

Assembled Identities

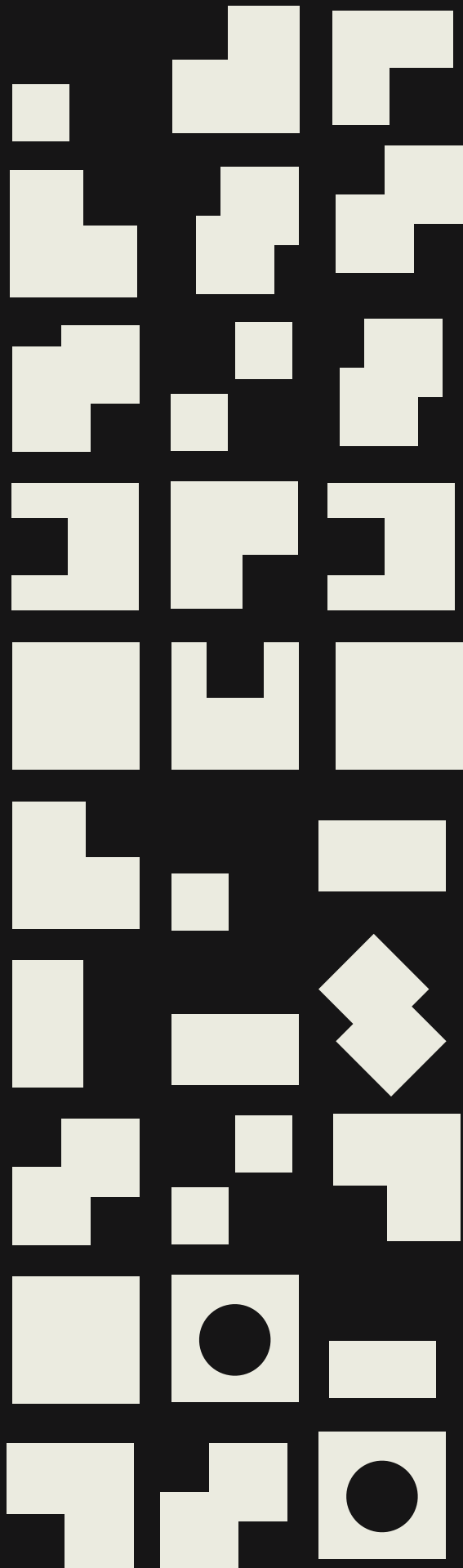
Designed for Cultural Variation



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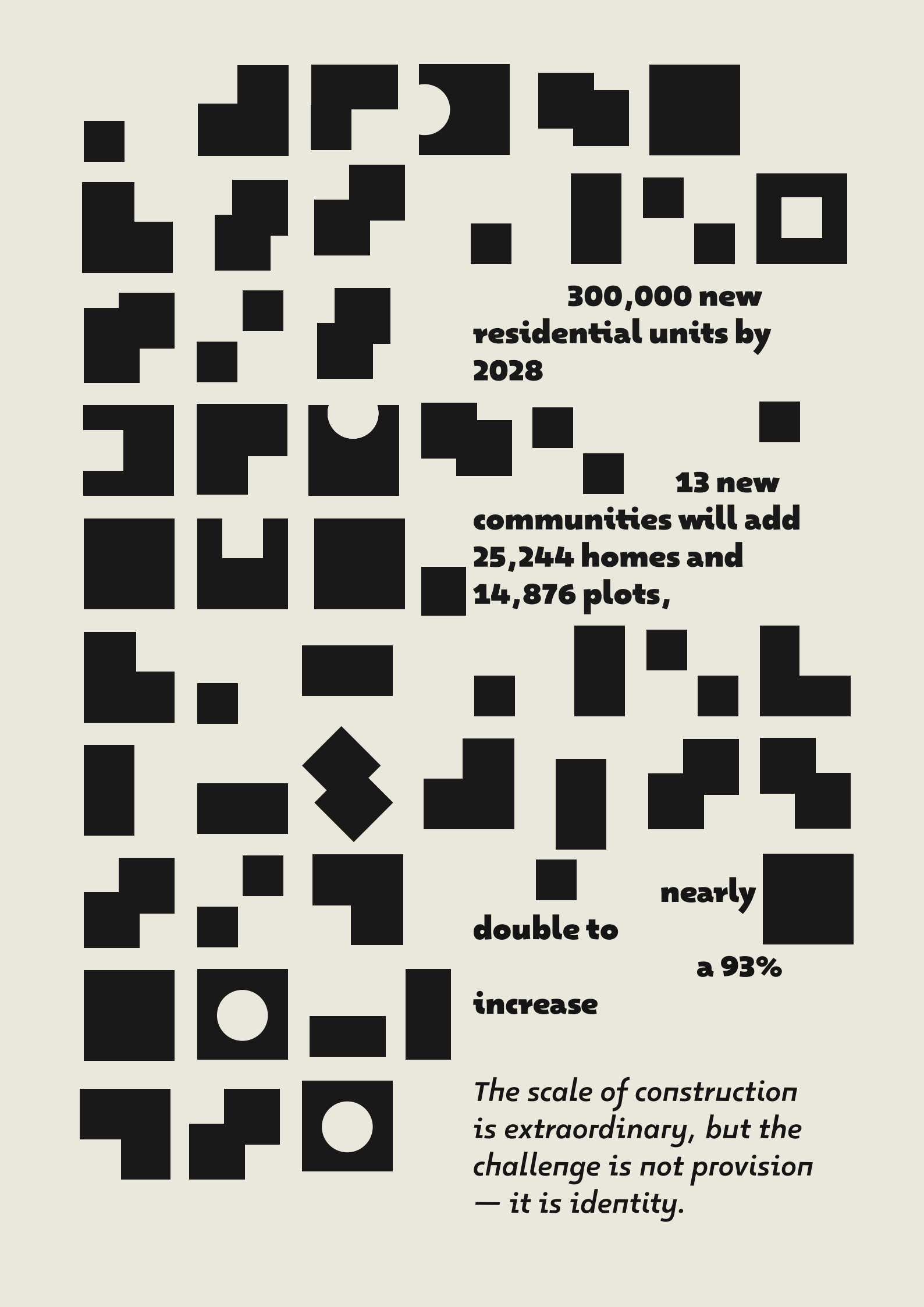
PHASE 1 - Curatorial Proposal
المرحلة الأولى - المقترح القيّم



In the coming decade, the Emirates will see unprecedented housing expansion. Dubai alone is projected to deliver nearly **300,000 new residential units by 2028** [Cavendish Maxwell, 2025].

In Abu Dhabi, **13 new communities will add 25,244 homes and 14,876 plots**, expanding the emirate's stock by almost 40% [Gulf News, 2025; WAM, 2025].

The UAE's residential market, valued at USD 18.3 billion in 2024, is forecast to **nearly double to USD 35.4 billion by 2033, a 93% increase** [IMARC Group, 2024].



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*The scale of construction
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— it is identity.*

Assembled Identities

Designed for Cultural Variation

01 — Introduction

In the coming decade, the Emirates will continue to build at a scale that reshapes its cities and its horizons. Tens of thousands of new homes are planned in Abu Dhabi and Dubai alone, part of an unprecedented expansion that ensures provision for future generations. Yet behind the statistics lies a deeper question: what form of identity will these homes carry forward? Will they merely shelter, or will they also host memory, belonging, and continuity?

Assembled Identities begins from this inquiry. It reframes the familiar typology of the real estate showroom, often associated with dull repetition, into a space for speculation, research, and cultural authorship. Conceived as the launch of a fictional developer, *Assembled Identities Properties*; the pavilion performs as both showroom and curatorial instrument. Instead of mortgages and contracts, it offers a spatial narrative composed of cultural fragments: the houwi, the majlis, the dual-kitchen typology, mashrabiya partitions, and the barjeel; basic instruments of vernacular intelligence in the architecture of the region.

