

Seminar 10: Art and Politics in the Gulf

Part A (top-down): State Politics

- 1. Marketing the state through art**
- 2. Investing in a cultured and knowledgeable citizenry**

Part B (bottom-up): Socio-cultural evolution

- Challenging the prevalent ideology**
- Expressing a novel, hybrid Arab identity**

Will State policies meet their citizens' aspirations?



Al Sabah (1718)



Al Khalifa (1783)



Al Thani (1825)



Al Nayhan (1761)



Al Maktoum (1833)



Al Qasimi (18th C)



Al Saud (1744)



Oman Al Said (1749)

Rulers of the Gulf and starting date of dynastic rule

1 Marketing the state through art



Sheikha Mayassa visiting the exhibition of Takahashi Murakami in Versailles fully financed by Qatar



Qatar has funded major exhibitions by prominent international artists such as Takahashi Murakami (featured), Cai Guo Qiang, Damien Hirst, Adel Abdessemed and Luc Tuymans. These exhibitions are often first shown abroad, where they are more visible and attract larger audiences, and then brought to Doha.

Besides Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman also promote themselves actively through cultural projection, portraying themselves as hubs of world culture.



Museum of Islamic Arts, Doha



National Theatre of Bahrain



Royal Opera House, Muscat

Art, in the state marketing vision, is part of a greater effort to project the Gulf city-states into the future through urbanization on a universal scale



Artist's impression of Silk City (Madinat Hareer) plan for new city across Kuwait Bay.



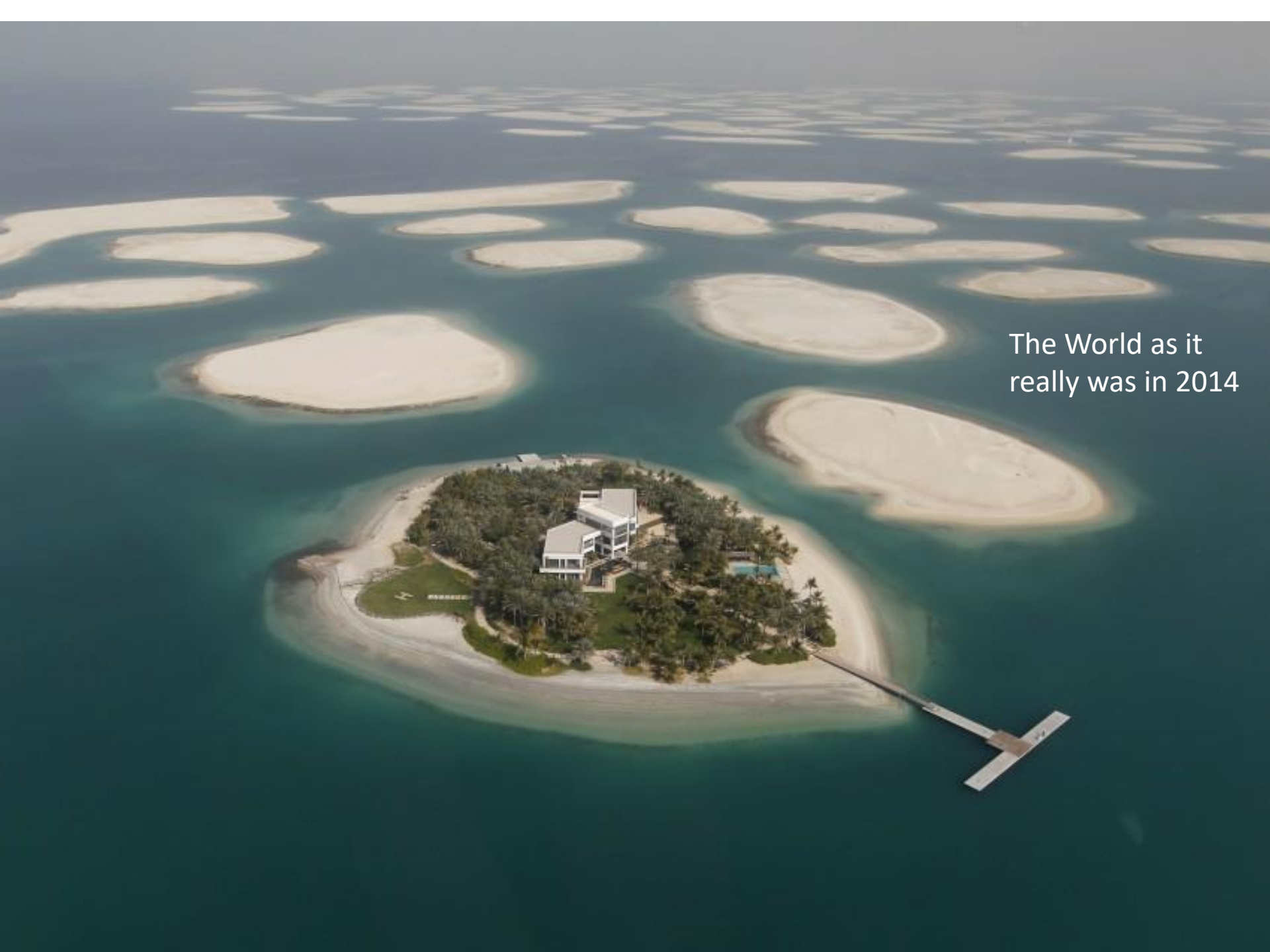
Dubai: Sheikh Zayed Road in the early 1990s



