

The White Cube Aesthetics in the United Arab Emirates: Globalisation and Localisation

The white cube aesthetics as a mode of display is dominant in the context of the exhibition spaces in the Arabian Peninsula.¹ The United Arab Emirates is arguably a place of contrasts where dichotomies are juxtaposed: local and global, public and private, religious and secular, hot environment and cool well-conditioned interiors. Rapid globalisation brought many things to the Emirati shores including nostalgia for the past and a sense of fractured identity.² Public spaces are platforms where these fractures may be negotiated where dichotomies may find their fitting jigsaw parts.

This essay begins by outlining what is meant by the white cube aesthetics, which develops gradually. It then traces the history of exhibition spaces in the UAE and related cultural organisations, it focusses specifically on the majlis as a cultural and architectural form of socialisation and exhibition. The essay studies the vernacular architecture and newly-built or repurposed structures to study the specificities of the white cube aesthetics in the UAE. The argument is that the perception of the citizens of the UAE³ of such structures involves a lesser sense of exclusion given not only the vernacular but also a larger Arab architectural tradition and climate. As it will become evident traditional white structures, particularly in Sharjah Emirate inform the white cube aesthetic, partly due to the conflict between the longing for the erosion of tradition amid globalisation processes and aspirations for International relevance. The matter is central for understanding the audience engagement and the shifts in role art production plays in the UAE.

In the introduction to Brian O'Doherty's *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Thomas McEvilly describes white-walled galleries as 'a non-space, ultra space, ideal space'.⁴ These terms illustrate well the anxiety that often arises when visiting such spaces. They privilege

¹ Corrin, Lisa, "Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves" In *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, (ed.) B. Carbonell, (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), P381

² Moosavi, Sareh, Jala, Makhzoumi & Margaret Grose, "Landscape practice in the Middle East between local and global aspirations", *Landscape Research*, (2015), P1

³ The community of various nationalities predominantly Muslim making up 10% of the resident population who have received the UAE citizenship.

⁴ McEvilly, Thomas, Introduction" In *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (ed.) B. O'Doherty, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), P8

conceptual art which is exclusionary to other art forms and ultimately influences the kind of art exhibited which is problematic. The earliest exhibitions in the UAE organised by Emirates Fine Arts Society were founded in 1980 by the ruler of Sharjah. Early Sharjah Biennials beginning in 1993 took place in a trade exhibition centre. It was a homegrown art fair without a codified display format often in a salon-style featuring artists from the region working in various media and styles through open group invitations [fig. 1].⁵ In 2003 the curation of Shaikha Hoor al Qasimi, alumna of the Slade School of Fine Art in London, turned to a white cube display of selected conceptual work by international artists.

Since the 1990s the majlis as exhibition space has gradually been overshadowed by foreign forms like galleries and biennials. Derderian writes about the translational infrastructures from the majlis to the white cube.⁶ EFAS annually showcased members' work and edited Tashkeel, a local arts magazine. The building [fig. 2] had a library, a studio space, a kitchen and a majlis [fig. 3], a heart of the building where traditionally members would congregate for informal discussions, entertainment, dispute resolution, wedding receptions and exhibitions. It plays an essential role in transferring heritage orally through folk stories and songs. The word 'majlis' derives from the Arabic root 'jls' meaning 'to sit'. A majlis is a common spacial, social and political organisational form widespread in the Muslim world. Every private house in the Gulf has this reception room. Sheikh Zayed's majlis in his house in Ras Al-Khaimah is painted white, a dominant colour in housing areas [fig. 4, 5].⁷ For the art world, majlis was a primary forum-like place of gathering.⁸ It's aura of congregation and informal interaction dominates the consciousness of UAE citizens to this day and even took a form of an online event hosted by the founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation Sultan Soud Al Qassemi titled the 'Cultural Majlis' [fig. 6].

⁵ Derderian, Elizabeth. "Challenging Terms; Contemporary Art and the Disciplining of Novelty in the UAE", *Museum Anthropology*, (2020), P82

⁶ *ibid*, P82

⁷ Amaireh, Hussein, "Colour in the UAE public houses" *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* (Locke Science Publishing Company, 2006), P33

⁸ Derderian, P90

However, no rigorous studies were conducted between the majlis and white cube as places of culture which share aesthetic elements particularly bright white walls. Exell points to the popularity of private collecting in the region, where majalis (plural) have been transformed into public museums with mixed display techniques from locally-shaped to standard Western museum displays where objects with description texts are in cases [fig. 7].⁹ The Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum in Qatar is characteristic of regional private spaces deriving directly from majlis [fig. 8, 9].¹⁰ The storage-like display of objects is similar to the display in Mark Dion's *The Academy of Things* in the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts 2015.

