biennale will present its 53rd International Art Exhibition from June 7 through November 22, 2009. In recognition of the emergence of the UAE as a cultural hub, and of the historic importance of this first national pavilion to be created by a Gulf state, the Biennale has provided a large and highly visible site in the Arsenale for the UAE Pavilion.
3. **Ministry of Culture, Youth & Community Development** 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 organises ongoing activities and develops mechanisms to secure the necessary support required to achieve its goals.

4. **The Emirates Foundation:** 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 national society and heritage.

The Foundation facilitates links between commercial businesses and the public sector to devise new projects and strengthen existing non profit initiatives throughout the country. Its funding comes from annual donations and an endowment fund supported by the Abu Dhabi government and private companies. Its six key areas of interest are Education; Science and Technology; Arts and Culture; Social Development; Environmental Awareness and Public Awareness.

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 H.H. Sheikh Mansour Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Presidential Affairs. Further information from: www.emiratesfoundation.ae

5. **The Dubai Culture & Arts Authority** was launched in March 2008 by H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to highlight Dubai as a dynamic culture, heritage and arts centre.

The Dubai Culture & Arts Authority aims to create, drive and support cultural

strategies while preserving national identity. With a vision to create a vibrant Arabian, global city that shapes 21st Century culture and art in the region and the world, it will build upon Dubai's status as a multicultural city, inspiring and encouraging its more than 200 resident nationalities to contribute to its culture and arts renaissance. The Authority is responsible for developing best policies, institutional and regulatory framework and funding within the cultural industry of Dubai. It will create physical infrastructure to position Dubai as an overall culture, heritage and arts venue as well as increase awareness in cultural activities by initiating a robust dialogue with the public. It will nurture talent through development of culture, heritage and arts curricula in schools and through partnerships with leading educational institutions to attract artists and cultural professionals to Dubai and inspire local talent to travel abroad.