



إكسبو 2020
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING WEEK

Women in Arabia and Islam: the poets and storytellers that shaped the world

Women's Pavilion Programming

Concept Note





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Date	Thursday 16 th December, 2021
Time	Event time: 16:00-18:00 Dubai Time Arrival time: 15:30 at the Women's Pavilion
Venue	Women's Pavilion Majlis

Overview

Women from the Arab and Muslim world have always pioneered in the field of education, from Fatima Al-Fihri, who established the world's first university in Morocco the 9th century; to Sitt Al Sham, who sponsored the advancement of sciences and arts in Syria in the 12th century; to Princess Fatima Bint Ismail, who donated land and sponsored the building of Cairo University in 1914; to Sheikha Fatima Bint Mubarak, the mother of the United Arab Emirates, who prioritized the education of women and girls with the formation of the United Arab Emirates and supported free public education for all till today. Beyond the formal pillar of education, women also contributed to shaping knowledge, instilling values, and developing fields of art, literature and poetry.

While Arabic poetry played a transformative role in history, women's contributions were often overlooked. Throughout history, women were not only the inspirations and central figures of both oral or written literature, but also have taken major parts in the composition, narration and transmission of poetry, legends and stories. Spanning 7,000 years, from the sorrowful rithā' (eulogies) of Khansa to the gleeful scorn of Wallada bint al-Mustakfi, from diwans (collected poems) to ghazal (love-song), Arab women boldly refused to be silenced. The vibrant words from Arab and Muslim women celebrate feminine wit and desire, pushed boundaries of social and cultural norms, and nurtured generations.

Poetry has always prevailed in the Arab world, and women has spearheaded the movement since its dawn. From pre-islamic to Andalusian periods, beautiful and powerful females in the history of poetry have not only promoted the Islamic values and Arab culture to other parts of the world, but also inspired women's suffrage movements in the Arab region.

Today, poetry is also a driver for social changes. Poetry can be part of manifestations that allow us to express ourselves via non-conventional ways. When unable to challenge ideas such as gender-based stereotypes, we use poetry to speak up, stimulate critical senses, reach a wider audience as well as leave a lasting impact. It is observed that there is an increasing use of poetry to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

As such, through this panel our goal is to recognize and celebrate Arab and Muslim women as culture carriers, nurturers and educators, who have shaped and inspired the minds of generations across history and continue to do so today in our modern world. The imprint of women of Arabia and Islam in poetry cannot be denied and will not be stopped.



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Join us in the Women's Pavilion to explore how better we could recognize the role of women from Arabia and Islamic region and amplify their positive contributions in through poetry and literature:

Key Questions

- What is the role of women from Arabia and Islamic region in advancing poetry and literature and in turn what is Arabic poetry's role in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment?
- How does poem and literature pass on the values of a community and nation to generations? How have poems shaped our cultural identities?
- What are some of the gender-based stereotypes and challenges we face today in the field of literature, especially in the Arab and Muslim region?



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Event agenda

Poetry Slam from Dr. Afra Atiq (15 min) 16:00-16:15

Presentation from Dr. Rafia Ghubash (15 min) 16:15- 16:30

Panel discussion (70 min) 16:30-17:40

Hind Alowais – Moderator

Senior Vice President of International Participanet, Expo 2020 Dubai, United Arab Emirates



Ms. Alowais is the Senior Vice President of the International Participants Department at Expo 2020 Dubai where she oversees the presence and participation of International and intergovernmental organizations, a wide range of stakeholders including global & local NGOs, academic institutions, philanthropic foundations, global initiatives at next World Expo “Expo 2020 Dubai”. Ms. Alowais will aim to create a space to address global challenges by bringing forward innovative and impact driven initiatives through building a platform for multi-stakeholder partnership to advance the global development agenda.

Ms. Alowais was a Senior Advisor for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships at UN Women. In that position, she oversaw the successful establishment and launch of the UN Women Liaison Office in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima, the First Lady of the UAE. Ms. Alowais was also responsible for initiating the process of looking into the role of religion in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment at UN Women headquarters.

Previous to that position, Ms. Alowais was the Deputy Permanent Representative at the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the United Nations in New York. She has worked on key security files such as the Syria conflict, Combatting Piracy in Somalia and disarmament issues before becoming actively involved in the Rio+20 process and 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development .

She later held the position of senior gender advisor and launched the UAE Women Peace and Security Initiative series in Partnership with UN Women and Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security as a contribution towards the Global study on the implementation of the UNSC 1325.