A traditional majlis has niches in the white walls for displaying decorative objects, possessions, portraits of male ancestors [fig. 10, 11].¹¹ While Exell and Wakefield argue that the new international museums in the Arabian Peninsula like the Guggenheim reflect active engagement with Western knowledge systems,¹² I would argue that the Western white cube aesthetics is blended with the majlis aesthetics in Sharjah exhibition spaces. There are some elements of culturally specific responses including the niches which UAE citizens instantly associate with the majlis [fig. 12, 13]. Sharjah mediates between the local and international. The arts in the UAE initially developed through private initiatives. Interior designer Alison Collins rented an old wind-tower house in Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood in Dubai which she converted into a gallery in 1989. This was the first gallery in Dubai called the Majlis Art Gallery, which exhibits contemporary artworks by international artists inspired by the region [fig. 14].¹³

The building materials of the vernacular Emirati architecture arise from the local landscape. The towers and walls of the coastal bastion Qasr Al Hosn built in the 1760s in Abu Dhabi are of sea stone and white coral and are finished with a smooth coating of white sand, burned and crushed

⁹ Exell, Karen, *Modernity and the Museum in the Arabian Peninsula* (London: Routledge, 2016), P2

¹⁰ *ibid*, P3

¹¹ Nagy, Sara, "Social diversity and changes in the form and appearance of the Qatari house". *Visual Anthropology*, (1998), P284

¹² Exell, P5

¹³ Worrell Hanan Sayed, "The UAE's Emergence as a Hub for Contemporary Art", *The Arab Gulf States Institute Magazine*, (2017), P4

seashells mixed with water [fig. 15].¹⁴ The porous coral is a natural and effective insulating material suited for cross ventilation facilitated by the sea breeze.¹⁵ Such heritage buildings with mainly off-white walls and courtyards have been adapted to serve mainly as art galleries, local theatres and museums.¹⁶ Qasr Al Hosn, former home of the ruling family, is a treasured symbol of the UAE's cultural self. It houses the National Advisory Council, National Archive, the Artisans' House and a cultural foundation dedicated to the visual arts of contemporary Emirati artists.¹⁷ It is expected that heritage buildings would be converted to museums but the contemporary art exhibitions perhaps were curated there because of the white-walled setting reminiscent of new museum spaces.

Contemporary UAE architects like Khaled Najjar increasingly choose to revisit, transform and adapt the aesthetic expressions of the heritage type structures to contemporary living.¹⁸ A major example is the heritage neighbourhood in Sharjah, an emirate with a cultural focus. In Sharjah extra walls are built from the existing stock of coral to reference the traditional buildings [fig. 16].¹⁹ A seamless transition between past and present is apparent in the converted heritage buildings. One of them, Al Hamriyah Studios, a space used for exhibitions and residencies is a former market [fig. 17]. Al Mureijah Art spaces for the foundation's contemporary art galleries are in the oldest residential district nominated in 2019 for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture [fig. 19].

Martin Herbert described the white cube as a 'modernist format that postmodernism couldn't kill'.²⁰ White-washed buildings are a long-established vernacular form of the Mediterranean and the Arabian Peninsula and is in a complex relationship with 'European' modernism which are certainly related to the emergence of the white cube aesthetics. Le Corbusier believed that modern

¹⁴ FacadesPlus, *Abu Dhabi's Oldest Building*, facadesplus.com/abu-dhabis-oldest-building-stands-strong-after-intensive-stone-restoration/, [accessed 20/03/22]

¹⁵ Vibhavari, Jani, *Diversity in Design: Perspectives from the Non-Western World* (New York: Fairchild Books, 2011), P262

¹⁶ Vibhavari, P268

¹⁷ KawaNews, *Qasr Al Hosn*, kawa-news.com/en/abu-dhabi-the-historic-district-of-qasr-al-hosn-reopens-its-doors-to-the-public/, [accessed 20/03/22]

