

**IDEAS FOR THE OPEN CITY:
AN EXPLORATION OF CONNECTIVITY WITHIN A CITY**

24 October | 7 – 8pm

Exhibition 24 – 29 October | 10am – 9pm

Building 3, Retail Unit R04, Dubai Design District (d3)

The panel discussion explores the theme of Connectivity Mobility and Opportunity as adopted for Expo 2020 and Dubai's ambition to be one of world's most disabled-friendly cities by 2020. What do they really mean? And how are these themes relevant to the public realm in our Gulf cities?

Moderator

Alastair Donald British Council's Architecture Programme

Panelists

Sultan Al Qassemi: Columnist, Co-founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation

Alex Scott Whitby: ScottWhitbyStudio

Sumaya Dabbagh: Dabbagh Architects, RIBA Gulf Chapter Chair

Waseem Kotoub: Head of Arts and Creativity, British Council, Qatar

Alastiar Donald

Alastair Donald manages the British Council's architecture programme, working internationally to develop exhibitions, festivals and curated programmes of contemporary architecture. He coordinates the curation and programming of the British Pavilion for the Venice Architecture Biennale and works on programming in the Middle East and the Gulf. In his role as associate director of the Future Cities Project, Alastair convenes the Future Cities Salon. And he is co-convenor Critical Subjects, the international Architecture and Design Summer School based in London. He is the co-editor of *The Lure of the City: from slums to suburbs* (2011) and *The Future of Community: reports of a death greatly exaggerated* (2008) and has written for a range of publications including Architectural Review, Blueprint, World Architecture (China), the Guardian and the Big Issue.

Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi

Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi is a United Arab Emirates-based columnist whose articles have appeared in *The Financial Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Huffington Post*, *The New York Times Room for Debate*, *Foreign Policy*, *Open Democracy*, and *The Globe and Mail*, as well as other notable publications.

Sultan is also a prominent commentator on Arab affairs on Twitter. Rising in prominence during the Arab Spring, his tweets became a major news source, rivalling the major news networks at the time, until *TIME* magazine listed him in the 140 Best Twitter Feeds of 2011.

Sultan is an MIT Media Labs Director's Fellow (2014-2016) and in 2014, *Arabian Business* placed Sultan in its list of World's 100 Most Powerful Arabs under the Thinkers category. He continues both to write and tweet about the Arab world both from his home in Sharjah, as well as while giving lectures internationally.

Sultan is also the founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation, an independent initiative established to contribute to the intellectual development of the art scene in the Arab region by building a prominent and publicly accessible art collection in the United Arab Emirates. Barjeel Art Foundation's currently has an exhibition at the *Whitechapel Gallery* in London.

Alex Scott-Whitby

Alex Scott-Whitby is the founding director of ScottWhitbyStudio, a multi-award winning architecture and creative consultancy that works within, on and outside the boundaries of traditional architectural practice. The studio works on projects that range in scale and duration from tiny projects that exist for hours to large city wide strategies that will take 30 years to complete.

The studio is currently working with clients on projects ranging from an exhibition for the Design Museum to a project to turn 38 of the 51 church towers in the City of London into low rent creative studios for emerging artists. These sit alongside one off sculptural commissions, public realm designs, and residential commissions in the UK, Middle East and Greece.

He is currently admissions tutor and senior lecturer at the University of East London, and was previously a Unit master at the Architectural Association, visiting lecturer at The Welsh School of Architecture, and a visiting professor at the International University of Architecture, Venice.

He first studied architecture at Newcastle University after which he spent a number of years working in Advertising and Filmmaking before completing his architectural education with 'The Free Unit' at The Cass School of Architecture and Design.

His work and the work of his studio and his students has been published and exhibited in the UK and internationally most notably at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale 2014, The Danish Architecture Centre, The Boston Institute of Architects, New London Architecture, and the Virginia Architecture Centre.

In 2016 he led a multinational and trans-disciplinary team to win the Unlimited Doha Design Prize.

Sumaya Dabbagh

Sumaya Dabbagh is the founder of Dabbagh Architects, an award winning architectural design firm, recognized regionally for its contemporary design and quality-driven service. She is a Saudi architect educated in the UK with diverse experience in architecture, interior design, and project management spanning over 20 years. She established Dabbagh Architects in 2008 and have since completed a number of prestigious projects.

Following an education at Bath University, Sumaya began her career in London and Paris working for internationally renowned companies such as Arup Associates and Polshek et Solomon Architects. Her return to the Gulf region was part of a quest to gain a deeper

understanding of her own identity. Her unique mix of influences and sensitivity towards both Western and Middle Eastern cultures and her innate understanding of the local culture and its subtleties is reflected in her work and contextual approach to design. Her award winning Mlieha Centre of Archaeology building is indicative of her sensitive, contextual designs.

Through her work in architecture and design in the Gulf region Dabbagh's quest to bridge the cultural and gender gaps continues. Dabbagh has participated in a number of conferences to share some of her theoretical ideas regarding architecture. She was an instrumental part of the team who set up the RIBA Gulf chapter in 2009 and is passionate about bringing more awareness to the region on the value of good design. She is the current Chair of the RIBA Gulf Chapter.

Sumaya Dabbagh Bsc. Hons, Barch. Hons, RIBA, PMP

Waseem Kotoub

Head of Arts and Creativity, British Council, Qatar

Waseem qualified as a doctor, obtaining a Master's degree in Health Systems and Hospital Management from Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. At the same time, he has a strong arts background, obtaining a Postgraduate Diploma in music from the Royal Academy of Music in London, and performing as a concert pianist around the world. Waseem has been working with the British Council for more than 7 years with a strong track record in delivering large-scale health, science, arts and creative economy projects in MENA region. He led on the arts strand of Qatar UK Year of Culture 2013 and the Great British Festivals. Waseem has merged Medicine and Music, using Music Therapy with autistic children as a mean of communicating and developing their skills. Waseem got an extensive experience in programmes that focuses on Disability, Inclusion and Accessibility and has worked on developing "Unlimited Doha Design Prize" concept and developed the partnership with high profile partners such as Foster + Partners, Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy and Qatar Ministry of Municipality and Environment.