These fragments once reflected the rhythms of domestic life and responded intuitively to climate, privacy, and kinship. Reinterpreted within the pavilion, they become elements of continuity, proposing how the architectural memory of the Emirates can evolve within an accelerating urban landscape. What's new isn't a technical agenda or a catalogue of nostalgic motifs, but living semiotics assembled into countless variations tuned to family life, climate, and community.

Together they outline a housing culture that safeguards continuity while enabling change. If prefabrication once promised efficiency, assembly promises resilience. This is not a finished product but a framework: positioning the UAE as both laboratory and voice in shaping housing's global future.



'Weekly Pow Wow' - Illustration by Sarah Alodayleh (2024)



02 — Thesis

Globally, housing has long been shaped by standardization. After World War II, prefabricated systems delivered millions of homes across Europe and North America. They solved urgent shortages but often erased local specificity, treating housing as a product of industry rather than a cultural practice.

In the 1970s, the UAE pursued ambitious housing programs to address rapid urbanization, seeking solutions beyond imported models. In 1974, architects Wolfgang Braun and Peter Säckl were invited by Sheikh Zayed to build a prototype near Al Ain, exploring ways to integrate Bedouin traditions with modern housing. Sheikh Zayed personally reviewed the design, insisting on features that mirror local heritage, traditions and culture. Although the prototype was not implemented, it set a precedent for balancing modernity and cultural continuity. Yasser Elsheshtawy's 2016 National Pavilion UAE research shows residents later adapted sha'bi housing to social needs, an adaptability largely lost after 2002's freehold boom.

In the UAE today, this logic persists. Suburban communities rise in endless variations of the same model: standardized floor plans, cosmetic façade choices, and limited spatial adaptability. The result is efficient provision, but with little room for cultural identity to take shape. What is lost is not only architectural diversity, but the possibility of housing to serve as a bearer of memory, kinship, and ecological knowledge.

Assembled Identities reimagines assembly as a cultural protocol for variation. A house is not a fixed product but an open framework; composed of fragments that carry memory and meaning: a majlis for gathering, dual kitchens reflecting domestic customs and privacy rituals, and woven screens recalling the areesh. These elements narrate heritage and identity while functioning as ecological and social instruments attuned to the UAE's climate and culture. These fragments are conceived not as isolated gestures but as a modular system of cultural building blocks. Each carries a layer of identity: social, climatic, or material, and can be assembled according to family needs and preferences.

The result is not a single solution, but a framework of variation authored by its inhabitants and enabled by emergent technologies. As Charles Eames wrote in 1944, "large-scale industry would seem to be the only logical means by which we can achieve an enterprise of such proportion".

Assembled Identities extends that logic from postwar reconstruction to the UAE's real estate boom, proposing that technology today can translate cultural intelligence into scalable systems, transforming digital fabrication and automation into instruments of belonging and continuity.



Photo of Pre-Fab Estate, Watford (1946). Schoolchildren help workmen construct a new estate of prefabricated houses in Watford, Hertfordshire, after the devastation of World War II. Source: Keystone



Photo of Prefab Housing Project (1970), Abu Dhabi. Source: AGDA Arabian Gulf Digital Archives

"It has been estimated that one million five hundred thousand houses each year for a period of ten years will be needed to relieve the urgent housing problem of this country alone. In the world at large, fifty million families will be in need of shelter as the result of [world] war. The enormity of such a need cannot even be partially satisfied by building techniques as we have known and used them in the past. Large scale industry would seem to be the only logical means by which we can achieve an enterprise of such proportion."

