



الجناح الوطني لدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة
المعرض الدولي للفنون
بينالي البندقية

The National Pavilion of
the United Arab Emirates
The International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia

NATIONAL PAVILION OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ANNOUNCES REEM FADDA AS CURATOR AND MOHAMMED KAZEM AS FEATURED ARTIST FOR THE 55TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION - LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

The United Arab Emirates will participate with a third National Pavilion in 2013 through the generous support of the Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation underscoring its position as an international cultural hub through a solo presentation exhibition and a highly competitive Venice Internship

September 26th 2012 – Abu Dhabi - The National Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates is pleased to announce its participation at the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, 2013. The Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development, H.E. Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Owais has appointed Dr Lamees Hamdan for a third consecutive term as Commissioner of the country's National Pavilion. For the 2013 exhibition, Reem Fadda, an Associate Curator for Middle Eastern Art at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Project, will feature the work of Emirati artist Mohammed Kazem in a solo presentation in the pavilion. The National Pavilion has appointed the dynamic Emirati design house, Fikra, lead by Salem Al Qassimi to produce the visual elements related to both the organization and the exhibition. The Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation is generously supporting the Pavilion for the first time.

The Curator and Artist

Fadda is currently working as Associate Curator of Middle Eastern Art - Abu Dhabi Project at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation based in New York. She is also a PhD candidate at the History of Art and Visual Studies Department at Cornell University.

From her curatorial concept, Fadda stated; "Mohammed Kazem, a pioneering contemporary artist and thinker from the UAE, represents a generation that emerged from an avant-garde legacy of arts and artists in the UAE and the surrounding region, one that has thrived since the mid-70s with advocates such as his mentor artist Hassan Sharif. The curatorial research for our pavilions presentation in Venice will see Kazem as the leading individual artist and thinker he is and highlight his contribution to the local artistic heritage."

Kazem first studied art at the Emirates Fine Art Society, he then went on to learn music, attend national and international art workshops, as well as teach painting at Dubai Art Atelier. Widely known through numerous solo and group exhibitions in the UAE and abroad, his works have been collected by private institutions such as Deutsche Bank as well as Museums in Doha, Sharjah, JP Morgan Chase Bank, USA, Sittard in Holland and by private collectors. Kazem has participated in many high profile exhibitions including the Havana Biennial (2000), Singapore Biennale (2006), Dhaka Biennial, Bangladesh (2002), and the Sharjah Biennale (1993 – 2007). Most recently he exhibited at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia (2010); and at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012).

A pioneer in the UAE contemporary art scene for his incorporation of video and new technologies, his interest in conceptual art and his progressive attitude towards medium and context is especially highlighted by his ongoing series "Directions."

"By engaging the work of Kazem, we can witness the urban modernity of an emerging nation through the eyes of its individual artists. In pursuing this initiative we hope to demonstrate that the developments we see in the region today do not come from a void, but rather evolve from the contemporary thought and practice of artists and intellectuals like Kazem, whose work has consistently interrogated the relationship between the individual and his/her social, urban, and natural environments," elaborated Fadda.

The National Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates

Initiated and supported by His Excellency Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Owais, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth and Community Development; the National Pavilion of the UAE continues to be developed and presented under the leadership of its Commissioner, Dr. Lamees Hamdan, a leader in the art and culture scene in the UAE and member of the Board of Directors of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority.

"Established to endorse the UAE's art scene on an international platform and build on local projects, the National Pavilion will return to Venice in 2013 with a truly nation-wide offering. Fadda represents Abu Dhabi's bold commitment to the UAE through its building of the Guggenheim Museum, Mohammed Kazem, from Dubai, has been a critical part of the fabric of every Sharjah Biennial from 1993 – 2007. Thus the 2013 Pavilion stands to strongly communicate internationally the depth of contemporary art practices in the United Arab Emirates" says Dr Hamdan.

"We are honored to have the support of the Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation for the National Pavilion. The Foundation's commitment to art in the community, engagement and support for the UAE and international art scene is crucial," added Dr Hamdan.

The Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation is the family foundation of Her Highness Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan. Its mission is aligned with the goals of the National Pavilion and Venice

Internship Program which strives to introduce not only the international community to Emirati artistic talent but so too young UAE nationals to the wealth of cultural experience encapsulated in the Venice Biennale. "Our founder, Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, is a passionate patron of the arts and a committed supporter of Emirati artists, and so it is with great pleasure that we are able to play a role in the program," stated Dr Salvatore LaSpada, Executive Director of the Foundation.

