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Oil and Art
Contemporary Art Museums in Arab Gulf
Case studies: Qatar and UAE

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This thesis contains no material, which has been accepted for any award or any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. It is affirmed by the candidate that, to the best of her knowledge, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in text of the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the state and future of the Contemporary Art museums in the Arab Gulf. It provides a framework for understanding the collections and socio-political aims behind the formation of the new art museums in the region. In the last decade Arab Gulf countries became the center of attention in the art world with their grandiose museum projects. These new museums are in the spotlight with their designs by star architects such as Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid, blockbuster exhibitions, expensive art commissions and partnerships with important western institutions such as the Louvre, British Museum and Guggenheim. In contrast to their contemporary image, Arab Gulf countries lack museum traditions, art education and collection culture.

This conflicted nature of the museums raise questions about the patrons, museum 's missions, curatorial concepts and audience. For the museum case studies, this thesis focuses on Mathaf: Modern Arab Art Museum of Qatar and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi of UAE. They are investigated in terms of architecture, location, curatorial concept, art collection, management and ideology. These museums have similarities as well as differences. Both museums are part of major urban transformation projects and are a subject of cultural prestige in the global art world. Their curatorial concentration on Contemporary Arab Art puts them into a strategic position for writing the history of Arab art and museum studies.

Keywords:

Contemporary art, arab gulf, qatar, united arab emirates, art patronage, 21st century museology, arab art, museum studies

Özet

Bu tez, Arap Körfez ülkelerinde ki çağdaş sanat müzelerinin durumunu ve geleceğini inceler .Bölgede ki yeni sanat müzelerinin oluşumunda ki sosyo-politik amaçları ve sanat koleksiyonlarının niteliğini anlamak açısından bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Son on yılda Arap Körfez ülkeleri başlattıkları görkemli müze projeleri ile sanat dünyasında ilgi merkezi haline geldiler. Bu yeni müzeler Frenk Gehry ve Zaha Hadid gibi ödüllü mimarların , gişe rekorları kıran sergilerin , pahalı sanat komisyonlarının ve Louvre Müzesi , British Museum ve Guggenheim gibi önemli batı merkezli kurumların ortaklıkları sanat dünyasında ses getirmektedirler. Arap Körfez ülkelerinde ki kısa müze tarihi ve modern sanat eğitim kurumları eksikliği, son dönemde ki büyük çapta ki sanat hamiliği ile büyük oranda tezat oluşturmaktadır.

Müzelerin bu çatışmalı doğası, bölgede ki sanat hamileri, müze misyonları, küratörlük kavramları ve seyirci ilişkileri açısından bir çok soruya zemin hazırlamaktadır. Müze vaka çalışmaları için, bu tez Katar'daki Mathaf Modern Arap Sanat Müzesi ile Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde konumlandırılacak Guggenheim Abu Dabi müzelerine odaklanmaktadır. Müzelerin mimarisi, konumu, küratörlük kavramları, sanat koleksiyonları, yönetimleri ve ideolojileri müze oluşumlarını yakından anlamak için incelenmiştir . Bu müzelerin benzerliklerinin yanı sıra farklılıkları da vardır. Her iki müze de önemli kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin bir parçası olup küresel sanat dünyasında kültürel prestij unsurudur .

Küratörlük temalarını Çağdaş Arap Sanatı üzerine geliştirerek Arap sanat ve müzecilik tarihinde önemli bir dönüm noktası oluşturmaktadırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler :

Çağdaş sanat ,Arap Körfez Ülkeleri , Katar, Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri, sanat hamiliği , 21. yüzyıl müzecilik , arap sanat, müze çalışmaları

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Introduction

The Arab Gulf is in a major transformation period. The whole region is changing its face with grand construction projects. Each nation is commissioning major museum projects, which will be telling the story of the region's history, art and culture. Motivation behind these projects can be explained by the quote of George Orwell 's famous 1984 novel, ‘ ‘ those who control the past, control the future ‘ ‘ (Orwell, 37,1949). Museums construct national narratives for presentation to both citizens and outsiders. They are the place for memorializing the past of the region. Modern and contemporary art museums have a special place among these new museum formations. In addition to create a ground for the understudied history of the Arab art, they also represent the artistic future of the nation within the global arena. This thesis examines the state and future of the Contemporary Art museums in the Arab Gulf. It provides a framework for understanding the collections and socio-political aims behind the formation of the new art museums in the region.

Who are the patrons and founder organizations of the Contemporary Arab Art Museums? What are the museum missions and how do they fit into cultural policies of the Gulf Region? What are the common characteristics of the contemporary art museum's collections in the region? What are the position of artists within the museum collection, at global art market and worldwide museum collections? Who are the intended audience for these collections? In this thesis, I explore these questions in the context of tradition and modernity politics of the region. Chapters of this thesis are divided according to these questions.

The first chapter primarily covers the political history of the region. History of the region is important for understanding the politics of today. Journey to the past allows us to examine the roots of ‘ ‘ blend of tradition and modernization ‘ ‘ rhetoric

in the region. After a long period of western domination and colonization, Arab Gulf countries gain their independencies. These nations have traditional sheikhdom systems but they are motivated to be part of the global world. Contemporary art scene in the region is flourished by the economical income that is based on natural resources. The second part of this chapter focuses on planned future of the region. Arab Gulf countries are aware of that their economics depend on oil, which is a non-renewable source. For adapting their economies to the future, Arab Gulf countries aim to reach a multi sector economy model. They gathered their economical and infrastructural goals under one vision, which they call ‘national vision’. These vision plans are drawing the map of Arab Gulf future. They are valuable documents for understanding the region’s future plans.

The second chapter deals with the problem of definition of contemporary Arab art. Although there is a growing interest for regional contemporary art works and tendency to categorize artists according to their nationalities or cultural backgrounds, there have been limited attempts to theorize the question of definition in contemporary Arab art. In this section, I asked the simple question of ‘‘what is contemporary Arab art? And search for an explanation by examining the role of Islam, neo-orientalism, nationalism and globalism in the definition of Arab art. Arab Gulf nations with their new modern and contemporary art museums projects claim to be the new art capitals. For investigating that claim, in the second section of this chapter I examine art education practices, museology and patronage network in Arab Gulf countries.

Last Chapter consists of two museum case studies, which are the Mathaf: Modern Arab Art Museum of Qatar and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi of UAE. The Mathaf Museum opened its doors in 2011 and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will be

opened in 2017. In this chapter, I investigate these museums in terms of architecture, location, curatorial concept, art collection, management and ideology. These museums have similarities as well as differences. Both museums are part of major urban transformation projects. They are matter of a cultural prestige in the global art world. Their curatorial concentration on Arab art put them into a strategic position for writing the history of Arab art.

The Mathaf developed from the private collection of H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Ali Al Thani under the supervision of Arab Gulf artist Youssef Ahmed who is a member of Qatar's ruling family, on the other hand the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection is collected by an international advisory committee which is selected by the Guggenheim Foundation and the support of Abu Dhabi's ruling family. Although both museums have the support of the ruling family and grow under government control, franchise nature of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi puts it into a different category and raises different questions.

Although the Mathaf was initiated as a private collection, today the museum is under the control of Qatar Museum Authority (QMA). The QMA was founded in 2005 for managing the resources of all museums in Qatar. Majority of the members of the Board of Trustees are from the royal family. Since the royal family members are part of this authority, each museum has vast support from the state as well as control. Management team of the museums depends on the Western expertise and the museum tradition for establishing the museums in the area.

While the Mathaf has a more transparent management, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi has a more discreet approach both in management and collection gathering. Unlike the Mathaf's organically gathered collection, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection is managed by the Guggenheim foundation with the Abu Dhabi Tourism

Authority's financial funding. The International Guggenheim foundation rather than the local experts will establish the curatorial vision of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum.

Both of the states followed a similar cultural policy which can be defines as follow: to connect the past and the future, to glorify and follow the ancestors, to connect the east and west and finally providing sustainability of government reforms by training students who will follow the governments future agenda.

While Qatar and Abu Dhabi spread the flash news of their new cultural projects at global arena, they are also facing various critiques. Main critiques against the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are, accusations for absorbing local financial resources for arts and culture, use of logic of gentrification, promoting through its architecture and media-driven images rather than the art collection and museum programming and mistreatment of immigrant workers which is causing damage the international image and prestige of the museum projects.

The Qatar government is criticized by local journalists for overusing public relation agents and for inviting only chosen global newsagents for exhibition openings and festivals. The royal family is accused of focusing their efforts overseas and not putting similar attention on locals and handpicking artist who are politically neutral. On the other hand, Qatar became a highly demanded art scene among international artists because of its financial opportunities.

Instead of encouraging new perspectives to evaluate and create works, these institutions aim to build a constructed memory for the new Arab image and culture. One of the biggest questions is on censorship; lack of freedom of speech makes the art scene in the region an empty golden shell; While it is glittering and being attractive on the outside, it is empty and meaningless from the inside.

Overall main motivations behind these museum projects can be listed as being a major tourist attraction for global audience, gaining global prestige by being the cultural capital and putting their nations into the cultural map of the global art scene and national progress through education and planning transformation of the society to become an information and knowledge society.

Formation of these museums increases the interest of the global art world about the region itself and artistic production. They revitalize the art market with their grand purchases and increase the market values of Contemporary Arab art. Many unknowns about the collections, censorship issues, history of Modern Arab art, grandeur museum projects, star architects, blockbuster artist exhibitions put the Arab Gulf into the spotlight. These museum projects have big ambitions and claims for the future of Contemporary Arab art. After the wow factor of these grandeur museum projects disappears, so many questions remain to be answered.

Events that followed the destruction of the World Trade Towers in September 11 2001, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq and recent political developments in the Middle East which is known as the Arab spring, are increased the interest for the Middle East in global arena. As a result of attention boom, everything related to the Middle Eastern world became an attractive topic for the global society. This trend is also emerged in Contemporary Art world. Contemporary Middle Eastern art appeared as a new interest among worldwide museums and global art market. Artists who have Middle Eastern origins like Kader Attia, Shirin Neshat, Walid Raad, and Ghada Amer became significant figures in international art scene. Initiations such as the Art Dubai and the Sharjah Biennale, and opening of new contemporary art museums, galleries and international auction houses put the Arab Gulf into global art map.

These developments raise the question of what were the previous limitations that prevented the interest, for the Contemporary Middle Eastern Art. Prof. Karin Roque in her “ Contemporary Arab Art Today ” article explain these limitations as follows; considering the Arab art, as not original but imitation of the Western art, non-existed art market structure in the Middle East countries, lack of art collecting tradition and culture in related to market structure, Prejudices against the prohibition of images in Islam, Orientalist Discourse such as “ Muslim world is backward and backward looking ” and finally lack of publicity and educational opportunities (Roque, 2010).

In related to these limitations and lack of interest for the area, there is not enough scholarly works for defining the Contemporary Middle Eastern Art. In 2007, *AMCA International, Association for Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab*

World, Iran and Turkey is established. Association is a member based professional organization, which aims the study of this emerging field through the creation of a network of interested scholars and organizations. Association is working on book reviews, sponsoring conferences and organizing meetings. In terms of publications, there are many journals existed that focuses on General Middle Eastern Art like Art Margins, Art Territories, Art Dubai Journal. New publications such as *Canvas*, *Bidoun*, *Nafas* and *Contemporary Practices*, which is targeting general audience, appeared also in the mass media.

One of the most available sources is the exhibition catalogue of the galleries and worldwide museums. Nada Shabout who is a leading scholar in Modern Arab Art studies and the president and founding board member of *AMCA International*, emphasizes that there is an disproportionally between the production of scholarly works and the growing number of exhibition catalogues of the contemporary shows of Middle East art. Shabout evaluates the recent development of the interest for Middle Eastern art as “ there is a move from a period of invisibility through to one of celebration of everything related to the Middle East has fostered a sense of discontinuity, with contemporary production being seen as a new, detached phenomenon ” (Shabout, Tate Conference series, 2009).

Since the majority of Euro-American exhibitions’ curators have Western art training, these curator’s approaches to the Middle Eastern art is a product of Western discourse. Although there are initiations for creating awareness and building understanding, Shabout argues that most of the themes of the Middle Eastern exhibitions can be considered as neo-Orientalist. These exhibitions suggest a new Middle Eastern image for the western eye as a reaction to the traditional orientalist phenomena. Curators and recent scholars have an important role in shaping this new

discourse. Shabout's argument can be considered as warning for careful evaluation of the exhibition catalogues.

One of the main discussions is around the defining the term *Middle Eastern Art*. In art market literature, Middle Eastern origin artists tend to be branded and identified which is creating an unresolved issues. Instead of using Islamic art like in the old fashion, galleries and auction houses are using national identities. This usage is also not solve the problem, especially in the case of "Arab " creates an epistemological problem. This generalized term is misleading the audience and neglect variety of the cultural and historical structure of the region. Some artists disclaim this categorization because they want to be considered equal with artists born in USA and Europe who does not defined with their national identities. Rather than using the term "Middle East ", Prince prefers to use the term "Art from Europe's nearest neighbors " rather than the for the Saatchi Gallery's, 2009 dated Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East exhibition. She argues that term Middle East denies the variety that characterizes in the exhibition works. On the other hand, her title would stress not the otherness and difference of these artists but their ability to translate, into compelling forms, the most arresting and urgent subjects of our times avoid me now, if you can..." (Prince, 2009, Khaleej Times). Prince's term suggestion is not also the proper solution for these controversies because it is problematic to define Middle East as the Europe's nearest neighbor, which is actually not. Her attempt to use a political correct definition also backfires because of its lack of actuality. Term remain as a shallow geographic definition.

Jordanian Royal Highness Prof. Dr. Wijdan Ali initiates earlier works about documenting and highlight the contemporary Middle Eastern art works. She published books like *Modern Islamic Art: Development and Continuity* and her edited book

Contemporary Art from the Islamic World. Modern Islamic Art: Development and Continuity provides a basic introduction for the field. In three chapters book is discussing the development of Modern Islamic painting in parallel to the political history, then she examines the western impact on artistic production in Islamic countries and finally she studies contemporary Islamic calligraphy for emphasizing the continuing Islamic artistic tradition. Although she undermines the other artistic medium such as photography, sculpture and filmmaking, this work is an important contribution for this area. In *Contemporary Art from the Islamic World*, she aims to emphasize that Contemporary art production is not exclusive reserve of the west. This book is the first book that extensively documented the development of contemporary art in Islamic world. A leading scholar in their areas examines twenty Islamic countries' modern art production. Modern artistic development of each country is examined within historical context and artists biographies included. This book can be considered as an important reference book.

Another active scholar is Nada M. Shabout who I referred earlier, she is the author of the book *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics*, as the title suggests, Shabout is focusing on Arab art, rather using the term Islamic, she recognizes the important distinction between Arabic and Islamic Art. Her argument is based on the shift in aesthetics from religious-Islamic to secular Arab in twentieth century. In her work she is questioning the impacts of colonialism, Orientalism, class division and duality of tradition and modernity in Modern Arab art. Despite the general survey books of Ali and Shabout there are few studies that addressed particularities of a certain Arab country such as *Palestinian Art* by Gannit Ankori and *Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art* by Maysaloun Ankori Faraj. In recent publications there are books that aims to focus on various aspects of the contemporary

art. Art World's *Contemporary Art in Middle East* is a good example. Book includes essays on issues like Diasporas artists and situation of contemporary Middle Eastern art in global art world. Book covers internationally known artists biographies, bibliography section, and interviews.

Interest for the topic is recently growing. Publications will be growing parallel to this interest. It is possible to come up with a new article in each day in one of the online journals. Since it is an emerging area, there are different approaches for defining these artworks and artists. In next decade, studies on Contemporary and Modern Middle Eastern art hopefully will be much more fruitful and exciting.

Chapter I

Arabian Gulf-Perfect (!) Blend of Modernization and Tradition

“ my father rode a camel. I ride a Cadillac. My son flies a jet. My grandson will have a supersonic plane. But my great-grandson... will be a camel driver.”

Arab Gulf saying¹

In the last decade a new theme and rhetoric has emerged from Gulf countries. Each newspaper article or a speech related to Gulf countries includes sayings such as “creating a modern society”, “being the Arabian ambassador in the global world”, and “building cities of the future”.² In parallel to these progressive phrases are themes of traditionalism. Gulf countries praise their heritage, past, natural environment, and Islam. In this reinvented image of the Arab world, traditionalism and modernism goes hand in hand.

A prime example of the popularization of this image is the National Day video created by the United Arab Emirates government. The video focuses on a young Emirati couple with their children. The woman wears a traditional long black cloak and head covering known as an *abaya*, and the man wears a *kandoora*, a long white cloak, with a *gotra*, a white head scarf. The family gazes at a new city skyline rising in the background. This caption represents the future and tradition at the same time ³.

¹ Quote is taken from the book, *The Arab Gulf States: Beyond Oil and Islam*, by Sean Foley, 2010

² These sayings are widely use in international and local media for Arab National propaganda

³ United Arab Emirates, every year, celebrated December 2 as the National Day. In 1971, UAE’s treaty with Britain has expired and the separate sheikhdoms decided to form a union. National Day video is prepared for the honour of 41th anniversary of the national Day.

UAE is a great example of the period of planned transformation in the Arabian Gulf. This transformation includes inventing traditions and creating new national identities. The Arabian Gulf countries are changing their image as desperate poor countries into globally respected economical powers. They aim to have a better life and create cities of the future and beyond. They emphatically indicate the notion of “change” in their advertisements and global statements. “Moving on” is held as a necessity element for being a sophisticated global nation. While they emphasize future development, they also stress pride in their heritage and tradition. Unlike an Orientalist view would suggest, Arabs embrace the notion of change and depicts themselves as the ambassadors of future. So how does this modernization and tradition dichotomy shaped in the Arabian Gulf and how does it reflect in Arab art and museology?

Mark Phillips argues that if tradition is not considered as a resistance to modernity, the term becomes again a way of raising essential questions about the way we pass on the life of cultures. It questions issues of authority as well as invention, practice as well as interpretation of tradition, which initially becomes a new complex, open - ended, subject (Phillips, Schohocet, 2004: 4). Clifford discusses the western idea of tradition, as characterized by repetitive, conservative, religious, native, local, non-rational, non-western and non-transformative practices. Tradition is represented in conflict with a dynamic future, which is defined by concepts such as change, science, rationality, modernization, development, globalization and progressiveness (Clifford, 2003:1). According to Clifford’s definition, tradition is not a wholesale return to past ways but a practical selection and critical reweaving of roots. Clifford argues that to understanding tradition, it is important to evaluate tradition in a binary with modernity.

To define the place of tradition within today's cultural politics, David Lowenthal states that “to neglect heritage is a cardinal sin, to invoke it is a national duty”. According to his argument, tradition became the cult of the nations of this century. Each nation is either praise their cultural heritage or grieve on their struggles in past. Looking at the elements of past such as history, tradition, memory and myth and consumed them as heritage, serve as a base for defining the roots of the people.

Although nations insists that they own their unique heritage which is, its exclusivity is crucial for national identity, Lowenthal claims that no heritage is purely native or wholly endemic: today every culture is a mixture so purity is impossible to achieve. Since pure heritage of a nation became utopic because people are not isolated from the rest of the world and each generation have different experience, multiple narratives of a heritage became a necessity. Each culture creates their own subcultures so there are different sides and aspects of heritage. Lowenthal states that “today any defense of heritage is now a potential target of suspicion in the case of narrative conflict with someone else's viewpoint” (Lowenthal, 1998: 22) He strengthened his argument by emphasizing situations whether heritage handle by national authorities or victimized losers, it can be despised because of its danger of overstep of others.

Lowenthal also argues that, “all pasts are foreign” According to him, claims of each group on their “own” history and heritage is wrong politics because collective ancestral past can not be possessed. People assume that they can decide which past belongs to them but Lowenthal insists that no past is exclusive and no past people are like us. He sees people's attempts to have exclusive rights on possess, interpret and maintenance is dangerous for the future of heritage. Heritage can strengthen by sharing. Outside appreciation, concern, and aid help to save the heritage of specific sites.

While heritage revival attempts in the Arabian Gulf contradicts with Lowenthal's arguments, it also has similar points. While museums in the region aim to write the unique story of the nation, praise their past and heritage, at the same time they are willingly to share this constructed culture with the world. In The Arabian Gulf tradition rhetoric, The Arabian Gulf countries remained unchanged and willingly to pass these traditions to future generations. Tradition became a continuous thing and creates links between different generations. While Gulf countries emphasis on being part of a global community, they also put a lot of effort to embrace the uniqueness of Arab culture to strengthening their nationalistic ideology. Tradition became a tool of unification for these young Arab countries, which have multi-national populations.

Today the Arabian Gulf challenges the Western idea of tradition. Unlike the negative connotations of the word, they publicize their nations with statements such as "modern society that is shaped by ancient culture", using tradition as a ground for progressiveness. Globalization and decolonization has become an antidote for a singular modernity thesis, and the Arabian Gulf reframing of modernity is another opportunity to examine this issue.

According to Kuhn, progress, change and innovation in a community is parallel to its structural power. Although it is possible to understand the different dynamics of society through material historical reasons, mostly theses reasons are transient and political rather than represents essence of the culture. After 1960's so-called traditional and under-developed societies invalidated the colonial argument by claiming historical agency and distinctive modern destiny (Clifford, 2003: 2) this situation forced theorists to revisit the singular modernity idea.⁴The colonial model of

⁴ see Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* New York: Verso, 2002

the world argued that Europe was the inventive core of the world, and everyone else was a traditional and passive community. Despite the seeming ridiculousness of this claim, it still finds a place in post-World War II discussions of development, modernity, westernization and globalization.

In the introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, the historian Eric Hobsbawm argues that invented tradition includes, "both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner with a brief and dateable period - a matter of a few years perhaps - and establishing themselves with great rapidity." These "invented traditions" are "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past." Usually, they attempt to establish links with a suitable historic past, but their connection with this past is tenuous at best" (Hobsbawm, 1992: 3). In the case of the Arab Gulf, the invention of tradition became an important element for creating a "modern" society. In the modern Arabian Gulf, newly invented traditions fill the cultural gap created as a result of semi-colonization under British control.

Suleyman Khalaf studied Camel racing in UAE as an ethnographic case study for transformation of a cultural icon with new meanings and rhetoric attached to it. (Khalaf, 2005: 243-261). In his work Khalaf analyzes the politics of heritage revival in UAE. While Gulf societies are trying to adapt to the capitalist global economy, they are also trying to protect and adapt their culture to the global world. Khalaf notes that camel used to be an essential element of the Gulf life. While economic role of the camel has diminished within the new oil economic context, it has experienced a large-scale cultural revival, becoming the center of the heritage related foundations as a link

to the Emirates pastoral past. Khalaf argues that inventing such traditions aims at safeguarding cultural heritage and national identity as well as the traditional dynastic political structure of the UAE as a modernizing nation-state. Linking traditional life to modern changing society through invented traditions strengthens the societies cultural unity. This link became an important tool for the Arab gulf unity as well.

The United Arab Emirates and Qatar play an important role in establishing the image of the new Arab identity. These Sheikdoms are not secular states and they put emphasis on role of religion in their culture. They appeared in global circles and international media wearing traditional clothes like *gotra* and *abaya* in front of futuristic architectural buildings rising in the background. These two countries are the most active in representing this past -future, tradition-modernity dichotomy in the region. This chapter examines the Past and the planned Future of the region in order to understand the ideology that is shaping the museums and cultural life of the region.

The Past

Museums are the main center of celebration for a country's history and culture. Since they are one of the main destinations of the foreign tourists and public, they have an important mission of representing the country. While stakeholders with political agendas carefully shape this representation, it is also a model for the nation's culture and traditions. Knowledge of a museum's cultural context is necessary to understand the motivations and aims behind the museum formation.

The modern Arab Gulf Countries started to take shape in the nineteenth century. External forces played a large role in the region. Specifically, Britain had an important role in the creation of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Other actors who took part in the destiny of the region were France, Russia and Germany for the nineteenth century and Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and USA

for the twentieth century. Bismarck described the Arab Gulf region as the hornet nest of international affairs. It became a key region because of its strategic location and oil resources. The concerns of the groups previously involved in the region continue to shape today's political structures. Although the region has a so-called sustainable political structure, a massive transformation is going on in all other areas.

The Gulf countries can be separated into two groups, regional powers represented by Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia and small states represented by Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE. Oman is an exception that falls between these two categories (Zahlan, 1998, pg. 4). The focus of this paper is small states of the Gulf countries and especially the UAE and Qatar because of outsized investments in museums and contemporary art.

In general, the Gulf countries have a sparse population, although native citizens remain a minority since the majority of the population is composed of visiting workers. The Gulf countries are all relatively young, having declared independence in the early 1970's. The independence movement was triggered and supported by the economic wealth initiated by oil discoveries in 1960's. Oil-generated income improved metrics such as lifespan, education, infant mortality, housing, per capita income, nutrition, health... etc.; however, the basic socio-political system has not changed. This situation is related to existing tribal nature of the Gulf countries and nineteenth-century partition politics.

Region is transforming into hyper modern monarchies. Although there are more demands for political freedom like the 2011-2012 Bahraini uprisings⁵, these

⁵ The Bahraini uprising is a series of demonstrations, amounting to a sustained campaign of civil resistance, in the Persian Gulf country of Bahrain. As part of the revolutionary wave of protests in the Middle East and North Africa following the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, the Bahraini protests were initially aimed at achieving greater political

movements do not intend to threaten the monarchy. This attitude is rooted in the people's tribal loyalty to their leaders. Even though external forces' influences are very influential on this loyalty, each State is able to use these influences to their advantage. This loyalty has sustained the stability of the state during the major events of the twentieth century such as Britain's withdrawal in 1971, the oil embargo in 1973, the fall of Pahlavi dynasty in 1979, and the establishment of the Islamic People's Republic of Iran, the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq wars and the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The tribal structure of the population controls the political and social life of the states. Even the modern institutions have been adapted from traditional forms. Society consists of two groups: *Bedouins* (bedu, بَدُو) and the urban settled people (hadar, حضر). In terms of the economy, *hadar* people represent those who live along the coast and worked as tradesmen, artisans and fishermen, and *bedu* refers to pastoral nomads who live in inland areas. *Hadar* people form the majority and dominate in politics and economy. Tribal leaders are used to known as *sheikh*, after declaring independence, rulers started to use the title *Amir* or prince and their families adopted the title *Sheikh* and *Sheikha*. According to Zahlan, two themes shape the Gulf region, the first is the influence of the past and the second one is the impact of foreign and international interest in the region (Zahlan, 1998: 8).

