

Tashkeel

History of Achievements & Ambitions

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Tashkeel Darkroom

About Tashkeel

Established in January 2008, Tashkeel is an independent resource for artists and designers living and working in the United Arab Emirates. Tashkeel is committed to facilitating art and design practice, cross-cultural dialogue and creative exchange. Members at Tashkeel have access to studio facilities for painting, graphic design, photography, printmaking, textile printing, jewellery and 3D practice. In addition to the studio resources, equipped with a wide-range of equipment, Tashkeel organizes a number of educational initiatives intended to encourage a new generation of visual artists, capable of pushing the cultural movement forward. Tashkeel also offers a library and journals

library, providing useful references and sources of inspiration for artists. In addition, there is a member's room where members can exchange their different artistic and cultural views, and an exhibition gallery that showcases the visual art scene in the country, featuring exhibitions of local and international artists resident in the UAE. Tashkeel also organizes workshops in creative practice, open to both members and nonmembers.

Under the directorship of Lateefa bint Maktoum, Tashkeel has initiated a number of projects in order to generate dialogue and promote the needs of the visual art scene in the UAE. Tashkeel has established good working relationships with artists and institutions, believing that the gallery should always interact

constructively within the local cultural and artistic arena. It has also worked with overseas artistic and cultural institutions with the aim of providing new resources for artists and designers and increasing the opportunities for producing and developing artworks for those working in the creative fields, enhancing their abilities and knowledge, artistic and technical skills. These projects were aimed at both established and emerging artists, in order to offer opportunities to the widest possible range of participants.

Tashkeel is interested in supporting young, creative talent, particularly in encouraging initiative and innovation, through regularly announcing open calls for artwork. Such projects are aimed at providing opportunities for inexperienced, creative young people to participate in exhibitions, to propose innovative projects that can contribute to the growing understanding of visual culture in the region and enhance the present scene through ingenious ideas. In pursuit of this initiative, Tashkeel works closely with all universities and educational institutions in the country, inviting their students to take part in such exhibitions. Participants submit the idea of an innovative cultural project in response to a given theme, with the best works being selected for inclusion in exhibitions in the gallery at Tashkeel. In this way, new talents are identified and introduced to the artistic arena.

Objectives of Tashkeel Studios:

Tashkeel aims at discovering the talents and artistic abilities of young people, and supporting this by providing the proper environment, the necessary materials and specialist equipment to pursue their creative practice. It provides those people who have little experience with the necessary practical and theoretical background of a range of creative disciplines, in addition to the basic rules that will help them refine their abilities. Tashkeel also tries to develop and support new artistic trends and to encourage general creative awareness, with the specific purpose of not only creating an artistic base throughout the country but also to develop the visual awareness of its citizens and residents.

Role of Lateefa bint Maktoum:

From the very beginning, Tashkeel director and artist Lateefa Bint Maktoum, showed great interest in young cultural leaders and tried to support their projects and develop their skills and capabilities, in



Tashkeel Bastakiya exterior

addition to enhancing the tools of cultural leadership through documenting and disseminating positive role models in the region and the world at large. She looked for creating means for dialogue and communication on the importance of culture at the local, regional and international levels. Lateefa bint Maktoum also looked for ways to enable artists to communicate with their communities and find ways through which representatives of official institutions would take part in the dialogue regarding the status of art in the UAE visual art scene. For this reason, she focused on holding seminars and symposiums on art, believing that this kind of dialogue would help in the intellectual exchange among artists and between the artist and audience. Such gatherings



Tashkeel Gallery

help convey the voice of the artist to the relevant institutions, especially in the presence of participants from different cultural backgrounds. In this way, the role of creative people and their institutions extends beyond their cultural fields to reach the entire society. This is apparent in most of the exhibitions and events held at Tashkeel.

Lateefa bint Maktoum pays particular attention to young people and tries to optimize their role, especially with the new ideas and expectations they have in the field of contemporary and modern visual art. Tashkeel has also hosted exchange and residencies with a number of international artists and works to provide opportunities for artists from widely-ranging backgrounds, believing that art is not restricted to a certain social or age group. Lateefa Bint Maktoum, furthermore, is keen to establish an international creative network, based on the exchange of ideas and experiences.