Sheikh Zayed Road, 30 miles West from previous picture, in 2011



Dubai – The World. Artists' Impressions



The World as it
really was in 2014

Falcon City - Dubai



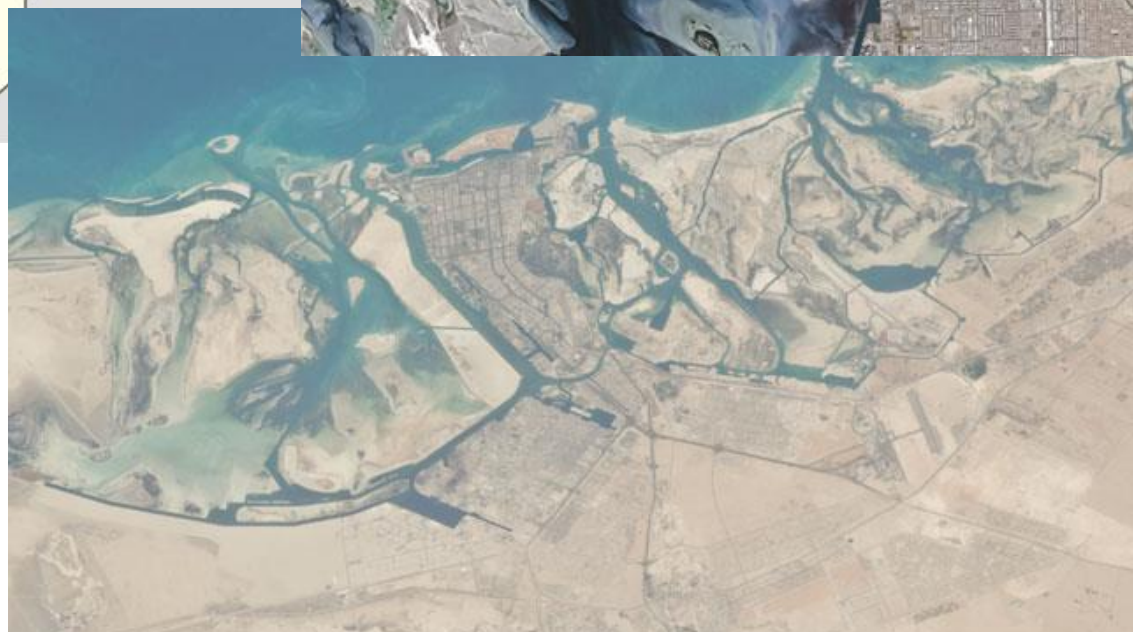
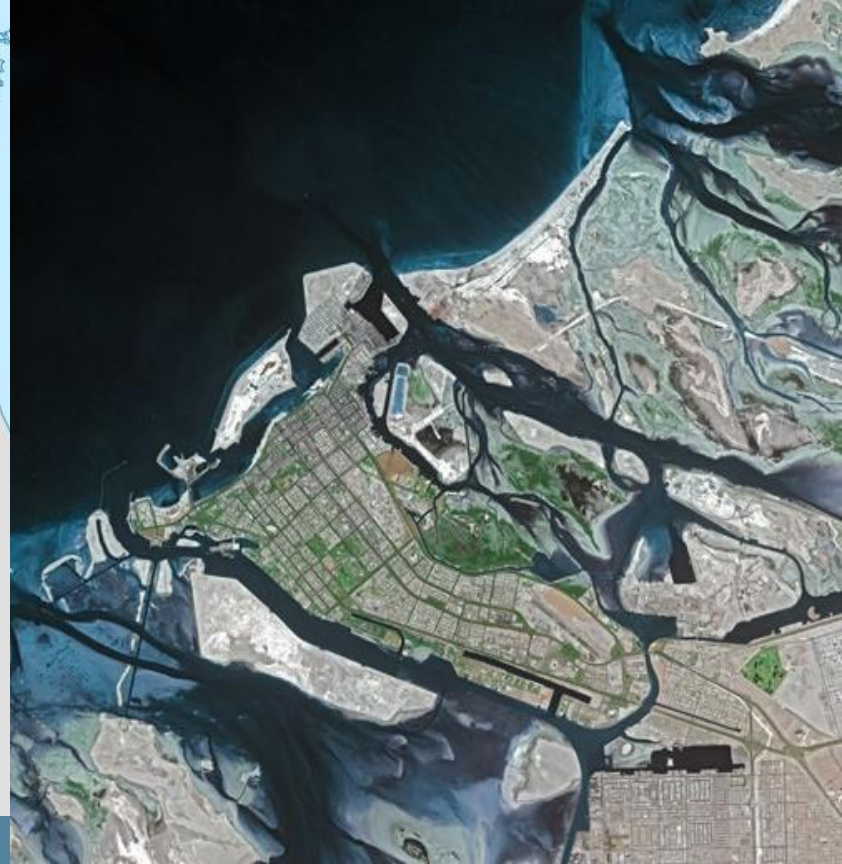