One of the earliest foundation stories in the region belongs to Mesopotamian mythology. The protagonist *Oannes* is a creature that had the form of a fish with the head of a man. During day he swam along the seashore of the Persian Gulf and taught writing, the arts, and the sciences to humans. Civilization was established in the mythological land of *Dilmun*, also known as the land of the Lost Paradise. *Dilmun*

Freedom and equality for the majority Shia population, "Bahrain Shia Leaders Visit Iraq". The Daily Telegraph. Retrieved 20 January 2011.

was a fertile and an agricultural land in eastern Arabia, and a trading nation with a rich culture and religious beliefs. The main trading product was the fruit of the palm trees and the pearls of Gulf Sea. These two goods continued to be the main export product until the late twentieth century.

The Gulf has a long history of conflict. Persian culture flourished in Eastern Gulf, while Arabic culture grew on the west side of the Gulf. The two cultures competed against each other in the Gulf. Today these two cultures have mixed and can be seen on both sides of the gulf. Besides the influence of these two cultures, Islam has been very influential in the region since it's founding in the seventh century. Islam increased the region's strategic importance culturally, politically and economically.

The Abbasid Empire traded intensely with the Arab side of the Gulf. Arab merchants provided luxurious goods like pearls, textiles, spices and porcelain from China, India and the Gulf region to the empire. Sophisticated pearl industries and mastery in sea trade raised the importance of individual cities like Sohar and Muscat. These cities already had a reputation for their prosperity before the arrival of Europeans.

European involvement in the region was initiated by Vasco de Gama's successful voyage around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. Europeans rapidly entered the trading scene in the region, changing the face of trade in the Gulf. European entry converted the intercontinental Arabic trade system into a mercantile trade system. Its strategic location in the trade route to India made the Gulf a valuable area for Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British tradesmen (Zahlan, 1998: 10).

In the sixteenth century, Ottomans, Safavids and Portuguese competed for power in the region. The Portuguese took control of the coastal regions like Muscat,

Oman, Hormuz and Bahrain. Although Ottomans did not succeed in capturing Hormuz, the Safavids were able to with the help of the British East India Company. As the Portuguese lost control, the Dutch, French, and British East India companies increased their presence in the region. Seventeenth century was an era of three companies contest for gaining the control of the region, especially the commercial centers, Bahrain and Muscat. Local Arabic tribes and Iran also joined this struggle. Muscat was finally captured by Ahmed Said bin Sultan Al Abu Said the founder of the Al Said family that rules today's Oman.

In the eighteenth century two events took place that continue to shape today's Gulf. First, the British victory at Plassey in 1757 strengthened their control of India, in turn increasing the British involvement in the region. Second, Sheikh Mohammed ibn Abdel Wahhab founded the Wahhabi movement in central Arabia, promoting a return to the original principals of Islam. One of the movement's first followers was the Al Saud family, the founding family of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Zahlan emphasizes that these two events provided the framework for the Modern Gulf region (Zahlan, 1998,pg 12), and within this framework, today's gulf states have been shaped by the events of the past 200 years.

The Sashimi tribal confederacy, known as *Al Qawasim*⁶, is one of the main tribal groups that shaped the destiny of the region. The tribe was a naval power along the Persian and Arabian coasts centered in today's United Arab Emirates. Europeans denounced that Qawasim as pirates. Today, the Al Qasimi family, founder of the Sharjah Emirates, is investigating the origin of their characterization as pirates and attempting to counteract the seafaring bandit image of their forefathers. This situation

⁶ The Qawāsīm, the ruling dynasty of Al-Shāriqah, were the principal leaders of the Persian Gulf pirates from the early 18th century; from their bases at Al-Shāriqah city." al-Qawāsīm." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011

is a great example of revisiting and re-interpretation of the past in order the process of creating the region's modern image.

The British and Dutch traders use the term pirate as a reaction to Qawasim's dominance in trade route that endangered their own economic positions. This trade rivalry triggered a war between the Qawasim and the British. Neighboring tribes such as Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, Abu Dhabi, Dubai Bahrain and Wahhabis allied with Qawasims (Zahlan, 1998,pg 13). In 1820, after a major defeat by Britain, each tribe in this collaboration signed separate agreements with Britain. Together the agreements are known as the General Treaty of Peace. By signing this treaty, the sheikhs agreed not to allow piracy in trade routes and in return Britain claimed that it had no political and territorial ambitions in the area. The General Treaty of Peace can be considered as the first sign of contemporary Gulf States as separate political units and their sheikhs as independent rulers. In nineteenth century, Britain's interest in the region was only limited to the sea route between Britain and India, not until hundred years later with the discovery of oil, Britain increase its political involvement within the region. Britain's supremacy in the region began to be challenged by Ottoman Empire, France, Russia and Germany at the end of nineteenth century. To prevent the Ottoman dominance in the region, Britain signed series of agreements with the local sheikhs, which bind them to discuss with Britain before negotiating with any foreign power. In 1892, Britain signed an Exclusive Agreement with the leaders of Trucial States.

Finally In 1899 Kuwait and in 1916 Qatar joined this trucional system⁷ by signing exclusive agreements with the other trucional states and Bahrain in order to escape from the Ottoman rule. These agreements strengthening the position of Britain

⁷ Trucial States (Place name) a former name (until 1971) of the United Arab Emirates Also called Trucial Sheikdoms Trucial Oman Trucial Coast

and make it the most dominant foreign power until 1970's. By the end of World War I the Gulf became a British lake (Zahlan, 1998,19). In twentieth century, Gulf became a more valuable location with the discovery of oil in Iran, which is also under the British Mandate. Britain established landing and refueling stops in Kuwait, Bahrain, Sharjah and Oman for the British air route linking Egypt, Iraq and India. Arab Gulf became a strategically important location for Britain, to provide sustainability of their dominance and exclusivity, Britain strengthening their bonds with the local leaders. While this stable relation provide continuity for the local leaders, it also socio-political isolation of these states from the rest of the world. Zahlan argues that until the discovery of oil these states appeared to be places where time had stood still (Zahlan, 1998, 20).

In 1920's and 1930's, three regional powers- Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq entered the political arena and claim to different parts of the Gulf States. Saudi Arabia claimed for inland territories of Oman, Qatar and trucional states, Iran made territorial claim for Bahrain and Iraq claimed for Kuwait. To maintain its position, Britain stepped back and minimized its involvement, British officials continued to record the important events and control the treaty regulations but not intervene to internal affairs. The local rulers received political and moral supports from Britain but did not impose to socio-economic reforms. Until the discovery of oil in the region during 1950's, the British were only interested in the sea route and were not involved in regional politics. Local authorities operated with full autonomy. Although in 1950's British offered assistance for "modern schooling" Abu Dhabi and Dubai refused this offer, claiming to have adequate resources of their own to open modern schools with assistance. Lienhardt suggests that while the recalcitrance of the sheikhs of Dubai and Abu Dhabi's to adopt modern education had religious roots, they may have chosen not to

adopt for its incompatibility with their political rule as well (Lienhardt, 2001: 9) Until 1955, there were no foreign newspapers circulating in the region. Broadcasting from other Arab countries was not influential in the region because of the language barrier and lack of pertinence to life in the tracial coast area. Since travelling to Europe and America and opportunities to learn foreign language were limited, the region remained closed to the outside world.

The discovery of oil in the 1950's has a turning point in the economic and ideological history of the region. Discoveries in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Qatar increased the per capita income as high as that of the richest countries. According to Lienhardt, people in large Arab countries believe that 'Arab' wealth should not belong to any particular country but to the Arab people as a whole. Before the oil discovery, regional politics were based on control over people rather than territory. Lienhardt explains that at sea, though the pearl industry had been equally open to everyone in the Gulf, offshore oil was judged on a western model to be the property of particular states. And on land, conflicts arose in matters of hereditary rights between sheikhs whom the British rulers recognized by virtue of its treaties and other sheikhs who did not enjoy such recognition (Lienhardt, 2001: 12).

After World War I oil companies came to the region for searching oil reserves in the area. Oil companies worked closely with Britain so they also follow Britain's separatist politics. Oil companies signed concessions with different rulers for each territory, recognition of oil companies helped to maintain the political system in the region. Companies need for defining borders, became the main reason behind the acceptance of principal boundaries and it cause each state to identify itself as a separate political unit.

Arrival of oil companies also opened the doors of Arab Gulf to the rest of the world. Increasing number of foreigner visit the gulf for business purposes. Zahlan emphasis that “as the barriers of isolation were lifted, an awareness of the political and economical realities of the Gulf region began to grow. Relationship with the entire Arab world gradually established”.

Gulf States used to interact with the rest of world through British advisory, including with their fellow Arabs. The only Arab contacts were schoolteachers from Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine who taught in Kuwait and Bahrain. Although British involvement in foreign affairs isolated the region, the situation gave an opportunity for rulers to strengthen their rule on local issues. British policy encouraged separation and multi-tribal leadership in the region in order to prevent the unification of the tribal groups under one flag. This policy led to the development of a national identity for each tribe.

Arab Gulf countries left behind their impoverished isolated and scarcely populated era soon after the World War II. Oil became the main resource that helps the transformation of the region except the political order. Cleveland states that oil income created a contradictory modernization and conservatism pattern in the region, rapid financial and infrastructure development conflicted with the political restrictions and the preservation of monarchical rule. Oil income also became a tool for diplomacy design to prevent potential crisis. Arab Gulf countries were lack of military power, which makes them vulnerable to invasions and dependent to external powers, which can offer military assistance. In that case, this external power was USA between the period of 1950's-1970's. Cleveland argues that USA was also assisting Israel so this creates dilemma for the states of Arab Gulf. Another dilemma that Arab Gulf facing

was to absurdity of support their Arabian neighbors social revolutions⁸ while they are conservative monarchies. After the announcement of withdraw of British power from regions in 1968, Arab Gulf states panicked because of the end of the British protective power over the region. British involved in intensive politics to prevent the expansion claims of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran in the region between 1968-1971. Arab Gulf nations obtained their formal independence in 1971. Cleveland argues that these states transformed their material and social foundations but did not touch to their traditional political institutions I during the boom years of the 1970's. Since these states were no longer under British control and have a financial power, they had to deal with political issues in the region such as Arab-Israeli conflict, political representation within a monarchial system and religious versus national identity.

In mid 1980's both Qatar and The UAE was relied on foreign labor and management that approximately eighty percent of the local population was alien citizens. This increased their dependency to foreign states but at the same time it helps the ruling families to stay in power. The ruling families prevent the emergence of mass politics and representative assemblies in the region by distribution of wealth to its citizens, providing well-paid jobs to elites and generous welfare for the whole population. Creating a content population, ruling families provided political stability and survival of monarchic regime.

From 1987 to 1991, Middle East was shackled with internal crises such as Palestinian Intifada and 1990's Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait. Iraqi invasion became internationalized into the Gulf War. These events changed the international balance of power in the region. US led intervention in the region became

⁸ Between 1950's and 1970's Arab world get through a period of social revolution, which is initiated with Nasserite era in Egypt and then spread through Syria and Jordan with the adoption of Arab socialism politics.

unpopular among other Arab countries in Middle East. Cleveland argues that US intervention initiated a deep source of Arab resentment that focused on the United States' double standard in the Middle East; they noted that while USA did not hesitate to enforce UN Resolutions against Iraq, but not on Israel for their pertaining in West Bank and Gaza Strip. The occupation of Kuwait also did not make Arab Gulf countries popular in the eyes of their Arab fellows either. According to Cleveland, in the view of many Arabs, The Gulf states are unnatural entities whose borders and ruling families had been determined by Britain to serve British interest (Cleveland, 2004, 476). Sultan Sood al-Qassemi also support this argument by stating “ For instance, Gulf Arabs were looked upon as being secluded from Israel's crimes against the Palestinians and for being spoiled as a result of oil revenues On the other hand the discovery of oil and gas in the Gulf led millions of Arabs to emigrate to the Arabian Peninsula, which in turn led some Gulf natives to look on their Arab brethren and on Asian immigrants with a sense of superiority” (Al-Qassemi, Qantara, 2013).

The 1990 Gulf War further deepened divisions within the Arab world, with countries in the region lumped into either the pro- or the anti-Western intervention camp on the subject of the liberation of Kuwait. Moreover, a pan-Islamic identity became popular during the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s as government-controlled media encouraged Muslims to rally for holy war. In the meantime, each Arab states promote patriotism and nationalism within their own borders. Al Qassemi give the example of Qatar, which changed its national holiday from the date of British withdrew to the day Al Thani family's seized power. By making this change, Qatar distances itself from the colonial era and created a patriotic occasion. (Al-Qassemi, Qantara, 2013). Arab Gulf states are changing their image in global arena. While they are creating new infrastructures, they are adopting more

frontline politics. Twentieth first century Middle Eastern politics were dominated with the Arab Awakening and Post-September 11 politics. Political unrest in the region put Gulf countries into the spotlight more than ever. Arab Gulf country aim to build a more positive image of the Middle East at a time when anti-Islamic sentiment continues to grow in Europe and the United States, but at the same time they are willingly to recreate the golden days of Silk Road, one on which their countries are powerful cultural and economic figures between the West and rising powers like India and China.

Today each Arab Gulf country has regalia of national symbols as manifestations of their separateness. This situation also explains the cultural competition among them. Eastern Arabian sheikhdoms share similar political systems and a common cultural outlook. They are autocratic monarchies or sheikhdoms, with limited or non-existent political participation. Ten families rule the Arab coast of the Gulf. These families are listed as following:

- Saudi Arabia ruled by the Al-Sa'ud
- Kuwait ruled by the Al-Sabah
- Bahrain ruled by the Al-Khalifah
- Qatar ruled by the Al-Thani
- Oman ruled by the Al Bu Sa'id
- Abu Dhabi ruled by the Al-Nihayyan
- Dubai ruled by the Al-Maktum
- Ajman ruled by the Al-Na'im

- Umm ruled by the of Al-'Ali
- Sharjah and Ras al- Khaimah ruled by the Al-Qasimi
- Fujairah ruled by the Al-Sharqi

These families owe their positions to tribal leadership. According to Gause, understanding the modern political situation is only possible by looking at the role of religion and tribalism in the region in post oil boom in 1970's (Gause, 1994: 10)

Muslim piety and Arabian tribal values are the two main characteristics of the monarchies' public images. These images are shaped in order to legitimate their rule locally and globally. State control over religious and cultural institutions increased significantly to control the use of these images. Governments systematically subordinated the power of tribes in the region and also increased the control over religious institutions such as mosques, schools and *waqfs* (religious trusts). Citizens of these states rely on these institutions for political participation and social gatherings, in the process becoming willing participants in government rhetoric. Because government supports these institutions financially and ideologically, they have limited tolerance for political opposition parties and free press. The discovery of oil in the region also increased the hand of local leader in the eyes of British power. As the British lost their privilege to act on behalf of the Gulf States, rulers increased their power by becoming actively involved in international business through their oil claims.

Rulers in the Arab Gulf countries come from the same family, but instead of the law of primogeniture, they succeed in accordance to their strength and abilities. Ideal characteristics of an Arab Gulf ruler include fearlessness, integrity, intelligence,

wisdom and generosity (Zahlan, 1998). According to Zahlan another important quality is having the approval of the rest of the family. This situation results in great rivalries and tensions within the families. Sheikhdoms were institutionalized during the 21st century. Although the Sheikhdoms are absolute monarchy, Sheikhs are tended to consult an informal council, *majlis*. Generally these councils contain family members of the ruling family. This system is based on the Islamic principle of *shura* or consultation. Position of these councils, give Sheikhdoms oligarchic characteristics.

Another important aspect of the relationship between the ruler and ruled class is distribution of income. Although the ruler is the major recipient of the generated national income, he invests in major socio-economic development projects in return for the favor of his people. This creates a mutual trust system between the sheikh and his people. Oil wealth has increased the gap between sheikhs and their people. Previously sheikhs used to have daily audiences open to public. However, sheikhs still have the support of the majority of their subjects in the UAE and Qatar. The main function of the sheikhs is to provide justice and order of the states. They have no religious position within the society. Although they do not claim to have a divine right to rule the state, they have distinguished statue from ordinary citizens. State's oil income is directly managing by the Sheikhs, which makes them the ultimate decision makers.

Today, the Arab Gulf countries have a political and economical alliance, which is known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Member countries of the GCC are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. Established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1981, the Council strives to achieve unity among its six members, which have similar political and cultural identities and share a

common belief to Islam. According to the Article 4 of the GCC charter, the Council is responsible for deepening and strengthening of relations, links and areas of cooperation among their citizens. To accomplish this, the Council promotes unified regulations in fields such as Economic & Financial Affairs, Commerce & Communications, and Education & Culture, Social & Health affairs, Information & Tourism and Legislative Administrative affairs (Gcc-sg.org).

Despite forming a union, the Arab Gulf countries compete with each other for regional power. Their competition exists in both economic and cultural spheres. The most notable cultural competition can be seen in the investments in museums. Although they have separate projects, there are similar motivations behind them. The blending of tradition and modernization, the building of a bridge between the past and the future and the preservation of cultural heritage are the popular themes in these policies.

The Future

The UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain have separate development plans. These plans are known as Qatar's National Vision 2030, Plan Abu Dhabi 2030, Bahrain Vision 2030 and Kuwait Economic Vision. While all focus on economic development, Qatar and the UAE have strong ideological and cultural targets as well.

Qatar National Vision 2030

The General Secretariat for Development Planning created the Qatar National Vision 2030. The Vision aims to advance economic and social progress for the society. Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani outlines the main themes of the Vision in the foreword:

- Economic and Social justice for all
- Man and Nature in Harmony
- Strong Islamic and Family values
- Invest in World class infrastructure
- Diversified economy

Al Thani especially highlights the Qatari national characteristics necessary for the Vision, creating a nationalistic framework for it.

The Vision acts as a new manifesto of the Qatari people. While the state of Qatar enjoys a period of prosperity derived from its rich oil reserves, it is also experiencing progress in economic, cultural and social developments. Progress and prosperity are the two keywords of this manifesto. For instance, the Country also claims the political progress since the adoption of Qatar's permanent Constitution in June 2005, which defines the roles of the three state powers and the rights and duties of Qatari citizens.

Despite the prosperity and progress rhetoric, the Vision claims that Qatar will manage to maintain its cultural and traditional values as an Arabic and Islamic nation such as holding the family to be the main pillar of the society. Since the Qatari nation's political system is based on Al Thani family, emphasis on the family is not a coincidence. The Emphasis on the two other keywords, Arab and Islam, which represent the nation and the religion, defines the framework of the ideology and image of the Qatari state and citizens.

In the vision characteristics of Qatar's future is defined as follows:

- Modernization and Preservation of traditions
- Intergenerational justice
- Managed growth and uncontrolled expansion
- Management of Expatriate labor force- the path of development
- Economic growth, social development and environmental management

The Qatar National Vision is a major transformational project that targets the future but also aims to preserve tradition. Qatar is facing a major change in the society as a result of its sudden wealth. While transforming the national infrastructure, political system and business life is relatively easy, the major challenge is to accustom society to this transformation without facing without major opposition. The Vision and its emphasis on tradition acts as a defense for the major top down changes. Although it argues for the combination of modern life with traditional values and culture, it does not mention a material example of a nation that has succeeded to balance the old and the new.

Sustainable development is a key concept for the idea of intergenerational justice. The goal is to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Qatar is targeting growth rates that are compatible with its capacity for real economic expansion. Since Qatar also gives importance to positive national identity, the rights and position of the expatriate workers is part of the national vision. Finally the last challenge that Qatar is facing is providing environmental development in parallel to urban. These challenges are addressed in the framework of the national vision.

For the Vision to succeed, Qatar government is focusing on four aspects, named the Four Pillars of National Vision. These pillars are Human Development, Social Development, Economic Development and Environmental Development. According to the Vision an ideal Qatari society should be educated, have Qatari moral and ethical values, protect its traditions and cultural heritage, have a strong sense of belonging and citizenship, be innovative and creative, participate to various sport activities, have access to affordable health care and have high quality training opportunities.

Qatar aims to build a dialogue and be open to other cultures in the context of its Arab and Islamic identity. Social goals of the Vision are to preserve Qatar's national heritage and enhance Arab and Islamic values and identity. Qatar explicitly connects itself with an Islamic Arab image, important agencies for the country's constructed image and history. Constructive identity has become a state policy. There are complex messages in this identity such as universality, Arab-Islam connection, diversity, new versus old and locality vs. globalism.

Plan Abu Dhabi 2030

The Abu Dhabi 2030 urban structure framework was published in 2007. The Plan's primary purpose is to deliver upon the vision of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, which is stated as follows, "Plan Abu Dhabi 2030, the Urban Structure Framework Plan, is designed to help Abu Dhabi filter and respond to current and future development needs, establish a planning culture and introduce strong guiding principles for new development." The Plan targets 2030 because of the expected tripling in population size and the risk of exhausting finite oil reserves. Abu Dhabi has chosen six key directions in planning its future: Sustainability, A Unique

Environment, An Evolving Culture, Identity & Opportunity, Excellence & Livability and Connectivity.

The cultural policy of the Plan is based on preserving the past with people's connection with land and water as their primary concern. Fishing, pearling and raising livestock in the desert are the main activities that represent the regions past economic activities. The explosive growth of architecture in Abu Dhabi must both connect to the landscape and preserve the historical architectural forms and Arabic patterns. Another quote from Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan in the Plan highlights the importance of the past. "Those who forget their past, compromise their future."

Conclusion

The transition from traditional to modern society has become a common theme in literature about Gulf societies. On one hand, there is an emphasis on undeniable linear modernization. On the other, society continues to preserve its conservative attitude. In addition to cultural conservatism, Islam seems to have achieved a stronger position than ever.

Islam, tradition and modernity are important concepts that are equally used for the legitimization of existing power structures. Since the government system is based on Sheikhdoms, governments need strong support from their people in order not to lose their power. To prevent the alienation of particular groups within the society due to top-down reforms, Islam, tradition and modernity rhetoric served as an all-embracing political statement. Concern for both tradition and modernity is found in the official rhetoric of the Gulf States. Ouis gives an example from the 1996 yearbook of UAE, "The political system of the United Arab Emirates is a unique combination of the traditional and the modern, offering an interesting study of the way in which it

is possible for a country to move forward with the same mechanics of a modern administrative structure while, at the same time, ensuring that the best of the traditions of the past are maintained, adapted and preserved.” This rhetoric has been also used in most recent documents such as the Abu Dhabi vision 2030 and Qatar National Vision 2030 (Ouis, 2002). Although traditions are considered to be static, they change, transform, and renew every day.

The most obvious feature of Gulf culture today is its emphasis on cultural heritage, which has been interpreted by researchers as a means of legitimizing power and the political status quo. Museums and other organizations for the preservation of local heritage are appearing in the Gulf today. Their emphasis on heritage can be interpreted as creating a nostalgic sense of the past that prevents the alienation of older generation gulf residents who is struggling with rapid modernization.

Ouis argues that preservation and conservation of traditional culture should be understood as a defensive response to the victory of modernity, Thus, the various expressions of tradition in the Gulf can in fact be interpreted as reactions to modernity that are expressed in modern ways. Throughout history, modernization, in terms of infrastructure, modern science and technology, is often embraced by Muslim societies. On the other hand, Islam is often seen as being in opposition to Westernization, which is resisted because of its lack of morality so that Muslims often call for modernization without Westernization, in what may be viewed as a quest for a modernization independent of the West (Ouis, 2002:)

Arabic Gulf countries use their wealth for modernization, which they understand as progress, rationalization and bureaucratization. They are transforming their cities into so-called cities of future. At the same time they pose with their traditional clothes and refer to their traditional culture in every aspect of the

modernization process. The emphasis on tradition is a tool for legitimizing their power, glue for sticking together the different segments of society, and a way to react against the western dominance during the pre-independence era. This policy is also reflected in their museums, which are the houses of protection of the culture, history and local art.

Chapter II

Contemporary Arab Art: Problem of Definition

When I decided to write my thesis on this particular topic, this question became the first challenge that I had to face. How would I classify and define the artists that are part of the Gulf countries art museum collections? Each actor finds a different way to define artists according to their ideology, position and aim so what would be the most fitted and politically correct term for my concern?

It is not the first time that non-western art is faced with a classification and definition problem. The first time western scholars started to be interested in other geographies' artworks, they treated them as indigenous folk craft because of the reason that they don't fit into their aesthetic criteria (Wijdan Ali, 1998, 7). Then Western scholars started the tendency to classify the artworks from Middle Eastern geography under the term Islamic Art. This new term is defined as ‘’ the sum of artistic manifestations created under Muslim patronage, by both Muslim and non-Muslim artists and artisans who adhere to Islamic aesthetics, for the usage and enjoyment of Muslims’’ by Wijdan Ali (Wijdan Ali, 1998, 8). This term was popular from mid nineteenth century to late twentieth century. The term was practical because it made it possible to unify diverse people, cultures and geographies within the framework of one faith. Shift from empires to nation states also affected the attitude toward classification of artistic creation.

According to Wijdan Ali there are three distinctive characteristics of Islamic art. The first characteristic is, in contrast to multiple phased Christian art, the Islamic world developed a uniformity of time and space in the art in spite of the various geographical and historical settings. She suggests that religion and Arabic, the language of Quran, which is adopted in each Islamic group, formed this unity. The

dominance of the Arabic language is the cause of a cultural unity that has been realized throughout the Islamic world (Allen, 1988, 44). Arabic script became the visual expression of this unity and the most significant characteristic. Secondly, artists and artisans' mobility between Muslim regions helped the formation of the universality of Islamic art by circulating ideas, styles and techniques. Finally, Wijdan Ali indicates that a traditional Muslim artist does not make a distinction of minor and major arts. There isn't any separation between fine arts and applied art. She argues that this separation is a western concept, which is emerged from the separation of spirituality and aesthetics (Wijdan Ali, 1998, 15-18).

David Talbot Rice makes another definition for Islamic art in his book on Islamic Art. He defines Islamic art as the following: Islamic art is a complete definite style, a whole repertory of motifs and a distinct architectural system associated with an idea and faith (Rice, 1975). According to him uniformity is the main characteristic with regards to time and faith. Unlike western progressiveness, Islamic artists remain attached to the model whose merit had been sanctioned by time and convention. Another distinguishing characteristic is the use of calligraphy as a basic form of ornament. Since the Islamic world has extensive boundaries and its population was drawn from virtually all the known races of man, it is possible to make a distinction through locality and time. His book covers Islamic art until the seventeenth century, after this period the question remains unanswered.

In 1989, Wijdan Ali entitled her book *Contemporary Art from the Islamic World*. In that particular publication, she gathered the artworks from, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Gulf, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and Yemen. While she chose to categorize the artists according to their nationalities, artists such as

Armenian artist Paul Guirgossian and Etel Adnan who has a Greek origin do not fit to the Islamic definition.

