



Learning From Dubai

Architectural Association School of Architecture

Winter School 2008
International Visiting
Student Workshop

In collaboration with
The Third Line and the
American University of
Sharjah

The Architectural Association London, one of the world's most respected and ambitious pedagogical laboratories for architectural design and spatial research, is offering a nine-day international visiting-programme in Dubai. Combining the AA's unit system with local initiatives, this intensive workshop-based programme will run a design-based curriculum that combines conceptual and material research in the process of radical criticism and the rigorous production of ideas. Students will work in teams of up to ten and develop individual projects while testing their ideas within the group. Each tutor-led unit will investigate different aspects of the emerging spatial realities of the Gulf region, with a local focus on Dubai.

Workshop Unit Agendas: Workers' Habitation; Dubai 24hr City

Based on a relentless belief in architecture as the tool for modernisation, the spatial ambitions of Dubai are exhilarating. The city is constantly redefining precedents, ranging from the world's tallest structure to the largest shopping mall. Large-scale developments such as Business Bay or the Dubai Waterfront (which will be seven times the size of Manhattan) are just two of the many construction sites, targeted to attract international investment, high-end labour-migration and package-tourism. But what is it that constitutes the often hidden infrastructures that enable such change?

Today, there is an urgent need to understand the Gulf's transformation in a different light – one not defined by a knee-jerk pessimism, but to take seriously what is often being ridiculed.

Rather than delivering a mere critique, we will initiate a critical practice of involvement. The Winter School will do this not through the pretence of delivering expertise from the outside, but by strategically uniting key practitioners and theorists from the wider region. This year's first ever Winter School will interrogate spatial realities in a holistic and sustained manner. We understand practice as a means of critical engagement: to be political outside the realm of politics. As curator Anselm Franke says, 'to break the image while expanding the narrative'.

Workshop Organisation

The workshop will take place at the Third Line, the Emirates' most internationally prominent contemporary art gallery. Tutoring will be provided by some of the most challenging regional and international practitioners from the field of architecture, urbanism, criticism and curatorial practices. Lecturers will include Rem Koolhaas (OMA, Rotterdam), George Katodrytis (American University Sharjah), Antonia Carver (Bidoun magazine, New York), Shumon Basar (AA, London) and Sunny Rahbar (The Third Line, Dubai).

Participants from all backgrounds will be encouraged, from students, graduates, architects, or those who have never thought about architecture as a career. Together, we will challenge an understanding of what architecture represents. The course is an intensive studio-based programme that requires full-time participation. The deadline for applications is 31 November 2007, although late applications will be considered if places are still available. An AA certificate will be awarded upon completion of this nine-day programme.

Dates of Workshop:
Friday 4 – Sunday 13 January 2008
Fees: £695

A one-day trip prior to the start of the workshop will visit some of Dubai's major new sites as well as the nearby Hajjar Mountains.

A package deal with a major hotel-chain and a number of alternatives in regard to accommodation will be offered to those who do not have local accommodation available.

Workshop Director: Markus Miessen
Coordinator: Sandra Sanna

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AA VISITING PROGRAMME: LEARNING FROM DUBAI

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