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الشارقة للعمارة
SHARJAH
ARCHITECTURE
TRIENNIAL

Press Release, 3 April 2018

**Sharjah Architecture Triennial: the first international platform on
architecture in the MENASA region**

Sharjah Architecture Triennial will take place in the Emirate of Sharjah, as the first major platform to invite dialogue on architecture and urbanism in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

The Triennial seeks to create new spaces for critical dialogue on contemporary architecture and urbanism by drawing on regional and international conversations while remaining rooted in the UAE. The inaugural edition opens in November 2019 and will be held in multiple sites across the capital city of Sharjah over the course of three months.



Aerial view of Corniche Street, Sharjah. Photograph by Ieva Saudargaitė

Founded by Sheikh Khalid Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Urban Planning Council, Sharjah Architecture Triennial is set to reframe ongoing conversations about the built environment of this diverse region and to address its social, economic, environmental and cultural context.

Sharjah Architecture Triennial responds to a need for creating a new space for critical dialogue that includes architectural practitioners, scholars, government bodies, students, and the general public.

Since the 20th century, rapid urban development throughout the MENASA region has produced multi-layered cities that simultaneously reflect historical shifts, fluid cross-cultural encounters, and aspirations for the future. Sharjah's history as a multi-ethnic trade port contributes to the urban density and cultural diversity that form its contemporary urban fabric. One of the UAE's most vibrant and cosmopolitan urban center up to the 1980s, Sharjah has enjoyed a more deliberate rate of development than other Gulf cities. Its built environment retains a human scale while historic, modern, and contemporary buildings coexist in a layered urban landscape, making it a rich site for this inaugural Triennial.

In the lead-up to the first edition, Sharjah Architecture Triennial will hold public programmes of talks and events to help create fertile spaces for dialogue. The first programme is a panel discussion entitled "Shifting Morphology of Gulf Cities" will be held in Sharjah on 7 April and is organised in partnership with the College of Architecture, Art and Design at the American University of Sharjah and the Sharjah Directorate of Town Planning and Survey.

Sheikh Khalid Al Qasimi, Chairman of Sharjah Architecture Triennial, commented:

"This is a crucial moment in the understanding and development of architecture and urban planning of the MENASA region. The regional urban landscape is evolving at a tremendous speed and impacting how urban dwellers interact amongst themselves. Sharjah Architecture Triennial will offer an accessible platform for critical reflection on the social and cultural issues that we face at both regional and international levels. Through the creative process of this exchange, we believe that we can arrive at new ways of designing cities."

- ENDS -

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Notes to Editors

Sharjah Architecture Triennial is a non-profit initiative legally housed under the Sharjah Urban Planning Council and funded by Government of Sharjah. Founding Partners include Sharjah Urban Planning Council; Directorate of Town Planning and Survey; American University of Sharjah,

College of Architecture, Art & Design; Sharjah Art Foundation; and Bee'ah (the UAE's leading integrated environmental & waste management company).

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

www.sharjaharchitecture.org

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Sheikh Khalid Al Qasimi

Sheikh Khalid bin Sultan Al Qasimi is Chairman of Sharjah Urban Planning Council and the Sharjah Architecture Triennial. Drawing on his academic background in architecture and design at the Architectural Association and Central Saint Martins in London, Sheikh Khalid oversees integrated inter-governmental efforts to introduce a new vitality into Sharjah's urban development. Under his leadership, Sharjah Urban Planning Council ensures that Sharjah and its residents have access to a future with sustainable economic growth and social wellbeing. Building on this foundation, the Sharjah Architecture Triennial serves as the first major platform to address critical reflection on the architecture and urbanism in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia region, placing Sharjah's development in dialogue with the wider region.