¹⁸ Vibhavari, P276

¹⁹ UniversesArt, *Sharjah Art Spaces*, <https://universes.art/en/art-destinations/sharjah/art-spaces/saf-art-spaces/06>, [accessed 20/03/22]

²⁰ Herbert, Martin, *What the 'White Cube' Means Now*, artreview.com/what-the-white-cube-means-now/, 21 January 2021, [accessed 7/03/22]

architecture owed to traditional vernacular buildings of the Mediterranean countries. He admired the traditional Algerian white houses, pure forms and inner courtyards.²¹ Weissenhof in the 1920s even attacked white cubic modernist architecture calling it 'Arab' and 'oriental'.²²

Egyptian modernist architect was searching for authentic historical alternatives in Egypt in the 1940-50s and some of what he designed were shining white houses.²³ He shared that he was trying to find his lost *arabité*, architecture that would potently express a true Arab identity.²⁴ On the first Friday (compulsory prayer day) since the end of construction in Agami near Alexandria, locals mistook the house for a mosque due to its whitewashed facade [fig. 20].²⁵ Hamid Ahmad writes of buildings made of platonic forms shining white and they encapsulate infinite space and the fragile material world' by juxtaposing the real with the ideal.²⁶ Notably, the main UAE Sheikh Zayed mosque is made of white marble [fig. 21]. Jason Farago thinks of contemporary museums as places where 'transcendence' is also experienced through major paintings and large installations, where white cube enhances the religious character of a museum.²⁷ Farago asserts the supremacy of the white cube for its purity and even sacredness of spaces with pristine backdrops perfect for subjecting the works to a bath of light.

Louvre Abu Dhabi is a stark example of one of those temples of light. He conceived the project as belonging to the country, its history and geography. Jean Nouvel designed a built archipelago in the sea consisting of 55 white buildings connected by exterior walkways under a dome. A museum-city

²¹ Çelik, Zeynep, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), p. 102

²² Cohen, Jean-Louis, "Internationalization, its networks and spectacles" In *The Future of Architecture Since 1889* (London: Phaidon, 2011), P73

²³ Ahmad, Hamid, *Hassan Fathy and Continuity in Islamic Arts: Birth of a New Modern* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), P22

²⁴ ArchitecturalReview, *Hassan Fathy*, <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/reputations/hassan-fathy-1900-1989>, [accessed 20/03/22]

²⁵ Ahmad, P22

²⁶ *ibid*, P64

²⁷ Farago, Jason, *Why Museums are the new churches?*, <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20150716-why-museums-are-the-new-churches>, [accessed 20/03/22]

was conceived as the narrow Arabian streets of a medina²⁸ and traditional low-rise architecture of the region [fig. 22, 23].²⁹ It is a 'sanctuary for the most precision works of art', in his own words.³⁰

Nouvel describes the structure as complex but creating a calm space. Crucially, in hot climates white not only reflects light but is also visually cooler which calms an individual psychologically though senses. This is contrasted by the White Cube Mason's Yard in London, where white considering English winter climate enhances the cold and humid sensation outside and does not resonate with an enduring centuries-old tradition of white interior. In his statement on the building Jean Nouvel refers to preferences for exceptions.³¹ For example, in cooler climates people seek to get warmer, while warmer climates call for cool haven. These words may explain why the white cube aesthetic of the Louvre Abu Dhabi creates a sense of serenity which is almost absent in the White Cube in London because in the Emirates it shelters from the heat and is a pleasurable escape from sun rays. Perhaps this may make the white aesthetic in Abu Dhabi more comfortable and less alienating than in London. Richard Meier praised white for its is never just white, but is often transformed by light.³² The walls shine differently in these locations because temperature and sunlight are of different intensities.

O'Doherty is concerned with the cumulative effect of the white cube, the work and its surrounding space on the viewer.³³ It reminds of the minimalist idea expressed by Fried that art experience is a confluence of the artwork, the place where it is presented and the body of the beholder.³⁴ Here content arises from context. It is possible to take the argument further and imagine the environmental and traditional context of the museum context. We should consider the particular

²⁸ 'settlement, town, city'.