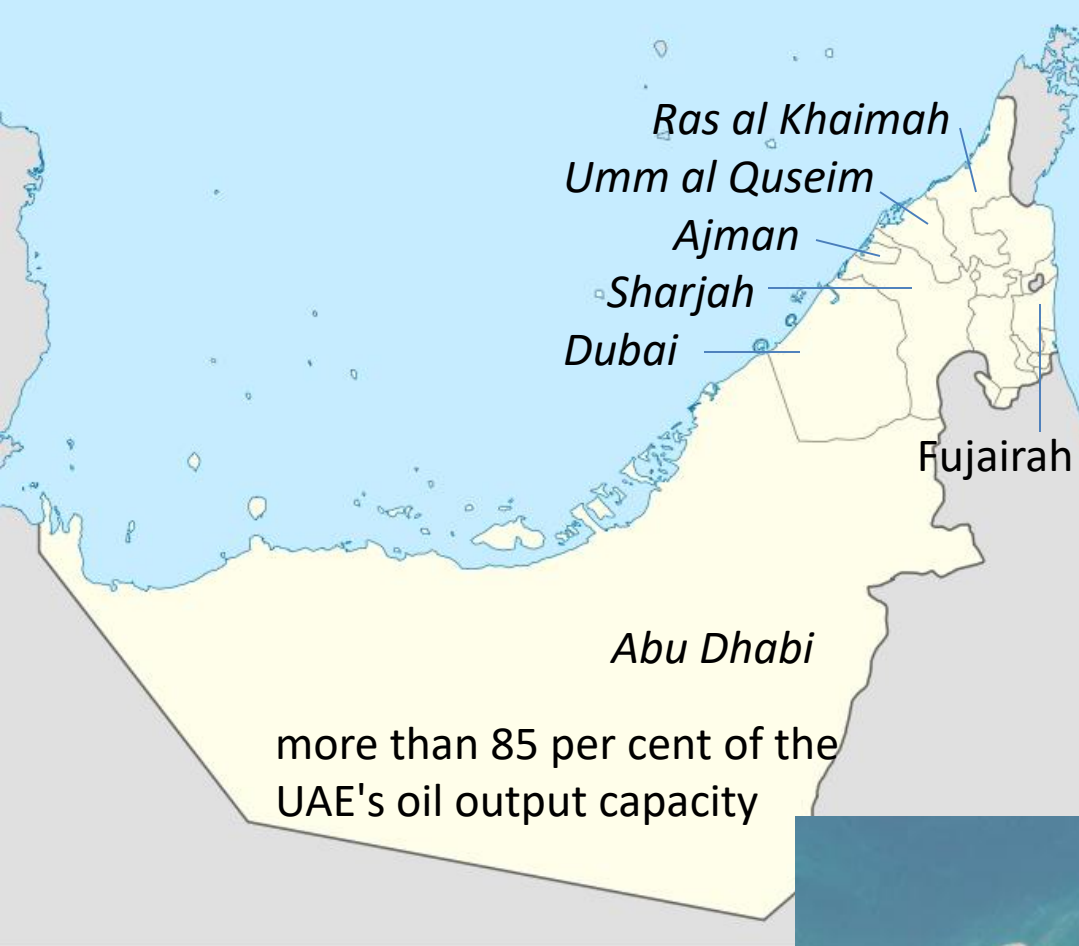
Art Dubai, a yearly gathering of artists and art world professionals in Madinat Jumeirah, attracts people from all over the world (including more than 70 museum delegations)



