

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sharjah Architecture Triennial presents
A Journey into Architecture Archives: Beirut, Cairo, Rabat
curated by George Arbid



Sharjah Architecture Triennial (SAT) presents *A Journey into Architecture Archives: Beirut, Cairo, Rabat*, curated by architect George Arbid. The exhibition runs from 13 May to 16 July and will highlight three institutions in the Arab world that hold and preserve architecture archives, shedding light on the rich history and contributions of architects to modern architecture.

The exhibition features archival material from the Arab Center for Architecture (ACA) in Beirut (co-founded by Arbid), the Rare Books and Special Collections at the American University in Cairo (AUC), and Archives du Maroc in Rabat. These institutions are committed to safeguarding the architectural legacy of the region and offer invaluable insights into its built environment through their collections.

Along with preserving the memory of completed buildings, the archives also uncover stories of designs that never came to fruition. One of the highlights of the exhibition is its focus on five unrealized projects abandoned either



due to political changes, mismanagement, economic reasons or personal vagaries. Through drawings and physical models, the exhibition brings to life these designs, providing visitors with a rare opportunity to experience what could have been.

Also on view will be three documentaries commissioned specifically for the exhibition, filmed in Beirut, Cairo, Rabat and Casablanca. They will take visitors on a journey into the collections, presenting a deeper understanding of the importance of architectural archives in shaping our understanding of the past, present and future of the built environment.

Commenting on the exhibition, Triennial advisor Mona El Mousfy said: 'The exhibition marks the start of a long-term vision and strategy that encompass various research initiatives including the creation of a database of architecture archives in the region. This exhibition, and subsequent ones that are planned, focus on selected curated architecture content from the explored archives, showing drawings, photos, and models, along with short commissioned documentaries. The interconnected mapping and investigative initiatives aim to foster new areas of enquiry for scholars and students and to generate increased public interest in the archives and their role in safeguarding the architectural history of our region.'

Marking the opening of the exhibition on 13 May, a panel discussion will take place 4-6pm with guest speakers Amel Chabbi, Zahra Ali Baba and Suha Hasan sharing their experiences with archives, stories about particular collections and the discoveries made in research. The panel will be moderated by George Arbid, followed by a tour of the exhibition. To RSVP to the panel discussion, [click here](#).

Press Office:

Sharjah Architecture Triennial, T +971 50 261 4423, @sharjaharchitecture
Anum Laghari: anum@sharjaharchitecture.org

Pelham Communications, T +44 (0) 20 8969 3959, @pelhamcomms
Rel Hayman: rel@pelhamcommunications.com

Notes to Editors

A Journey into Architecture Archives: Beirut, Cairo, Rabat

When: 13 May – 16 July 2023

Where: Sharjah Architecture Triennial, [Al Qasimiyah School](#), 7 Sheikh Saqr Bin Khalid Al Qasimi Street, Sharjah

Exhibition opening – Saturday 13 May – [RSVP](#)

4-6pm: Panel discussion and Q&A

6pm: Exhibition tour led by George Arbid

7pm: Reception

About Sharjah Architecture Triennial:

Founded in 2018 by Khalid Al Qasimi, Sharjah Architecture Triennial (SAT) is a platform for architecture and urbanism in a region that extends from West Asia to South Asia and the African continent. Physically anchored in



Sharjah and the United Arab Emirates, SAT aims to engage diverse audiences and stakeholders in a collective conversation on architecture at the neighbourhood, city, and regional levels. Institutional research and programming support on-going critical reflection through exhibitions, publications, and public programmes in tandem with its international editions. SAT is committed to pursuing a multi-disciplinary approach that fosters an understanding of the broader role of architecture, including its relation to social and environmental issues.

George Arbid

Following a Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures en Architecture from the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), Arbid was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at MIT History, Theory and Criticism Program and obtained a Doctor of Design degree from Harvard University. He has held teaching positions at ALBA, AUB, and the Lebanese University in Lebanon. His research covers mostly modern architecture in Lebanon and the Arab world.