The Royal Society of Fine Arts in Jordan, which published the book, also established the Jordan National Gallery, which claims to be the pioneer institution, which promotes contemporary Islamic art in terms of its development, its appreciation and international recognition. The gallery gathered a collection, funded by different actors such as private individuals, international banks and public institutions; the collection became representative of the development of artistic expression in the region (Wijdan Ali, 1998, 7)

In the Introduction page of the book, Wijdan Ali states that the occupation of lands by colonizers caused culturally overpowered indigenous traditional art by Western aesthetics. After these countries gained independence, artists struggled between adhering to Western aesthetics and norms and protecting their cultural identity. Wijdan expresses the common traits of the artists from the Islamic World as follows: all Modern Islamic artists are following western norms; aesthetics and rules because they had a western oriented education. Most Islamic artists, who are in search for their artistic identity, aim to find a way to combine their eastern origin with western education and create a synthesis of traditional heritage and Western modernity and finally all Modern Islamic artists are disconnected with their society (Wijdan Ali, 1998, Introduction). Wijdan Ali wrote the book in 1989, since then, the term ‘Islamic art’ became less favorable. Rather than using religious terms, nationalistic identities are being used more often, especially for artists from the 1940’s and afterwards. Although nationalistic definitions and classifications are popular among art historians, the relationship between religion and nationality is also questioning.

Author of *Formation of Arab Aesthetics*, Nada Shabout argues that without discussing what is Islamic art, it is not possible to define what is Arabic art? According to her it is not necessary to make a distinction between Islamic and Arab art terms since they are not synonymous. It is also a fact that these terms are overlapped during the 1940's, when secularism became highly influential for Arab people; some of the artists grew fascination as well as domination of western culture. Shabout argues that Arabism is not racial but a cultural term; she makes a simple division between Islamic and Arabic by placing emphasis on the national and cultural characteristics of being Arab (Shabout, 2007).

The modern definition of an Arab is one who speaks and communicates through the Arabic language (see Image I for Arab World Map). Arabic language and the alphabet are the unifying elements for the Arab people, not just the religion Islam. Arab people unify under shared culture, past and future. The formation of the Arab aesthetics can be categorized under three time periods, which are Arab art under Ottoman rule, imitation of European art, and Modernization period (Shabout, 2007).

While Ottoman European encounters became influential during the nineteenth century, western artistic styles became popular among Arab elites. Especially in Egypt, European art forms became widespread among Ottoman officials. This trend became even more influential under French and British occupation. Arab nationalism is triggered by Ottoman despotism and European colonization. As a reaction to these movements, art worked as an agency to construct a national identity. Glorify the past serve as a foundation for the formation of nationalistic image. At the beginning of the twentieth century contemporary artists experimented to formulate a new style, which is the combination of local folk mythology with the European stylistic genre of the time. These artists could not find their place among the global art world; their arts

were labeled as an imitation of Western art. They were exposed to nationalistic reductionism.

After western colonialism disappeared in the region, identity crisis started to rise in Arab lands. In order to solve the problem, artists turned their artistic scopes into ancient cultures of the region. They tried rediscovering the past; Egyptian artists looked to the ancient Egypt and Iraqi artists studied Babylonians and Lebanese rediscovered the Phoenicians. During the 1920's these artists merged together the styles inspired by their ancient heritage with contemporary trends, and reshaped the indigenous Arab art.

The second step the artist took to create distinct and unique style was the use of Arabic calligraphy. They started to use Arabic letters in Arabic art for the purpose of emphasizing nationalism. Calligraphy became the symbol of national identity, a unifier. Seeking inspiration from tradition became the main artistic trend. Arabic letters served as a means of connecting the present with the past, a way of Arabizing or localizing western modern art as well as a key element in the reinvention of tradition. In a general sense, modernism means secular and new for Arab artists modernity became a synonym for rediscovering their heritage. Modernity is defined as a historical development in Arab artists' writings, not a specific period. Arabization of modern art was not a superficial cosmetic alteration of European art but a conscious alteration of European art and a conscious reconstruction of the familiar into a national visual identity (Shabout, 2007).

In the 1990's market and social concerns changed, aesthetics became politicized. Themes of romanticized images of nations gave way to individualism. Artists resisted Orientalism and embraced styles like realism and abstraction. They also evolved a new sense of modernity. The new age of modernity embraces

hybridism. Cultural globalism theories discuss the decentralized modernity, which is based on the notion of a non-linear history, unrestricted chronology and geographical openness that shaped nations with parallel themes and intersections.

In the 21st century, one of the most of important goals is to change the perception of the audience that Arab is equal to Islam. Ten percent of the Arab population is made up with Arab Christians and other religion. Vice versa only fifty percent of the Muslim world is Arab. While the West readily accepts that many Christians are not practicing their religion, Arabs are commonly thought of as strictly following their religious doctrines (Shabout 2007). Only a few artists define themselves as having strong connections with their religious backgrounds. Today, the globalized world makes identity issues more complicated. Besides the confusions and misconception of Arabs and the Middle East, there are also enormous cultural differences. Backgrounds such as second-generation immigrants, voluntarily, exiled and born in Diaspora communities and people with ties to more than one country make it impossible to make national and cultural generalizations for groups of artists.

Today it is still possible to trace the fragments of colonialism and nationalism in the globalized world. Sam Bardouil states that exhibitions and publications that cover non-western artists provide viewers a summarized story of that culture rather than create a base for understanding the art at hand. They are just acting as a crash course in cultural otherness (Bardouil, 2010). Even national characteristics are sacrificed for the sake of commercial purposes and reduced to a cliché. In a globalized world it is impossible to group artists or schools of art by their geographic location. Artists have limitless sources of inspiration such as international art fairs, the Internet and traveling exhibitions.

Stereotypes might have true elements but they are misleading most of the time. Contemporary Arab Art is not homogeneous. There is a general expectation from Arab artists to use elements like Arabic calligraphy, portrayals of veiled women and references to Islam. This expectation is a result of neo-Orientalist approaches in the art world today.

Oleg Grabar suggests that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of Muslim states were under European control or influence, but today there are more than forty five independent Muslim states, and there are large Muslim populations are living in countries like China, India, France, Great Britain, Germany, Russia and the USA. In parallel to this situation, curiosity and interest to Muslim culture is increasing (Biermann, 2005, pg. 11-60). Although interest in the Muslim culture, in other words, “the orient,” “is not a new concept for the western sphere, today the borders are not as clear as in the 19th century.

An East and West dichotomy existed since the very early time periods in the history of the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. In his popular work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that the Western world justified their colonial actions in Middle East with romanticized and false images. In these images the West portrayed the East as exotic, barbarous and brutal (Said, 1978). Events that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York can be considered as a turning point for the depiction of the image of Middle Eastern societies. Terrorism is an additional element for this stereotyping image of Middle Eastern people.

Today there are two academic trends in Orientalist discourse. First is an increasing tendency to think of Orientalism as an ideology, which belonged to a period of history that is now behind us. Now we are in the “post-Orientalism” era. Supporters of these trends like Robertson emphasizes on the emergence of a global

communications system and “the development of a form of global sociology.” He argues that these developments have ended the history of social-centered analyses (Robertson, 1998:8); Turner also agrees that the sharp contrast between Occident and Orient is hopelessly out of date. According to the second trend, even though there are developments that crystallized the Orientalist discourse, old patterns of human history and destiny, which shaped the West and Islam dualism, still exists. Far from it: they have been reconstituted, redeployed, redistributed in a globalized framework and have shaped a new paradigm, which can be called “neo-Orientalism” (Samiei, 2010).

It is also possible to see this neo-orientalist trend in the contemporary art world. In the last decade, global interest for the so-called Contemporary Middle Eastern art is growing. The political events such as 9/11 and the Arab Spring, artistic events like international biennials and the opening of international auction houses in the Middle Eastern region trigger this interest. Although the term Middle Eastern art is problematic because of the vague borders due to globalization and Internet communication, international curators in global art circles popularly use this term.

Shabout emphasizes that the production of scholarly works and the growing number of exhibition catalogues for the contemporary shows of Middle Eastern art is disproportionate. Shabout evaluates the recent development of the interest for Middle Eastern art, as “There is a move from a period of invisibility through to one of celebration of everything related to the Middle East has fostered a sense of discontinuity, with contemporary production being seen as a new, detached phenomenon” (Shabout, Tate Conference series, 2009).

Since the majority of Euro-American exhibition curators have a Western Art training, these curators’ approaches to Middle Eastern art are the result of western discourse. Although there are initiations for creating awareness and building

understanding, Shabout argues that most of the themes of the Middle Eastern exhibitions can be considered as neo-Orientalist. These exhibitions suggest a new Middle Eastern image for the western eye as a reaction to the traditional Orientalist phenomena. Curators and recent scholars have an important role in shaping this new discourse. For example, a 2013 exhibition entitled “where east meets west” is taking place in Pomona, CA. In the invitation message the east is defined as “Eastern means Artwork or Artists related to China, Japan, Vietnam Iran, and Iraq...” Western as “Western means Artwork or Artists related to the United States, Britain, Canada...” In order to connect the three dots, exhibitors trust the Eurocentric worldview of the target audience. This invitation can be considered as an evidence for rooted bipolar world understanding.

Today, due to globalization and constant mobility of human and objects, it is impossible to tag artists with definite cultural identities, which is based on geographical boundaries, schools or styles. A majority of the contemporary artists reacts against stylistic classification and cultural geographies. Contemporary Arab artists are suppressed under the western cultural and ideological leadership. Unfortunately, contemporary Arab art tends to be evaluated under post colonial and neo-orientalist discourses.

Finally the dominance of western institutional practices causes misunderstandings and continuity of these discourses. Art institutions are exploiting the marketable stereotypes in order to increase their income or attract the attention of a wider audience. Some of the exhibition titles represent clichés such as the 2003 New Art Gallery London exhibition: *Veil: Veiling, Representation and Contemporary Art*; the 2006 MoMA exhibition: *Middle East without Boundaries*; the 2009 Saatchi exhibition: *Unveiled*; and the 2009 Austrian Cultural Forum: *The seen and the hidden*

(Dis) covering the Veil. It is crucial to establish a curatorial and academic practice that originates from within the region in order to achieve a more balanced and comprehensive representation of Arab Artist in the global era.

According to Till Fellroth, Contemporary Arab art is distorted by the global political climate, the influence of mass media, the commoditization of contemporary art, and the dominancy of western curatorial practices. He explains these distortions as follows: after the Cold War, Arabs took the place of Russians as the new enemy. The notion of a common enemy is a method of social control. The image of Arab is constructed by the Clash of civilization⁹ and the events of September 11. Arabs became a target of a presumption that people can be uniquely categorized. Each artist, like every single human being, can simultaneously belong to countless categories without any contradiction (Bardaouil & Fellrath, 2010).

An Arab artist can, at the same time, be a woman, a Christian, a traditionalist, an actor, a painter, or born and raised in Europe. Each artist has a particular identity. They should be evaluated as individual case studies. It is crucial to understand the artists in his or her own context so a generalization called Arab artist is a superficial grouping. In Western mass media, Arabs are portrayed in a negative way. Misrepresentations of Arabs create misunderstanding. Media is a powerful tool for publicizing a certain image. Stereotypical images for Arabs are wealthy, oil rich sheikhs, the uncultured barbarian, the sex maniac harem owner and the ruthless Arab terrorist. These common stereotypical portraits preconditioned the ideas about the Arabs and Arab culture in the western world.

In the case of commodization of contemporary art, since art became an affordable commodity during the 1980's, people are obsessed with particular and

⁹ See Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilization*, 1993

recognizable works. Ownership of the specific work provides them a higher status in the society. Some people also look art as an alternative investment. Rather than looking at their artistic creations, they are interested in artists' possible career. Since 2006, with the opening of Christie's, Sotheby's and Bonham's, artists from the Middle Eastern world find themselves in this global art market. This sudden interest in contemporary art from Middle East can almost be described as a gold rush. This gold rush increases the interest to the region's artistic production and creates awareness for distinct representations of Arab culture.

Although artists claim to be transnational artists, they are still struggling with cultural identities. A bipolar world understanding also still exists and a synthesis of traditional heritage and western modernity is continuing to be the rhetoric of cultural politics. Themes such as position of women, lack of democracy and Islamic iconography are pre-conditioned topics for an international audience from an exhibition of artists with some connections with the Middle Eastern culture. This creates a challenge for artists who want to free themselves from stereotypical connotations. Living and working in different environments inevitably impacts the way that their works are being created, making it difficult to argue for an all encompassing and specifically the Arab aesthetic.

Contemporary Arab Art; Education, Museology and Patronage in Arabic Gulf

The Arabian Gulf Cooperation council which is an economic and political union of six states, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. Although these countries are sharing the same geography as well as a common historical, political and cultural background, they all have different approaches to museology and art patronage.

Before the formation of modern art education in the region, in the Arabian Gulf, embroidery, weaving, jewelry making, woodwork and decorative paintings on the exterior of buildings were the main crafts in the region. Modern Art education in the gulf region started during the 1940's (Wijdan Ali, 1989). The traditional system of learning, which is known as *kuttab*, was replaced with a modern education system. In the *kuttab* system, groups of children from various age groups gathered in a classroom and learnt to memorize Quran and social manners. The introduction of modern education increased the function of schools to be an education center to a community-gathering center. Children found a ground to express their creativity and learn the basics of drawing from proper art teachers. The Ministry of Education hired teachers from Egypt, Palestine and Iraq. Those nations founded their art education systems long before the Arabian Gulf. During the late 19th century, the Egyptian government has established the first School of Art and Decoration and an Institute for art teachers in the Arab world. Teachers from these schools became the first educators of Gulf artists (Wijdan Ali, 1989).

Wijdan Ali identified the first generation of Gulf artists as follows: Mojab Dosari, Ayoub Hussein, Khalifa Kattan, Ahmed Zakaria Ansari, Tariqh Fakhry, Qassim Yaqout, Jawad Jassim, Mohammed Damghi, Abdallah Kassar from Kuwait, Abdul Azziz bin Mohammed al-Khalifa, Ahmad Qassim Sinni, Abdul Karim Orayid,

Yousef Qassim, Aziz Zabari, Salah Madani, Youssef Ahmed Hussein, Salman Dallal, Rashid Arifi, Rashid Swar, Nasser Youssef, Abdallah Mahriqi, Abdel Karim Bosta, Jalil Orayid and Hussein Sinni from Bahrain, Abdel Halim Radwi, Jamil Mirza and Ahmad Dashash from Saudi Arabia. Their training was based on basic academic principles of drawing and painting. Oman, Qatar and the UAE did not follow the trends of establishing art education in the region.

The governments of Kuwait (1945), Bahrain (1952), Saudi Arabia (1961), Qatar (1965), UAE (1965) and finally Oman (1980) sent their first group of students abroad to receive a western style art education. The development of art education and a modern art movement in the Gulf countries are directly connected to the government's official patronage of arts. The government's patronage increased after the discovery of oil and economic boom in the region. Governments initiated art classes, scholarships, organized exhibitions and finally established museums.

Today art education in the Arabic Gulf is under the control of The Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS). The Bureau designs the curriculum of art education. ABEGS was founded in 1981 and is located in Riyadh. The organization aims to serve the educational, scientific, cultural, documentary objectives for member states. It also contributes to develop projects and seeks to achieve coordination and integration of the educational and scientific efforts of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) member states which include: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (Al Amri, 2010).

Objectives of ABEGS can be listed as follows: "to prepare good citizen who is a producer and lifelong learner, who adheres the Arab Islamic identity according to his/her values and believes in life and who deal fairly with others, tolerance and

mutual respect; to gain access to the knowledge society with conscious and ability to compete internationally in a common framework for the integration between the countries of Gulf States." (abegs.org). As listed in the objectives, the education bureau's primary concern is to educate children who embrace their Arab Islamic identity. The Arabic Gulf invests in its future by educating a generation, which is armed with a strong belonging to their nations and equipped with necessary information to represent their nation on a global level. This approach also exists in art education. Arabic Gulf state officials aim to educate their own artists and art professionals.

The Virginia Commonwealth University is a great representative of this ideology and motivation. In 2013, Qatar graduated its first fine art graduates from VCU Qatar University. VCU Qatar is the Qatar campus of the prestigious Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Richmond, Virginia. It was established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, it offers fine art programs at the Bachelor and Masters levels .VCU Qatar's vision is to innovate Qatari society through art and design and its mission is to be a center of excellence for education and research in art and design. Through its programs, the university aims to educate art professionals who lead innovations in the creative and cultural professions in Qatar and the region.¹⁰

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (see Image 5), delivered the commencement speech to the first 44 graduates of the programs and said, "As a civil servant, I have been honored to continue the work of our ancestors in connecting the past with the present, while building new cultural bridges between East and West. Today, it brings me great pleasure to celebrate an

¹⁰ See 'www.qatar.vcu.edu' for university programs

important milestone in that journey, a milestone I think of as ‘Made in Qatar’ – a celebration of 44 Doha-educated graduates in the Fine Arts!” (news.vcu.edu) This speech summarizes the whole cultural policy of Qatar, connecting the past and the present, glorifying and following the ancestors, connecting east and west and finally providing sustainable reforms by training students which will be continued to spread ideology that is designed by the government.

Fine arts societies were established such as Emirate Society of Fine Arts (1980), Modern Art Society in Bahrain (1969), and the Saudi Arabian Society for Culture and Arts (1973), the House of Saudi Arts (1967), the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture Arts, and Letters (1973) and Qatar Society of Fine Arts (1980). As a next step, art museums followed these society foundations.

Emily Doherty asks the question of what is the first thing that a country does when it wants to assert to its identity? And the answer is to create a museum. She investigates how activity of collecting and what the presence of major art collections can mean in terms of national and local identity.

Art collections in the Arab gulf tended to be privately owned and kept behind closed door. This tendency has been changing with the new museum formations in the region. Both in Qatar and Abu Dhabi, government and the ruling families are the main collection entities in the region. Since the governments are behind these new formations, it is impossible to consider these museums politically neutral. Doherty argues that for young countries with focus on nation building like UAE and we can also add Qatar into this category, to collect and then catalogue is crucial for creating a structure for the nations. Institutionalizing is the starting point in nation building process (Doherty, 2012).

There are six Contemporary Art Museum in Arabic Gulf. These are the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait, the Contemporary Art Museum of Bahrain which is under construction, the MATHAF: Modern Arab Art Museum in Qatar, the Sharjah Art Museum and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in United Arab Emirates.

The Kuwait Modern Art Museum was established in 2003 (see Image 6). The National Council founded it for Culture, Arts and Letters. This council is the main government body that regulates Kuwait's artistic life. It controls the national museums, performing arts, institutes, the libraries, archeological excavations, and conservation projects. The Council has been very active since the 1970's; it channels government funds to artistic projects in Kuwait. The Council is criticized for being conservative and only providing support for traditional painting, which is targeting the taste of the majority of the population. The National Council for Culture's website is only in Arabic and the Kuwait Modern Art Museum does not even have a website. This attitude closed down the gates of the Kuwait art scene to the global audience. Although the public art scene in Kuwait is strictly under the control of the government, it does not have a global voice. Members of the Sheikh's family and Kuwait elites are supporting Contemporary Arab Art and also developing private collections. Sheikha Lulu Al-Sabah with her private foundation JAMM Art consultancy and private collection of Sheikha Paula Al-Sabah are an example of individual support in Kuwait (jamm-art.org).

Emir of Kuwait Sabah El Ahmed El Cebir El Sabah and his wife Sheikha Hussah Al Sabah are the owners of the world's most important Islamic Art Collection. Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) institution is founded from their art collection. Besides organizing exhibitions, the foundation is also supporting cultural heritage preservation and archeological excavations. The collection includes more

than 30,000 Islamic art objects from the eighteenth century and onwards.¹¹ Emir's private collection was donated to the National Museum of Kuwait. As in the critiques, Kuwait's ruling family chose to be a memory keeper of the Islamic past rather than the supporter of contemporary art.

The Contemporary Art Museum of Bahrain is still under construction. The Cultural and National Heritage Sector of Bahrain is funding the museum. This Sector aims to spread public awareness about the high quality aspect of culture, which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. It arranged its long-term plan to achieve goals such as preserving the historical identity and national characteristics by emphasizing Arab and Islamic origins. This Sector is divided into three categories, which are the Culture & Art Directorate, the Archeology & Heritage Directorate and the Museum's Directorate.

The Museum Directorate is in charge of managing and planning all of the museums in Bahrain. Exhibitions that are prepared by the directorate aim to promote international recognition of Bahraini civilization, to increase touristic development and to preserve the national heritage and traditions of Bahrain for the new generations. Although the Contemporary Art Museum of Bahrain's architectural plan by Zaha Hadid is available online (see Image 7), the project's future is unknown. There is no deadline and no information is available for the collection or its curatorial aspect. Until the construction of the Contemporary Art Museum is completed, Contemporary Art from Bahrain is being represented and exhibited in the Bahrain National Museum.

The Mathaf: Museum of Modern Art (see Image 8) was established in 2010 by H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Al Thani. After he donated his own

¹¹ For more detailed information about the collection see: www.darmuseum.org

collection to the museum it became a part of the Qatar Museum Authority.

H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Al Thani started to collect Modern Arab art in 1986. Youssef Ahmed, his Art professor at Qatar University, influenced Sheikh in his collection. Youssef Ahmed also became the first director of the museum. Al Thani turned his collection into a private museum and then donated the collection to the government. Since the museum is under control of the Museum Authority, it has a parallel mission with the Nation's cultural agenda.

Sheikha Mayassa is the daughter of the Emir of Qatar and also the chair of the Museum Authority. She can be considered a spokesman of cultural policies in Qatar. During her Ted Talks¹², she described Qatar as a young nation led by young people. She gave the speech in her traditional clothes Abaya. Sheikha responded to the critiques against the black Abaya by stating that this traditional cloth is a diverse cultural statement. She continued her speech with the argument of "Qatar doesn't want to be same with the rest of the world but want to know and understand each other." For this agenda to succeed, Qatar invests in tradition. While being part of the global village, at the same time they are developing their own culture.

Sheikha stated during her speech to that global audience that Mathaf wants to discover the Arab Picasso and Cezanne and also she added that, "We do have artists but we have not discovered them yet." She pointed out how modern Arab art is understudied and it is their duty to bring the art history of Arab lands into light. While Sheikha Mayassa tries to advocate the Arab art, she also makes claims for rewriting the Arab art history. The Mathaf Museum is not just an exhibition center but it also runs residency programs, encouraging researchers and documenting Arab Art. Museum encourages researchers to discover and Arab masterpieces. Sheikha Mayassa

¹² Sheikha Mayassa, *Globalizing the Local, Localizing the Global*, Ted Talk, Beirut, Dec 2010

used the term Arab-Picasso, first word Arab is an emphasis on the nationality concentration of the museum and why did she use the term Picasso and Cezanne? In addition to being successful artists, Picasso and Cezanne are well known globally respected and appreciated masters. Mathaf Museum is not just encouraging research but it also aims to create a global awareness and admiration for Arab art. Mathaf museum did not just target the local audience but it looks for a place in global art world and strengthening the place of Arab art in art history.

In the United Arab Emirates, there are two Contemporary Art Museums, one is in Sharjah and the other one is the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. While the Sharjah Museum is government funded, the Guggenheim Museum is a franchising project. In comparison to other nations in the Arabic Gulf, the UAE favored private institutions more than the government institutions. Although this increased the freedom of the collection, it also creates discussions for the globalizing and branding of museums.

The Sharjah Museum (see Image 9) is founded by Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah in 1997. The museum is under the control of the Sharjah Museum Departments. According to the Sharjah Museum Collection development policy, the only decision maker about the collection is His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi. The museum does not have a website, which also makes it closed to the global audience.

The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (see Image 10) is a satellite museum, which is planned to be open in 2013, but the construction company rescheduled it to 2017. The Guggenheim foundation already has satellite museums in New York, Venice, Bilbao but Abu Dhabi will be the biggest Guggenheim museum. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will focus on Contemporary Middle Eastern Art. Museum will be located in the Saadiyat Cultural District.

Ownership of the museum belongs to the Abu Dhabi's Tourism Development & Investment Company. Rather than targeting the local audience like the other museums in Arab Gulf, The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi aim to be an international tourist attraction destination. Abu Dhabi government also commissioned two other museums, the Zayed national museum with the British Museum and the Louvre Abu Dhabi. As the name suggests, Abu Dhabi chose to depend on well-known brands for founding their museums rather than building their own museums. Although these museums are still under construction, there are many questions and theories appeared on academia and international media about the ideology behind Abu Dhabi museums and their future.

Across the region, and over the past three to four decades, there has always been a small group of local art collectors. Today Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al Thani, the founder of the Mathaf Arab Museum of Modern Art in Qatar, followed by Dubai Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi can be considered as the main art patrons in the Arab Gulf. These collectors are shaping the faith of contemporary art in the region.

While the Arab Gulf region built their own museums and publicized its blockbuster exhibitions, in the western part of the Arab world, the art world became de-institutionalized. As an example of this trend, Cairo used to be one of the Arab art centers, but after the Arab Spring events, artists started to put their arts in the streets, art went beyond the museum and blurred the boundaries between art and life in the countries where the Arab Awakening has been flourished. For example, in Egypt art patrons fled during the Arab Awakening and several galleries have closed down. Since the Egyptian and Iraqi art scenes are now almost diminished artists have turned their faces to international auctions and exposures at Mathaf. The political situation in the Arab world increased the local importance of the art museums in the Gulf region.

Bagdad, Cairo and Beirut used to be the centers of cultural life in the region but these places were destroyed by wars and social unrests. Since governments have lessened their support for art, individual enterprises became more visible and powerful in the art world such as regional biennales, the UAE's Saadiyat Island project and finally, Mathaf, Qatar.

Chapter III

Case Study I: Qatar / Doha

About the Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum

The Mathaf is the new modern art museum of Qatar. It is only three years old but it has already hosted many ambitious events and exhibitions. The Mathaf was founded explicitly to celebrate Arab artists and an Arab perspective on global modern and contemporary art. H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al Thani is the founder of this museum project. Al Thani started to form an Arab art collection in the 1990s. As stated in the home page of the Mathaf 's official website, Al Thani initiated this collection by imagining what an Arab Museum of Modern Art might look like (Mathaf.org); this statement clearly shows that the museum collection and its design were formed with a particular interest, taste and ideology. In this chapter, I intend to look at the different aspects of this museum such as the management team, location, events and its status in social media. Finally, I will try to draw attention to the collection of the museum, which enables the understanding of the consciously constructed image of the Museum and the Modern Arab.