2 INVESTING IN A CULTURED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE CITIZENRY



*The 'Corniche' of
Abu Dhabi
photographed by
Wilfred Thesiger
in 1948*



Abu Dhabi:
Primus inter pares

Abu Dhabi plans for 2030

- COMMERCE**
- Mixed Use - Retail Area
 - Mixed Use - Office Area
 - Mixed Use - Hotel/Resort Area

- EMPLOYMENT**
- Industrial
 - High Tech/ Business Park

- CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL**
- Government /Nat'l Institution
 - Embassies/Diplomatic
 - Health Care
 - University/ College
 - Cultural

- COMMUNITY**
- Religious
 - School

- OPEN SPACE/RECREATION**
- Parks/Developed Open Space
 - Environment Res./National Park
 - Recreation

- RESIDENTIAL**
- High Density Residential
 - Medium Density Residential
 - Low Density Residential
 - Palace

- OTHER**
- Utility/Infrastructure
 - Agriculture
 - Government Reserve
 - Desert



4.3.2M - Land Use Framework Detail

Creating an art infrastructure in Abu Dhabi

Sheikh Zayed National Museum by Foster + Partners

Maritime Museum by Tadao Ando

Performing Arts Centre (by Zaha Hadid)

The Louvre Abu Dhabi (by Jean Nouvel)

The Guggenheim by Frank Gehry



Saadiyat (Happiness) Island being built in Abu Dhabi



To foster artistic production, Dubai has allowed the settlement in the industrial area of a privately managed gallery and creative spaces hub, with 50-60 businesses



Alserkal Avenue in Al Quoz Industrial Area



THIS IS NOT A MUSEUM!



Al Quoz, Dubai: Housing for Immigrant Labor

Foreign artists lobby for the rights of the immigrant workers: boycott of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi by the artists' collective Gulf Labor, and spin-off Gulf Ultra Luxury Faction (GULF)



SAHARA KINGDOM, proposal for billboard at Global Village, Dubai. 2007



CAMP: Radio Wharfage, Sharjah 2009, view of outdoor studio. The Mumbai-based collective, upon invitation by the Sharjah Art Foundation, established careful logs of the freight carried by the dhows that still ply the trade between the Gulf, the Horn of Africa and India, and a FM radio station for the crews of the boats broadcasting in several languages



Sharjah: New Art Spaces of the Sharjah Art Foundation



QATAR





Andy Warhol visiting Kuwait in 1977

Kuwait: the most progressive cultural scene of the Arabian peninsula in the 1960s and 70s



3 Challenging the prevalent ideology



*Sami Mohammed: Penetration
(bronze), 1989*



Tarek Atoui: **Unplified**, sound installation based on Ghassan Kanafani's novel "Men in the Sun" 2012

Hakim Jamain: Return (acrylic keys), part of the Museum of Manufactured Response to Absence, intervention in the Museum of Modern Art in Kuwait, 2012





'boyat'

بني
عيش





Shurooq Amin: I Like Him I Like Her, 2012



Shurooq Amin: Take Me to Heaven, 2009

TRUTH OR DARE: REVEALING SHADOWS



BAGHDAD WAS UNDER SIEGE. THE CALIPH AND THE LIBRARIANS OF DAR AL-HIKMA TRIED TO SAVE THE KNOWLEDGE CONTAINED IN THEIR BOOKS.