Dr. Rafia Ghubash – Speaker

Professor of psychiatry, Ex President of the Arabian Gulf University (2001-2009), Founder of woman's museum the first of its kind in the Arab region, United Arab Emirates



Professor Dr. Rafia Obaid Ghubash is the former President of the Arabian Gulf University (AGU) in Bahrain. She studied at Cairo University to gain her Bachelor of Medicine degree and went on to receive a Ph. D. in Community and Epidemiological Psychiatry from the University of London. She is also President of the Arab Network for Women in Science and Technology, a network to help women scientists attain leadership positions and to attract more women into science. She is a practicing psychiatrist and she held the post of Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Services at United Arab Emirates University until 2001. Prof. Ghubash has written extensively on Psychiatry and received the Award of Excellence Physicians in 2004. She was also honoured with the Middle East Women's Educational Achievement Award in 2002. In autumn 2012, Prof. Dr. Ghubash opened the first museum in the United Arab Emirates that is dedicated entirely to the accomplishments of women from the region. 'Bait Al Banat' translates to 'House of Women' and acts as a cultural center documenting the role of women in the United Arab Emirates throughout its history and into modern times, it also houses historic artifacts that show the history of the United Arab Emirates. She is a member of the World Future Council.

Dr. Afra Atiq – Panelist

Emirati spoken word poet, United Arab Emirates



Dr. Afra Atiq is an Emirati scholar, teaching artist, and poet. She holds a PhD in Media and Creative Industries at UAE University and a Master's degree in diplomacy.

She has been published in international peer reviewed journals. Her research focuses on mapping the Arab literary sphere, education, literacy, social media effects and collective memory.

Over the years, she mentored and coached students and writers. She has also conducted numerous workshops at schools, universities and cultural institutions.

She has won multiple awards for her poetry and has been featured on stages across the world. Her art explores a broad range of topics which include heritage, culture, identity, and legacy.

She writes and performs in a blend of English, Arabic, and French. She's a founding member of Untitled Chapters – a community for Emirati women writers.



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Dr. Shihab Ghanem – Panelist

Engineer, administrator, poet and author, United Arab Emirates

Dr. Shihab Ghanem (b. 1940) is a UAE citizen living in Dubai. He has a Mechanical and Electrical Engineering (double degree) (Aberdeen University, Scotland), 1964. Master in Water Resource Engineering (Roorkee University, India), 1975. Doctorate in Economics (Cardiff, University, Wales). 1989. Honorary Doctorate in Literature, Soka University, Tokyo (2015).



He has published 90 books in Arabic and English including 20 books of Arabic verse and 30 collection of translated verse, half of them from Arabic to English. Some of his poetry has been translated into 20 languages.

There are more than 20 songs by various singers including Sami Yousuf and Suchetha Satish based on his poems.

He is the recipient of about 30 awards including: 1st prize for poetry in the UAE (1984); Rashid for Scientific Excellence (1989); Book prize from the Ruler of Sharjah for poetry translation (2003 and 2007); Tagore Peace Award (2012); World Poetry Society Intercontinental Poetry Award, Chennai, 2013; UAE Cultural Personality of the Year, Al-Owais Creativity Awards (2013); honouring by Al-Ithnainiah, Jeddah, (2013).; GALA Award (2013), etc.

He is retired and his last posts were: Director of Engineering Dubai Ports & Jebel Ali Free Zone and Advisor to the Chairman of the Ports and Free Zone, then Managing Director of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Technology Park, Dubai, UAE.

Q&A session (20 min) 17:40-18:00



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APPENDIX 1

Introduction of the Women's Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, Louvre Abu Dhabi, Women in Arabia and Islam series

EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Since the first Great Exhibition held in London in 1851, Expos have connected people and provided special spaces to spark dialogue amongst those who are curious about the future. Running from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai will bring the world together to imagine, design and build a more sustainable, dignified and prosperous world. One that is cleaner, safer and healthier. One inspired by collective action around shared challenges, and in which future generations will flourish. Under the theme of "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future" and our three sub-themes of Sustainability, Mobility and Opportunity, Expo will be a platform for positive, collaborative change.

THE WOMEN'S PAVILION AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Our Women's Pavilion, under the exhibition title 'New Perspectives', is a critical component of this vision and will be curated by Expo 2020 Dubai in collaboration with Cartier. In highlighting the positive contributions of women, we will demonstrate that when women thrive, so too does all of humanity.

The UAE has dedicated itself to ensuring that issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are centrally addressed in everything we do at Expo 2020 Dubai. By shining a light on women past and present, known and unknown, the Women's Pavilion challenges the misconceptions that women still frequently face, seeks out new perspectives on the impact women bring to our world, explores new approaches to creating a more equal world, and identifies ways in which we, together, can create new perspectives, change deep-rooted perceptions, and adjust mindsets.

Through different modes of convening, our goal is to highlight that the only way to peace, prosperity, and sustainability is through the full and equal participation of women.

WOMEN IN ARABIA AND ISLAM

Women in Arabia and Islam is a series of ten cultural talks held in partnership with the Louvre Abu Dhabi research programme inspired by the artworks of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum and celebrating the rich Muslim heritage. Taking a historical and cultural perspective, the events focus on sharing and recognizing the positive role women from Arab and Islamic backgrounds have played in the course of history until today.