Museum Management and Qatar Museum Authority

The Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum is one of the museums that are under the control of the Qatar Museum Authority (QMA). The QMA was founded in 2005 for managing the resources of all museums in the state of Qatar. Besides the Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum, the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Qatar and the Orientalist Museum are under the responsibility of the QMA. The

majority of the members of the board of trustees are from the royal family. Members of the management team are mostly experienced officers from Europe and USA and the rest are officers that are educated in UK, USA or Europe. While the authority is supported by the state, the management team of the museum also depends on Western expertise and the museum tradition for establishing the museums in the area.¹³ One of the main goals of the state officials is to train their own experts and generate a local community of museum staff.

Educational programs exist for training the future museum professionals in the region. A master's program in Conservation Studies and Museum & Gallery Practice at University College London Qatar (UCL) is a great example for this initiative.

These programs have regional focus and large practical elements. They aim to create professionals for the cultural heritage management sector by encouraging students to have practical experiences across the Middle East. For instance, the students of the programs are given the opportunity to have internships at the Mathaf. Michelle Dezember, Acting Head at Mathaf and Head of Education and Public Programs, states, "For Tea with Nefertiti and Forever Now exhibitions (November 17- March 31, 2013) at the Mathaf, we needed to acquire specialist expertise in conservation from abroad. We look forward to the day when we don't always have to look outside of the country for these professionals," (Qatar Foundation Telegraph, 2013).

The Qatar state is systematically connecting the education system and museums to create their own professional pool. While the future of the museums are aimed to be secured through training future professionals with Qatari values in the Western education system, museums themselves already are a result of the motivation for preserving the past and connecting it with today and the future.

¹³ See list of management team: <http://www.qma.org.qa/en/about-us/management-team>

“What has been achieved in the past must be transformed into living future” is a statement by H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Al Thani, Chairperson of the QMA. This statement appears within the values of the QMA which is published on the website (Qma.com.qa.en). Sheikha emphasizes the specific function of the museums, which is reviving the past in today’s time and making it part of the future. The Qatar Museum authority posted their mission as follows:

- “ -To develop, promote and sustain museums, art and heritage at the highest global standards for community engagement, education, and enjoyment in Qatar.
- To develop and showcase world class collections in world class architecture.
- To propose national policies to build a vibrant museum, art and heritage sector, being at the forefront of research and innovation
- To offer the best career opportunities to create leaders of tomorrow
- To engage in cultural dialogue and educational programs that build bridges between nations, fostering national pride and engaging in cultural diplomacy on behalf of the State and in trust for the people of Qatar.” (Qma.com.qa.en)

This outline is an important document for understanding the priorities of the museum officials in the region. The QMA is targeting to reach global standards; they don’t want to establish museums just for the local audience, but they aim for them to be a global attraction. While The QMA provides an educational environment for the local audience by emphasizing world-class collections and museums, they also aim to be one of the pioneers in research and innovation on a global level. National pride is at the center of the motivation behind these projects.

There are six museums and collections under the control of the QMA, these are the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum of Qatar, the Orientalist

Museum, The Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art-, Photography Museum, Qatar's Natural History Museum. Today, three out of five museums are under construction, which are Qatar National Museum, Orientalist Museum and Photography Museum. Museum of Islamic Art and Mathaf; Modern Arab Art Museum are the two museums that are already functioning in Qatar. Each Museum has its own agenda and they all serve to the nation's main agenda, which is creating a local identity and reconnecting with Arab heritage.

Internationally known architect Jean Nouvel designed the new national museum of Qatar (see Image 11). Museum construction is still in progress but its design is well received in the media already. The complex is a highly extensive project, which includes, museum galleries, restaurants, a food forum, collection storage, auditorium, children activity center, library, café, laboratories and offices. Rather than just being an exhibition hall to house a collection, the museum is intended to be a comprehensive cultural and educational center. The former national museum used to have a museum of the state, a lagoon and a very popular marine aquarium. The new museum will include the older collection but also transform its collection as a representation of Qatar nationalism. The sections of the new museum will be divided into the following themes (Qma.com,qa.en) ; Between Desert & Sea, Qatari Sea, Qatari Design, Travelling the Desert, Moving Shelters, Life on the Sea, Treasures Unveiled, Celebrating Life, Getting into the History, New Resources and Between Past and Future.

As the section themes suggest, the National museum will highlight the past and the future of Qatar. While the desert, sea, and Bedouin traveling culture represents the past, the "New Resources" and the "Between Past and Future" section is going to emphasize Qatar's planned future. The museum will celebrate "the Qatari

way of life” said Mr. Dolman of the museums authority. “I think it is incredibly important to the people of Qatar that we get it right, that it acts as a proper tribute and record of their history” (Hartvig, 2012).

The second museum under patronage of QMA is the Orientalist Museum. It has one of the most significant collections of Orientalist art in the world. The collection includes artworks from 16th century and onwards. Unfortunately the museum is not open to the public with the exception of temporary exhibitions but it lends works to museums around the world. The collection includes approximately 900 paintings, watercolors, drawings and prints, as well as sculpture and applied art. Orientalist art is a nineteenth century phenomenon, which creates images of the people, objects and landscapes of the Middle East and North Africa. Mainly European travelers and artists depicted scenes from Middle Eastern daily life and sometimes their fantasies. While some of the paintings can be considered as documentation, some of them are depictions of highly erotized and exotic imaginary from the Middle East. Since the collection is not open to the public, the question of the censorship of nudity remains unanswered. The Orientalist Museum has held two exhibitions, “Journey Into the World of Ottomans” and “Art of Travel”; No controversial, exotic images were placed in these shows. Both exhibitions were focused on other issues like cultural exchange and the image of Ottoman lands in Europe. Further exhibitions and the possibility of opening the collection to a wider audience would clearly increase the profile of the museum.

The third museum is the Photography Museum designed by Santiago Calatrava (see Image 12). The museum is going to tell the story of photography and to make the visual documentation of history of Qatar. The Photography Museum is going to be a new addition in the process of creating the new image of Qatar.

Although there is no official announcement on the date of opening, the media is already making news about its impressive architectural design and the possibly launch date soon.

The fourth museum is the Museum of Islamic Art, which was opened to the public in 2008. This museum is the only Islamic art museum in the Arabian states of the Persian Gulf. I. M. Pei designed the unique architectural structure of the building (see Image 13). He was inspired by early Islamic architecture. The objects in the collection are gathered from different geographies and each region has its own section on the third floor of the museum. These sections are: Early Islamic Art, Iran & Central Asia, Egypt & Syria, India and Turkey. Each section is also organized chronologically. On the second floor, objects are organized according to their subjects, which are Science, Pattern, Calligraphy, and Figure in Art. The “Figure in Art” section is a good response to the general false understanding that figural drawing is banned in Islam. This view also causes a low estimation for figure drawing in Islam. The collection would put emphasis on the diverse approach for figure drawing (Qma.com.qa.en).

There is a dress code for the visitors to enter the museum. “Visitors are asked to be dressed appropriately. Entrance may be refused to those unsuitably dressed” warning is written on the museum’s website. Although religious objects are taken out of their original context and are part of an open exhibition, the museum asks its visitors to treat exhibition objects as holy as if they are in their original context. Although a dress code is widely used for entrance to functioning temples such as St Pietro Basilica,¹⁴ there seems to be a common perception of division of museum and holy places in terms of dress code. While the Islamic art museums in Malaysia and

¹⁴ Vatican dress code: <http://saintpetersbasilica.org/touristinfo.htm>

Turkey do not apply dress code for the entrance, Qatar Islamic Art Museum's attitude can support the idea that the Islamic Art Museum is not a secular place but an extension of the Islamic image of the nation.

The last museum under the control of the QMA is the Mathaf. The Mathaf is the second museum project completed by the Qatar Museum Authority. In comparison to the Museum of Islamic Art, which was the first completed museum, The Mathaf is a modest project. French architect Jean-Francois Bodin, in cooperation with Burns, designed it and McDonnell (see Image 14) The location of the museum is in the Education City (see Image 15). The Education City is a city quarter that was founded by the Qatar Foundation. It offers various educational choices that are not available elsewhere in the Arab Gulf region. Students from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain) are allowed to study in Education city as a result of an arrangement to foster educational opportunities for the citizens of member states. Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar, WCMC-Q, Texas A&M, Carnegie Mellon Qatar, Georgetown University and Northwestern in Qatar are the universities that exist in the Education city (Myeducationcity.com).

Another aspect of the Education City that is emphasized by the Qatar Foundation is the multicultural characteristics of the students, faculty and staff. Education city aims to create the perfect environment for the global citizen of the future who is able to engage comfortably and confidently across all forms of diversity. Qatar Foundation defines Global Citizen as follows (Qf.org.qa), "Global citizen will need to be more flexible and welcoming of diverse voices. They will increasingly see conflict as an opportunity to work towards positive and mutually beneficial change rather than a wedge driven between individuals or groups. Global

citizens will enjoy experiencing the traditions, beliefs, and cultures. They will learn to move ahead more comfortably on issues where things are rather unknown than known; they will use the resources around them to chart a reasonable course. Because of the power of the Education City experiences, graduates will be the twenty-first century global citizens that are so in demand around the world. This type of learning is not easy but it is well worth the time and the effort.’’

This definition of a global citizen is like an instruction guide for Qatari youth to fulfill the state expectations. The government invests in the dynamics of knowledge production and prepares for a multi-national future. While the government supports the flexibility and openness to diverse cultures, they also want their youth to be respectful to traditions and the beliefs of others. Considering the geographical location of Qatar, openness to other cultures increases the cultural and economical exchange within the region. Education became a key to connect with the outside world for Qatar people. Therefore, locating the Mathaf in the Education City makes it closer to the global world. Although the museum highlights the Arab art and aims to attract locals, it also wants to reach out to the rest of the world. Education city with its *Global Citizens* is one of the gates of Qatar that opens up to the global world. Locating the Mathaf in the Education city among a culturally diverse and high-educated population is a way for accessing target audience.

As well as location, the architecture of the building is also serving well to the QMA’s vision for its museums. The Mathaf is a modern white building and its corporate identity colors are black and white. It looks simple, modern and universal, you feel like the museum is located somewhere in Northern Europe or Northern America. Although the white building made the impression of being inspired by Brian

O'Doherty's (1976) white cube tradition¹⁵, Mathaf museum building is a renovated old school building. Jordanian Scholar Dr. Wijdan Ali, in her edited book *Contemporary Art from Islamic World* (1989; 46) described the situation of school buildings in the Arab Gulf Countries as follows; in the 1950's the traditional education system was being replaced with "western style education". Modern school buildings became community centers for social and cultural activities. These activities were not just athletic events, plays and art exhibitions but also wedding celebrations and public bazaars. By renovating a school building, Mathaf is continuing the function of modern school buildings as a public gathering center. The decision of renovating a school building in the Education City instead of commissioning a worldly known architect such as Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel or Zaha Hadid like its neighboring countries brings the Mathaf a distinctive character.

The dual character of the architecture can be seen in the logo. As Clare Davies argues the museums loose, looping calligraphic-style logo (see image 52) puns on cultural and linguistic duality. A stand-in for the second "a" in the English transliteration of the Arabic word for museum, *mathaf* resembles the soft "h", turned on its side, which appears in the original Arabic script (Davies, 2010, 3). The Mathaf building has different sections with various functions such as *Manara*, The Mathaf's education wing, offers ongoing learning opportunities. It hosts artist encounters, talks, school tours, summer programs, workshops and more. *Maktaba*, a research library, has print and digital collections that cover general art history, modern art worldwide and art theory, with a special focus on the Arab world. *Mahal* is the museum shop and *Maqha* is the Mathaf's coffee shop. These functional buildings give the museum a

¹⁵ White cube exhibition spaces aim to build a protective shell that is not connected with the outside world for exhibiting art,

different character than just being an exhibition hall; it is transformed into a social, educational, and cultural location. While the museum building is the local face of the museum, its official website is the face of the museum for the international public. It is a highly efficient, colorful and interactive website. The mission of the museum is clearly stated in the official website. H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani who is the Chairperson of the Qatar Museum Authority (Mathaf.org), states that Mathaf's mission is to expand people's ideas about art in the region and to show that the story is more elaborate, more exciting, and more surprising than one would expect. With this quote Sheikha invites the audience to discover the region's art. Her words aim to increase the expectations for the art in the region.

Mathaf is also highly active in the social media; through the use of social media, Mathaf is reaching a wider audience. The museum has Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Those accounts share videos, comments, images, and interviews on a daily basis. They intensify the modern, young, and multi-cultural image of the museum. Unlike the other museums in the Arab Gulf region, The Mathaf is more open to social media. It spreads the activities, exhibitions, and store items through social media into a wider audience. The audience is also able to become involved with the museum through online applications and activities.

On the Facebook group of the Mathaf, almost 50,000 people have "liked" the page and the Mathaf has 6,714 followers on Twitter. According to Jim Richardson spreadsheet ¹⁶, which is based on automated data collection from Facebook and Twitter, the world's most followed museum on social media, is MOMA with 897,345 "likes" on Facebook and 923,086 followers on Twitter. MOMA is followed by The

¹⁶ For the whole data collection see: <http://litot.es/museums-in-social-media>

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York with 569,237 “likes” on Facebook and 440,179 followers on Twitter. This data collection is a great way to understand the Mathaf’s social media policy. Since the museum is targeting younger generations, an active social media strategy is helping them to attract visitor’s attention and create mutual relationships. The Mathaf posts videos, photographs, invitations for events, and posters of activities and exhibitions through Facebook. The moderator frequently shares news and photographs of the events and educational activities. Visitors do not even have to go to the museum to follow the events and participate in the museum activities. The Mathaf also organizes competitions through social media to increase interaction with visitors (see Image 16). As in the Image 16 suggests the Mathaf organized a competition for visitors on Integra, museum asked its followers to take photographs within the orientation day and share it on Instagram. Then the Mathaf staff selected winners at the end of the evening and prized them with photo machines. As in this competition, The Mathaf has an active social media policy. While it organizes indoor events, Museum also encourages visitors to share their experiences online with a wider audience.

The Mathaf museum’s social media policy is highly active and is a great example for other museums, which are targeting a global audience. The language of the messages, Tweets and shared visuals are mostly English and Arabic. The museum’s approach is highly informal and based on creating close ties with a younger generation. The Mathaf’s social media accounts are intensifying the interactivity of visitors and turning the museum into a virtual community center.

In addition to social media interactions, The Mathaf is also active in museum education programs. The Mathaf Acting director and head of education, Michelle Dezember, argues that the main objective of the education programs is to build

relationships with diverse audiences through a wide range of educational programs and events (Dezember, 2013). Mathaf has offered Artist Encounters Workshops, Panel Discussions, Musical Performances, Guided School Tours, Academic Conferences, Family Programs, Community Partner Programs, Film Screenings, and Mathaf Voices Internships for university students.

The Mathaf organized Family Fridays, story-telling activities on Wednesdays and school days, summer activities for children. Posters that are presenting children from different ethnic groups are praising the diversified background of Qatar residents (see Image 17). In the activity photographs, children are photographed sitting on the ground, drawing on walls and playing with their instructors. Their activities are parallel to the exhibition themes. Children from the ages of 3-7 first visit the galleries then they attend to the sketching activities. Languages of the activities are both in English and Arabic. This attitude helps the museum reach a wider audience and it also makes museum more accessible to the international expat community in Qatar.

For youth, The Mathaf organizes events such as college nights and Mathaf lab, which is a gathering of Qatar-based influencers from diverse art related backgrounds; among them illustrators, writers, film makers, graphic designers, interior designers, social media personalities and entrepreneurs and also organize talks and conferences. It also runs ‘I am Mathaf voice’ program (see Image 18) which encourages students to give exhibition tours. These interactive programs allow the museum to connect with younger generations and spread their approach to Modern Arab Art. A variety of museum events increase the number of visitors. Qatar is also involved in the ‘‘Global Art Forum’’. Featuring commissioned projects and research, as well as six days of live talks, the Global Art Forum brings together a diverse line-up of participants, including artists, curators, musicians, strategists, thinkers, and writers. Founded and

produced by Art Dubai, the Global Art Forum is presented by the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority (Dubai Culture), and is held in partnership with the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art (Qatar Museums Authority).

In addition to those events, Dezember suggests three projects, which will be useful for the museum's goals. The first one is the utilization of social media to foster a creative community among the youth in Doha. Teenagers and young adults are encouraged to contribute online challenges. These challenges create a learning ground for the Mathaf's collection and allow students to showcase their own creative endeavors in fields such as photography, writing, and drawing. Online participation will be linked to in-person museum visits, encounters with artists and museum educators, and excursions in the city, such as art walks and scavenger hunts. The second project is a school tour that is created by students for students using the digital technology. Middle school or high school students will become experts on modern Arab art by creating challenges for other students to perform in the galleries using mobile applications. Through these challenges, students will teach their peers in Qatar and the United States about the collection and connect works of art to social issues. The final program is partnering with local special needs centers to create museum programs that include art creation and foster social-emotional development for youth with physical and intellectual disabilities (Dezember, 2013). They are also interested in working with an international museum that has experience with special-needs visitors. All of these programs aim to increase community involvement by encouraging research, using social media and initiating dialogue with international museums.

Wassan Al Khoudari (Sajiil, 2010; 19) explains that the cousin of the Emir of Qatar gathered the museum's art collection, Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Al

Thani. It covers works of art from all phases of modern art in the Middle East, from the 1840s to the present. Sheikh Hassan Al Thani himself studied twentieth century art at the Qatar University and gathered a collection of over 6,000 works of art over ten-year period. Sheikh Hassan's love of art comes from his childhood. He grew up in a household in the 1960s, which was decorated with European still life and landscape paintings. Sheikh Hassan came up with the question of what place Arab artists had in the story of modern art during an Art of the Twentieth Century Course taught by Youssef Ahmed at the Qatar University. During these lectures, Sheikh Hassan's desire to contact artists and familiarize himself with their work was born. The lack of access to these works and the scarcity of scholarly works on the material motivated Sheikh Hassan to build his own collection under the supervision of Youssef Ahmed. His collection is also supported by Sheikh Hammad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Sheikh Hassan's professional experience with the art world was initiated with a museum in a private villa, which was directed by Youssef Ahmed. By offering a place of refuge to artists such as Dia Azzawi and Ismail Fattah, who fled Bagdad in 1994, Sheikh Hassan managed to succeed in his aim to get involved in the process of art creation. He did not want to just commission artists for their artwork but also to support them in fulfilling their need to make art. Instead of attempting to personally influence artistic creation, Sheikh Hassan offered a residency program. Although Sheikh Hassan clearly stated that his intentions did not influence artists in his statements on the *Sajiil* exhibition catalogue, it would be interesting to look at the works that are produced by artists during their stay at his residency program.

Sheikh Hassan's other intention was to create a collection that provides resources for Arab Modern Art Studies. His initial aim was to make a place for Arab art in art history. Since art history as a field tends to be Western oriented, it is

important to study, research and produce art by Middle Eastern origin scholars and artists. Sheikh Hassan is an important supporter of this viewpoint and wanted a museum that would become a center for this form of cultural production. Sheikh Hassan is known as a scholar, educator and patron. In his vision, the modern Arab art museum is not just a showplace but also a generator for creativity, inquiry and engagement.

Sheikh Hassan retained his personal ownership in 1994 and in 2004 he offered the entire collection to the Qatar Foundation. In 2008, collection became the foundation for the Mathaf museum project initiated by the Qatar Museum Authority chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the daughter of the emir. After his donation, Sheikh Hassan wrote in the catalogue essay accompanying the opening exhibition that "I will become only an observer, just like everybody else, The museum will go out of my hands into the hands of a new generation, who I hope will remember me with fondness." By turning his private collection into a public institution, Sheikh Hassan gained public renown.

The lack of a regional tradition for collecting art is a drawback for the formation of the art museums in the Arab world. The Mathaf is founded from a private collection that was nationalized. Since it was started as a private collection, the personal motivation of the patron is highly visible. The lack of a collection tradition in the region puts the Mathaf in a unique position and gives the collection an experimental nature. The main goal of the patron is to understand the Arab aesthetic and cultural connection by observing the works in one space. The main ideology behind the collection is the desire to assert Arab visual creations in relation to the rest of the world. According to Al Thani, modern art can be considered as “a parameter for cultural progress, evolution of taste and social interest.” Sheikh Hassan makes a

direct correlation between modern art and the progress of the nation. According to his argument, since the Arab nation is considered to be the cradle of the most significant civilizations, there is no excuse for Arabs not to be actively involved in modernity projects (Sajil, 2010,19-25). The Mathaf collection includes over six thousand pieces of modern Arab art from various time periods and locations. The collection is mainly focused on art production from the Arab world as well as Iran and Turkey. The collection aims to become an open access resource for an international audience who aim to learn more about the art of the Arab world and beyond. Exhibitions, programs and events that are organized by the Mathaf claims to celebrate art by Arab artists and highlight the Arab perspective on both international modern and contemporary art. This claim makes the Mathaf a pioneer in documenting, archiving, and exhibiting modern art works from various parts of the Arab world. In addition a to library at the Mathaf, the museum uploaded ninety images into their Google art project site. This website allows the museum to reach a wider audience and while creating database opportunities for researchers all around the world. Wassan Al Khoudari explains the importance of the Google art project ¹⁷ for the Mathaf Museum as a method to promote Modern Arab art to the global audience, which is one of the main agenda of the collection, (Salt Symposium, Istanbul, 2012).

Artists in the collection are diverse in terms of their educational background, their nationality and their national origins. Although the collection did not gather within an institutional context, it discusses the status of Arab artists in a wider context and it also looks at historical and contemporary factors that influence artistic

¹⁷ The Art Project is a unique collaboration with some of the world's most acclaimed art institutions to enable people to discover and view artworks online in extraordinary detail. Working with over 250 institutions, we have put tens of thousands of works of art from more than 6,000 artists online. This involved taking a selection of super high-resolution images of famous artworks, as well as collating more than thirty thousand other images into one place. For more details: <http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/about/>

preferences and knowledge production. In general, there is limited information about artists from former colonies and artists with Arab backgrounds so there is a lack of collective memory for the art of the region. Deena Chelebi (Sajjil, 2010, 25) explains this situation during the 19th-20th centuries as a period when non-Western art suffered from invisibility and amnesia. Arab art suffered from prejudice and was dismissed as being a replica of Western Art art.

Emin Mahir Balcıoğlu, the Qatar Museum Authority Program Coordinator, told me an anecdote during our talk at the 2012 Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair. An Argentinean curator, a Brazilian curator, and Balcıoğlu were discussing Modernist art movements in their own countries at a Modernist art exhibition opening. A German art historian, who overhears the discussion, reacts by stating that Modernism is a European based movement and it does not make sense to integrate the movement into their local art histories. This short anecdote shows how Euro-centrism has deeply perpetrated the art and art history circles. The Mathaf aims to increase the participation of Arab art in modern art history.

While the Mathaf has publicized itself as the representative of modern Arab art, the main question becomes this: what is modernity in a country that strongly values traditions? While the modern white museum building creates a familiar modern art museum scene for the international viewer, people with traditional garments create a contrast to this picture.

Another important aspect of the Mathaf is the way that artists from an Arab background are embraced. Al Thani states that the mission of the Mathaf is to collect works by Arab artists regardless of their affiliations, schools and styles under one roof, for the state of Qatar wants to be the home for Arab creativity (Mathaf.org). So how does Qatar, namely the Mathaf, define Arab artists in today's global world?

Deena Chelebi argues that Mathaf's vision is based on a regional cultural unity. It aims to create an Arab perspective on modernity in the region's visual creation and production (Chelebi, 2012). The Mathaf accepts and promotes an ideal, which is no longer popular in contemporary rhetoric on art. This ideal, however, is the essential theme in the exhibitions and sayings of Qatar.

Exhibitions, Artists and Works

The Mathaf museum started its journey with three exhibitions, which are listed as: Interventions (December 30, 2010-May 28 2011), Told -Untold-Retold (December 30, 2010-May 28, 2011) and Sajiil, a century of modern art (December 30, 2010-October 1, 2011) (see Image 19). Since then, the Mathaf organized four more exhibitions, which are, *Swalif*, *Cai Guo-Qiang: Saraab*, *Tea with Nefertiti* and *Forever Now* exhibitions. Collectively the curatorial aim of these exhibitions is to become a resource for its visitors to learn about modern Arab art. Writing the history of modern and contemporary Arab art is the major theme of these exhibitions. Selected themes, artists and timelines are significant in terms of the cultural policy of Qatar, which is shaped around tradition and modernization rhetoric.

Interventions (December 30, 2010 - May 28, 2011)

By focusing on the relationship between modern and contemporary art, the *Interventions* exhibition is curated by Nada Shabout and celebrates the work and continuing careers of five internationally recognized and influential artists from the Arab world: Dia Al Azzawi, Farid Belkahia, Ahmed Nawar, Ibrahim el Salahi, and Hassan Sharif.

Nada Shabout is an art historian who specializes in modern Iraqi art and is the

author of the book *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics* that was published by the University of Florida Press, 2007. She teaches Art History and Arab Visual Culture at the University of North Texas. Shabout is also the founder and president of the Association of Modern and Contemporary Art from the Arab World, Iran and Turkey (AMCA).

Mathaf commissioned five new artworks from the artist for the *Intervention* exhibition. While Mathaf hosting the artistic journey of the artist, having a commission also allows artists to provide a context for their artwork.

Dia Azzawi (b.1939 in Bagdad) is a well-known artist who has a unique approach to the use of Arabic letters. His degree in Archeology from Baghdad University (1962) became an inspiration for his works. He states that “‘Antiquity was an incentive. Instead of following a European example, it seeks inspiration from tradition. I began to be inspired from my heritage and to make use of historical forms as a consequence of my study of archeology.’” (Minkara, Levantine Center.org, 2010).

Another important aspect of his style is the use of color. Although his style is criticized for being merely ornamental, he answered these critiques as follows: “‘As long as I can create unique and aesthetic forms that possess their own terminologies and they are able to carry me back to a national tradition I belong to, I consider that something of a success.’” Azzawi’s works are intended to rediscover the past and transform it into contemporary realities. In his works, he connects the two worlds, both the ancient culture of his country and the modern art world. Shabout suggests that Azzawi does not just produce artworks that are based on his intuitive creativity, but he dedicates himself to understanding the intellectual side of the creative process that is connected to human progress (Shabout, 2007, 122). Azzawi tended to see his

cultural inheritance as humanity's inheritance, which is not bound to geographical limitations.