²⁹ Louvre Abu Dhabi, *Architecture*, <https://www.louvreabudhabi.ae/en/about-us/architecture>, [accessed 20/03/22]

³⁰ Nouvel, Jean, *Louvre Abu Dhabi: The museum and the sea*, <http://www.jeannouvel.com/en/projects/louvre-abou-dhabi-3/>, [accessed 20/03/22]

³¹ *ibid*

³² Treccozi, Damiana, "Nothing but Art: Index Tower Penthouse", *Compassess*, (2017), P72

³³ O'Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica: The Lapis Press, 1976), P14

³⁴ Battcock, Gregory, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1995), P127

context of the white cube aesthetics as it arguably speaks a different dialect in these parts of the globe.

Yet this practice of display is not neutral. It is this sacredness surrounding the museum objects touched upon by Nouvel and Farago that Brian O'Doherty confronted interpreting it as a modernist obsession which problematised the reading of art.³⁵ Unlike in the Dion-like display at the Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani Museum, the spaced-out and isolated objects in the white cube space look like valuable, expensive and scarce goods.³⁶ While the majlis is also a traditionally male-dominated space, for many, white cube aesthetics creates the negative experience of exclusion under the pressure of social elitism of this aesthetic.³⁷ In this respect Wendy Shaw rightfully warns of the dance of the notions of intellectual freedom and deceptive cultural inclusiveness.³⁸ She points to it occurring in some contemporary art contexts which use the white cube aesthetic that inherently makes accessing spaces difficult without 'initiation'.³⁹ For example, Alraouf describes the Sharjah Arts Area as being made up of 'exclusive spaces sealed off from the buzz of the surrounding downtown' which makes the foreign low-income residents feel unwelcome.⁴⁰ Despite producing materials in South Asian languages this audience perceived interior art spaces as being not for them, though they did participate in open air activities like screenings and performance.⁴¹

The President of Sharjah Art Foundation, Hoor Al Qasimi believes that the trajectory of contemporary art is in the hands of not only the conditions of its making but also of fluctuating histories and competing information.⁴² According to her, the Sharjah Biennial aims to deepen the context of these issues through thought-provoking art works. The obstacle appears to be the white

³⁵ *ibid*, P26

³⁶ *ibid*, P76

³⁷ *ibid*, P76

³⁸ Shaw, Wendy, "Art among the Myths of Globalism: The Istanbul Biennial", *Third Text*, (2002), P102

³⁹ O'Doherty, (1976), P76

⁴⁰ Alraouf, Ali, "The rehabilitation of the Muharraq heritage centre, Bahrain: a critical narrative" In *Cultural heritage in the Arabian Peninsula: debates, discourses and practices*, (eds.) K. Exell, T. Rico, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), P174

⁴¹ Exell, P143

⁴² ArtRadarJournal, *Sharjah Art Foundation announcement*, <https://artradarjournal.com/sharjah-art-foundation-announces-curators-of-sharjah-biennial-14/>, [accessed 20/03/22]

cube aesthetics and its power to make visitors feel alienated. However, Alraouf is too quick to discard all Sharjah exhibition spaces as exclusionary. The Sharjah Art Foundation galleries include restored historic buildings including the restored Emirati merchant home Bait Obaid Al Shamsi, which has been acting as an exhibition venue of the Sharjah Biennial since 2009 and reflects Arabic Islamic Architecture [fig. 24].⁴³ It has typical majlis niche elements and would make Emirati nationals feel more welcome as well as other visitors familiar with this form. Some spaces seem more like a majlis and, therefore, should be less exclusionary despite majlis being a male socialisation space, families would also spend their time together. Perhaps through exposure to such exhibition spaces and conversations many types of audiences may get initiated into white cube spaces whether of strictly Western feel or with elements of Arab interiors.

While it is certain that the majlis form has shaped the development of regional museums and private collections which authentically reflects the history and traditions of the Arabian Peninsula [fig. 18].⁴⁴ Modernist narratives of modern Arab art alongside Western art in white cube spaces shape the development of scholarship. Exell believes that these spaces are forms of communication that have only started to be integrated into the social culture of the UAE.⁴⁵ I would argue that repurposing of the Sharjah heritage buildings to serve as gallery spaces and during the biennial is a testament to that conversation taking place on an institutional level. This also reflects deeper issues of fracturing tradition and nostalgia that have arisen due to globalisation exemplified by the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, where there is more emphasis on ‘design over content’.⁴⁶ Exell interprets it as a causality of cultural hegemony or imperialism. This search for universal values interfered with the continued development of local culture and experience by the Emiratis.⁴⁷ Therefore, the strengthening of Emirati national identity is reinforced by emphasising traditional culture, customs and religion.⁴⁸

