

SULTAN SOUD AL-QASSEMI



Nationality
United Arab Emirates

Birth Date
01/01/1978

Languages
Arabic, English, French

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Sultan Al-Qassemi is an accomplished **entrepreneur** and a **philanthropist, facilitator and promoter of art and culture**. He has spearheaded entrepreneurial, cultural and social initiatives throughout his multifaceted career. His impartiality, **motivational discourse** and **positive leadership** have gained him respect and a **network of high-level peers**. As a **moderator and negotiator**, Al-Qassemi understands the power of consensus and compromise to unite stakeholders. He possesses a rare blend of **political, cultural, business and diplomatic comprehension** and tenacity. As well as being **articulate, strategic and analytical**, Sultan has the ability to **engage with youth globally** to support culture and become active stakeholders in **social progress**. Sultan Al-Qassemi is part of a new generation of Arab leaders, **leading by inspiration, not position**.

Corporate and Cultural Experience

2010–Present

Founder

Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE

- First and largest publicly accessible, non-governmental modern and contemporary art collection in the Arab world with over 1,250 works.
- Staged over thirty exhibitions at museums across four continents attracting over half a million visitors.
- Mounted critically acclaimed exhibition “Imperfect Chronology” of the collection at London’s Whitechapel Gallery over 16 months, attracting more than 330,000 visitors.
- Organised first ever exhibition of modern Arab art in Tehran.
- Published 12 books promoting Arab art and artists in English, French, Arabic and Farsi.
- Fundraised from public and private institutions to carry out the programming while fulfilling strict bureaucratic and policy funding requirements from partner organisations.
- Partnered with educational institutions to hold seminars and exhibitions including Yale University, New York University, CCS Bard Center for Curatorial Studies, American University in Washington and Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

1998–Present

Managing Director and Partner

Al Saud Co., Sharjah, UAE

- Managing a private multi-hundred million dollar investment fund with investments in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America.
- Developed and implemented strategy favouring long-term sustainable investments over high-risk, short-term returns, enabling the company to avoid serious financial loss during 2009’s financial crisis.
- Transitioned the company into a thriving business by shedding less efficient operations, and concentrating resources on best value for stakeholders.
- Managed and grew the team to more than 300 employees.
- Designed the corporate structure including department functions, KPIs, communication channels, human capital development and overall monitoring.
- Developed and implemented corporate succession plan where senior members of the leadership team were mentored and trained to take on additional responsibilities.

2018

Collector In Residence

Delfina Foundation, London, UK

- Organised a Gulf city architecture symposium with 10 architecture practitioners.
- Conducted a closed cultural debate session.

- 2015 **Co-Director of Global Art Forum**
Art Dubai, UAE and Kuwait
 • Contributed to establishing the theme and built talks and seminars around it for the Global Art Forum, which is one of the leading annual gatherings of scholars, artists and practitioners In the Middle East.
 • Directed program across two countries which involved dozens of people including speakers, hosts, contributors, staff and volunteers.
- 2007 **Co-Founder**
Meem Gallery, Dubai, UAE
 • Co-founded commercial gallery promoting Modernist masters from the Arab world, Turkey and Iran.
 • Includes the Noor Library of Middle Eastern Art – an important collection of over 16,000 books, journals and catalogues related to modern, medieval and ancient art of the region.
- 2001 **Founder**
Barjeel Securities, Dubai, UAE
 • Founded first regional securities firm offering access to the Indian Capital Markets.
 • First Emirati to be appointed to the board of a publicly listed Indian company.
- 2000-2010 **Co-Founder**
AX Studio, Dubai, UAE
 • Co-founded the region’s first studio aimed at documenting, preserving and promoting traditional Arab garments among local and international visitors.

Academic Experience

- 2021 **Visiting Lecturer at the School of Public Affairs**
Sciences Po, Paris
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2020, 2021 **Visiting Instructor in the Islamic Civilization & Societies Program**
Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, Boston College
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2020 **Senior Lecturer at the Art History and Fine Arts department**
The American University of Paris, France
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2019 **Adjunct Instructor in the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS)**
Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2019 **Lecturer in the Council of Middle East Studies**
Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University
 Taught Politics of Modern Arab Art
- 2017-2018 **Practitioner-in-Residence and Visiting Scholar**
Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, New York, USA
 • Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art concentrating on the fine arts of the Arab world, Armenia, Iran, Israel and Turkey.
 • Research included emergence of Arab Gulf States as new centres of education, diplomacy, academia, tourism and culture, in the Middle East and the world.
 • Delivered talks, moderated panels and taught workshops on themes of art and modern Gulf cities.

