

BIENNALE SESSION PROPOSAL

Enhancing Arab Narratives: Pathways within Biennale and Academia

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Enhancing Arab Narratives: Paths within the Biennale and Academia

An initiative by:

Alba Nabulsi – Journalist and Educator

Date: October 8, 2025

University Partners:

University of Bologna (Unibo), University of Padua (Unipd), IUAV Venice, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, University of Bergamo

Media Partner:

The New Arab – Al Arabi Al Jadeed

Venue:

Giardini and Arsenale, Biennale, Venice

Meeting point (10 to 10.45)

Giardini

Giardini della Biennale. SESTIERE CASTELLO 30122 VENEZIA

Conference venue (11 to 13)

Arsenale, Sale d'Armi

Educational Space of Biennale Session, Former "South Africa Pavillion"

Afternoon venue

Arsenale

Address Arsenale: Campo della Tana 2169/F, Sestiere

Overview

This session explores Arab voices through a curated tour of the Biennale, highlighting this year's theme, "Intelligens," as interpreted by the Arab pavilions. The programme is particularly tailored for students from the Faculties of Urban Planning (IUAV Venice), Sociology and Political Science (UNIPD), and Arts, Museology and Curatorship (UNIBO) and Arts (UNIBG).

Alba Nabulsi will introduce the themes represented across the Arab pavilions and coordinate the guided tour.

10.45 - 11 Greetings and introduction

11-12

Beatrice Leanza, curator of the Saudi Pavilion, will share insights into the curatorial process and the development of its public programme. (15')

Deena Hammam, Associate Curator of Learning & Audience Engagement at Art Mill Museum, (Qatari Pavillion) will explain the "Beyti Beytek" exhibition ongoing at Palazzo Franchetti and the Giardini. (15')

Professor Ruba Salih (UNIBO) will share some reflections on what decolonial horizons can be possible at a time of genocide. How to rethink space after urbicide? (15')

Ibrahim Fakhri, Creative manager at The New Arab will present their ongoing media coverage of Arab presences at the Venice Biennale, reflecting on its international reception and impact (to be confirmed in presence/remotely). (15')

12-13

London-based Palestinian actor and artist Mo'min Swaitat will introduce his Majazz project and the Palestine Sound Archive, revolving around Palestinian heritage and music as artistic practices. (15')

DAAR, the Italian-Palestinian architecture studio awarded with the Golden Lion in the previous Architecture Biennale will talk about its project Ente di Decolonizzazione - Borgo Rizza. (15')

Alessandra Ferrini will talk about her project in the previous Art Biennale highlighting the Italian colonial past in Libya, "Gaddafi in Rome, Anatomy of a friendship". (15')

Venice-based Palestinian artist Jasmine Barri will contribute her perspective on the Arab diaspora, memory, and identity through her artistic practice. (15')

A closing video-performance of the mezzosoprano Dema Bakri introduced by the artist herself will close the event.

Programme Schedule

10 - Meeting point at Giardini

Meet and greet

Autonomous Visit of the Qatar Pavilion, GB and, according to time, Egypt (no guided tour)

Coffee and Dates ritual

Walk towards the arsenale

11:00–13:00 –

Greetings / Biennale and Universities

Talks and Performances

Venue: Room G / Sala G (Arsenale)

13:00–14:30 – Lunch Break

Lunch is organised for discussants, artists, and contributors. Students are advised to bring a packed lunch or choose the “packed lunch” option (10 euros), because the restaurants and cafeterias may be very crowded and busy.

14:30–16:00 – Guided Tour of other Arab Pavilions

Pavilions: Lebanon, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Bahrain, Oman.

16:30–18:00 – Work Café where students are invited to imagine their own curatorial programme of an Arabic country pavilion / collateral event.

(Sala G)

Contributors

Beatrice Leanza – Curator, Saudi Arabia Pavilion (remote)

Deena Hammam, Learning & Audience Engagement at Art Mill Museum, Qatari Pavillion (in person)

Ruba Salih – Professor, UNIBO (in person)

DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency)

Intervention about the *Ente di decolonizzazione Borgo Rizza* - Golden Lion 2023 (remote)

Alessandra Ferrini - Artist (remote)

Jasmine Barri – Artist (in person)

The New Arab – Media Representatives (in person)

Alba Nabulsi – Session Coordinator and Discussant

Performance (video recording + introduction):

Dema Bakri – Mezzo-Soprano (in person)

Video display of her performance singing Vivaldi's *Filiae Maestae Jerusalem*

Art installation – Jasmine Barri

The diaspora series