⁴³ Sharjah Art, <http://sharjahart.org/sharjah-art-foundation/visit-us>,

⁴⁴ Exell, P165

⁴⁵ Exell, P4

⁴⁶ Exell, P4

⁴⁷ Ahmad, P22

⁴⁸ Exell, P143

The modes of display influence the perception of art objects and the kind of objects produced and then selected for exhibition. Since the 80s the increasing moving away from majlis to the white cube space has influenced whose work gets exhibited and written into art history, conceptual work was favoured while other work was dismissed as a craft.⁴⁹ In Islam metamorphoses and continuous transformation are valued over rejection of previous experiences.⁵⁰ Outlined complex social issues are sources of main challenges of contemporary art practice in the UAE. Namely, the dichotomy and the historical discontinuity perceived between ‘new’ art and ‘traditional’ Islamic arts.⁵¹ The crux of the matter is the lack of scholarship against which new production may be juxtaposed, not to mention the complexities arising from that contemporary production where modern historical developments are already contested.

Amirsadeghi points out that contemporary production largely opposes the label of the ‘other’, the label that stuck firmly with both Islamic and Modern Arab art influenced by identity politics.⁵² Exell suggests that UAE’s approach to modernity is characterised by the fusing of the modern and the traditional while retaining cultural identity with aspects of secular modernity and the employment of the rhetoric of the ‘universal’ in engagement with global ideas and art to bridge that dichotomy through discourse.⁵³ A potent example is the art neighbourhood called Alserkal Avenue in the Al Qouz region of Dubai which prides itself of housing organic homegrown galleries born out of the industrial, non-elite area. Such a setting away from luxury stores further facilitates a more comfortable perception of the Alserkal warehouse white cube aesthetics. In fact, the proliferation of white cube galleries, fairs and museums across the UAE alone could make one desensitised from feeling excluded through mere frequent exposure. This may explain why one client requested the architect Abboud Malak to have an apartment with no colour with the exception of art in Dubai’s

⁴⁹ Derderian, P91

⁵⁰ Ahmad, P28

⁵¹ Amirsadeghi, Hossein, Salwa Mikdadi, Nada Shabout, *New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), P8

⁵² *ibid*, P8

⁵³ Exell, P2

Index Tower Penthouse.⁵⁴ This minimalist museum-like space with extreme white cube aesthetics is indeed a fitting frame [fig. 24].

Emirati sheikhs benefit from the white cube spaces displaying blockbuster exhibitions of major Middle Eastern artists like Shirin Neshat and Lalla Essaydi in the Louvre Abu Dhabi. These spaces present the rulers as visionary and cultured and give them, the country and its art market global acclaim that invites investment and tourism. Additionally, the Sharjah Biennial housed in repurposed heritage building presents the UAE and its artists as part of the contemporary art scene and part of the continuity of art history. It achieves these goals through the appreciation of local forms and adoption of the new ones.

Clifford believes that the Western museum has the potential to become a ‘contact zone’ by mediation and facilitation of cross-cultural communication.⁵⁵ If we bear in mind the vernacular Emirati architecture, white Fathy houses, the relationship between Le Corbusier’s modern designs and Algerian houses then the Louvre Abu Dhabi seems to seem as a West-to-East. The same could apply to the white cube aesthetics. Perhaps it is time to redefine the local version to elevate the negative effects of such pristine sacred spaces and make them more profane.

The context of the UAE art scene and of the Arabian Peninsula at large is a complex one. This practice of display changes the ways visitors look and perceive exhibited objects. Traditional architecture and climate influence the perception of the white cube aesthetics in different contexts. Therefore, this is the terrain where the conversation about the mediation of dichotomies should start because white cube spaces in the UAE are varied. From warehouses to repurposed heritage buildings, exhibition spaces are where the conversations about the sense of exclusion should begin to determine the proper context of these spaces and the identity of Emirati citizens in this increasingly globalised world.

