

ترينالي
الشارقة للعمارة
SHARJAH
ARCHITECTURE
TRIENNIAL

Press release, 7 August 2019

**Sharjah Architecture Triennial Announces Programme
Details for First Edition**

**First group of participants and projects announced alongside
publications**

9 November 2019 – 8 February 2020



Ngurrara artists producing *Ngurrara Canvas II* at Pirnini, May 1997. Photo K.Dayman (Ngurrara Artists and Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency).

The rights of future generations are being decided today.

The Sharjah Architecture Triennial opens this November as the first international platform on the architecture and urbanism of the Global South. Curated by **Adrian Lahoud**, the theme for the inaugural edition is ***Rights of Future Generations***.

The relationship between generations is at the heart of our struggle to avert a climate crisis. Architecture's role is pivotal because it shapes our co-existence with others, with kin that have passed and those yet to come.

Extractive relations between beings are reinforced by the social, technical and mental ecologies we inhabit, and that we continue to reproduce unthinkingly and unfeelingly. Without identifying the fact that the present state of affairs is not an accident of history, but rather a war waged against beings in order to condition them to accept their exploitation, we will never understand climate change on its proper terms - as a symptom of the eradication of alternative perspectives on what it means to live and to co-exist with others.

Yet, alternative perspectives courageously struggle to survive everywhere we turn. The Triennial is an archipelago of such struggles drawn from across the Global South. Their stories are - in the words of the Uluru Statement from the Heart - a gift to those who are ready to receive them. They indicate enduring sites of experimentation against extractive social orders. Their rebellion against extinction has been going on for centuries. The task faced by architects is to align themselves with these struggles in order to imagine what is possible beyond the existing arrangement of things. *Rights of Future Generations* sets out to rethink fundamental questions about architecture and its power to create and sustain alternative modes of existence.

The Triennial is pleased to announce the first group of projects, which includes collaborations among architects, artists, engineers, activists, performers, choreographers, scientists, musicians, and anthropologists. A full list of participants will be announced in September. The Triennial also announces the loan of the *Ngurrara Canvas II*, a monumental painting used as proof of Aboriginal land tenure, marking only the second time that this unique artwork will be exhibited outside Australia.

Select Participants & Projects

More than a thousand years old, the Atacama lines and geoglyphs embody pre-Hispanic representations of the relationship with the underground and its resources. As such, they carry strong consequences for genealogy and ownership. **Alonso Barros, Gonzalo Pimentel**, and **Juan Gili** from the Fundación Desierto de Atacama, with **Mauricio Hidalgo** from the Quechua people of Huatacondo (Tarapacá, Chile), use this history to support indigenous struggles against mining companies and the Chilean State - so as to preserve the Quechua land and its history.

Europeans saw the desert as a failed forest. Yet for centuries, Bedouin societies thrived through their extensive knowledge of plants that flourish in arid environments. Artist duo **Cooking Sections** (Alon Schwabe and Daniel Fernández Pascual) reimagine the role of desert plants, challenging the idea of the desert as a bare landscape. Working with engineering practice **AKT II**, they are prototyping a new model of non-irrigated urban gardens for Sharjah and other cities in arid environments.

Architect **Dima Srouji**, sound artist **Dirar Kalash**, archaeologist and anthropologist **Silvia Truini**, anthropologist **Nadia Abu El-Haj**, and lawyer **Shahrazad Odeh** look at the displacement of archaeological fragments and the constant alteration of their context in Sebastia, Palestine. Asking how to resist the future manipulation of the ground, the team proposes a sonic construction of the constantly shifting terrain.

In its various manifestations throughout history, the architectural element of the platform has been a mediation between social formations and the ground - whether as house plinth, temple basement, or theatre stage. Architecture office **DOGMA** investigates historical examples of platforms - such as the Aboriginal Bora rings, Ancient Greek threshing floors, the stairs of the Apadana in Persepolis, and Adolphe Appia's eurhythmic spaces - to understand the meaning of a quintessential and yet overlooked architectural element. A new commission by **DOGMA** in the centre of Sharjah will engage with the thriving public space of the city.

Felicity Scott and **Mark Wasiuta** unearth the archives of the audio-visual programme that was part of Habitat, the UN Conference on Human Settlements held in Vancouver in 1976. Looking at the visual culture and knowledge structures that Habitat aspired to produce, Scott and Wasiuta examine the mechanisms of international aid and the construction of an imaginary of the Global South.

