



Pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain
at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition- la Biennale di Venezia

Fundamentalists and Other Arab Modernisms, is the Kingdom of Bahrain's third National participation at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition- La Biennale di Venezia, following its two successful participations with Reclaim in 2010 and Background in 2012.

The pavilion, located in the Arsenale Artiglierie, is commissioned by her Excellency Sheikha Mai Bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, Minister of Culture of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the curators are Bernard Khoury and Dr. George Arbid, co-founders of the Arab Center for Architecture (ACA), based in Beirut.

For its third participation, the Kingdom of Bahrain decided to concentrate on the wider Arab World and use the opportunity of the pavilion to support the efforts of the Arab Center for Architecture in creating a centralized database of architectural documents from across the Arab World. In parallel to the exhibition in Venice, significant efforts have been made toward the collection of an important number of documents that have been added to the database of the ACA that will be online to coincide with the opening of the Biennale. It is hoped that this will highlight the importance of collecting architecture archives; a task that the Arab Center for Architecture is undertaking.

Fundamentalists and Other Arab Modernisms is an exploration of the links between colonialism, fundamentalism and modernity across the Arab World, in an effort to understand the links between each of these movements and their relation to the architecture of the time. At a time, when the Arab World is witnessing many changes, it seemed relevant to reflect on the legacy of the pan-Arab project.

The exhibition has been designed by DW5/ Bernard Khoury architects in Beirut and consists of a large-scale map of the Arab World that references the colonial maps. A circular library that contains the exhibition catalogue and gathers a selection of a hundred built projects between 1914 and 2014 across the Arab World surrounds the map. Above the installation, a dome supports projections of a commissioned screenplay by Studio Safar which comprises of a reading of the 22 national anthems of the Arab countries.

A collection of seven different essays form the scientific content of the exhibition and offer a historical overview of the evolution of architecture within the different geographical components of the Arab World: Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, the Levant, North Africa and East Africa. Each essay is accompanied by a selection of relevant archival documents of buildings from that region within the historical period of 1914 to 2014. The archival documents gathered in the publication represent a selection from within a wider collection that will be made available on the online database of the Arab Center for Architecture.

The collection of essays as well as a selection of a 100 buildings will form the basis of the exhibition catalogue entitled, Architecture from the Arab World 1914-2014 a selection, available for consultation at the pavilion.

For press enquiries contact:

bahrainpavilion@moc.gov.bh