- 2017 **Honorary Doctorate Honoris Causa and Member of President Alumni Advisory Council**
American University of Paris, Paris, France
- Assisted university in fundraising from regional governments and institutions.
 - Currently advising on strategy in academia, engagement of community and financial sustainability.
- 2009-2012 **Non-Resident Fellow**
Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (Formerly Dubai School of Government), Dubai, UAE
- Conducted research and published articles on social reform, entrepreneurship, culture and economics while a fellow at major government think tank, which focuses on research and teaching with an emphasis on public policy in the Arab world.
- 2008-2010 **Adjunct Professor**
Higher Colleges of Technology – Dubai Men’s College, Dubai, UAE
- Taught classes on Entrepreneurship and Middle East History.
 - Brought in visiting scholars, entrepreneurs and business leaders to entire university.
 - Part of assessment workshop to evaluate learning objectives and develop grading criteria.

Leadership and Leadership Programs

- 2018 **World Fellow**
Yale, Greenberg World Fellows Program, New Haven, USA
- Selected as one of 16 global leaders for this prestigious leadership development program.
- 2011–2016 **Young Global Leader**
World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
- Participate in and promote international collaborations between my peers in leadership roles.
 - Organised and implemented public diplomacy programs to raise the profile of Sharjah and the UAE
 - Organised session of Young Arab Leaders with Young Global Leaders at the World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea in 2009.
- 2016-2018 **MELI Fellow**
The Aspen Institute – Aspen Global Leadership Network, Washington, DC
- The Aspen Institute’s Middle East Leadership Initiative (MELI) seeks to develop a new generation of community-spirited, effective and enlightened leaders in the Middle East in business, government and the non-profit sector.
- Contributing to multilateral and cross-cultural projects involving partners outside of typical Arab cultural and business sphere (e.g. Israel).
 - Creating simulations of activities not possible in real life due to geopolitical conditions.
- 2014-2016 **Commissioner**
Global Commission on Internet Governance
- Was a member of the commission responsible for the *One Internet* report.
 - Assisted with guidelines to aid in the future of the internet remaining protected, accessible and trusted.
- 2013 **The Draper Hills Summer Fellows Program on Democracy and Development**
Stanford University, California, USA
- Analyzed developmental cases and studied importance of rule of law in laying the groundwork to safeguard heritage, national income and improve education standards.
 - Lectured on the impact of the Internet and regional governments’ internet regulations in the Gulf.
- 2012 **Academy of Achievement**
50TH Anniversary International Achievement Summit, Washington DC, USA
- Chosen as a delegate based on a criteria of exceptional people around the world effecting significant change through emerging technologies and social media.
 - Participated in workshops and attended lectures with leaders in the fields of art, science, media and education.

- 2011 **International Visitor Leadership Program**
 Washington DC, Boston, New York, Denver, Orlando, USA.
- Cultivated relationships with new and established leaders from the host country and around the world.
 - Met with subject matter experts to discuss recent trends, approaches and findings of the role the internet has had in disseminating knowledge and information and its consequent impact on societies.

Chairman

- 2008-2010 **Young Arab Leaders – UAE Chapter**, Dubai, UAE
- Elected by membership to lead this Pan-Arab youth NGO with 150 members in the UAE.
 - Instigated networking and educational seminars and facilitated speaking engagements.
 - Led successful fundraising to keep Young Arab Leaders program active.
 - Organised Entrepreneurship Summit - a large conference attended by 500 youth.
 - Member of the Strategy Advisory Committee that worked on the organisation’s sustainability plan.

Journalism and Writing

Prominent columnist, writer and commentator on matters related to art, culture, youth and politics of the Arab world. Through traditional and digital media I educate, raise awareness, promote and question important causes and issues.