Dr. Arbid's writings include *Architecture from the Arab world (1914-2014) a Selection*, published at the occasion of the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2014 where he co-curated the Pavilion of Bahrain. He recently co-edited with P. Oswalt *Designing Modernity: Architecture in the Arab World 1945-1973* (صوغ الحداثة: العمارة في العالم العربي) ١٩٧٣-١٩٤٥ published in 2022 in English and Arabic (Jovis and Riwaq).

He is a co-founder and director of the Arab Center for Architecture located in Beirut, and of Docomomo Lebanon. Arbid is currently finishing a report for the Ministry of Culture in Lebanon commissioned by the World Monument Fund: *A Roadmap for an Inventory of Architectural Heritage*. Besides being a practicing architect, he has served on several competitions and award juries, including the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture - Mies van der Rohe Award 2019.

Amel Chabbi

Amel Chabbi heads the Conservation Section at the Department of Culture & Tourism - Abu Dhabi where she is responsible for planning conservation and management measures, policies and guidelines for the built heritage of the Abu Dhabi Emirate. This includes overseeing the implementation of preventive and curative conservation across all sites and buildings, coordinating the preparation of conservation and site management plans for heritage resources, overseeing major strategic rehabilitation projects of heritage buildings such as Bait Mohammed bin Khalifa and the Cultural Foundation, as well as spearheading the Modern Heritage Conservation Initiative. Prior to joining DCT, Amel was based in the United States where she was a Research Associate at the Getty Conservation Institute and later as a building conservator at Superstructures Engineers & Architects. Amel holds a B.A. in Archaeology and Chemistry from the University of Virginia and an M.Sc. in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. Board member of ICOMOS International from 2012-2017, she is currently a member of ICOMOS-UAE and of the International Scientific Committee on 20th-century heritage. She also currently serves on the Scientific Committee of the ALIPH Foundation and the Technical Working Group of the Federal Committee on Architecture and Urban Heritage of the UAE post-1960s.

Zahra Ali Baba

Zahra Ali Baba is an architect, a cultural Heritage specialist, and the Co-founder of Heritage Workers; a non profit organization dedicated for heritage advocacy, and conservation, with a focus on the civil community's participation in the protection of heritage ecologies. Her career in conservation started when she joined the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters in Kuwait in 2009. Her research on the traditional building cultures of the pre-oil societies in the Gulf region contributed to the Interpretive restoration strategy of the earthen architecture and historic site of Qasr Khaz'al in Kuwait City, leading to a long term research lab to be established



on this research topic. Since 2011, Zahra has been a member of the delegation representing Kuwait at the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, co-facilitating the preparation of the nomination dossiers for both Failaka Island and Abraj Al Kuwait. A recipient of the Getty Keeping it Modern Grant award in 2020, Zahra continues to implement the conservation plan for Kuwait Towers and the urban landscape of the 20th Century Water Management system, in preparation of a World Heritage Nomination Dossier. Zahra initiated/curated Kuwait's first representation at the International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia in 2012, and continued to supervise the national presence in Venice as the commissioner of Kuwait Pavilion from 2014 until 2021.

Suha Hasan

Suha Hasan is the founder of ASH, an architecture practice based in Stockholm. Her research explores obscure histories, material conditions and environmental impacts connected to the built environment, specifically archaeological and heritage sites. She has lectured and taught in universities in Bahrain, Egypt, Singapore, Sweden, Sudan and the UK. She is the founder of Mawane, a platform for urban research based in Bahrain and a founding member of the MSc (Modern Sudan collective). Both platforms enable research and the sharing of its outcomes through public art exhibitions, talks and workshops. She is also the head of the AA Visiting School Khartoum and has served as a consultant for UNDP Sudan. Her current research investigates the agency of architecture and archives in the formation of memory in the post-colonial city. She earned a PhD from KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm. Suha currently lives and works between Bahrain, Khartoum, London, and Stockholm.