His former works cover themes such as folkloric, Islamic, ancient and local Arab tragedies as well as ancient myths. Shabout describes the art of Azzawi as a fusion of ancient and modern. Azzawi's *Red Sky with Birds* (1981) painting (see Image 20) is exhibited in *Intervention*. In the publications of Gallery Claude Lemand¹⁸, this particular painting is explained as being the voice of nomads and Bedouins in Iraq with the Arabic scripts, which blend into colorful forms. Dia Azzawi is one of the Arab artists who are well known and accepted in the global art world.

Farid Belkahia (b.1934, Marrakech) was trained in Europe as an artist. Benchemsi (2009) elaborates that in his works, he is inspired from "memory" as a theme as well as historical and cultural landmarks, matching graphic signs, referring to a universal symbolism which joins Berber signs, issues of identity origins, historical and civilizational landmarks (see Image 21). Belkahia also started to use natural local materials such as henna and saffron as a manifestation of his concern in local identity. Farid Belkahia defines himself as a traveler who explores different historical cultures and civilizations. He is one of the strongest advocates for the establishment of native art training in the Moroccan school curriculum. Shabout (2007, 140) argues that by including Arabic calligraphy and Moroccan artifacts in his school curriculum, Belkahia encourages his students to learn the history of local crafts. He aimed to eliminate the Western idea of distinction between the craft and fine art, which was a popular understanding in mid twentieth century.

Belkahia, like Dia Azzawi, is also inspired by tradition and local styles. By

¹⁸ see Claude Lemand Gallery, Dia Azzawi exposition itinerary, <http://www.claude-lemmand.com/artiste/dia-al-azzawi-4?souspage=exposition>

inheriting local techniques and materials, he embraces his traditions and adapts them to the present.

Ahmed Nawar (b.1945, Gharbia) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Art in Cairo and pursued his education as an artist in Madrid. Throughout his career, he has exhibited his works in worldwide museums. His compositions consist of geometrical and technological elements with traditional figures. For example, in his Fayoum portrait series, he used the traditional Fayoum portraits and put them into new contexts. By using different techniques and materials, Nawar proposes a new aesthetic. In the *Intervention* exhibition, Nawar exhibited his formative sculptures, abstract paintings and drawings. His innovative style and modernist approach fits well into the exhibition's theme and it has parallel points with the other artists in the exhibition (see Image 22).

Ibrahim El Salahi (b.1930, Omdurman) began his artistic journey in Sudan during 1950s and he pursued his career as an artist in London. He integrated Islamic, African, Arab and Western traditions to create a unique approach to Sudanese visual culture. El Salahi is one of the first artists to use Arabic calligraphy for artistic purposes in modern paintings. His style can be considered organic and abstract. In 2013, Tate Museum London organized an exhibition under the title 'A Visionary Modernist'. The Curator emphasizes El Salahi's African roots rather than his Arab identity. On the other hand, in the Mathaf exhibition, his Arab roots are emphasized (see Image 23). In his painting 'Behind the Mask', El Salahi created an abstract figurative composition of women in the veil. A symbol of a crescent was placed into the composition. A woman in a veil who holds a white pigeon creates a contrast with its soft drawing to the formative figures and background.

Hassan Sharif (b. 1951, Dubai), During Hassan Sharif's first solo exhibition in Dubai in 1976, he was threatened with expulsion from the country. Today his works are appreciated both in the Arab and global art worlds. Sharif's artistic approach can be explained as explored impressionism, abstract colorism, organization and structuralism. In his recent projects, Sharif developed an interest in the individual styles of the 1950's-60's Arab artists' generation who seek a unique style. He uses simple and natural materials for his installations. He described his aim as "to destroy the continuous monotony of the industrial producer by overloading my work with realism" (Hassahsharif.com). For *Intervention*, Sharif produced a conceptual installation, which is entitled as *Cow belly* (See Image 24). The installation is made of aluminum, copper and iron. The subject of the artwork is deals with a global matter: the critique of consumerism and world hunger. After *Intervention*, this piece was also exhibited in the Singapore Art Museum.

All of these artists were influenced by Arabism during the early stages of their development as artists. Their works became the representation of their search for their own cultural identity and they all emphasize their cultural distinctiveness. Shabout states that the common trait of these artists is that they all challenged many social conventions and they battle with censorship. As a curator of the *Intervention* exhibition, Shabout wants to be a pioneer in the presentation of key achievements in modern Arab art history while providing a space to display this history. The exhibition showcases Arab artists from 1950s-60s and the challenges they faced in creating their distinctive style. Although they were trained in the Western world, they were aware of the impact of their cultural background on their works. Since Mathaf aims to contribute to the history of Modern Arab art, this exhibition strives toward that goal.

Told -Untold-Retold (December 30, 2010 - May 28, 2011)

Twenty-three artists with Arab roots participated in the *Told/Untold/Retold* exhibition. Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, independent curators who are partners in the Art Reoriented Curatorial Consulting Agency, curate the exhibition. This exhibition is the first-ever large contemporary art exhibition in Qatar.

One of the most important characteristics of this exhibition is that the Museum curators for this exhibition commissioned all twenty-three works. The sketches and photographs of the commissioned works were also included in the exhibition catalogue, showing the working process of the exhibition. Curators put emphasis on the patronage of the museum.

Curators chose to use the term “Artists with Arab roots” in order to define participant artists. They argue that this term became applicable for today’s transnational world. While trans-modernity can be an alternative to the post-colonial paradigm, constant transmigration creates an environment, which is rich in diversity of cultural and aesthetic references. While artists might have Arab roots, at the same time they can also share various experiences in different parts of the world.

Curator Sam Bardouil stated that the primary aim for the exhibition is to put emphasis on the formalistic qualities of the works of art. Curators (Mathaf.org) asked the questions “what forms, be they cultural, social, political, or otherwise, can today’s artists identify and incorporate into their work, which earlier artists have not already absorbed?” By asking this question, they pushed themselves and artists to expand their boundaries. In their works artists try to escape from their geographical identity tags and deal with the notion of time.

The exhibition consists of three sections, in which a different artist and time period is represented.

For the curatorial concept, artworks are divided into three sections. The title of the sections and artist divisions are represented as follows:

Told. The Things that Were...

Ghada Amer, Akram Zaatari, Kader Attia, Sadik Kwaish Alfraji, Adel Abidin, Jeffar Khaldi, Khaled Takreti.

Untold. The Things that Could Be...

Lara Baladi, Marwan Sahmarani, Youssef Nabil, Younes Rahmoun, Wafaa Bilal, Lamia Joreige, Walid Raad, Khalil Rabah

Retold. The Things that Are...

Ahmed Alsoudani, Abdelkadeer Benchamma, Mounir Fatmi, Amal Kenawy, Buthayna Ali, Hassan Khan, Zineb Sedira, Steve Sabella

This exhibition can be considered an attempt to experience an exhibition that is free from neo-orientalist approaches. Artists were commissioned for this specific exhibition produced artworks that connect with global thinking in contemporary visual culture. With this exhibition, curators challenged the general expectations for an Arab Museum. Since this exhibition was one of the opening exhibitions, it reflects the experimental and patronage characteristics of the Mathaf Museum.

Sajiil: a century of modern art (December 30, 2010- October 1, 2011)

Sajiil, Mathaf's inaugural exhibition of works was a remarkable, comprehensive cross-section of art from the Arab world produced over the last one hundred years. The exhibition features works by over one hundred artists from the Arab world through more than a century of world-changing developments in art, culture, society and politics. *Sajiil* means 'Act of Recording' and with various artworks from different lands and artists, this exhibition serves as a visual documentation of the region's art history. " *Sajjil ana Arabi* " (Record, I am an Arab) is also a line from a famous poem by Mahmoud Darwish, the iconic Palestinian poet who died in 2008.

The exhibition is publicized as the visual manifestation of Arab modernism. One of the reasons behind the choice of this exhibition topic was the urgent need for research on the question of 'Where does Arab modernism fit in relation to European modernism?' European centered art historical studies put European modernism into the center and treat it as the point of reference. Arab modernity is perceived as hybrid and inauthentic and there was no acceptance of Arab modern art without comparison to European Art.

Sajiil is curated by Dr. Nada Shabout, Wassan al-Khudhairi and Deena Chelebi. In *Sajiil* exhibition curators tell one version of how modern art in the Arab world was formed. Curators state that the *Sajiil* exhibition records the work of artists, restores the agency of artists and negotiates the creation of culture and history. According to the curators, one of the main challenges of this exhibition was to curate places and histories of the vast and varied regions we call the Arab world. How could contemporary artists from the Arab world not be grouped regionally or ethnically

when the world still abides by old formulas and perceptions?

Nada Shabout (2010 : 15) states that this exhibition does not assume that there is a single and unified Arab experience. On the contrary, it admits the multiplicity of experiences but it also realizes the several common moments that justify the collective identity. Artists in the exhibition are from Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Sudan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Palestine and Bahrain. The Majority of the groups are Egyptian or Iraqi nationals. Most of them are trained in Europe and produce modern art.

Artists in the exhibition:

Chafic Abboud Maidan, Hamed Abdalla, Jellal Ben Abdallah, Etel Adnan, Rifaat Ahmad, Yousef Ahmad, Mahood Ahmed, Mariam Abdel Aleem, Mahood Ahmed, Mariam Abdel Aleem, Asaad Arabi, Mohammed Arif, Layla al- Attar, Suad al Attar, Farid Awad, Ragheb Ayad, Dia Azzawi, Marwan Kassab Bachi, Housny el Banani, Ala Bashir, Farid Belkahia, Abdallah Benanteur, Kamal Boullata, Ahmed Cherkaoui, Saloua Raouda Choucair, Daoud Corm, Georges Corm, Salem al- Dabbagh, Brahim Dahak, Saliba Douaihy, Hafid al- Droubi, Mohanna Durra, Inji Efflatoun, Salah Enani, Ismail Fattah, Fuad al Futaih, Abdel Hadi el Gazzar, Cesar Gemayel, Jilali Gharbaoui, Paul Guiragossian, Taheya Halim, Mustafa al- Hallaj, Mahmoud Hammad, Jamil Hammoudi, Faiq Hassan, Kadhém Hayder, Menhat Heimy, Abdul Halim Hemche, Adam Henein, Mohammed Ghani Hikmet, Nazem al- Jaafari, Khalid al-Jader, Saadi al-Kaabi, Youssef Kamel, Louay Kayyali, Hassan Khalifa, Mohammad Omar Khalil, Nazeer Khalil, Rachid Koraichi, Rafik Lahham, Faisal Laibi, Hussein Madi, Nja Mahdaoui, Baya Mahieddine, Sliman Mansour. Hassan Massoudy, Mohammed el-Melehi, Sami Mohammed, Kamel Mostafa, Fateh al- Moudarres, Mahmoud Mokhtar,

Abdullah al-Muharraqi, Nazir Nabaa, Hamid Nada, Omar el-Nagdi, Mohammed Nagy, Rafa al-Nasiri, Ahmed Nawar, Ahmed Nawash, Leila Nseir, Mahmoud al-Obaidi, Ahmad Osman, Omar Onsi, Hamed Owais, Mohammed Racim, Samir Rafi, Khalid al-Rahhal, Abdul Qadir al-Rassam, Nouri al-Rawi, Mohammed Ben Ali Rbati, Georges Sabbagh, Atta Sabri, Mahmoud Sabri, Issam el-Said, Mahmoud Said, Shakir Hassan Al Said, Ibrahim el-Salahi, Nazar Salim, Naziha Salim, Faisal Samira, Jewad Selim, Lorna Selim, Ismail al Shaikhly, Saad Shakir, Hassan Sharif, Laila Shawa, Mohammed Foad el-Shazly, Akrem Shukri, Gamal el-Sigini, Gazbia Sirry, Ali Talib, Vera Tamari, Madiha Umar, Adham Wanly, Wijdan, Seif Wanly, Nazar Yahya, Ramsis Younan, Jassim al-Zainy, Fahrelnissa Zeid.

Sajiil was divided into ten themed categories: nature, the city, individualism, form and abstraction, society, family, history and myth, struggle, *huroufiyah* ('abstract letter form art') and Doha. These themes are chosen in order to emphasize the cultural Arabism and shared identity of the region's people. While the exhibition depicts different stories from the region, as a whole they represent the evolution of artistic thought in the Middle East. (See Images, 25, 26, 27, 28 for exhibition plans)

Nature

While landscape painting was highly popular among European painters in the 19th century, it did not maintain enough popularity among Arab artists. The authors of the exhibition catalogue state that by the time pioneer Arab artists started to receive education in Europe, landscape painting was already being challenged in the mid-twentieth century. However, landscape painting is embraced by Arab artists for the effort to portray their homeland's identity. While Lebanese artists are more interested in depicting nature because of the natural beauty of their homelands, Iraqi artists who settled in Bagdad chose to depict their urban surroundings instead of nature. Another

approach to landscape painting is taken by Palestinians. As a result of the Israeli occupied territories, land is a politically loaded issue. Palestinians used the genre as a statement for their right to exist in the lands they claim, and in doing so romanticized their past and history. Even though the genre was not a very popular one, it became a ground for exercising and experimenting with new techniques for Arab artists. The artwork of Saliba Douaihy, Cesar Gemayel, Laila al-Attar, Rafa al-Nasiri, Mohammed el-Melehi, Shakir Hassan Al Said and Khalid al-Rahal are exhibited in this section. (see Image 29).

City

Cityscapes have been a more popular topic among Arab artists. The urban theme is used for depicting the ideal image of a nation and documenting the transformation of small villages into urban spaces. The city became a metaphor for modern identity. Artists produced works with various techniques and styles such as abstraction, naturalism, topographical painting and architectural documentation.

While the architectural landmarks of the city are depicted, the city's dwellers also became the subject of painting. Artists like Hafidh al Droubi and Inji Efflatoun, Abdul Halim Hemche, Abdulqadir al-Rassam depicted daily scenes in their paintings. On the other hand, artists such as Suad al-Attar, Housny el- Banani, Youssef Kamel, Khalid al-Jader, and Nouri al-Rawi put emphasis on the architecture (see Image 30). The duality of tradition and modernity was visible in these paintings. While religious and historical site depictions emphasized tradition, modern cityscapes highlighted industrialism and cosmopolitanism.

Individualism

Portraiture is one of the most popular genres in Arab art. Although it was forbidden under certain Islamic ruling dynasties, with modernity portraiture became a widespread genre among Arab artists. Portraiture became a high fashion among the middle class, which started to consider such painting to be prestigious. The paintings of Abdul Qadir al-Rassam, Cesar Gemayel, Hafidh al-Droubi, Atta Sabri and Daoud Corm are great examples of self-likeness and realist portraiture production.

Artist like Naziha Salim, Faiq Hassan, Shakir Hassan al-Said, and Georges Sabbagh experimented with different techniques in portraiture. This allowed artists to express themselves with different styles.

Form and Abstraction

As Arab artists started to go abroad for their art education during late 19th and early 20th century, abstraction naturally became popular among them. The artists' main concern switched from the subject to the form. The curators of the exhibit focus on three artists from this genre, Kamal Boullata, Ibrahim El Salahi and Hassan Sharif. They all manipulated and deconstructed the familiar signs and symbols of the subject. Transforming traditional visual culture within a modern context gives the artist a chance to connect their roots to the future. The heritage effect became a dominant theme which can be traced in the works of Taheya Halim's 'The Pyramid' and Kamal Boullata's 'Twelve Lanterns for Granada'.

Society

This section includes a variety of subjects. While there are depictions of daily life in the Middle East, it also investigates the individual connection with the nation. It is

possible to see every aspect of the society, from the countryside to urban life, from ancient to modern and from formal to informal. Hamed Abdalla and Rifaat Ahmad chose to depict figures in their traditional clothes, and while Abdalla insisted on a deconstructive style, Ahmad used a sketchy technique to bring his subjects to life. Music, dance and entertainment scenes are depicted by Ragheb Ayed, Jellal Ben Abdallah, Hafidh al Droubi, Slalah Enani, Hassan Khalifa, Mohammed Ben Ali Rbati, Nouri al-Rawi, Mohammed Racim, and Jewad Salim. These artists' works capture scenes of entertainment and stream them into a collective memory. Another popular scene is depicting the working class people at the market and farm. Paul Guiragossian, Taheya Halim, Faiq Hassan, Menhat Helmy, Saadi al-Kaabi, Louay Kayyali and Hamad Owais embraced this artistic trope. Artists paid attention to the details and intimate moments of their figures as well as their gaze and posture. This has given the viewer a chance to share a moment with them in a timeless space.

Family

The family represents the core element of society. In this section of the Interventions exhibit, the family became a political metaphor rather than its original notion of centrality and warmth of personal bonds. Mother and child represent the ultimate symbol of homeland in Arab art. The mother is the backbone of the family; her fertility and nurturing nature give her significant symbolism. Adham Wanly, Georges Sabbagh, Gazbia Sirry, Mohammed Ghani Hikmet, Khaldi al Jader, Louay Kayyali and Seif Wanly depict the motherhood theme. Another theme that is related to the family is the idea of a couple as the core of the family. The works of Dia Azzawi, Mahood Ahmed, Omar Onsi, Jewad Selim and Faisal Laibi were represented in this section (see Image 31).

History and Myth

Early twentieth century Arab artists tended to explore their historical roots in order to adapt to their nation's modern future. Arab nations considered themselves a part of a religiously oriented collective, the *ummah*, until the early twentieth century. This understanding has been changed with the idea of nation states. In order to justify modern separate states, cultures looked to their ancient roots, the Egyptian looked into the Pharonic culture, the Iraqi artist looked into Mesopotamian culture, and the Lebanese looked into Pharonic style. While each nation looked for a different civilization from their ancient past, they realized that all of these civilizations merged together and achieved a unifying culture.

Second generation artists had a freer approach to their history and region. Rather than placing their art into strict borders, they adapted less conservative manner. In addition to using social history as a reference point, artists also turned to the history of art, the history of Islamic painting, historical miniature painting and mythology. Ghani Hikmet, Mariam Abdel Aleem, Suad Al Attar, Abdel Hadi al Gazzar, Mustafa al-Hallaj, Kadhém Hayder, Mohammed Omar Khalil, Abdullah al-Muharráqi, Fateh al-Moudarres, Mahmoud Mokhtar, Nazir Nabaa, Hamid Nada, Khalid al-Rahhal, and Mohammed Racim are exhibited in this section (see Image 32).

Struggle

This section gathered the works of artists who depicted the struggle of forming a nation since the beginning of the spread of nationalism in the region. Artists used different styles and techniques to represent Arab nationalism. Beirut, Cairo and Baghdad became the centers of nationalist movements, which embraced the cosmopolitanism within culture, in comparison to Europe.

One of the main struggles of the artists in this section was to form an

indigenous nationalistic style. Works in this section include art depicting political issues, such as opposition to imperialism and colonialism, the struggle for independence, the Interwar period of crisis, reactions to the Palestinian struggle and inner conflicts between the Muslim Brotherhood and intellectual left. In this section, works from Dia Azzawi, Rachid Koraichi, and Sliman Mansour focus on depicting the Palestinian struggle. They used exile symbols, arrested individuals, miserable figures as well as hope symbolism. Their works became influential in the creation of a visual culture for the Palestinian struggle.

Other artists that portrayed the nationalism and modernization struggle are Ala Bashir, Abdallah Benanteur, Sabri Mohammed, Jewad Selim and Ibrahim El Salahi (see Image 33).

Huroufiyah ('abstract letterform art')

This section is dedicated to the Arabic letter and text. The use of the Arabic letter in a formalist and abstractive manner is unique to Arab art. It gives Arab art a unique position and approval for its originality. Curators argue that the use of the Arabic letter is well accepted and celebrated worldwide as the ideal Arab modern visual production and as a natural extension of Islamic Calligraphy. *Huroufiyah* is celebrated in the West as the only truly Arabian art form. Since the Arabic language is one of the most significant cultural connections for the Arab people, the use of the alphabet creates a collective visual culture. Earlier artists used calligraphy for marking their specific cultural identity and strengthening ties with Arab nationalism. Later Arabic scripts became the most popular visual element that brought together the culturally varied Arab world from *al Mashriq* to *al Maghrib* (from east to west) Works of

Chafic Abboud, Etel Adnan, Dia Azzawi, Yousef Ahmed, Kamal Boullata, Abdallah Benanteur, Mahmoud Hammad, Rachid Koraichi, Rafik Laham, Hussein Madi, Nja Mahdaoui, Omer el Nagdi, Rafa al Nasiri, Laila Shawwa, Issam el Said, Shakir Hassan al Said, Hassan Sharif, Nazar Salim, Madiha Umar and Wijdan Ali formed this section in the exhibition (see Image 34).

This section of exhibition is praised by art critiques for arranging powerful grouping of works and emphasizing themes in Modern Arab art that show historical continuity (Raza, Art Asia Pacific, April 2011).

Doha

The last section is dedicated to the artists who produced works during their residency in Doha. The residency program is an important way to support the production and development of Arab Art. Artists' residencies give Doha a new characteristic, as the city became the center of creativity. This section includes Dia Azzawi, Ala Bashir, Salem al Dabbagh, Ismail Fattah, Saadi al Kaabi, Mahmoud al Obaidi, Shakir Hassan al Said, Ibrahim el Salahi and Nazar Yahya.

Artists had a chance to get out of their familiar environment and experience the nature of Doha. This change is reflected in their works. Since Sheikh Hassan commissions these works, they are also significant in terms of patronage relations. The Doha Residency Program works specially to create opportunities for refugee artists like Nazar Yahya, Mahmoud al-Obaidi, Salem al Dabbagh, Ala Bahir, Saadi al-Kaabi and Shakir Hassan. These artists were lucky enough to continue to produce art under the patronage of Sheikh Hassan, since it was impossible for them to do so because of the Iraqi occupation. The Doha section especially puts emphasis on the new role of Qatar, a role of patron, home for exiled artists, supporter of Arab art and

art center (see Image 35) .

Wassan Al Khoudari states that after Sajiil exhibition, they were criticized because they used white cube space, which is found to be a highly neutral atmosphere for narrating the story of a century of modern Arab art (Salt Symposium, 2012). Art critic Sam Thorne argues that Mathaf's first exhibition is undoubtedly an important early steps in writing a largely unwritten history, but the Mathaf's approach seems also to testify to a certain unwillingness to take a second stride. While it purposefully sets out not to write a national art history, the allegedly looser boundaries nevertheless often turn out to be more restrictive than they first appear (Frieze Issue 137, 2011). Sara Raza from Art Asia Pacific magazine also argues that although this first attempt of the museum curators was a challenge because they had to work within the constraints of a private collection, Sajiil did not inform the viewers about major art centers such as Bagdad and Cairo and did not put emphasis on the role of the Turkish Ottoman empire and its pan-Islamic influence on the formation of modern Arab art. (Raza, Art Asia Pacific, April 2011). Since Sajiil was the first exhibition of the museum and it was formed in a hurry, it would be unfair to judge the museum's curatorial agenda according to this single exhibition.

Swalif (August 14,2011-October 29,2011) Between Memory and Modernity

The *Swalif* exhibition was curated by Yousef Ahmad, Mariam Helmy and Fatima Mostafawi and Reem Al Thani (see Image 36). The exhibition includes twenty of Qatar's most influential artists and four decades (1960s- 2000s) of art production with a new selection from the collection of the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. The Arabic word *swalif* suggests friendly, informal conversations and stories. The

Swalif exhibition's concern is Qatar's art story and its relationship between modernity, memory and art. The exhibition is retelling the story of the development of the Qatari Art Scene. The artists in the exhibition witnessed the transformation of the nation and society, and the exhibition shows the effects of this transformation reflected in their artworks (Mathaf.org).

While *Saqr* (2006) by Sheikh Hassan Al Thani is the newest work exhibited, the oldest one is *The Bisht Maker* (1965) by Abdulwahed Al Mawlawi (see Image 37). Many artworks refer to Qatar's local history of art. Artworks are inspired from details and motifs of local architecture, traditional Bedouin *sadou* designs, plaster decoration, and the wealth of other traditional crafts in the region. The museum curators hope that this presentation by *Swalif* of a distinctly Qatari modern art movement will help inspire students, artists and residents with new visions of artistic possibilities for the future.

Artist in the Exhibition

Mohammed Ali Abdulla, Yousef Ahmad, Ahmed al-Asadi, Mohammed al-Atiq, Faraj Daham, Wafika Sultan Saif al-Essa, Essa al-Ghanem, Ahmed al-Haddad, Wafa al-Hamad, Ahmad al-Haenar, Ali Hassan, Mohammed al-Jaidah, Saif al-Kuwari, Salman al-Malik, Essa al-Malki, Abdulwahed al-Mawlawi, Hassan al-Mulla, Abdulrahman al-Mutawah, Majid Hilal al-Naimi, Ali Sharif, Sultan al- Sulaiti, Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed, Jassim Zaini.

Cai Guo-Qiang: Saraab (December 5, 2011-May 26,2012)

The *Saraab* exhibition is organized to look forward to Asian Contemporary Art. The exhibition presents more than 50 works, including 17 newly commissioned works by Cai Guo-Qiang, one of the most influential contemporary artists on the international art scene (see Image 38).

On the Mathaf exhibition website, *Saraab* is portrayed as being a bond which is being reestablished between Qatar and China, who for centuries were Silk Road trading partners, through Cai Guo-Qiang's exhibition "Saraab" (Mirage). This statement sheds light on the political agenda of the exhibition. While with this exhibition Mathaf is hosting a world famous artist, it is also strengthening ties with China. Another emphasis is put on the historical ties with China.

This exhibition is also fits well with Mathaf's aim of combining tradition and modernity. The exhibition opened with the staging of one of Mr. Cai's trademark gunpowder explosion events, "Black Ceremony," in the nearby desert. Mathaf commissioned 17 new works from Mr. Cai for this exhibition as a part of Mathaf's art patronage policies. The show by Mr. Cai, created with help from local Qataris, incorporated traditional Qatari *houri* boats and local fabrics. While the local audience has a chance to get involved in the art making process, works of Mr. Cai adapted Arabic and Qatari characteristics (Mathaf.org)

Student art exhibition: Transform (December 15,2012-January 13,2013)

Art education is limited and still in a state of development in Qatar. Since being the capital of art is one of their goals, the Qatar Museum Authority and Mathaf are attempting to reach young people in the Qatar community.

The Mathaf Student Art Exhibition “Transform” is the first initiative that encourages young people to produce art and while giving them the opportunity to exhibit their creations in Qatar. The word “transform” fits well into Qatar’s current situation. The Qatar State aims to transform a wealthy small state into a global center. Sustainability is the key issue for this transformation period. The young people who will be the future of Qatar are asked to rise to the challenge of transformation and submit their artwork to the art competition.

