

جنّاح المساءة WOMEN'S PAVILION



EXPO
2020
DUBAI
UAE

IN COLLABORATION

WITH *Cartier*



TRAVEL AND CONNECTIVITY WEEK 9-15 JANUARY 2022

Super SHeroes: How Arab and Muslim Women Use Media to Connect and Shatter Stereotypes

EVENT DETAILS

- **Date:** Thursday 13th January, 2022
- **Time:** Event time: 16:00-18:00 Dubai Time
- **Venue:** Women's Pavilion Majlis

CORE ISSUE

Arab and Muslim women are using traditional and new media to challenge outdated, incorrect, and two-dimensional images of themselves and of the gender roles in the region and worldwide. Digital, interactive media provides new opportunities to connect and disseminate nuanced and diverse images of women in Arabia and Islam as well as to advance, collectively, gender equality and women empowerment throughout the region.

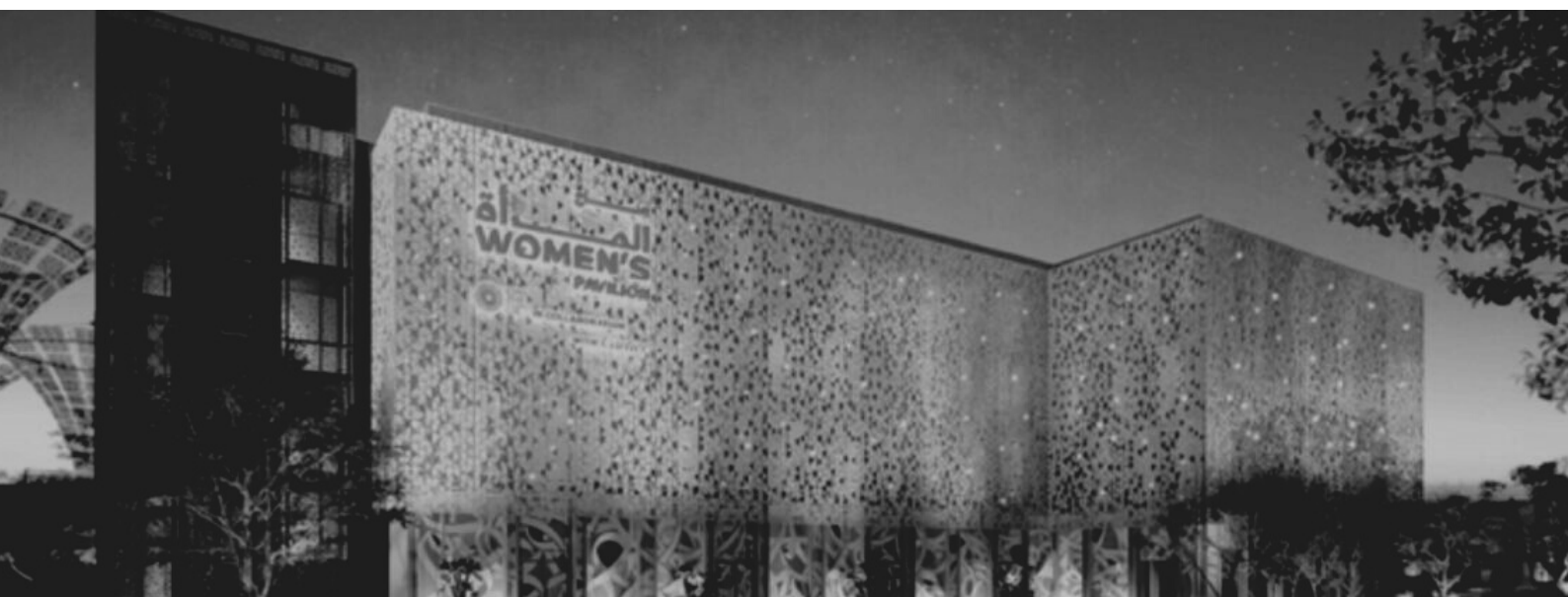
VISIBILITY, DIVERSITY, AND A VOICE

Historically, the invention of print, photo cameras, the radio and the television have brought the world closer together. The opportunity for learning about other people, places, cultures, and religions improved the extent to which people across the world felt connected. And yet, the discovery of new worlds through the mass media went hand in hand with stereotyping and "orientalism", as Western-dominated media outlets and the film industry depicted other cultures in a rather two-dimensional and caricatured way.