The UAE has already presented two widely acclaimed iterations of the National Pavilion at the 53rd and 54th International Art Exhibitions. In 2009, the UAE made history becoming the first gulf nation to present a National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. In 2011, the UAE presented its second National Pavilion curated by Vasif Kortun and featuring Emirati artists, Reem Al Ghaith, Abdullah Al Saadi and Lateefa bint Maktoum.

The National Pavilion of the UAE at the Venice Biennial is supported by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, and the Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The 55th International Art Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia Universally recognized as the world's most prestigious contemporary art event, la Biennale di Venezia (the Venice Biennale) dates back to 1895 when the first art exhibition was organized. It will present its 55th International Art Exhibition from June 1 through November 24, 2013. In recognition of the emergence of the UAE as a cultural hub, the Biennale has provided a large and highly visible site in the Arsenale for the UAE Pavilion. Additional to the art exhibition, La Biennale hosts Architecture Biennale, Film Festival, Music, Theater and Dance Festivals.

2. Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation The Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation works to contribute to the creation of positive futures for the citizens of the United Arab Emirates and the full realization of their potential and aspirations. To that end, it develops and supports charitable initiatives in the areas of education, arts, culture and heritage, and the environment.

In the arts, the Foundation works toward three strategic goals:

- 1) To support emerging and future Emirati artists in developing their talents at the earliest stages of their growth
- 2) To educate and engage the public in art and to build new audiences in the UAE for the arts
- 3) To introduce the international community to Emirati artistic talent

The Foundation is the family foundation of Sheikha Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan and was founded by her in 2010.

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. Reem Fadda, (1979) Focusing on a number of projects in her native homeland of Palestine, Fadda was Director of the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA) and worked as Academic Director to the International Academy of Art – Palestine, which she helped found in 2006. She co-curated and had been involved in many projects such as: “Liminal Spaces”, a 4 year long artistic & political project, consisting of conferences, tours, art residencies and exhibitions in Palestine, Israel & Germany; “Ramallah Syndrome”, a project showcased at the 53rd Venice Biennale; «Tarjama/Translation» which was an ArteEast program, showcasing 30 artists from the Middle East and Central Asia at the Queens Museum & Herbert E. Johnson Museum; and the “3rd RIWAQ Biennale”, which she curated alongside Charles Esche in Ramallah. She is a member of the general assembly of both the International Academy of Art, and the Kamandjati Association, the selection jury of the Young Arab Theatre Fund and the steering committee of Decolonizing Architecture. Additionally, she was a recipient of both Chevening and Fulbright scholarships.

5. Mohammed Kazem, (1969) Kazem’s works have been selected for Biennials and Exhibitions around the world for over two decades, including, Holland, Singapore, Germany, Switzerland, Egypt, Lebanon, Bangladesh, India, Spain, Japan, The USA, Uzbekistan, Russia, and Cuba. He has taken part in several Sharjah International Art Biennials and has been awarded first prize for installation. Kazem went on to curate the 8th Sharjah Biennial in 2007. Since then, he was the curator of The Flying House from 2007-2011, while simultaneously curating exhibitions in Spain, Switzerland, and in the UAE. Kazem has opened his own studio, Empty10, in Al Quoz, Dubai in 2012. Most recently Mohammed curated the annual MinD exhibition at the DUCTAC Gallery of Light in Dubai. The exhibition Dubai Contemporary will be on for one month, during Dubai Art Fair. Mohammed is currently an MFA candidate at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, USA where he will finish the degree in December 2012.

6. Fikra Design Studio Fikra is a multidisciplinary design studio specialized in bilingual graphic design; Arabic and English. Founded by Salem Al-Qassimi in 2006, Fikra works across a variety of media, time-based and print including book design, data-visualizations, environmental graphics, bilingual typography; Arabic and English, identity creation, interaction design, and motion graphics. The studio’s philosophy is deeply rooted in investigating new pathways for problem-solving through design exploration and education. Fikra gained its reputation as one of the leading graphic design studios in the UAE.

7. Venice Internship Program Initiated in 2009 in conjunction with the National Pavilion of the UAE at the Venice Biennale, the Venice Internship Program offers a range of opportunities to young Emiratis keen to engage with culture and arts at the highest international level. The program focuses on a 1 month internship opportunity for an elite group of Emirati nationals based on-site in Venice acting as custodians of the National Pavilion. These interns manage the exhibition and participate in a rigorous educational program utilizing the wealth of museums, galleries and cultural institutions found throughout Venice. The Program runs throughout the 6 month duration of the Art Biennale and will return to Venice in 2013.