THEY MANAGED TO TRANSFER SOME OF THE CONTENTS OF THE BOOKS INTO NINETY-NINE GEMSTONES WHICH HAD BEEN CRAFTED TO ABSORB THE INFORMATION.

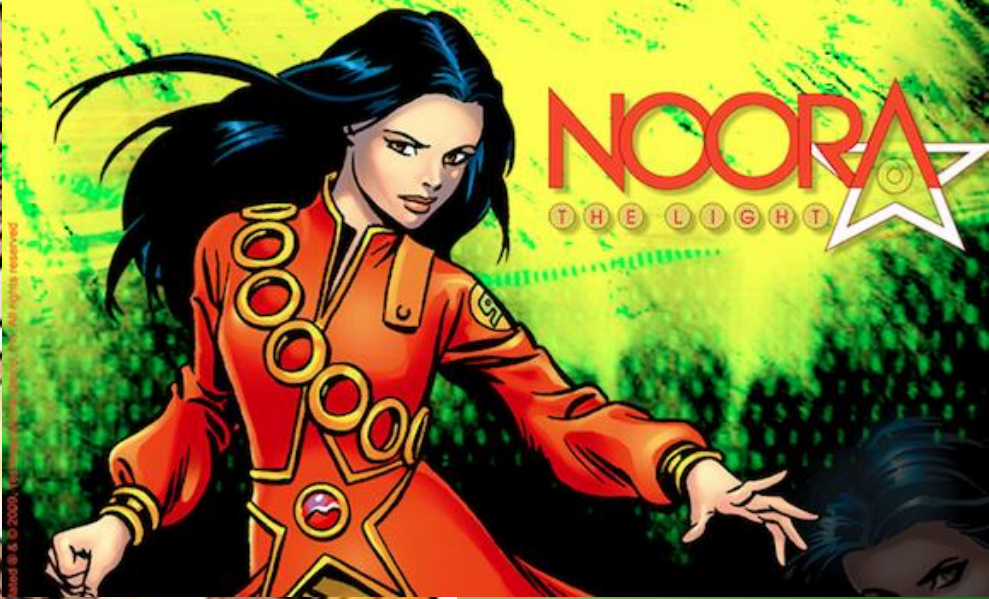
AND THEY WERE ABLE TO SMUGGLE THE NOOR STONES OUT OF BAGHDAD, TAKING THEM TO ANDALUSIA --

-- WHERE THEY WERE PLACED WITHIN THE DOME OF THE GREAT FORTRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE FORTRESS WAS MYSTERIOUSLY DESTROYED, ITS SECRETS LOST TO TIME --

-- AND THE GEMSTONES WERE DISPERSED TO THE TIDE.

RUMORS OF THEIR EXISTENCE PERSISTED, WHISPERS THAT THE STONES HAD SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD AS EUROPE EXPANDED ITS EMPIRES.



Dr. Naif Al Mutawwa:
The 99 (comic books)



Liane Al Ghusain (Kuwait): **Let This Not Be A Record of Our Times.**
3D printed sandstone seal celebrating the opening of the Avenues Mall in Kuwait. 2015



لا إله إلا الله بعد اليوم





Seen at Design Days Doha 2012

Waheeda Malullah: 'Rainbow' action painting





Manal Al Dowayan: Suspended Together, sculptural installation, 2012



Bushra Almutawakel (Yemen): Joy, from the Fulla series, 2010





4

**EXPRESSING A NOVEL, HYBRID
ARAB IDENTITY**



Lamya Gargash:
Pink Ninja, from the
“Presence” series,
2005 - 06



Reem Al Ghaith: from the Held Back series, 2006-7



Mohammed Kazem



Ebtisam Abdulaziz: Autobiography, still from performance, 2009





*Ramin Haerizadeh:
Tehran Cabaret
Dubai, 2009*



Sophia Al Maria: Introduction to the Gulf Colloquium



Ibrahim Quraishi: *Mixed Ancestry*, from the Family Portraits series, 2013)



Ibrahim Quraishi: *Pater Mater Sovieticus*, from the Family Portraits series, 2013)

5

Will state policies meet socio-cultural evolution?

If so: the leadership of the Arab World will continue shifting to the Gulf

If not: social conflict ahead