Architect **Francesco Sebregondi** and queer theorist **Jasbir K. Puar** research practices of maiming and containment in Palestine, particularly in the context of the brutal repression of the Great Return March protests in Gaza. Their joint project exposes the condition of the Israel/Gaza border as a site where new techniques of biopolitical, infrastructural, and urban control are currently being trialled.

Named after the French diplomat responsible for the Suez Canal, the Lessepsian migration connected the marine ecology of the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, changing both forever. In a three-act performance coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the Canal's opening, the **HaRaKa Platform/Adham Hafez Company** (Adham Hafez, Mohsen Binali, Mona Gamil, Lamia Gouda, Adam Kucharski, and Donia Massoud) explores the legacies of its construction by looking at the intergenerational migration of animal species and dance gestures.

The Ganges Delta is a place dominated by fluidity and movement of land and water. At the confluence of the Padma, Jamuna, and Meghna rivers, the line between water and land is indistinguishable due to tidal dominance. Water inflates during the monsoon, expanding territory, swallowing the banks and everything on it. This condition has produced a peculiar case of intergenerational inhabitation and land title, where the collective memories of older generations inform descendants about their possessions submerged in the water. **Marina Tabassum** and associates chart the paradoxical relationships of dry and wet culture, oral history and land title which define the unique condition of this unsettled landscape.

Visual artist **Marwa Arsanios** is continuing her work on the relation between feminism, land rights, and ecological activism. She is working with ecofeminist political groups that practice communal farming, such as the Kurdish autonomous women's movement in Northern Syria, Grupo Semillas in Tolima, Colombia, and DESMI in Chiapas, Mexico. Focusing on the localised knowledge of the land, Arsanios calls into question longstanding associations of womanhood and nature in terms of fertility and nation building.

Wooden sailing vessels, or *dhow*s, have crossed the Indian Ocean for centuries, creating a geography of trade that connects India, Iran, the Gulf coast and East Africa. The dhows predate European imperialism, and continue to thrive by operating in the gaps of global shipping routes. Anthropologist **Nidhi Mahajan** charts these networks, examining relations of kinship, domesticity, patronage and debt that are formed through and on the dhows.

Public Works looks at the architecture of the so-called maid's room, which is common in Lebanese homes. Through this particular interior, they confront the structural marginalisation of migrant domestic workers through the Kafala system. Relying on historical accounts, archival documentation, legal research, and interviews, their project targets the audience's individual responsibilities - whether as sponsors of domestic workers, architects, law-makers, or as beneficiaries of a normalized system.

Mehr is a Farsi word that translates to compassion. It is also the name of the largest public housing scheme of the Islamic Republic, constituting 2.3 million nuclear-family dwelling units spread across the territory of Iran. Using the *Mehr* as a base, architect **Samaneh Moafi** develops a project in collaboration with **Platform 28, WORKNOT!** collective, **Mhamad Safa, Maria Bessarabova** and the residents of *Mehr* in Dowlatabad, Esfahan. The project sets out to challenge the structures of state patronage and male patriarchy in working-class homes. Organising a workshop and deploying performative methods, the work reclaims domesticity as a space for collective rituals and alternative forms of dwelling.

A trans-disciplinary team from Indonesia, Singapore, and Switzerland has come together to investigate the story of the *subak* - the complex irrigation system of Bali that has, thanks to the close cooperation of farmers and priests, held the island in a balance for a thousand years. Composers **Vivian Wang** and **Dewa Alit**, artist collective **U5**, and architects **Li Tavor, Alessandro Bosshard**, and **Matthew van der Ploeg**, working with **Adam Jasper** at ETH Zürich, explore the homologies of landscape, time, and music. The project recounts how the hydraulic and cultural landscape of the *subak* became one of the first sites of resistance to the so-called Green Revolution.

Ngurrara Canvas II is a 10 x 8 metre painting that was produced in 1997 by a group of forty artist-claimants in support of their native title claim over vast stretches of the Great Sandy Desert in Western Australia. It is the largest and one of only several examples where painting has been used as proof of Aboriginal land tenure and native title. *NCII* embodies intergenerational Aboriginal relationships to

country, through its depiction of the unifying feature of *jila*, the permanent waterholes that underpin law and ceremony for Ngurrara people. It will be presented in Sharjah alongside newly commissioned work on the legal history of the native title hearing.