— Charles Eames 1944

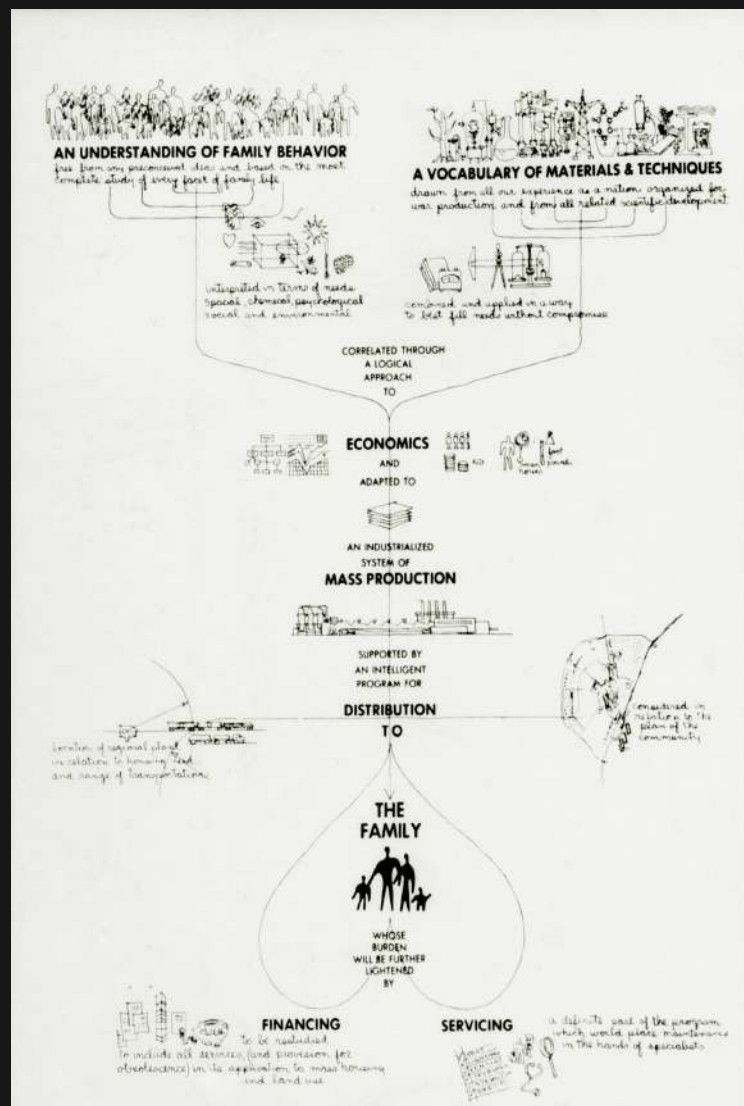
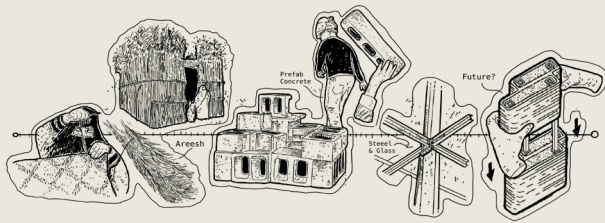


Diagram from the July 1944 issue of Arts & Architecture magazine. In this issue, Charles Eames, outlined his ideas about the role of mass production in housing.
Source: Charles and Ray Eames Foundation (Colors inverted for clarity).

03 — Vernacular as Prototype

The UAE's heritage demonstrates a capacity for **adaptive assembly**. Goat-hair tents expanded as kinship groups grew. Palm-frond canopies, or *areesh*, embodied mobility and climatic responsiveness. Courtyard houses orchestrated shade, ventilation, and family life within compact plots, layering spatial logics around social and environmental needs. These dwellings were never static; they were architectures of negotiation, evolving in response to circumstance.



A 'Very' Brief History of Modularity in the UAE, Illustration by Sarah Aladayleh (2024)

The proposed pavilion does not replicate these forms, but rather reinterprets principles of porosity, additivity, and repair through composites of sand, shell, and palm fiber. By embedding local craftsmanship and building wisdom into contemporary fabrication, it grounds innovation in cultural context, ensuring continuity with place while addressing global pressures of water, energy, adaptability, and identity.

