



Pavilion of Kuwait
At the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - la Biennale di Venezia

The NCCAL Announces *Acquiring Modernity*: The Kuwait Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia

Kuwait City—May 1, 2014. Commissioned by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kuwait's pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia will take place from June 7, 2014 until November 23, 2014. Housed in the Arsenale, *Acquiring Modernity* is Kuwait's second participation after *Kethra*, which debuted at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition in 2012.

Under the supervision of Deputy-Commissioner Zahra Ali Baba and the creative direction of artist-curator Alia Farid, *Acquiring Modernity* will address the exhibition's overarching theme of 100 years of modernity from 1914 to 2014. Commissioned in parallel with Kuwait's first modern monument proposal to UNESCO, the pavilion will explore symbols of modernity in Kuwait's architecture, with a special focus on Michel Ecochard's Kuwait National Museum, designed in 1960 and completed in 1983.

"The pavilion will investigate the arrival of modernity in Kuwait through a number of buildings and projects commissioned by the state as 'modern status symbols,' particularly the Kuwait National Museum," said Farid. "The investigation will also analyze the current conditions of these buildings towards understanding the impact of modernity on local culture—whether modernist ideals were assimilated, altered, neglected, rejected—and what those reactions convey about contemporary society in Kuwait."

At the inauguration of *Acquiring Modernity*, participants will restage the celebratory opening of the Kuwait National Museum in 1983. During the rest of the six-month exhibition, they will continue developing their investigations regarding the role of the museum and the rehabilitation of its programs. Kuwait's participation in Venice is only one moment of visibility from a larger project that aims to restore rigorous cultural involvement in the country.



Representing Kuwait at the Biennale Architettura 2014 is a team of 21 individuals engaged in diverse areas of research, fabrication, and image-making: Aisha Alsager, Dana Aljouder, Sara Saragoça Soares, Hassan Hayat, Nesef Al Nesef, Noora Al Musallam, Amara Abdal Figueroa, Gráinne Hebler, Abdullah AlHarmi, Samer Mohammed, Nima Algooneh, Liane Al-Ghusain, Adel Al-Qattan, Wafa'a Al-Fraheen, Dalal Al-Sane, Noura Alsager, Maysaa Almumin, Cherihan Nasr, Fatema Alqabandi, Alaa Alawadhi, and Ghazi Al-Mulaifi.

The pavilion will also feature collaborations with filmmakers Shakir Abal and Oscar Boyson, graphic design duo Dexter Sinister, and artist Abdullah Al-Awadhi.

Accompanying the pavilion is a research publication available in English and Arabic, a film set for release in November 2014, and a joint installation with the Nordic Pavilion.

For more detailed information about the curator, participants, or the pavilion, please visit our website: www.acquiringmodernity.com.

Acquiring Modernity is proudly supported by the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, and real estate partner, United Real Estate Company.

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The NCCAL

Established in 1973 by Amiri Decree, the Council seeks to preserve and promote the arts throughout the country, and aims to cultivate a productive environment for artists. Today, the duties of the organisation vary from maintaining museums, public libraries, and cultural centres, to organising excavations, renovating pre-oil structures, arranging annual cultural festivals, hosting readings and lectures, and representing Kuwait at cultural events abroad. The NCCAL also awards prizes each year for outstanding individuals in the fields of art, art criticism, literature, drama, film, music, translation, and the social sciences.

The Curator

Alia Farid Abdal (b. 1985) holds a Masters in Museum Studies and Critical Theory from El Programa de Estudios Independientes from the Museu D'Art Contemporani De Barcelona, a MSc. in Visual Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a BFA from La Escuela de Artes Plasticas de Puerto Rico. Abdal has completed residencies at Beta Local in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Casa Arabe in partnership with the Delfina Foundation in Córdoba, Spain, the Serpentine Gallery in London, England, and another at Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, in Doha, Qatar. Currently, she works at the Heritage and Restoration Department at the NCCAL, where she helps in the rehabilitation of public programs and facilities, and in the enhancement of cross-institutional relationships.

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