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ARTIST MOHAMED AHMED IBRAHIM TO REPRESENT UAE AT LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2022

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Artist Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim to represent UAE at la Biennale di Venezia 2022

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Painter and sculptor Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim will represent UAE at the 2022 edition of la Biennale di Venezia (Venice Biennale), in an exhibition curated by Maya Allison for the National Pavilion UAE.

Ibrahim is known for being one of the UAE's earliest experimental artists and an influential member of the UAE's now-historic avant-garde art community, which formed in the early 1980s. Through his form-led practice and handcrafted works, he responds to his environment, with keen affinity for the natural landscapes of the UAE. Major institutions that have acquired his work include the British Museum, Centre George Pompidou, Sharjah Art Foundation, Art Jameel, and Barjeel Art Foundation. His work was included in the Kochi-Muziris Biennial 2016 and numerous solo and group exhibitions internationally.

The National Pavilion UAE's 2022 exhibition will be curated by Maya Allison, Executive Director and Chief Curator of the New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery ("The NYUAD Art Gallery").

"I am inspired by the coasts, sierras and mountain lights of my home in Khor Fakkan, where my family has lived for generations," says Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim. "Here in the UAE we are surrounded by diverse and ancient landscapes as well as advanced urbanisation. This tension is one of the concepts I explore in my work through organic materials, by allowing my subconscious to find the forms. I am delighted to be able to share my locally-rooted practice with a global audience at the Venice Biennale."

Maya Allison says, "When I first encountered a work by Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, its playful, abstract yet organic form electrified my curatorial senses. Later, discovering the depth and extent of his legacy was a watershed moment in my study of the UAE's contemporary art movement, which dates back half a century. Ibrahim continues to innovate, with a prolific daily practice and several flourishing bodies of work. He is one of the most important artists working in the UAE today, and has influenced generations of artists here. I am looking forward to an even greater international audience discovering this work with his solo exhibition at the Venice Biennale."


With this exhibition, the National Pavilion UAE is moving towards a more artist-led approach to curation in recognition of the strength of the UAE's artistic community. The selection committee appointed Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim for the 2022 exhibition and following discussions, the artist chose Maya Allison, one of the leading experts on the contemporary regional art scene, as his curator. This is not a first-time collaboration between Allison and Ibrahim, who have formed a strong working relationship across exhibitions such as The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery's *But We Cannot See Them: Tracing a UAE Art Community 1988-2008*.

The 59th International Art Exhibition of la Biennale di Venezia will be held between 23 April 2022 and 27 November 2022, under the artistic direction of Cecilia Alemani.

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Wetland, the National Pavilion UAE's upcoming architecture exhibition for the 2021 Venice Biennale, will open on 22 May 2021. The exhibition is curated by Dubai-based architects Wael Al Awar and Kenichi Teramoto, who are exploring a renewable, environmentally friendly cement alternative inspired by salt and mineral compounds found in the UAE's Sabkha (salt flats). Wetland marks the National Pavilion UAE's tenth exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

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