Tashkeel Bastakiya:

In a unique step, Tashkeel has opened a second facility, Tashkeel Bastakiya, in the heritage area of Bastakiya, Bur Dubai. One of the most important historical and tourist areas in Dubai, Bastakiya is known for its unique architectural style, the tall wind tower buildings lining the narrow alleyways standing as a reminder of the architectural and urban development of the city. The Bastakiya Art Fair takes place to coincide with Art Dubai and is held in the renovated houses and open squares in Bastakiya every year in March. The fair is considered an international platform for the display of innovative local talents and for the enhancement of the artistic and cultural movement in Dubai.

Tashkeel Bastakiya houses six individual artists' studios and a dedicated members gallery. Five studios are intended for long-term use – a minimum of three months – with no more than two artists sharing each studio. The sixth studio is intended for use by visiting artists or to be booked by members



Tashkeel Nad Al Sheba exterior

for weekly or monthly periods, or on a project basis. Membership in Tashkeel Bastakiya allows artists to use the studios in Bastakiya and all other facilities in Tashkeel's premises at Nad Al Sheba.

Tashkeel International Artists Exchange Program:

In April 2008, within the framework of the International Artists Exchange Program, Tashkeel hosted a number of international artists in this country and sent artists from the UAE abroad. Artists explored the local surroundings and culture in Dubai, working in the studios at Tashkeel to produce and implement artistic projects that reflected their creative interaction with their experiences, which were then exhibited in the Tashkeel gallery.

The initiative provided an opportunity to open dialogue between the artists working in the Middle East and Europe as they became aware of the surroundings in which their peers are working, reflect on the similarities and differences in their practices, encourage interaction and cooperation between local and international artists, and promote

the works of artists in the region in order to reach a wider segment of the public. Through these programs designed to spread artistic awareness, Tashkeel aims to contribute to the cultural exchange between the UAE and the world at large, and this in turn serves the main objective undertaken by Tashkeel in providing support for the visual arts and culture in the UAE to realize more achievements. The process of exchange plays a significant role through identifying the developments of arts all over the world in order to enrich the scene with new works of art; exchange and consolidation are integral creative action that give new and diversified modes. In the field of visual art, the artist is affected by the surrounding political, ethical and cultural affairs and, therefore, the works of such artists reflect these matters. We can describe the artist as the constant researcher who is always in quest for what assimilates the concepts of his/her works. The environment of the artist affects nature, and consequently it affects the context of the work of art.

The residency projects are aimed at developing new artistic schemes through interacting with different cultural and artistic environments and working together with different artists from other countries. Aware of the current limitations in the field of visual arts, Lateefa bint Maktoum began to take an interest in such programs, leading to joint projects between Tashkeel and other relevant institutions. Believing in the need to give artists the opportunity to improve their technical and artistic capabilities, Tashkeel relied mainly on creative and practical criteria, in addition to seeking the widest possible regional and social diversity. Evaluation was made through an invited independent jury composed of people with broad experience in the field of arts. Such evaluation aims at presenting professional works of art in terms of technical quality, innovation, excellence and capabilities. The jury ensured that the selected

artworks demonstrate an artistic and cultural and/or intellectual value. This is clear in the Biladi exhibition curated by Tashkeel for the UAE pavilion at EXPO 2010:Shanghai and later shown in the gallery in Nad Al Sheba.

The residency programs organized by Tashkeel give the opportunity to artists and contributors to the cultural movement to identify different cultural milieu. Residency also allows the artist to look for new ideas and maintain relationships with others and to see their artwork in a new context. In addition to providing studios and accommodation, Tashkeel offers support to the resident artists to help them interact with the local and foreign cultural scene.

The residence periods give the participating artists the opportunity to conduct field research and make the preparations necessary for the execution of the projects in different areas. It is not only an



members working

opportunity to recognize the local cultural scene, but it also serves as an encouragement to carry out the artistic projects. Furthermore, Tashkeel supports the resident artists through organizing their visits in order to help them communicate with their colleagues in the local cultural environment.

In a new initiative, Tashkeel has recently launched an international residency program in partnership with the Delfina Foundation, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority and Art Dubai, at House 44, in Bastakiya. Artworks and installations produced during this residency will be exhibited in House no. 44 during Art Week, from 13 to 20 March 2011. This show comes as part of the co-operation and cultural exchange between artists from the UAE and international artists, with three young Emirati artists, Hind Bin Demaithan, Shaikha Al Mazrou and Shamma Al Ameri producing work alongside

two established international artists, Abbas Akhavan (Iran/Canada) and Tobias Collier (UK).

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation for Tashkeel for encouraging and supporting a new generation of artists who will enrich the artistic scene.



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