- 2011–Present **Regular columnist** **Gulf News**, Dubai, UAE
 2008-2011 **Regular columnist** **The National**, Abu Dhabi, UAE

Select published articles:

	Al Monitor		Haaretz
2014	Regional strife destroying historical Arab treasures	2008	Jews of the Arab world: Welcoming our long-gone neighbors
2013	Thriving Gulf Cities Emerge as New Centers of Arab World		
			The National
		2010	A monument of tolerance in the heart of Dubai
		2010	An education vision with an eye on all Emiratis
2016	How art can help diffuse Middle East tensions	2010	Linking capital’s knowledge hubs can fulfil its vision
2014	The shifting soft power of the Arab world	2010	Breathing life into Bastakiya and the history of Dubai
	Gulf News	2009	Art’s powerful message for the merchants of death
2017	Encouraging cultural CSR in the UAE		
2017	The UAE needs a law to protect modern architecture		
			Open Democracy
2015	The art of education	2013	The new generation and the future of the broader Middle East
2013	What Gulf museums don’t show		

Directorships

As a Director in these publicly listed companies, I liaised with government authorities on behalf of companies for licensing, registrations and compliance as well as responding to questions from government entities and the media. Other responsibilities included implementing the vision of the company, reviewing operations of the firm and overseeing performance of the team.

- 2002–2006 **Geojit Securities**, Kochi, India
 2001–2003 **Gulf Investments Services**, Muscat, Oman
 2001–2003 **Sohar University**, Sohar, Oman
 2002–2003 **Globinvest Holding Company**, Muscat, Oman

Board Appointments

- 2017–Present Academic Advisory Board, **Dubai Institute of Design and Innovation**, Dubai, UAE
- 2016–Present Board of Trustees, **Museum of Contemporary Art**, Chicago, USA
- 2016–Present Co-Chair of the Global Vision Initiative at the **Museum of Contemporary Art**, Chicago, USA
- 2013–Present Middle Eastern Circle, **Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum**, New York, USA
- 2010–Present Advisory Board, **Art Dubai**, Dubai, UAE
- 2008–2012 Advisory Board, **UAE University, College of Business and Economics**, Al Ain, UAE

Speaking Engagements and Initiatives

- 2019–Present **Founder/Curator**
Online Cultural Majlis
- An informal conversation series featuring innovative thinkers from the Arab world including: Minister of Culture H.E Noura Al Kaabi, Minister of State H.E Zaki Nusseibeh, artist Samia Halaby, and science communicator Hashem Al-Ghaili.
- 2008–Present **Lectures, talks and speeches**
- Over 250 public engagements as a speaker, lecturer and moderator. Key themes of my lectures include youth unemployment, social media, Arab Spring, politics of Middle Eastern art, and the emergence of Gulf cities.
- Highlights include:
- **Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy**, University of Michigan: first Arab to deliver Josh Rosenthal Education Fund Lecture
 - **The Elliott School of International Affairs**, George Washington University: talk on Arab Spring
 - Series of talks on Gulf states emergence as cultural, scientific and educational hubs at **New York University** Abu Dhabi, **Middle East Institute** in Washington DC, **Columbia University Global Center** in Amman, Jordan.
 - Series of talks on the political undercurrents of major Middle Eastern artworks at **New York University**, **London School of Economics**, **Bibliotheca Alexandrina**, **Zayed University** and **University of Cambridge**

Recognitions, Fellowships & Awards

- 2019 **Grace Hopper Fellow** – Yale University, New Haven, USA
- 2016 **MEI Scholar** – Middle East Institute, Washington DC, USA
- 2016 **United Nations Foundation Global Journalist Corps**, New York, USA
- 2015 **Honorary Senior Fellow** – Regent’s University London, UK
- 2014–2016 **MIT Media Lab Director’s Fellow** – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, USA
- 2011 **Aspen Ideas Festival Scholar** – Aspen Institute, Washington DC, USA
- 2010 **Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Patron of the Arts Award**, Dubai, UAE
- 2005 **Sheikh Rashid Award for Academic Excellence**, Dubai, UAE
- Featured in:** Time Magazine, Foreign Policy, Forbes Arabia, Al Monitor

Education

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| 2004 | European Business School , London, UK
MSc Global Banking and Finance
Awarded Distinction (sole honour in cohort). Elected class President. | 1998 | American University of Paris , Paris, France
BSc International Business Administration |
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References available upon request