Word count: 3 732 words (below unpenalised 10% maximum allowance)

⁵⁴ Treccozzi, P70

⁵⁵ Clifford, Jean, *Routes: travel and translation in the late twentieth century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), P192

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Figures



[fig.1] Emirates Fine Arts Society Exhibition - 1981, Shiekha Hoor Curates United Arab Emirates' Pavilion at Venice Biennale, www.artfixdaily.com/artwire/release/6602-shieka-hoor-curates-united-arab-emirates-pavilion-at-venice-bienn [01.03.2020].



[fig. 2] Emirates Fine Arts Society, www.heartofsharjah.ae/gallery-emirates-fine-arts-society.html#!prettyPhoto [01.03.2020].



[fig. 3] Emirates Fine Arts Society, universes.art/en/art-destinations/sharjah/art-spaces/emirates-fine-arts-society



[fig. 4] Interior colour sitting room in Ras Al-Khamah Museum. Source (Amaireh Hussain, 2006).



[fig. 5] Interior colour, calm cool effects (Sheikh Saeeds's house). Source Amaireh Hussain 2006.



[fig. 6] Sultan Al Qassemi, 013 Online Cultural Majlis. Nada Shabout 13th May 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvLNpXZg7g4



[fig. 7] Entrance hall, various weapons and armour, private museum of Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani, sonyaandtravis.com/sheikh-faisal-bin-qassim-al-thani-museum/.png



[fig. 8] Collection of painings, private museum of Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani, sonyaandtravis.com/sheikh-faisal-bin-qassim-al-thani-museum/.png



[fig. 9] Room with various arabic items, private museum of Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani, sonyaandtravis.com/sheikh-faisal-bin-qassim-al-thani-museum/.png



[fig. 10] Majlis featuring a portrait of a male on the wall. © Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Qatar, 2014, ich.unesco.org/en/RL/majlis-a-cultural-and-social-space-01076



[fig. 11] Majlis from UAE in Al Ain, majlismyblog.blogspot.com/2020/12/traditional-majlis-uae.html



[fig. 12] Niches in Sharjah gallery space. whyilovesharjah.com/2020/01/09/sharjah-art-area-and-sharjah-art-foundation/.png



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[fig. 14] Majlis Gallery www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/art/the-majlis-gallery-dubai-oldest-fine-art-space-is-closing-its-doors-permanently-1.1086848



[fig. 15] Qasr-Al-Hosn. © Department of Culture and Tourism Abu Dhabi, kawa-news.com/en/abu-dhabi-the-historic-district-of-qasr-al-hosn-reopens-its-doors-to-the-public/.jpg



[fig. 16] Sharjah Art Foundation, The winding alleyways around the square hide urban gardens and cinemas | © Sharjah Art Foundation speakart.info/2017/11/16/sharjah-art-foundation-production-commission/.jpg



[fig. 17] SAF venues, 2016. Image courtesy Sharjah Art Foundation, artradarjournal.com/sharjah-art-foundation-announces-curators-of-sharjah-biennial-14/.jpg



[fig. 18] Saif Marzooq Al Shamlan's photographic collection, with (from L–R), Exell Karen, 2016, p. 165.



[fig. 19] Sharjah Art Foundation's Al Mureijah Square location offers art exhibitions, cinema screenings and great food | © Sharjah Art Foundation.



[fig. 20] Fathy house. ArchitecturalReview, Hassan Fathy, <https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/reputations/hassan-fathy-1900-1989>, [accessed 20/03/22]



[fig. 21] Sheikh-Zayed-Grand-Mosque, www.swedishnomad.com/sheikh-zayed-grand-mosque/.jpg



[fig. 22] Louvre Abu Dhabi, Photo Courtesy of Mohamed Somji, www.architecturaldigest.com/story/jean-nouvel-louvre-abu-dhabi [01.03.2020].



[fig. 23] Louvre Abu Dhabi, © Laurian Ghinitoiu, www.archdaily.com/883911/critical-round-up-the-louvre-abu-dhabi-by-jean-nouvel/5a141693b22e381a940001fb-critical-round-up-the-louvre-abu-dhabi-by-jean-nouvel-photo



[fig. 24] Bait Obaid Al Shamsi, Courtesy Sharjah Art Foundation, www.artnews.com/art-news/news/sharjah-biennial-15-delayed-2023-1234593235/.jpg



[fig. 24] Studio M, Abboud Malak, Index Tower Penthouse, p. 71