

الجنّاح الوطني لحولة الإمارات
بيّنالي البندقية

National Pavilion UAE
La Biennale di Venezia



La Biennale di Venezia

60. Esposizione
Internazionale
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Media alert

NATIONAL PAVILION UAE'S *ABDULLAH AL SAADI: SITES OF MEMORY, SITES OF AMNESIA* CONCLUDES ITS EXHIBITION AT BIENNALE ARTE 2024

- *Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia* welcomed 308,719 visitors.
- The 2024 Biennale Arte announced the sale of 700,000 tickets, with an average daily attendance of approximately 3,300 visitors.
- A special exhibition book is available, and the exhibition can be visited via the National Pavilion UAE website.

26 November 2024, United Arab Emirates: The National Pavilion UAE closes its eighth participation at the Biennale Arte 2024, with *Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia*. Curated by Tarek Abou El Fetouh, the exhibition welcomed 308,719 visitors at the pavilion since its inauguration on 20 April 2024.

The 2024 Biennale Arte announced the sale of 700,000 tickets, averaging approximately 3,300 visitors per day, in addition to the 27,966 visitors who attended the preview. Of the total audience, 59% came from abroad and 41% from Italy. The 60th International Art Exhibition attracted a significant number of young people and students under the age of 26, accounting for over 190,000 attendees, or 30% of the total audience.

Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia highlights the work of Emirati artist Abdullah Al Saadi through eight distinctive journeys, comprising a total of 456 pieces. His diverse practice spans painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, and photography. By using found objects, creating new writing systems, and documenting his experiences, Abdullah offers a rich and reflective body of work that encourages viewers to contemplate their connections to the world around them. His work is deeply rooted in the UAE's landscapes and his own family history, capturing the intricate relationships between individuals, their natural surroundings, and their social environments.

The exhibition's title reflects Al Saadi's exploration of memory and forgetting, and the dynamics between manifestation and disappearance. The works on display offer a reflection on his decades-long artistic practice, conjuring the atmosphere of the artist's studio along with his ritual practices, reflections, and associations that have formed over many years.

Laila Binbrek, Director, National Pavilion UAE, remarks, "*Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia* uncovered the unknown and presented multiple new directions for interpretation of Al Saadi's work, thanks to the curator Tarek Abou El Fetouh. We witnessed visitors fully immersed in the performed reading of the exhibition, staged by professional actors from the UAE alongside students from the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy as a collaborative extension of our Venice Internship Program. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this journey and helped foster an environment for dialogue."

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Abdullah Al Saadi, Artist, said, “It’s an honor to represent the UAE at a global and prestigious platform like Biennale Arte in Venice. I’m grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with curator Tarek Abou El Fetouh for the second time. Two poles are integral to my practice: my journeys into the wilderness, where I gain inspiration and create, and my studio, where I preserve and archive my works – both manifest according to my own systems. Through the exhibition in Venice, we were able to show these worlds and processes.”

Tarek Abou El Fetouh, Curator, commented, “We took a cross-disciplinary approach to explore themes of temporality while curating the work of prolific artist Abdullah Al Saadi. I am grateful to all who contributed to this journey, fostering an environment for dialogue and reflection that resonates beyond the exhibition walls.”

The National Pavilion UAE plays a key role in enriching dialogue, building community partnerships, and collaborating with cultural institutions in the UAE and in Venice, Italy. This year, the National Pavilion UAE worked with the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy, the UAE’s only university dedicated to performance, and universities in Venice – Università Ca' Foscari and Università Iuav di Venezia – to deliver the Venice Internship program. The program provides interns with the opportunity to spend one month in Venice, engaging collaboratively in hands-on daily operations of the exhibition.

Through dialogue, the exhibition’s accompanying publication engages with historians and philosophers whose interviews with Al Saadi offer a new perspective on interpreting art from the region. Titled *Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia*, the publication is edited by Tarek Abou El Fetouh and Rasha Salti, co-published by Kaph Books, and available for sale online [here](#).

The National Pavilion UAE expresses special thanks to the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy for their collaboration, which reflects the pavilion’s ongoing commitment to supporting young artists, curators, and scholars who present untold stories of the UAE on a global stage.

A virtual tour of the exhibition *Abdullah Al Saadi: Sites of Memory, Sites of Amnesia* will remain available on the National Pavilion UAE’s [website](#).

The National Pavilion UAE is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Culture, with a permanent pavilion at La Biennale di Venezia’s Arsenale – Sale d’Armi.

For more information on the participation of the UAE at La Biennale di Venezia, please visit nationalpavilionuae.org or follow the National Pavilion UAE on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#).

Please find hi-res images and the full press-releases here: [2024 Media Downloads](#)

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