Artists: **Manmarriya Daisy Andrews, Munangu Huey Bent, Ngarta Jinny Bent, Waninya Biddy Bonney, Nyuju Stumpy Brown, Pajiman Warford Budgieman, Jukuna Mona Chuguna, Raraj David Chuguna, Tapiri Peter Clancy, Jijijar Molly Dededar, Purlta Maryanne Downs, Kurtiji Peter Goodijie, Kuji Rosie Goodjie, Yirrpura Jinny James, Nyangarni Penny K-Lyon, Luurn Willy Kew, Kapi Lucy Kubby, Monday Kunga Kunga, Milyinti Dorothy May, Ngarralja Tommy May, Murungkurr Terry Murray, Mawukura Jimmy Nerrimah, Ngurnta Amy Nuggett, Japarti Joseph Nuggett, Nanjarn Charlie Nunjun, Yukarla Hitler Pamba, Parlun Harry Bullen, Kurnti Jimmy Pike, Killer Pindan, Miltja Thursday Pindan, Pulikarti Honey Bulagardie, Nada Rawlins, Ngumumpa Walter Rose, Kulyukulyu Trixie Shaw, Pijaji Peter Skipper, Jukuja Dolly Snell, Ngirlpirr Spider Snell, Mayapu Elsie Thomas, George Tuckerbox, and Wajinya Paji Honeychild Yankarr.**

Publications

The inaugural Sharjah Architecture Triennial is developing an unconventional, collaborative editorial model that aspires to decentralise the act of publishing, and to foster new conversations beyond the field of architecture. A sequence of publications both in print and online will combine different formats, temporalities, and genres, challenging the idea of the exhibition catalogue.

Rights of Future Generations: Conditions is an editorial collaboration with a leading group of critical and independent media platforms from the Middle East and beyond. A series of new essays authored by the Triennial participants, *Conditions* explores sites of environmental struggle and social experimentation from across the Global South - both anticipating and complementing the exhibition. The essays will be published online between August and November 2019 on [Ajam Media Collective](#), [ArtReview](#), [e-flux architecture](#), [Mada Masr](#), and others to be announced. A feed of the entire series will be available on the Triennial's website.

Conditions will also be a printed book, to be published on 9 November 2019 to coincide with the opening of the Triennial. A second volume, ***Rights of Future Generations: Propositions***, will be published in spring 2020. It will feature documentation of the inaugural exhibition, alongside newly commissioned texts and translations, expanding and reflecting on the theme. The two volumes will appear in a double edition of English and Arabic. The Triennial is pleased to announce [Morcos Key](#) as its editorial designer.

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Press Office

International Press Office at [Pelham Communications](#), T: +44 (0) 20 89693959 | @pelhamcomms
Sophie Campos: sophie@pelhamcommunications.com
Eleanor Gibson: eleanor@pelhamcommunications.com

Sharjah Press Office
Anum Laghari: anum@sharjaharchitecture.org

Notes to Editors

Founded by Khalid Al Qasimi in 2017, Sharjah Architecture Triennial is the first major platform for architecture and urbanism in the Middle East, North and East Africa, South and Southeast Asia. Participating in international conversations while anchored in the specificity of Sharjah and the United Arab Emirates, the Triennial offers new spaces for critical reflection that situates the built environment within its complex social, economic, and cultural contexts. Triennial programming invites dialogue that accommodates Sharjah's rapid urban development amidst historical shifts, ongoing cultural encounters, environmental challenges, and aspirations for the future.

Each edition of the Triennial will be led by a curator who spearheads a core programme of exhibitions, urban interventions, conferences and public talks with the participation of local and international practitioners and researchers.

www.sharjaharchitecture.org

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Adrian Lahoud

Adrian Lahoud is Dean of the School of Architecture at the Royal College of Art London. His work critically examines concepts of *scale* and *shelter* in architecture in light of emancipatory urban and environmental struggles, focusing on the Middle East and Africa. He was Research Fellow on the Forensic Architecture project and head of the MA Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University. He has also led urban design programmes at the Architectural Association and University College London. Recent exhibits include: 'Climate Crimes' in *The Future Starts Here*, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2018; 'The Shape of the Eclipse' in *Let's Talk about the Weather: Art and Ecology in a Time of Crisis*, Sursock Museum, Beirut, 2016; and 'Secular Cosmologies' in the Oslo Architecture Triennale 2016: *After Belonging*. Recent publications include: 'The Mediterranean: A New Imaginary' in *New Geographies*, Harvard University Press; 'The Bodele Declaration' in *Grain, Vapour, Ray: Textures of the Anthropocene*, MIT Press; and 'Nomos and Cosmos' in *Supercommunity*, MIT Press.