Over five hundred K12 students participated in this competition from various schools in Qatar (see Image 39). This exhibition shows the efforts of the Mathaf Education program in reaching out to the public community. This exhibition targeted the future, as Mathaf aims to encourage the future generations of creative leaders to explore the potential of art to transform society.

Forever now (November 17,2012-June 1,2013)

“Forever Now: Five Anecdotes from the Permanent Collection” is the second exhibition that highlights artwork from its own permanent collection. Fifty-seven works from Fahrelnissa Zeid, Jewad Selim, Saliba Douaihy, Salem Al-Dabbagh and Ahmed Cherkaoui are exhibited. The exhibition explores how the artists’ environments, histories and cultures influence their expressions of belonging, adoption and modernity. Each artist has a different background, but they share a common heritage and geography. Another significant common point of the artists’ work is that they all contribute to the development of Arab art by initiating regional movement.

Fahrelnissa Zeid (1901-1991) was born in Istanbul as the daughter of an Ottoman diplomat. She attended the Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul and then continued her education in Paris. She married Prince Zeid al Hussein of Iraq and lived in Jordan. Zeid is famous for blending Islamic and Byzantine elements with abstract influences in her paintings. During her artistic career, she held more than 50 exhibitions of her works and founded the Fahrelnissa Zeid Institute of Art in Jordan (see Image 40) (Forever Now, 2013).

Jewad Selim (1921-1961) was born in Ankara. He pursued his education in Paris, Rome and London. Selim is considered the forefather of Iraqi Sculpture; he was head of the Iraq Institute of Fine Arts Sculpture Department until his death. He founded the group Modern Baghdad for modern art, which follows Picasso; they believe in the role of the intellectual in art. He also founded the new Baghdad School of Modern Art. Selim combined Mesopotamian and Arabic Islamic Heritage with European art movements. His cultural awareness in the art-making process makes him one of the first Arab artists who searched for the formation of a nationalist artistic identity (see Image 41) (Forever Now, 2013).

Saliba Douaihy (1915-1994) was born in Ehden, Lebanon. His family was a prestigious wealthy family. His artistic life started as an apprentice to painter Habib Srour. He continued his education at *Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris*. From 1936-1945 he lived and worked in Lebanon; during this period he introduced the style of European in Lebanon. In 1950 Saliba migrated to the United States and it changed his artistic style. Although he was exposed to new artists and styles in the United States, he detached himself from specific art movements and

created his unique style. After taking philosophy courses, he dedicated his artistic life to transforming his artistic style by using abstract and minimalist techniques (see Image 42) (Forever Now, 2013).

Salem Al-Dabbagh (1941-) was born and lived in Iraq. After his graduation from the Institute of Fine Arts, he attended to graphic courses in Lisbon. Salem is a member of the Innovators group. During his artistic career he participated in exhibitions in Baghdad, Lisbon, London and Beirut. In his paintings he uses neutral colors such as black, white and grey. He is searching for the perfect color balance in his paintings (see Image 43) (Forever Now, 2013).

Ahmed Cherkaoui (1934-1967) was born and lived in Morocco. His artistic career started with an apprenticeship for a calligrapher before moving to Paris for studies at the *Ecole des Metiers d'Art and Ecole des Beaux-Arts*. After his graduation, he spent a year at Warsaw's College of Fine Arts. In his works, Cherkaoui combined traditional prayer rug motifs and tattoo models with Polish and French avant-garde style (Forever Now, 2013).

All of these artists find a way to combine their various experiences and reflect them in their artworks. Many of them had a chance to study abroad and enhance their visions and perspectives. Each of them tried to create their own style, which can connect them to their roots and adapt them to their modern experiences. This exhibition is parallel to Mathaf's aim of protecting tradition while approaching modernity (see Image 44).

Tea with Nefertiti (November 17- March 31, 2013)

Tim Fellrath and Sam Bardouil curated the *Tea with Nefertiti* exhibition. This is their second exhibition design for Mathaf after the exhibition titled “told / untold / retold” in 2010. *Tea with Nefertiti* is the first exhibition that produced and curated in an Arab Country and toured internationally. After Qatar, the show traveled to *the Institut du Monde Arabe* in Paris, where it was exhibited from April 22, 2013 to September 29, 2013 (see Image 45).

The iconic Nefertiti Bust¹⁹ (see Image 46) is the starting point of this exhibition. They pulled out this pop icon statue from the discussions of ownership and use it as a case to study in their search for an answer to the question ‘’ How have artworks been used to create images and the perception of cultural otherness? ‘’.

The German archeologist Ludwig Borchardt discovered the bust of Nefertiti during his excavations in Egypt. Due to his agreement with the Egyptian government, he confiscated the bust and took it to Germany. Since 1923, the limestone and stucco bust has been exhibited in Germany. Today it is located in an entire room set aside for her in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin. Although Egyptian officials have asked for the temporary or permanent return of the artifact, Germany rejects the proposal for returning the bust, arguing that it also became a part of their own cultural heritage. Inspired by this famous bust, on the 100th anniversary of its discovery, curators are examining how artworks travel "through the eyes of the artist, within the museum or exhibition context, and lastly with the public sphere and mass media by investigating artworks from various time periods and continents.” (Mathaf.org)

¹⁹ Nefertiti Bust museum catalogue info <http://www.egyptian-museum-berlin.com/c53.php> ,

The exhibition is composed of 26 contemporary artists' interactions with Pharonic, Coptic, Islamic archival documents, modernist paintings and the sculptures of European and Egyptian masters. The time frame for the exhibition starts in 1800 BC and continues into the present. From video installations to ancient artifacts, a wide range of media is used for the exhibition. Exhibition sections are organized according to three themes: The Artist, The Museum and The Public.

In the Artist section, the curatorial narrative is focused on the artist's formalistic and expressive concerns. In their interview with Al Jazeera, curators Tim Fellrath and Sam Bardouil point out that The Bust of Nefertiti has been always a subject in the controversial discussions on the ownership issue rather than treating the bust as a work of art. In this section, curators are trying to challenge this approach and focus on the artist's concerns to deal with the bust of Nefertiti by informing the audience about the specificity of the time and location in which the artist functioned. This emphasizes the individuality and creativity of the artist.

In the Museum section, the main concern is the focus on presentation of the artwork. This section investigates the museum institution as a meaning and function builder. While the artwork is prepared for the presentation, not necessarily the exact meaning and functional concern of artwork fits with the artist's intentions and ideas. Bardouil argues that "No curation is neutral" and by that he argues that artworks interact with the ideological narratives of the area in which artifacts are displayed. The moment that an object is placed in a museum, it represents the curator's vision and institution's mission. (Mathaf.org)

Finally, in the Public section, the viewer is faced with artwork which have lost their original context; they go beyond the artist's and museum's intentions and become part of the public discussion. This section aims to look at the unpredictable

transformations of art when it is faced with the public gaze and the clash with commercial, political or ideological ends.

Archival documents supporting the exhibition suggest that the appreciation of Middle East as exotic is rooted in the European archeologists' finds in their colonies and the way they exhibit them according to their ethnicity and geography in their 'Universal Museum'²⁰. This kind of museum development has shaped the trends of periodical, ethnical and geographical classification in Western oriented art history.

Artists in the Exhibition

Ghada Amer, Arman, Mohammad Said Baalbaki, Taha Belal, Adam Broomberg & Oliver Chanarin, Honoré Daumier, Thomas Demand, Maurice Denis, Rudolf Ernst, Mamdouh Muhammad Fathallah, Francis Frith, Georg Frey, Alberto Giacometti, Gilbert & George, Georges Henein, Candida Höfer, Iman Issa, J & K, Emily Jacir, Ida Kar, William Kentridge, Paul Klee, Susanne Kriemann, Little Warsaw, Maha Maamoun, Luigi Mayer, Lee Miller, Amedeo Modigliani, Mahmoud Moukhtar, Vik Muniz, Youssef Nabil, Xenia Nikolskaya, Amy Nimr, Lorraine , O'Grad Grayson Perry, David Roberts, Georges Sabbagh, Tino Sehgal, Nida Sinnokrot, Thomas Struth, David G. Tretyakoff, Kees van Dongen, Van Leo, Ai Weiwei, Ramses Younan, Ala Younis, Bassem Youssef.,

According to *Ibraaz Magazine*, *Tea with Nefertiti* was a heavily curated exhibition. The editor of the magazine found the visual correspondence between Palestinian-American artist Nida Sinnokrot's installation of two bulldozer arms

²⁰ 'Universal museums are dedicated to collecting, cataloguing, and presenting a representative sample of the world's many cultures in a scientific and objective manner, thereby allowing visitors to use their own faculties of reason to make conclusions about the complex world in which they live.' See more in Cuno, James. *Museums Matter: In Praise of the Encyclopedic Museum* , University of Chicago Press, 2011.

pointing up to the heavens and a 1st century AD Terethunis stele of a man repeating the same gesture of arms pointing to the heavens a bit far-fetched, and too much of a historical stretch (Ibraaz, July 2013).

With the *Tea with Neferiti* exhibition, Bardouil and Fellrath are challenging standard museum curation, as the in *Told/ Untold/Retold* exhibition. They succeeded in creating an alternative narrative for both artwork and artist, free from the labels of art historical narratives that have become deeply entangled with cause and effect, geography, identity, and cultural specificity and political and social structures.

Osama Abustita, an independent art critic, praised the efforts of the curators for loaning many works multiple locations and preparing an excellent quality catalogue with good reproductions and extensive bibliographies. He argues, however, that the concept of the exhibition, while not fully explored, it is an elaborated one. Abustita is hopeful for the future of museums in the Arab world to create more critical art exhibitions, such as *Tea and Nefertiti* (arabartex.org,2013).

Conclusion

Qatar aims to be the prominent cultural hub that values tradition while looking forward. Although it established itself as a museum emirate, it is a result of a major transformation of politics in the region. Qataris were not used to visiting museums. According to the number provided by E.M. Balcıoğlu from the Qatar Museum Authority, during first year of the museum they had over 500.000 people visit the museum of Islamic Art. This number becomes highly important if we consider that the total population of Qatar is 1,700,000 (hurriyetdaily.2011). While museum visitor numbers look promising, the expatriate community that lives in Qatar represents the important portion of this number. Although the Qatar Museum Authority and staff of

the museums attempt to attract the attention of local people with free buses, free entrance fees, internet publicity and free educational programs, they still have a long way to go to spread the museum-visiting culture among locals. For the moment, the Qatar art scene is government run and organized in a top down structure. The government controls art museums. The Qatar Museum Authority is the decision-making body for the museums and majority of the members in the authority are from the Sheikh Hassan's family. Since there was no museum culture in the region, museums have detached relations with the local population. While they are attracting the younger generation with education programs and entertainment events, they have limited access to the wider population. This situation is questioning the top down efforts of the museum and raises questions, such as How the Mathaf hopes to practice contemporary museology when the society is not asked what they want or need in a museum? Wassan Al Khoudari explains that during their first year, the museum did not have a concrete program. They did not know what would be effective for their audience so they tried different activities and organized various events. Community engagement is at the center of the museum events. They advanced the museum program according to audience response. Artist encounter events allow them to let the audience collaborate with the artists in order to contextualize the works. The Mathaf does not have a separate permanent exhibition space so the museum staff organizes temporary exhibitions. These new exhibitions attract an audience and encourage people to visit the museum at multiple times. Al Khoudari states that they are trying to design exhibitions that put Qatari art at the center. They hope to attract and target a local audience (Salt Symposium, Turkey, 2012).

Heather Alnuweiri, owner of the Al Markhiya Gallery in Qatar, observes that "The people who buy from us travel abroad frequently, have maybe lived or studied

abroad and have been exposed to this,” referring to contemporary art. “We’re still at a point where locals will come to the gallery and say, “my son can draw like that.” She also added: “The royal family is taking astounding steps by building these museums, but I think it will take a generation before you see major change” (Hartvig, 2012). Her observation is valuable for understanding the private art market in the region.

Appreciating contemporary art comes with education and critical thinking. Despite the royal family’s efforts to create a cultural capital, the Mathaf museum should have found methods of connecting with local society. Although education programs like Family Fridays and child-focused educational programs are great initiatives to start with, the establishment of a museum culture in the society will take a generation. Children who enjoy the educational programs in the museum today will be the future local visitors of the museum.

While museums in the region became an issue of national pride, they are also important to put Qatar on the map. Blockbuster exhibitions, such as the 2012 Takashi Murakami exhibition *Ego* and 2013 Damien Hirst *Relics*, as well as festivals such as the Tribeca Film Festival and Global Art Forum, aim to put Qatar on the world agenda. Museums and Cultural events in the region became the center of Qatar’s global advertorial campaign, and as a result they are criticized for being intensively controlled by the government. The Qatar government is criticized by local journalists for overusing public relation agents and for inviting only chosen global newsagents for exhibition openings and festivals. The royal family is accused of focusing their efforts on attracting an overseas audience and not putting similar attention on the local population. Sharing Arab heritage with the rest of the world became a primary concern, rather than focusing on developing local art circles (Cohen, Tea with Nefertiti at Mathaf, Nafas Magazine, 2012).

The Qatar royal family is accused of using their position as a facilitator of the international art scene to promote themselves. Rather than letting the art scene in Qatar grow naturally according to the needs of its people, these observers say, the country is a handpicking artist who are politically neutral.

On the one hand, although Qatar's method of using art as a PR campaign for the royal family is criticized among local artists, it is appreciated among international artists. An example is the sculpture artist Richard Serra²¹, who built a 24-meter high sculpture (see Image 47) in Qatar. He states that “my large sculptures could only be built where there is faith and values to support the enormous efforts of such an undertaking.” In his interview, he praises Qatar's encouragement and support for art (Qfa.org.qa). On the other hand, Qatar's revival of cultural life is criticized because of its conflicted nature. While there are intensive construction being undertaken for museums and the purchasing of major western artworks, the State emphasizes grass roots intentions, such as exploring Arab cultural heritage, the nomadic past and strengthening the bond with their Middle Eastern neighbors.

The Al Thani family is estimated to have spent at least \$1 billion on Western painting, sculpture and installations. Purchased artwork includes Paul Cezanne's “The Card Players” for over \$250m—a record price for a work of art. Other art was purchased from Francis Bacon, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst, a number of them bought for record prices (Qatar's Cultural Queen, The Economist, 2012). The Al Thani family does not explain the reason for these highly expensive purchases. In addition to these purchases, Sheikha Mayassa also sponsors blockbuster artists such as Murakami and Damien Hirst. Although these exhibitions are increasing the global interest in the region, their high costs cause some to question their benefits

²¹ Quote of Richard Serra from fr.blouninartinfo.com interview. Hartvig, 20 December 2011

for Qataris.

Qatar has become a highly demanded art scene among international artists because of its financial opportunities. With the West facing financial decline and artists struggling with a lack of artistic funds, Qatar has become a land of opportunities for artists. This position also gave Qatar a leading position in shaping the world of art today. Takashi Murakami claims that doing an exhibition in Qatar is a once in a life time opportunity and it would not be possible to do it in another location because of the high costs of such a large scale project.

Another critique of museums in the region is their tendency to promote a specific national identity and single narrative about their history. Exhibitions serve as a collective expression of national pride rather than conforming to one cultural narrative (Davies, 2010). Instead of encouraging new perspectives to evaluate and create works, these institutions aim to build a constructed memory for the new Arab image and culture. Censorship is one of the obstacles for the improvement of contemporary art scene in the region.

E.M.Balcıoğlu argues that “Arab societies are still closed politically because of religious norms; so you are likely to find more stimulating artworks in these countries which are questioning their regimes and social orders” (Hurriyet Daily News, 14 July, 2011). While these kinds of provocative artworks are widely produced abroad, they don’t have a venue within the region. Artist Ninar Esber, who is represented by the Anne de Villepoix Gallery of Paris²², indicates that it is not enough to invest millions in art venues and artworks; the lack of freedom of speech makes the art scene in the region an empty golden shell. While glittering and attractive on the outside, it is empty and meaningless on the inside (NY times, March

²² <http://www.ninaresber.com/index.php>

1, 2012).

Although exhibitions concentrating on Arab art, such as “Interventions” and “Sajiil” in Mathaf, validate the primary concern of Mathaf to establish a history of Arab art, monumental international exhibitions that are supported by QMA such as Murakami Show, the Cai Guo Qiang exhibition and the Bourgeoisie retrospective at the Katara Cultural village are turning the eyes of a global audience to Qatar. These large-scale art events are helping Qatar to become known as a new cultural hub in global media. Its effects at the local level remain to be seen.

Mark Hudson, a journalist from *Telegraph UK*, questioned whom all this activity is actually for. He wondered this as he was wandering through Doha streets and looking at new cultural institutions such as the Doha Film Institute, the Katara Art Center and the Qatar Philharmonic orchestra in Katara Cultural Village. The answer to his question comes from Mayssa Fattouh, the artistic director at the Katara Arts Center. She states that, “It’s about building an audience for art and developing the artists of the future. We’re showing Qatari artists alongside international names. Visiting artists are doing workshops with local artists and schoolchildren, building on the traditional culture that’s already here. It’s an organic, ongoing process.” (Hudson, *Telegraph*, 2013). Targeting the future is the main agenda of the art institutions in Qatar. If the Mathaf and other institutions in the region continue to hold education programs and have consistent community involvement, they are likely to be successful in terms of building an informed audience in the region.

Case Study II: UAE / Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates, holds 9% of the world's oil reserves and 5% of the world's natural gas. Reserves will be sustainable for 150 more years. The existence of this valuable natural resource provides a huge income for the emirates. The government of Abu Dhabi wants to benefit from this income by developing the state. Rather than being a state that is dependent on natural resources, they aim to create a multi-sector economy. In order to reach this goal, the government initiated a project titled "Abu Dhabi Vision 2030." As the name suggests, it is a long term strategic plan for transforming the emirate into a world class economy by diversifying into various sectors, integrating with the global economy, optimizing government resources and investing in physical infrastructure (abudhabi.ae, 2011). The heart of this progressive vision is the creation of a new island, which will put Abu Dhabi on the world map. This island will be a center for various forms of tourism such as sports, business, cultural and lifestyle. The project includes art museums, luxury hotels, shopping malls, exhibition and convention halls and golf courses. The government aims to attract 7.9 million tourists by 2030.

The Saadiyat Island Project (see Image 48) is a highly ambitious project, which is taking place in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. The project's goals and objectives are stated clearly on its official website. The project's main aim is to transform Abu Dhabi into an attractive business, cultural and tourism destination as well as a place to live (saadiyat.ae, 2010). While the island will put emphasis on the unique characteristics of Abu Dhabi, it will be organized for satisfying the demands of the foreign consumer. The island will be spread across 27 square kilometers on the coastline and size of the living area will be 2600 hectares. The Island will have seven

districts: Saadiyat Beach, Saadiyat Retreat, Saadiyat Lagoons, Saadiyat Reserve, Saadiyat Promenade, Saadiyat Marina and finally the Saadiyat Cultural District.

Three major museums are planned for the region. These are the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and finally the Zayed National Museum under the advisory of the British Museum. Each Museum has its own specific role. The Guggenheim collection will focus on contemporary Middle Eastern art, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will be the twenty first century universal museum and the Zayed National Museum will be telling the history of the nation. While all of these museums are similar in terms of their connections with the western world and impressive architecture, each of them represents unique characteristics, ideological statements and intellectual discussions.

Louvre Abu Dhabi

The Louvre museum was founded in the eighteenth century under the influence of a strong nationalist ideology. While the Louvre functioned as the archives of the world through its collection that it possessed in the age of colonization, at the same time it was also designed to glorify the masterpieces of French Art. The Louvre became a part of French national identity and values. The satellite museum project in Saadiyat Island conflicts with the Louvre's foundation ideology. The Louvre Abu Dhabi became highly controversial because of its conflicted nature with the Louvre's representation of French cultural and national identity.

Correspondence for the Louvre Abu Dhabi project started in 2007. From the beginning of the project, it became highly controversial in terms of the characteristics of the agreement. The agreement was signed between the government of Abu Dhabi

and the French Museum Agency and the Ministry of Culture and Communication. The conditions of the agreement require adaptation of the name Louvre, the loaning of works of art and the staging of special exhibitions in Abu Dhabi. As the *New York Times* wrote regarding the situation, ‘‘The Louvre’s Art is priceless but the name is expensive’’, (NY Times, 2006). The whole deal costs around € 975 million for the Abu Dhabi government: €190 million for rotating 200-300 artworks for 10 years, € 165 million will be paid for management expertise for 20 years and € 195 million is paid for the design of the four temporary exhibitions each year for 15 years. In addition to that, Abu Dhabi also agrees to finance an art research center in France and pay for the restoration of the Chateau de Fontainebleau’s theatre, which will be named after Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, one the most nationalist figures in the Abu Dhabi emirates.

Although the cost of Louvre Abu Dhabi is insignificant when compared to the total costs of the Saadiyat Island project, which is € 20.7 million, it has still become a target of opposition groups. This expansive agreement increased the tension between the French government and the French traditionalists. Traditionalists accused the government of selling art of the nation (Poulin, 2009). Instead of presenting the business side of the treaty, the French government preferred to emphasize the international cooperation aspect, friendly ties between the two nations and the role of the agreement in the education of future generations. While these aspects are popular themes in current politics, they do not change the financial nature of the treaty.

According to the *New York Times*, this treatment might also serve as pay back for the United Arab Emirate’s order of 40 Airbus 380 aircraft and the purchase of € 10.4 billion worth of armaments from France (NY Times, March 6 , 2009). While this assumption is debatable, it is also true that the Louvre Abu Dhabi has become the

center of politics between Abu Dhabi and France. Giving the name of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan to the newly opened gallery of Louvre Paris is also significant because it is the first time that a foreign name will be granted to a government-owned cultural institution. This situation can be discussed in terms of the nationalist nature of the Louvre: Is this a sign of the change in ideology of the Louvre Museum or is it a way for the Louvre in Paris' to adapt to the age of globalization? Or is it just related to current international politics?

The Louvre Abu Dhabi introduces a new cultural exchange among museums. The treaty with the Louvre is not a regular loan agreement, but with the involvement of money, it can be pursued as a business treaty. Since international museums are considered a part of world cultural heritage, their collections' cultural exchange through a financial agreement makes a complicated ethical situation. Besides the objects, Abu Dhabi also hired French Museum Agency professionals for building its own collection. Collection formation is a very lengthy process. For the ambitious curatorial plan of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the museum is expected to spend € 400m for the development of a collection. Abu Dhabi aimed to create its collection in a gradual way as not to disturb the art market. Following their purchases will be also be very interesting for observing the creation of a twenty-first century Universal Museum.

Another brand name used in the project of the Louvre Abu Dhabi (see Image 49), is the French Architect Jean Nouvel. Nouvel is commissioned to create a Universal Museum. His conscious choice of the design emphasizes the universal and local aspect of the architecture itself. He was inspired by the water system that runs through Abu Dhabi. For designing the roof, he looked at the traditional roof system in Abu Dhabi culture and while being inspired by palm leaf forms; he also wanted to use the daylight as a function and inspiration. Nouvel's design also emphasizes the free

flow between interior and exterior space, which is a reminiscence of a ‘*suaq*’ or a local market often found in the Middle East. Nouvel’s architectural language blends traditional characteristics and modern architectural design. The building itself is a manifestation of the island, which aims to create a unique traditional place and at the same time meet the demands of the visitors (Skluzacek, 2010). As I stated before, Jean Nouvel was commissioned to create a Universal museum, and although it is certain that his plan is inspired by the local elements and architecture, it lost its notion of universality and is under the threat of becoming an orientalist building.

The curatorial model of the Louvre also emphasizes the universal aspect of the museum. Shared human experiences that transcend geography, nationality and history are the main themes that influenced the gallery organization and the collection will emphasize that the galleries will be chronologically organized rather than with a region based approach. Each gallery will exhibit objects from different regions but from the same time period. While it makes possible for the audience to observe the notion of interaction and mutual relations between different cultures, this approach also makes the museum ‘‘ Universal’’. Galleries will be organized according to four major periods, which are the birth of civilizations, medieval days and the birth of Islam, the classical period from humanism to enlightenment and the modern and contemporary era that starts at the end of the eighteenth century (saadiyat.ae, 2010).

The Louvre Museum picks up a more traditional curatorial model for the gallery organization of the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Their model can be considered a western oriented linear chronological approach. Although this model is also applied in the Louvre Paris, there are more than 200 years between these two museum formations so it remains a major question whether this model is the best option for Louvre Abu Dhabi.

According to Carol Duncan, the Louvre Museum is influential for art museums around the world. Organizing galleries according to national schools is one of these practices that was created by the Louvre Museum. In 1810, during the reopening of Louvre Museum, galleries organized with four significant art history sections, which are Egypt, the Classic Greek and Roman world, the Italian Renaissance and finally the art of France. These galleries emphasized the highest achievements of Western civilization. Most of the museums in Europe and the United States adopted this ceremonial program. Visitors first head to galleries that gather Egyptian, Greek artifacts and Italian Renaissance artworks before being directed to other collections. This arrangement was popular until the 1950s, when the introduction of modern art collections to the museum changed the direction of the museum gallery organization, but this chronological approach continued until recently (Duncan, 1991: 99). While the Louvre Abu Dhabi is promoted as the future of universal museums, using an old school curatorial concept contradicts the publicized agenda of the museum.

Overall, the main critiques of the museum are the use of the Louvre's artwork for commercial values and ideological dispositions. The Abu Dhabi government legitimizes the agreement by stating "Abu Dhabi wants to be a state capital, so we know our deficiencies and we look for the best and try to learn from them" (Reem Al Hashuqi, 2010). Abu Dhabi responded to the discussions about the new type of colonization, and accuses the Louvre of reaching out to extend western influence and culture over the Middle East. Since this is not a forced arrangement and Abu Dhabi is not an under-developed county, the colonization typology does not fit with the project. In addition, Abu Dhabi's mission statement, which is to engage and educate an increasingly diverse international audience through its unique network of museums and cultural partnerships, emphasizes Abu Dhabi's target to become a leading figure

in the global world. Abu Dhabi uses its financial power to attract others, in contrast to forcing cultural impositions (Skluzacek, 2010).

Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

The Abu Dhabi Guggenheim museum project was initiated in 2007 and it is supposed to be completed in 2017. The Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, the Tourism Development & Investment Company and the Guggenheim foundation invested 200 million dollar into the project. The Abu Dhabi Guggenheim museum will be the largest Guggenheim Museum. Besides exhibiting the Guggenheim foundation collection, the museum also aims to form its own collection. The Guggenheim will be assisting the museum in the development of a collection, the design of exhibitions and establishment of educational initiatives

Architect Frank Gehry designed the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (see Image 50). He is also known as being the architect of the famous Guggenheim Bilbao Museum. In his design, Gehry was inspired by sea and desert landscapes. The design of the building represents the Gehry style, with its curvy and boxy metallic structure. Each gallery will differ in terms of size, and they are going to serve different purposes, such as special installations and workshops. Besides its functional design, Gehry did experiments with different architectural techniques, which will be creating harmony with the natural environment. The Guggenheim Museum, with its additional biennale gallery sections, is a candidate for the center of art in Middle East (saadiyat.ae, 2010).

The appearance of the Guggenheim brand in the Saadiyat Project did not create as many controversies as the existence of the Louvre brand. The main reason is their different missions, ideologies and historical past. Guggenheim is the leading name in

museum branding; Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is a new addition to an already existing satellite museum network. The evolution of the Guggenheim is an important example for understanding the nature of museum branding. One of the first initiatives for creating a museum brand is held by Thomas Krens, the director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim foundation. It was no coincidence that he had a master's degree in business administration. Niall G. Caldwell states that "by developing an identity of the institution into a "brand", Thomas Krens started a museum revolution. The Guggenheim museum opened branches in Italy, Germany, Spain and finally in Abu Dhabi. The Guggenheim earned the status of the first global museum brand by its franchising policy. The essence of creating a successful brand is defined as "creating a high level of name awareness and the positive associations which attach to the name and are called to mind by the name"(Caldwell, 2000).

Caldwell argues that, although "brand" belongs to the consumer product of marketing terminology, its meaning should be modified for usage in museum marketing. Museum brands have different ethical and ideological concerns. In the twenty first century, museums became part of the leisure activity market but they have other concerns and missions that differentiate them from the other activity options in the market. In the case of Guggenheim, the main motivation for using the techniques of brand management for the cultural tourism product is to attract many visitors by creating multiple museum destinations around the world. The Guggenheim museums that opened as franchises became highly successful models for this new approach. This franchise model is also being criticized because its museum franchising policy resemblances the McDonalds franchising model (Caldwell, 2000).

Krens, the director of the Guggenheim museums, responds to that critique as "I think certainly there is a branding factor with art organizations such as the

Guggenheim, the Louvre or the Tate. People tend to associate these organizations to a certain profile and certain values. But it is not franchise. You can go to a McDonalds in London, Barcelona or Singapore and the burgers taste the same. You cannot say that about a cultural institution because if you had it experience the relationship would be lost''. While the brand museum established branches in different locations, their names became the emblem of the quality standard but each brand had its own unique identity. Although collections can be similar, audience perception and relation with the collection differs from region to region in accordance with the culture and expectations of the region.

The Guggenheim effect, which is established in the Bilbao project, is known for its function as a tourist magnet and useful contributions to the creation of income for the museum, but it is also important to evaluate its possible contributions to the development of the local and international art scene (Plaza, Tironi, Haarich, Silke, 2009). While the Saadiyat Island Cultural island is designed as an ambitious tourist attraction site, what will be the cultural contributions of the museums to the revival of the art and culture of the emirates?

The Saadiyat Island is following the Bilbao model in terms of using powerful architectural imageries and brand names to transform a city into a cultural center. On the other hand, the Saadiyat project has huge differences, as Abu Dhabi did not just establish a cultural place but they are recreating a fantasy city with other major attractions such as the NYU Abu Dhabi, five-star hotel chains, various entertainment outlets and the creation of a business district. When we look at the big picture, the cultural island does not seem like the center of the transformation of the city, but a colorful addition to the prestigious image of the city.

Zayed National Museum, Abu Dhabi

Project of the Zayed National museum was started in 2009 and it's opening will be around 2014. The name of the museum comes from the former president Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The museum will be about the history, culture and economic growth of the Emirates. Twelve architects competed for the winning design and Lord Norman Foster's design was accepted (see Image 51). Foster was inspired by the Sheikh Zayed's passion for nature and falconry. Galleries are designed as falcon wings and the exterior of the building is covered with forestry. In the design Foster also tried to reflect the local culture and traditional Arabic design elements. The complex includes a conservation lab, library, theatre, auditorium, performance spaces and galleries.

In 2009, Abu Dhabi established an agreement with the British Museum for providing expert curatorial and operational advice and counsel for the development of the Museum. The queen of England was also part of the architectural foundation ceremony. Collaboration with the British Museum also demonstrates close political relations with the United Kingdom. Since the British Museum is also a museum dedicated to a nation, the mission statements of the future Zayed National Museum parallels the British Museum. This partnership can be highly effective for the creation of a national museum (Saadiyat.ae, 2010).

Although the mission of the museum is clearly obvious, dedicating a national museum to a specific figure is very interesting. Since the United Arab Emirates is a state formed by different emirates, Zayed as the national figure is an interesting choice for representing the whole nation.

Using prestigious brand names from the western world secures the success of

the Saadiyat Island Cultural district, their universally accepted names give a guarantee that the products or experience offered will be of a certain quality. While Abu Dhabi is playing safe by hiring advisors from well-known brands, they are also emphasizing the uniqueness of the island through their worldwide advertisements by stating that Abu Dhabi and the wider emirate are a destination for travelers who seek an authentic experience and wish to immerse themselves in a resilient and largely unchanged culture.

By providing familiar and trustworthy names, Abu Dhabi's cultural district aims to attract foreign travelers to an authentic but a familiar environment. Caldwell emphasizes that museums should know more about their visitors and what motivates their decision to visit particular institutions (Caldwell, 2000). Guessing the visitor profile of the Saadiyat Island Cultural district is a real challenge. While they aim to have 150.000 settlers in the new island and also attract tourists, who will these people be? What will their interests be and what will be their expectations from these famous brand museums? Since the island is still under construction, it is only possible to evaluate the projects from their representations' and advertisements. These sources allow us to look at these museum projects as case studies, which can be the first models for future museums. Although it is not possible to predict the success of these projects, even the intentions and aims indicated in the planning process give us a lot of clues about the future of museums in the region.

Conclusion

Case studies: Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum & Guggenheim Abu Dhabi

The Mathaf Modern Arab Museum and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, two contemporary art museums in the Arab Gulf, aim to be the faces of contemporary art production and exhibition in the region. In addition to becoming touristic attractions, they increase the global prestige of the states of Qatar and UAE. Although the reasons behind the formation of these two museums are similar, they are following different paths in their journeys.

Qatar and UAE gained their independencies in the 1970s. Their history is full of political struggles. Foreign powers used to apply economic control in these regions. Their destinies changed after the discovery of oil in the 1960s. In the national day video of UAE, Director of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority describes the oil income as “just enough to build a nation from scratch”. The Abu Dhabi government is determined to use the oil-generated income for national progress. Since oil is not a renewable source, these states aim to create a multi-sector economy to provide financial sustainability.

Tourism is one of the key sectors in their development plan. Cultural tourist attractions increase their prestige in the global arena. Since their main goal is to become a global tourist destination, the quality of the museum projects is highly significant. They seek to reach global standards to attract global visitors. In addition to the local population, these visitors are the main target audience of the museum. Thus, the main policies of these destinations include inviting western professionals and relying on their experiences and practices. Through these projects, these states became highly influential in the global art world by hiring a large amount of

professionals, buying, lending and borrowing artworks. Not just in terms of collecting but also with highly skill career options, these nations benefit from the brain drain that is occurring in the world's cultural centers. Although new job opportunities and the existence of new possibilities can be considered as positive both for the art world professionals and the region's art scene, it has increased the dependency and favored western professionals over local ones in the region. Dependency on Western-educated professionals, especially in the case of Guggenheim is highly criticized in the art world. Collections are being planned in the west while the money comes from the Arab gulf region's oil income. Since foreigners shape the museums, these museums can end up being another example of cultural colonialism. Nicolai Ouroussoff pointed out that it's not the first time that the Arab world is dependent on western expertise. During the 1950's and 60's western consultants, experts and professionals poured into the Middle East and it created mass divisions between privileged elites and a struggling lower class (Ouroussoff, NY Times, Nov 2010).

The motivation behind the museum formations is to become a cultural capital of the region. Since neither of the states had a museum tradition and they have underdeveloped art historical traditions, they put a lot of effort positioning their nations on the cultural map of the global art scene. To be on the radar of the global art world, Qatar and UAE invest in grand art museum projects with star architects and they fund blockbuster exhibitions.

Since both Qatar and Abu Dhabi are in the process of rebuilding their infrastructure and designing their city plan, they created separate spaces for cultural and education centers. In Qatar, this section is called the Education city and in Abu Dhabi, it is the Saadiyat Island Cultural district. In the Education city there are six American universities, a British, a French and a Qatari university. These are,

Virginia Commonwealth University, Weill Cornell Medical College, Texas A&M University, Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Northwestern University, HEC Paris and Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies. Similar foreign university partnerships exist in Abu Dhabi such as NYU Abu Dhabi, Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and University of Strathclyde Business School Abu Dhabi Campus.

The existence of these satellite universities increases the foreign student and educators in these countries and eventually makes them the target audience of these new museum formations. While these universities attract international students, they also provide Western education to native students in the region. The foundation of these satellite universities has a similar agenda as the museum franchises in the region. To reach the global standards in cultural and educational sectors, both Qatar and UAE hire western professionals and benefit from their experiences.

In terms of targeting the local population, the Mathaf museum organizes education programs, school competitions and local artist talks. The Mathaf also puts relatively less interest in Western expertise while the Abu Dhabi Guggenheim puts emphasis on the brands rather than the formations. Qatar aims to increase sustainability for the development and research of contemporary art. Promotion of college level art programs and museum research center are evidence for this goal. Emin Mahir Balcıoğlu, president of Qatar Museum Authority, states that Qatar wants to be a cultural society, which will depend on its population by 2030 (Hurriyetdaily.com, July 2011). A new bourgeoisie is appearing in the nation. Since 1995, the state is planning the transformation of the society to become an information and knowledge society. While new institutions rely on Western expertise, the state invests in the education of local professionals who are going to run these new modern

institutions.

One of the major challenges in the Arab Gulf, in terms of attracting a local audience, is to create an appreciation of modern and contemporary art, which requires education and familiarity among Arab public. Since The Mathaf and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are the pioneer contemporary art museums, they are obliged to attract and educate the local audience in order to provide sustainability and local participation in the museums. In Abu Dhabi, Verena Formanek, senior manager of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, stated that they are educating the local audience at the Manarat Al Saadiyat²³. In their education they aim to promote new museums and familiarize people with visual arts (theguardian.com, May 17, 2012). Talks, panels, exhibitions and workshops are organized in the Manarat Al Saadiyat.²⁴ Talks and panels cover topics such as museology, modern art, artistic dialogues, art documentation etc. In addition to the talks and panels, there are practical art workshops for children and young adults. The Manarat Al Saadiyat functions as an education center which prepares the local audience for the new museums opening in the region.

The Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum also regularly organizes workshops, talks and panels, which are targeting local audience. Besides artist talks and panels related to the exhibitions, there are also art workshops, community gatherings, reading circles, student guide programs, teacher education programs, curatorial dialogues and internationally partnered projects. The variety of talks, events and

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Manarat Al Saadiyat literally means 'the place of enlightenment'. It is a 15,400 square meter visitor center, in Saadiyat Island, UAE.

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To see the detailed schedule of Talks & Panels look
<http://www.saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae/en/cultural-programme>

workshops is significant for Mathaf's effort to educate and connect with the local audience.

Both the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and the Mathaf of Qatar are aware of the fact that they have a disconnection with the local audience. Local people have the lack information and appreciation for modern and contemporary art. To change the perception of the local audience, both of the museums invest in education. Although these museums hold planned education programs, it will at least take a generation to see the result of these efforts. Doherty argues that while these collections and museums are an important investment for the future generations both economically and culturally, these states also need to encourage private sectors, galleries, collectors and patrons to revive a cultural life in the region (Doherty, 2012). This top down approach might be a necessity in the beginning and it can be an effective initial strategy but the existence of important cultural institutions is just the beginning. Communities should embrace the art culture and make it part of their lives. Otherwise these museums will remain as a showcase of the royal families' treasure hunt.

Regarding the management, both the Mathaf and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are under the state control. The Mathaf Modern Arab art museum is one of the museums that are under the control of the Qatar Museum Authority (QMA). The QMA was founded in 2005 to manage the resources of all museums in the state of Qatar. The majority of the members of the Board of Trustees are from the royal family. Since the royal family members are part of this authority, each museum has vast support from the state as well as control. The management team of the museums depends on the Western expertise and the museum tradition for establishing the museums in the area. Some of the Western professionals in the QMA are, ex-Chairman of Christie's International, Edward Dolman as Executive Director and

Acting CEO, ex Director of Global Distribution in Al Jazeera Network, Phil Lawrie as Chief Commercial Officer and Kimberly French as Chief Marketing Officer.

The Mathaf collection used to be a private collection, which was donated to the Qatar Museum Authority. The collection was formed in order to locate the place of Arab art in art history. The collection is based on the vision of one person who happens to be H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al Thani. Although he donated the museum to the state he still exists as a chairman and effective participant in decision-making. On the other hand, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi is under the control of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority. Unlike the Mathaf's organically gathered collection, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection is managed by the Guggenheim foundation.

In Qatar, The Royal Family invested 1 billion pounds in modern and contemporary art in four years. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi does not have as big a budget as Qatar. A private supporter does not support the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection and the budget belongs to the government. Qatar's art purchases and art event organizations are globally followed. While artists who have the support from the family to actualize a grand project like Murakami, Richard Serra and Damien Hirst praise their patrons, the local artists because of their focus on overseas famous artists rather than local Arab artists, criticize the royal family.

The Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum collection was started by H.E. Sheikh Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al Thani under the supervision of Arab Gulf artist Youssef Ahmed. The International Guggenheim foundation rather than the local experts will establish the curatorial vision of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum. Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority states that, 'Abu Dhabi wants to be a state capital so we know our deficiencies and we look for the best and try to learn from them'. This

is their justification for depending on Western expertise. UAE is in a process of forming cultural centers and the lack of museum tradition in the region, necessitated the government to acquire Western expertise for museum formations. Although the government officials justify this argument, the relevant attitude can cause alienation of the local artists in the region from the museum projects.

Guggenheim branding and expansion is based on financial concerns. According to Krens, the expansion of the Guggenheim has been indispensable in responding to the changing needs of art museums. Opening new branches increases the popularity of the museum at a global level, attracts an international audience, strengthens the image and prestige of the brand and finally attracts diversified international funds (Brenson, 2002, 6). Ersoy argues that to achieve these goals, the Guggenheim adopts economies of scale in administration, programming, and finances; the Foundation decentralizes the management of its permanent collection, finds international partners to secure more funds, delegates its administrative and programming responsibilities to its partners, and thereby assumes the contended role of being a pioneer of the 21st century art museums (Ersoy, 2011,8).

Using prestigious names of the Western art worlds such as Louvre, British Museum and Guggenheim is a policy for securing the success of the planned museums in the region. These brand names suggest the symbols of the global quality of cultural experience. Abu Dhabi advertised the experience as “an authentic experience in an unchanged culture within the buildings of the future and brand names create a familiar environment for the global audience” (tcaabudhabi.ae, 2011).

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has been severely criticized for being dependent on the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York for decisions regarding the administration as well as programming. Ersoy summarized the critiques

against the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao as follows; it has absorbed a large percentage of local financial resources allocated for arts and culture; it has failed to interact with local artistic communities. It has adopted the logic of gentrification, as the decision of this investment originated from Bilbao's decay and ruination; and last but not least, it has been promoted through its architecture and media-driven images rather than the art collection and museum programming (Ersoy, 2011, 9).

Is the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi going to share the same fate as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao or is it going to evolve its own collection and depend more on local experts rather than a Western oriented approach? Since the collection has not been unveiled completely and the purchases as well as the members of the collection advisory body are also not yet revealed, these questions can be answered only after the opening of the museum.

While the Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi both aim to focus on Middle Eastern art, they have different curatorial concepts. The Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum collection aims to contribute to the history of Modern Arab Art and increase the participation of Arab art in art historical studies. Al Thani focused on modern art in his collection after the museum was handed to the Museum Authority. The Mathaf also started to be interested in collecting contemporary art. One of the main goals of the Mathaf is to connect the past with the present. H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani states that ‘art can only truly flourish if the artists, their collectors, curators and audiences are able to connect today's activities to yesterday achievements’. (mathaf.org.qa). As in the statement, focusing on the past and glorifying the present achievements are covered by Mathaf's curatorial concept.

The collection includes artworks by Arab artists from various affiliations,

schools and styles. Mathaf exhibitions such as *Interventions*, *Sajiil: A Century of Modern Art*, *Swalif: Between Memory and Modernity* and *Forever Now: Five Anecdotes from the Permanent collection* are aiming to point out the significant artists of the Arab world. These exhibitions can be considered as a contribution to the attempts of writing the history of modern Arab art. In these exhibitions, artists like Fahrelnissa Zeid, Jewad Selim, Saliba Douaihy, Salem Al Dabbagh and Ahmed Cherkaoui are grouped together because of their common attempts of connecting themselves with their roots and at the same time adapting themselves to modernization. Youssef Ahmed and Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed are cherished because of their visualization of transformation of the society from a traditional to a new modern one. Another group of artists that include Dia Al Azzawi, Farid Belkahia, Ahmed Nawar, Ibrahim Salahi and Hassan Sharif became significant because of their artistic influence from Arab ideology. In their artworks, they use Arab elements such as Arabic calligraphy and Arab visual culture to create their distinctive styles. They have a common agenda of rediscovering the past and transforming it to today. *Sajiil: A century of Modern Art*, an exhibition which is divided into ten categories: nature, the city, individualism, form and abstraction, society, family, history and myth, struggle, *huroufiyah* and Doha can be considered as an attempt to classify the history of Arab art under certain topics. These topics serve as guidelines for understanding the general choices for artwork subjects.

What makes the Mathaf Museum different from other art museums in Arab world is its pan-Arab cultural identity. Although various Arab states such as Egypt, Iraq and Algeria have modern art museums, their collections are dedicated to the art of the citizens of their country, and they did not have embraced a pan-Arab identity. Pan-Arab cultural institutions were established abroad rather than in Arab countries.

Arab cultural projects like the Arab British Center London, Insititute du Monde Arabe Paris, Casa Arabe Madrid and the Arab American National Museum are great examples of these formations. Deena Chelebi stated that Mathaf is unique because it did not promote a specific sense of national identity of a single state but it emphasizes individual creations within wider artistic and social framework (Chelebi, *Articulating Mathaf*, 2010).

While the Mathaf Modern Arab Art Museum puts emphasis on the Arab aspects of the mission of the museum, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi has a more transnational approach in its curatorial concept. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi collection was partially unveiled in the 2012 Abu Dhabi Art fair. Works of six artists were exhibited in the panel. These artworks are a poster work by Jacques Villegle (French mixed media artist), an installation by Rachid Koraichi (Algeria), a sculpture by Monir Farmanfarmaian (Iran), a glasswork by Ai Weiwei (China), a tapestry by El Anatsui (Ghana) and a sculpture by Subodh Gupta (New Delhi). The Richard Armstrong collection director argues that this selection is indicative of the museum's collection. Rather than focusing a certain nationality or geography, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi will include a broad range of artists from different parts of the global world.

In May 2013, more works were revealed from the collection which were created by El Anatsui, Chant Avedissian (Egypt) Feng Mengbo (Chinese), Youssef Nabil (Egypt), James Rosenquist (American), Heinz Mack (German), Marwan (Lebanese), Hassan Sharif (UAE), Monika Sosnowska (Polish) and Yang Fudong (Chinese). The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection is defined as follows: Popular culture & Mediated Image, Abstractions, History & Memory, Narrative, System, Process, Concept and Global Perspectives.

Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority said; ‘’ The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, through its transnational perspective on art history, pioneers a novel, visionary model that will redefine the art historical canon. Through its collection, exhibitions, and educational programs, this museum will contribute to expand the critical histories of contemporary art in 21st century and foster appreciation of outstanding creative achievements, amongst the regional and international audiences’’ (Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Event Schedule, May 2013).

There are two main controversial criticisms of these museums. One of them is the mistreatment of migrant workers and the other one is the issue of political and religious censorship of artworks. According to the Qatar National Research Fund survey in 2012, there are some 1.35 million foreign nationals working in Qatar. These workers make up some 94 per cent of the total workforce in the country. They don’t receive healthcare insurance from the government and work in bad conditions with substandard salaries.²⁵ These workers were promised big salaries and good conditions before they joined the workforce in construction projects in the Arab Gulf but once they arrive their passports are taken and they are forced to work with minimum wages, which are not paid on time and they have bad housing conditions. Human Right Watch reported the situation of foreign labor construction sector in advance for the 2020 World Cup. Similar problems also exist in Abu Dhabi. In 2007, Human Right Watch sent a private letter to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the French government and the Louvre Museum, which signifies their concern about the

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For more info about the exploitation of migrant construction workers
check: [://www.amnesty.org/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/) and <http://www.hrw.org/middle-eastn-africa/qatar>

exploitation of migrant workers in the UAE. HRW asked these institutions to require that its UAE partners do not withhold workers' wages, do not confiscate passports, document and publicly report work-related injuries and deaths, and forbid recruiters from unlawfully collecting recruiting, travel and visa fees from workers. Also they added that they should establish an independent and transparent oversight committee to monitor labor practices at the Abu Dhabi Louvre (hrw.org, 2007). Neither Qatar nor UAE and the art institutions of Guggenheim and Louvre remain silent about these injustices.. More than 130 international artists, curators, writers signed the boycott pledge which was initiated on March 17, 2011. They demanded the protection of rights of the workers and refused to be part of the projects that abuse human rights. Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch said, "If the Guggenheim and TDIC fail to address the artists' concerns, the museum may become better known for exhibiting labor violations than art." (Hrw.org, March 18 2011)

On October 2013, the “52 weeks of Gulf Labor Group”, a protest group who campaigns about the situation of labor in the Gulf was started artists including Doug Ashford, Yto Barrada, Doris Bittar, Sam Durrant, Matthew Greco, Hans Haacke, Thomas Hirschhorn, Lynn Love, Guy Mannes-Abbott, Naeem Mohaiemen, Walid Raad, Oliver Ressler, Andrew Ross, Jayce Salloum, Ann Sappenfield, and Gregory Sholette. This is the main group reacting to the mistreatment of immigrant workers in the region.

The 52 weeks of Gulf Labor Group produced a poster in the Venice Biennale, which is a call for one year of interventions for workers and their rights in the construction of the Guggenheim, Louvre and other institutions in Abu Dhabi. The movement was shaped around the slogan ‘Workers are also artists and artists are also workers. We stand together in solidarity in our dignity in our rights in our

strikes''(gulflabor.org). The lack of humane, working and living locations of the migrant workers in the Gulf region attracted the attention of the world's media. While the state has been highly criticized for creating a huge gap between the workers living conditions and the luxury aspects of the projects that they are working on, Louvre and Guggenheim foundations also became the target for negative press. Although the government officials do not accept the acquisitions, The Louvre and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are criticized for remaining silent and continuing the constructions of the buildings. The situation of migrant workers damages the international image and prestige of the museum projects.

The second controversial issue for the region's art scene is about censorship. Before the Arab Uprisings ²⁶, sensitivity on nudity and religious subject existed in the region. With the rise of political movements in the Middle East, political censorship also became an issue. The chief curator of Sharjah Biennale, Jack Persekian, was dismissed from his position in 2011 because of a single artwork, which has an offensive poem²⁷. His dismissal increased the questions about the censorship in the region. Is it possible to become a cultural center by controlling each artwork and eliminating the unwanted ones? Can the art scene be flourished enough under the treat of censorship?

Especially in the case of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, everyone is curious about the attitude of the Guggenheim on censorship. Rita Aoun Abdo, director of Saadiyat's Cultural Center, argues that the museums should grow within the local

26 Arab uprisings refer to demonstrations and protests (both non-violent and violent), riots, and civil wars in the Arab world that began on 18 December 2010 in Tunisia

27 Mustapha Benfodil's installation *Maportaliche / Ecritures sauvages* (It Has No Importance / Wild Writings, 2011)

culture, “ otherwise they are not viable. They are based on real dialogue, not on shock or controversy. How would you define censorship? Is it based on local or international values? Censorship has always existed and it’s just the respect of what are the values of the place ‘’ (Theguardian.com, May 12, 2012).

On the other hand, William Wells, director of the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo, argues that the Guggenheim did not have a signed commitment from Abu Dhabi that there would be no censorship, although the project managers said there was an understanding. The Arab Spring triggered the Emirati authorities concern about political censorship. Since the collection has grown through private consultation there is a lack of transparency on the Guggenheim project. This situation makes the global audience wonder about the fate of the collection. How will the Abu Dhabi government and the Guggenheim officials reconcile on the issue of censorship?

For the issue of censorship, Jean Paul Engelen, Dutch director of QMA, states that ‘’ its not about making the most thought –provoking academic theory’’, it is about starting a conversation and widening horizons. We are introducing a new language, we don’t have to start with the swear words. In Europe we did not go from Michelangelo to Damien Hirst in a decade (Theguardian.com, May 16, 2012).

In relation to the Damien Hirst exhibition, the QMA spokesman stated that “we are planning to launch an extensive education program to introduce Hirst and his work to Qatar’s community. Curatorial decisions will obviously take into consideration the cultural sensitivity of our community towards some works that may appear offensive or repulsive” (Theguardian.com, May 16, 2012).

The nature of contemporary and modern art is normally perceived as shocking and borderless in global art circles. Artists use art as a powerful tool for making their statements. The idea of censorship in contemporary art is evaluated as an intervention

into the very nature of art. On the other hand, both Qatar and Abu Dhabi agreed about their nation's lack of art history studies and perceptions. Rather than a now or never approach, the Gulf States have taken a small step by opening the gates of their nations to the global art scene. While their grand projects increase public expectations, these states still need time to accept and adapt to the boldness and reactionist nature of contemporary and modern art. They need to have experiences with the global art scene. Founding a great museum, opening galleries and organizing blockbuster events will help but plunging into the global art scene will create conflicts in time. Rather than focusing on the issue of art censorship, curators and museum officials are looking at the dialogic aspects of these museum formations. While these museums aim to connect the two worlds, tradition and modernity, they should also have a sensitivity to the community in order to encourage the locals to be part of the new art scene rather than feel isolated from it.