On screen, for a long time, Arab and Muslim women have been stereotyped as passive victims of Arab and Islamic patriarchy, subjugated, oppressed and in need of rescue. Muslim women have been provided little agency – their ability to think and act independently often depicted as limited. Starting with the iconic 1962 movie Lawrence of Arabia, women in the region were largely invisible and only existed as anonymous masses bidding farewell to the Arab menfolk departing to war and as passive victims of such wars. Or, as a more benign but perhaps just as incorrect image of the “Arabian woman”, we grew up with princess Yasmine, saved by her hero Aladdin on a flying carpet in the Disney-movie named after him.

Nowadays, Arab and Muslim women are challenging these views and the gender roles associated with it, through TV, widely available films, social media and comic books. Digital connectivity, the internet and social media, the widespread availability of mobile phones and satellite TV, have all increased the range of opportunities for those previously left unheard. Today, media in all its forms is used by Arab and Muslim women as a tool for expression, as well as for mobilization around gender equality and women's empowerment. TV, films, comics, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok have become important instruments in fighting stereotypes and prejudices, at a time when viewing and sharing content has become much easier. The monopoly of the traditional, gated mass media has been broken, with the emergence of more diverse and nuanced views on women from the region and Muslim women worldwide as a result.

At the same time, enhanced connectivity has been a double-edged sword. While social media, in particular, has helped Arab and Muslim women to become more visible, vocal and connected to each other and to the wider world, it has also exposed them to stereotyping and increased and more direct abuse. Indeed, social media tools can just as well reinforce stereotypes and further imprint them in our own systems of bias. Consequently, Muslim and Arab women also have found themselves fighting this dangerous trend through new and old media alike.



REDRAWING IMAGES THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Film, as well as TV shows broadcasted on Arab satellite channels have been important in connecting the region at a societal level. The 21st century has seen the emergence in the Arab world of a generation of women filmmakers like Haifaa al-Mansour, Nadine Labaki, Annemarie Jacir, Nujoom al-Ghanem, Nayla el-Khaja and Kaouther bin Hania among others. They use their cameras and stories to move away from the images of women as passive victims. Instead, they provide insights on Arab and Muslim women's everyday life, their desires, experiences, and ambitions. Arab women have also consolidated their presence as presenters and hosts of talk shows. Influential presenters such as Parween Habib, Zainab Salbi, Badriya al Bishr, Muna Abu Sulayman, Rania Barghout, Nadia Ahmad, and Elham Wagdi tackle women and social issues and taboos in their shows, such as sexuality, gender equality, sexual harassment, rape, child abuse, infidelity, and divorce, challenging conservative forces in society and projecting images of women far from those international audiences are used to.

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND FEMALE ROLE MODELS

Thanks to social media, women across the world, including in the Arab world, have become more effective in expressing their views and are better connected with each other. Social media and new mobile technologies are assisting women in creating changes that are predominately positive, helping them to break stereotypes. Young women influencers like Salama Mohammed and Sara Karrit are using social media to do exactly that. By tackling issues such as family relations, body image, wellness and wellbeing they are overhauling the image of Arab and Muslim women for local and international audience in the order of millions, offering new forms of women's leadership and empowerment in Arabia and Islam.

MUSLIM SUPERHEROINES: CHALLENGING THROUGH COMICS

In the last two decades, comic books have started to tackle issues of religious, ethnic and gender diversity. Muslim Superheroines such as Kamala Khan, Ms Marvel, and Dust have started to enter the pantheon of comics. They openly challenge the stereotyped image of Muslim women. Ms Marvel, created by two women that bring their own experience as Muslim Americans to the character, is a teenager, Pakistani-American and Muslim, the first Muslim Superhero to headline her own book. Ms Marvel's journey to discover her identity and challenge stereotypes provides the reader with a new perspective on Muslim women in today's world.



Join us in the Women's Pavilion to explore how better we could amplify the role of women from Arabia and the Islamic region in the spheres of traditional and new media, by celebrating their positive contributions and tackling questions such as:

KEY QUESTIONS

- What role have mass media played in shaping worldwide views and understanding of women in Arabia and Islam? Have globally broadcast cultural representations increased understanding or reinforced stereotypes and a “them” vs “us” mentality?
- How are Arab and Muslim women currently using traditional and new media to redraw static images of themselves? What is the impact of their work on gender roles within societies and among new generations in particular?
- Traditional and new media are powerful connectors in the Arab and Islamic regions. What has been the impact on connecting women across the region and to what extent is it a factor in their common quest for gender equality and women empowerment?



