



PRESS RELEASE

Pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain
at the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia

IN A WORLD OF YOUR OWN

In a World of Your Own is the Kingdom of Bahrain's first national participation at the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia.

The pavilion, located at the Arsenale Artiglierie, was commissioned by Her Excellency Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and curated by Melissa Enders-Bhatia.

A subjective exploration of culture and self lies at the core of the art practices of Mariam Haji, Waheeda Malullah and Camille Zakharia. With an emphasis on the importance of identity, the pavilion examines the expression of interiority and private meanings in these artists. Mariam Haji's drawings of imaginary landscapes and personal confrontations represent the artist's personal and highly internal struggles relating to gender, spirituality and social norms. Realistic in style yet imbued with strong personal symbolism, Haji provocatively questions traditional modes of thinking and cultural stereotypes. Playful exploration is the hallmark of Malullah's art practice. However, through a careful staging of her photographic compositions, the artist explores deeper issues regarding the role of women, dress and religion in her more traditional community. Lebanese born Camille Zakaria has practiced as an artist in Bahrain for close to twenty years. An itinerant, his collage art practice focuses on the themes of belonging and memory. Using images from his archive of over 20,000 photographs, the artist compulsively reconfigures these images in an attempt to make whole a life characterized by chance and geographical and personal dislocation.

These three artists reflect very different personal experiences and personal contexts in a country characterized by rapid modernization, urbanization and resulting social and economic heterogeneity. Self-taught Malullah, internationally educated Haji, and nomadic Zakharia are indicative of the varied and complex experiences of being an artist in Bahrain, a relative newcomer to the world of international contemporary art.

Ludovico Centis, Matteo Ghidoni and Michele Marchetti were responsible for the exhibition design of the Bahrain pavilion.

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