The Mathaf Museum, compared to the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi seems more promising in terms of sustainability. The Qatar government also invests in art schools and artists' studios, in addition to museum projects. Rather than building a museum building full of masterpieces, the government has made multiple attempts to build an audience. This awareness gives more hope for the future sustainability of the cultural life of the region. Mathaf museum is also a product of top-down reforms within the region like the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi but its collection is gathered by the ruling family using a more patient and gradual approach. Patrons started their collections in 1980's before a market structure existed and before the art boom.

The Mathaf is a functioning museum and it is following a certain agenda. The museum already became a gathering place for Arab artists and serves as a base for the contemporary art scene of the Arab world. Being a pioneer gives the Mathaf an

immense responsibility. To succeed with its pan-Arabic agenda, which no longer is a popular political rhetoric, the museum needs to be open and brave while looking at the past of the regions and trying to connect it with today and the future.

In the case of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, there are many questions to be asked such as what will be the position of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi in the existing art world in the Middle East? Is it going to be something more intellectually stimulating than just a tourist boom? How will the local people interact with the museum? How will Abu Dhabi become a cultural center when it has no history of museums, artist community, collection, or patrons besides the royal family and its passion for contemporary art? According to the Qatar National Vision 2030 report, “Qatar is at the crossroads of embracing global influences whilst trying to retain its cultural identity”, which summarizes the ideology behind the developed projects.

The countries of the Arab Gulf have a shared history, religion and a future agenda. The Gulf countries became a test case for the globalization of art as an economic project. Rather than an organic evolution, these cities are built from scratch; they rewrite their past and attempt to write their future. Their main goal is to become the cultural center of the Middle East without having a tradition of modern museology. They are depending on the Western expertise while they are struggling to be cultural leaders. The future of these museums is not clear but it will, without a doubt, be interesting to follow.

Images



Image 1 Map of Arabic Gulf Peninsula



Image 2 Image of Qatar from Lonely Planet Guide Book



Image 3 Gulf Cooperation Council Map



Image 4 Arab World Map



Image 5 Sheikha Mayassa during her VCU Commencement speech



Image 6 Kuwait National Art Museum



Image 7 Contemporary Art Museum of Bahrain



Image 8 Mathaf: Museum of Modern Arab Art



Image 9 Sharjah Art Museum



Image 10 Guggenheim Abu Dhabi



Image 11 Qatar National Museum by Jean Nouvel



Image 12

Photography Museum by Santiago Calatavra



Image 13 Islamic Art Museum of Qatar by I.M.Pei



Image 14 Mathaf : Modern Arab Art Museum of Qatar

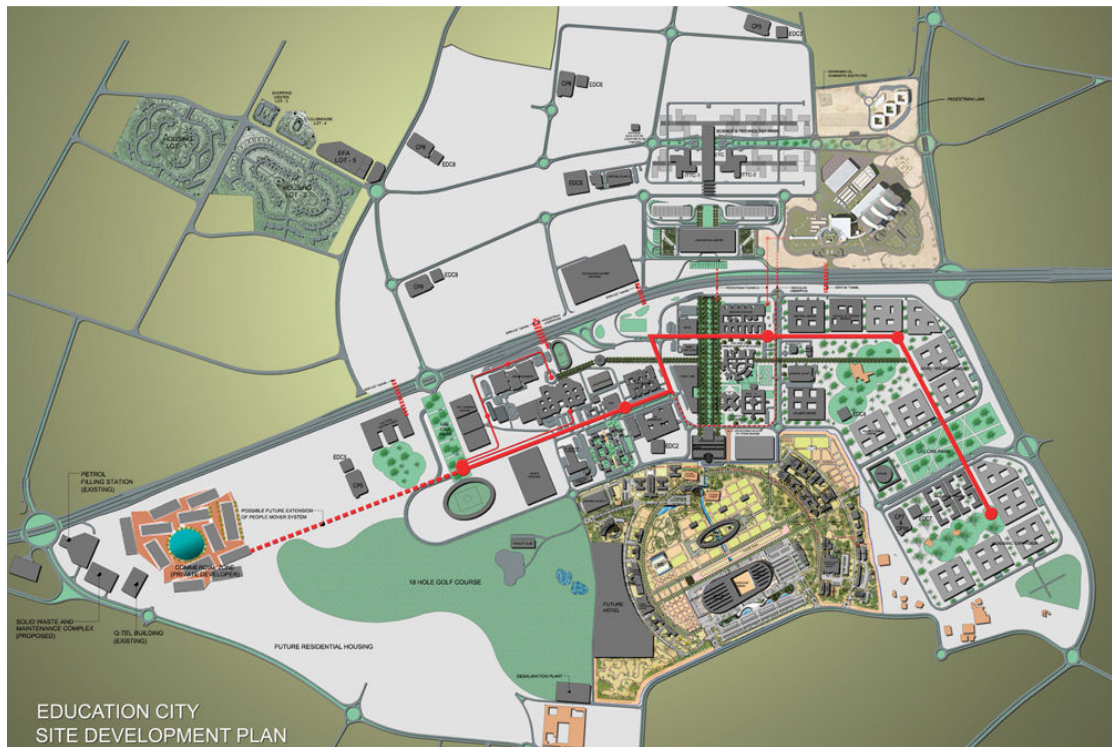


Image 15 Qatar Education City Plan



Image 16 Mathaf Instagram contest

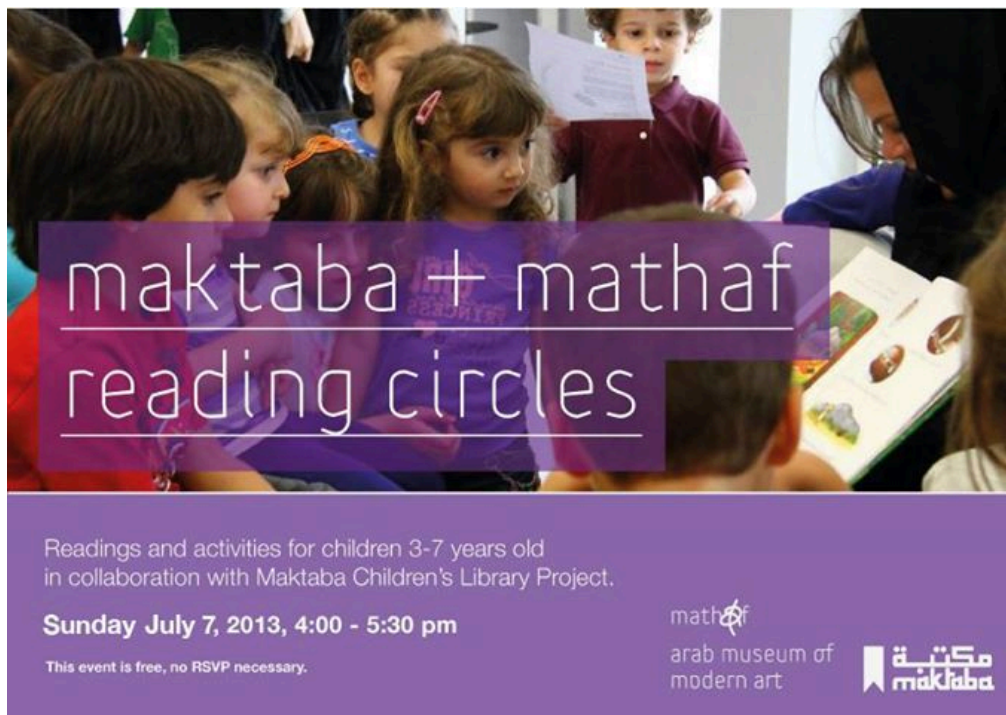


Image 17 Mathaf Child Education Program Poster



Image 18 Mathaf Voices Program Poster



Image 19 Opening Exhibitions of Mathaf



Image 20 Red Sky with Birds (1981)



Image 21 Farid Belkahia, *Intervention*, Mathaf. Photo Credit Haupt & Binder



Image 22 Ahmed Nawar, *Intervention*, Mathaf. Photo Credit Haupt & Binder

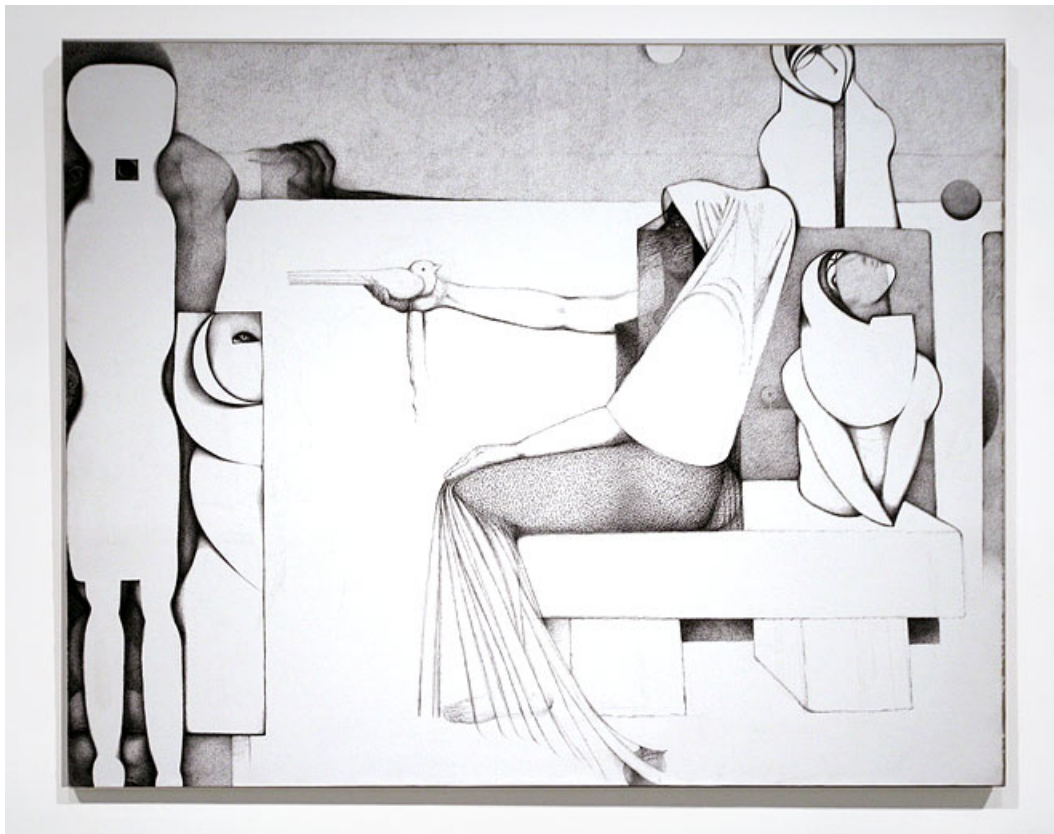


Image 23 Ibrahim Al Salahi, *Behind the Mask*, 2010, Intervention, Mathaf



Image 24 Hassan Sharif, *Cow Belly*, Iron-Aluminum-Copper, 2010 Intervention, Mathaf, Photo Credit Haupt & Binder

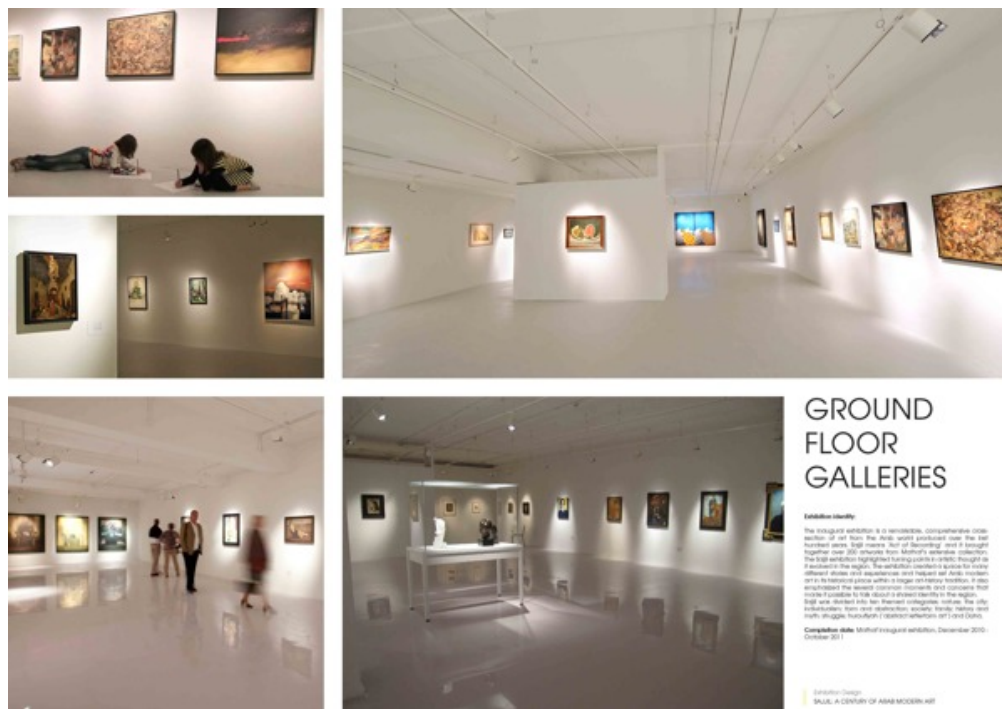


Image 25 Sajiil Exhibition, Ground Floor Galleries, designed by Reem Al Thani



Image 26 Sajiil Exhibition, First Floor Galleries, designed by Reem Al Thani



Image 27 Sajiil Exhibition, Form and Abstraction Galleries, designed by Reem Al Thani



Image 28 Sajiil Exhibition, Doha Gallery, designed by Reem Al Thani



Image 29 Sajiil Exhibition, Nature Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 30 Sajiil Exhibition, City Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 31 Sajiil Exhibition, Family Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 32 Sajiil Exhibition, Struggle Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 33 Sajiil Exhibition, History & Myth Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 34 Sajiil Exhibition, Hourifiyyah Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 35 Sajiil Exhibition, Doha Section, Mathaf photo credit Nafas Magazine



Image 36 Swalif Between Memory and Modernity Exhibition Poster



Image 37 Abdulwahed Al Mawlawi, The Bismaker, 1965 , Swalif Exhibition, 2011



Image 38 Cai Guo-Giang: Saraab Exhibition Poster, Mathaf, 2011-2012

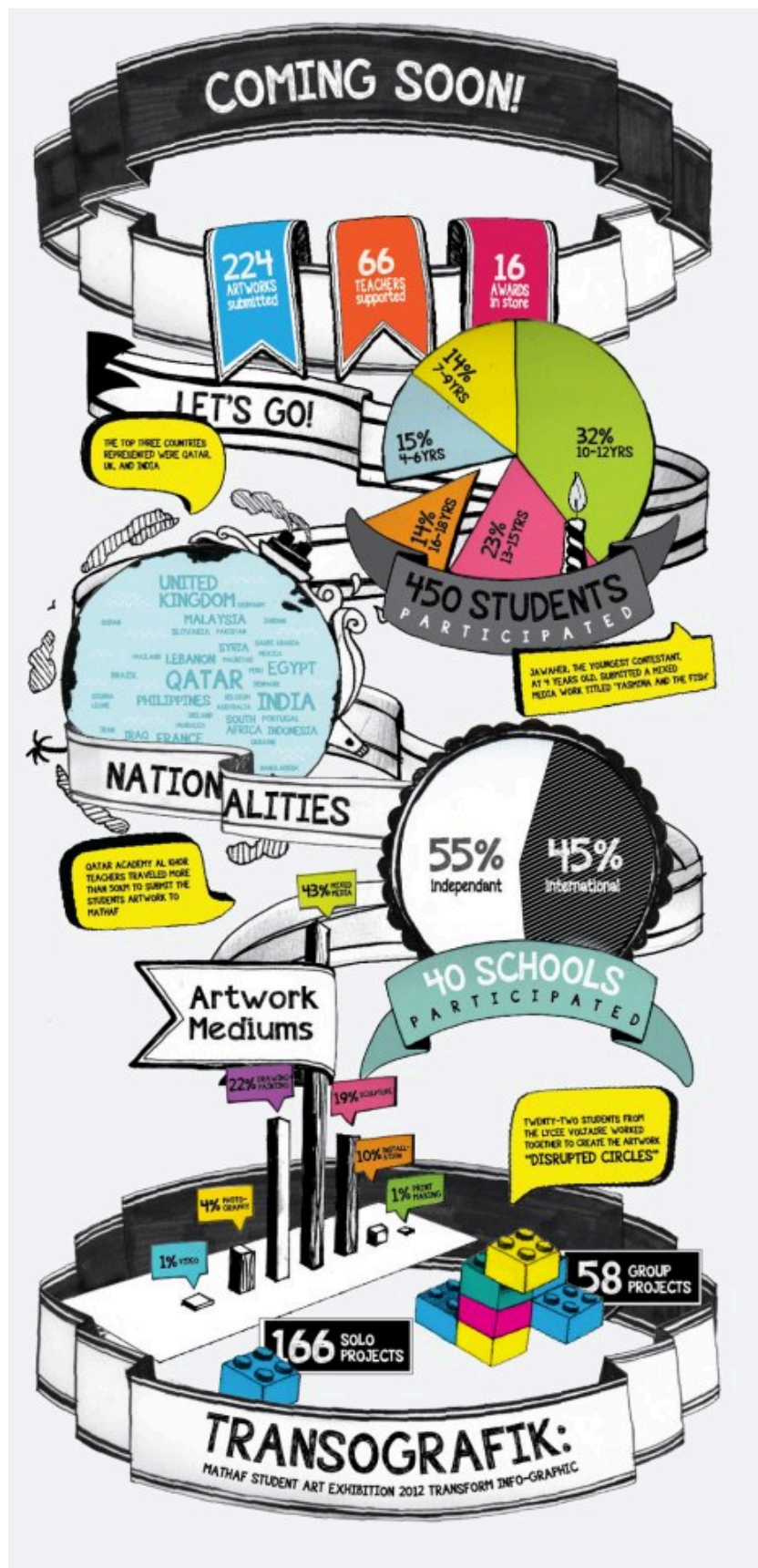


Image 39 Transformation Student Exhibition, Competition Result Poster, Mathaf ,2012



Image 40 Forever Now: Fahrelnissa Zeid Section, Mathaf, 2012 , photo credit Nafas Art Magazine



Image 41 Forever Now: Jewad Selim Section, Mathaf, 2012 , photo credit Nafas Art Magazine



Image 42 Forever Now: Saliba Douaihy Section, Mathaf, 2012 , photo credit Nafas Art Magazine

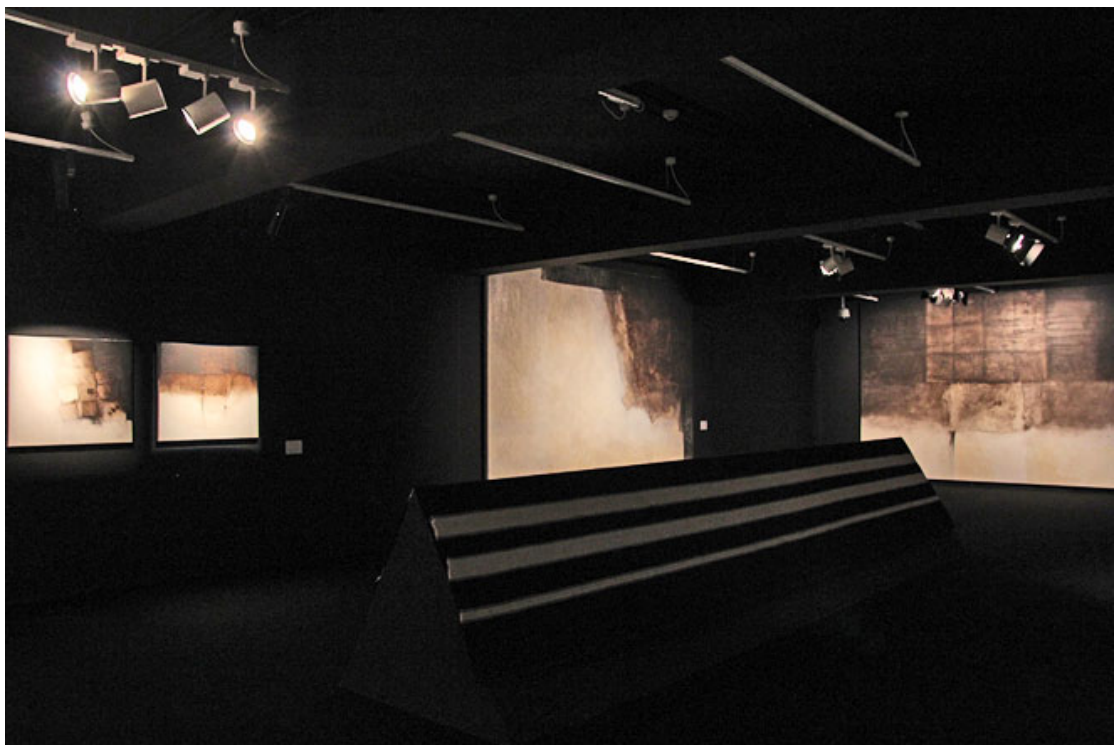


Image 43 Forever Now: Salim al Dabbagh Section, Mathaf, 2012 , photo credit Nafas Art Magazine



Image 44 Forever Now: Ahmed Cherkoui Section, Mathaf, 2012 , photo credit Nafas Art Magazine



Image 45 Tea with Nefertiti & Forever Now Exhibition Poster, Mathaf, 2012-2013



Image 46 Bust of Nefertiti, Beliner Museum, Germany



Image 47 Richard Serra sculpture, Qatar, 2012

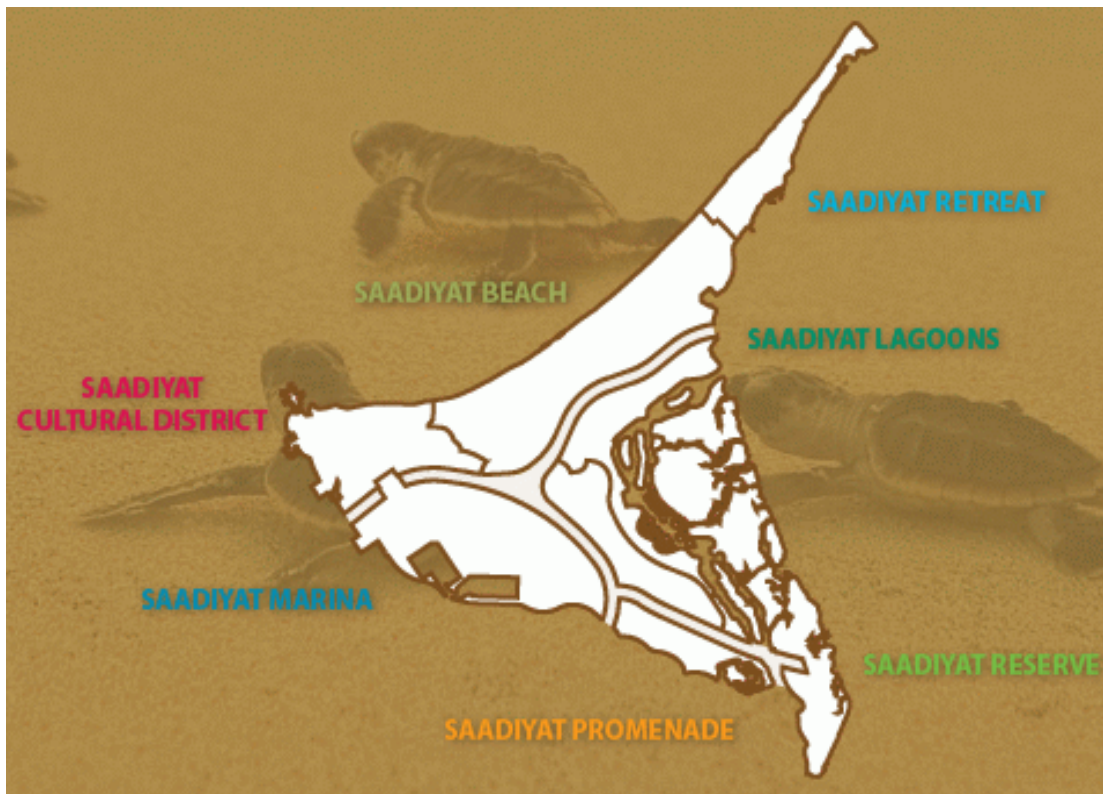


Image 48 Saadiyat Island Plan

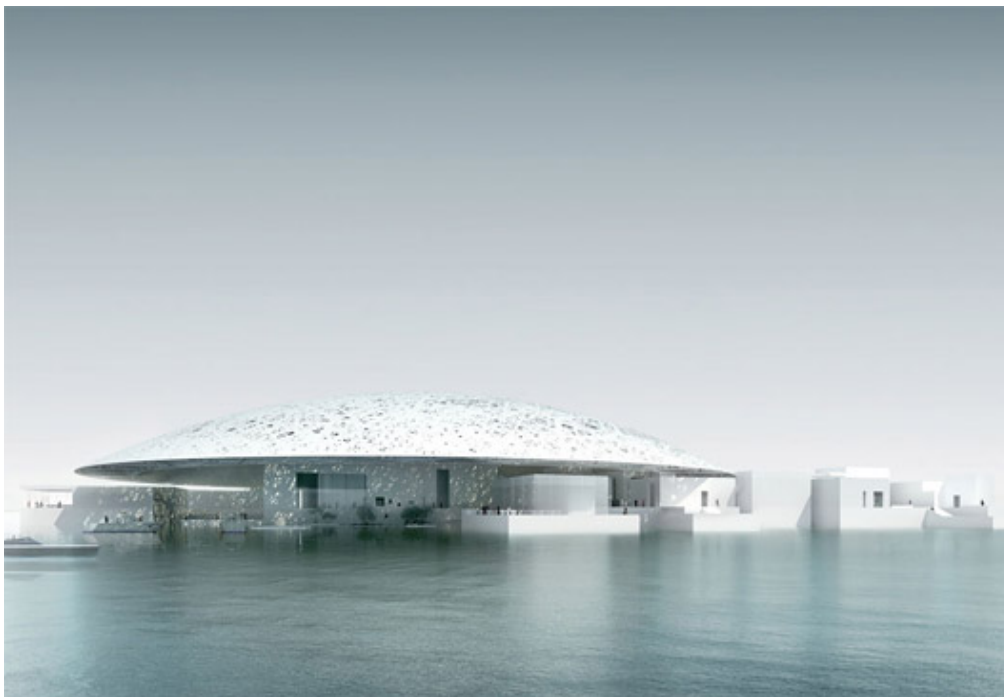


Image 49 Louvre Abu Dhabi



Image 50 Guggenheim Abu Dhabi



Image 51 Zayed National Museum, UAE Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Cultural District



Image 52 Mathaf Museum Logo

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