INVITED SPEAKERS



Hind Alowais– Moderator Senior Vice President of International Participants for International Organizations and Non-Official Participants, Expo 2020 Dubai, UAE.

Currently, 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, and a wide range of stakeholders including global and local NGOs, academic institutions, philanthropic foundations, and global initiatives. In this role, Ms. Alowais led on establishing the Women's Pavilion and developing the strategic partnership with Cartier to create a space that tackles the agenda of gender equality and women's empowerment in a meaningful way.

Before taking up a position at EXPO2020, Ms. Alowais was the first Emirati national to hold a senior position at the United Nations Entity for Advancement for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women). Ms. Alowais was also previously 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, Combating Piracy in Somalia, and disarmament issues before becoming actively involved in the Rio+20 process and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Alowais also worked for the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 15 years. Following stations in Beirut and New York, she played a central role in the UAE's successful campaign to host the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi. She also served as Special Assistant to UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs, HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and advised on key policy issues. Her work focused on multilateral diplomacy and on supporting the advancement of the UAE's agenda at the UN.

In her work for the EXPO 2020 and the Women's Pavilion, Ms. Alowais draws upon these experiences to push forward the gender equality and women's empowerment discourse across all sectors



Muna AbuSulayman - is an Arab media icon, been constantly named as one of the most influential Arabs, as well as, one of the most influential Muslims in the World due to a unique and diverse cross-functional work experience from Media to Philanthropy to Social Impact Entrepreneurship, including hosting the seminal Arab female empowerment show Kalam Nawem on MBC.

AbuSulayman, sits on the Gucci Global Equity Board, and has lead The Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundations, as well as co-founded several startups in education and health.

She has spoken at the World Economic Forum, the UN, and the World Bank on the sensitive issues such as “Media Leadership in the Arab World” and “Monetization of Motherhood.”

Most notably,, AbuSulayman has successfully launched, managed, and scaled multiple businesses and is running a consultancy that focuses on finding “Big Ideas that Work” to solve problems in Education, Health, Gender Issues, and Entrepreneurship.



Nicole Al Rais is a researcher and TikTok content creator who grew up in a small rural town within San Diego, CA. Her work centers on how globalization affects culture, and if local and global forces can find a respectful intermedium. This inquisition correlates with her personal experience as a revert Muslim living in Dubai and married into an Emirati family.



Tima Shomali is an Arab Director, Producer, Writer and Comedy actress from Jordan, as well as the founder of Filmizion Productions.

Tima's most recent work is the Netflix original, *AlRawabi School for Girls*, a young adult drama that talks about bullied outcasts at the prestigious "AlRawabi School for Girls," who plot a series of risky takedowns to get back at their tormentors. The series was in the trending top 10 shows on Netflix in a number of countries and was described by *The New Yorker* as "The Netflix Teen Drama That Goes Deeper into the Arab Patriarchy," while *The Economist* stated that "AlRawabi School for girls is not just another teen drama."

Tima is the creator, show-runner and director of the show.

Tima has a BA in Business Administration and Finance and an MFA from The Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts - where she majored in screenwriting and producing.

In 2011 Tima made her debut as a comedy writer and lead actress in the local online comedy show "Bath Bayakha", Finding a voice in comedy, she then created her own show, "FemaleShow" in 2013 through her company Filmizion Productions. FemaleShow was an instant regional success and was the most viewed show in Jordan at its time of release with 95+ Million views up to date, it has produced three seasons so far.

Tima's success in comedy did not limit her, but branched out into drama as she produced the TV series "Zain" She also found a place in talk shows, both as one of the hosts of Emirates TV, "DardaChat" and worked behind the scenes as the Supervising producer in the groundbreaking, *Nida'a Show* (an Arabic version of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*) - presented by Zainab Salbi and produced by Discovery channel.

Tima was named as one of the most influential young Arabs in the world by *Arabian Business Magazine* for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017, She was called the next "Tina Fey" of the Arab World after her participation as a speaker in *Women in the World Summit* in New York.

Introduction of the Women's Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, 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.

WOMEN IN ARABIA AND ISLAM

Women in Arabia and Islam is a series of ten cultural talks 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.



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.