

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

- 2023-2025 **Research Associate**
SOAS University of London
- 2023 **Guest Lecturer in Art and Aesthetics**
Bard College Berlin
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2022, 2023 **Fellow at Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin**
Institute for Advanced Study
- 2022 **Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs**
Columbia University
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2021, 2022 **Lecturer at the School of Public Affairs**
Sciences Po, Paris
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art
- 2021 **Lecturer at Crown Center for Middle East Studies**
Brandeis University
 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
- 2020-2021 **Visiting Scholar at the Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs**
Harvard Kennedy School of Government
 Taught Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art

- 2020 **Senior Lecturer at the Art History and Fine Arts department**
The American University of Paris
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 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
- 2016-2018 **MELI Fellow**
The Aspen Institute – Aspen Global Leadership Network, Washington, DC
- 2014-2016 **Commissioner**
Global Commission on Internet Governance
- 2011-2016 **Young Global Leader**
World Economic Forum, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2013 **The Draper Hills Summer Fellows Program on Democracy and Development**
Stanford University, California, USA

- 2012 **Academy of Achievement**
50TH Anniversary International Achievement Summit, Washington DC, USA
- 2011 **International Visitor Leadership Program**
Washington DC, Boston, New York, Denver, Orlando, USA.
- 2008-2010 **Chairman**
Young Arab Leaders – UAE Chapter, Dubai, UAE

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.

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

Select published articles:

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

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

- 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

- 2023–Present Board of Trustees, **American University of Sharjah**, Sharjah, UAE
- 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