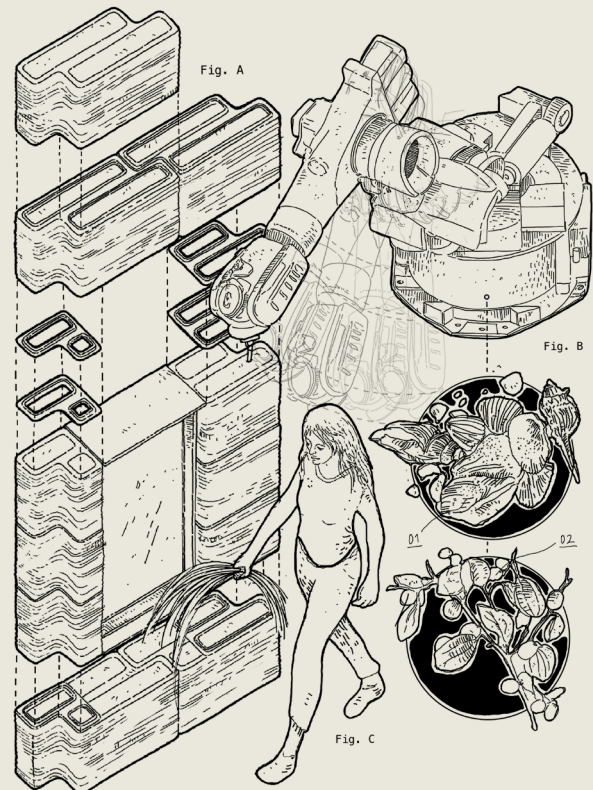
AI-driven configurators translate family needs and cultural rituals into validated assemblies, ensuring variation is grounded in performance. Computational protocols enable modules to evolve as a system of parts, a majlis corner, a dual-kitchen block, or a light shaft, recombined without losing continuity. At the same time, it stresses architecture must be more climate-conscious, beginning with construction waste reduction.

The material system proposed by *Assembled Identities* is forward-looking, drawing on emergent technologies that enable cultural intelligence and ecological responsibility. Large-scale 3D printing allows mass customization, where modules are not standardized but tailored to specific spatial roles, motifs, and genealogies. Crucially, additive fabrication opens housing to locally sourced biomaterial; such as crushed seashells, desert sand, and palm fiber, embedding the Emirates' landscapes and building traditions directly into construction. This integration of cultural form and local matter reframes housing as both a vessel of identity and an ecological practice. By incorporating bio-waste aggregates that reduce cement content in concrete mixtures, the system mitigates the environmental impact of a material responsible for nearly 8% of global CO₂ emissions.

Where prefabrication once erased context, this new technological ecology reintroduces it, offering a catalog of fragments that can expand, adapt, and regenerate in response to the rhythms of family life.

By framing vernacular precedents not as nostalgic references but as active prototypes, *Assembled Identities* positions tradition as a resource for innovation. Continuity is not achieved by mimicry, but by rethinking how ancestral strategies of building, cultural relevance, climatic adaptation, and reparability can be encoded into contemporary systems.

The translation of vernacular principles into modular components ensures that families can adapt their dwellings over time. Growth, privacy, and kinship rituals are supported not through standardized floor plans, but through adaptive building blocks that evolve with household life.



Can Ai Help me Grow my House? Illustration by Sarah Aladayleh, (2023).

04 — From Showroom to Pavilion

The pavilion interrogates the role of the architect within a future shaped by the developer-driven real estate market. Adopting the familiar typology of the showroom, it inverts its logic and recasts it as a site of critique and speculation. The exhibition unfolds across three registers:

1-Genealogies

Tracing how cultural typologies, from courtyards and barjeel to social spaces like the majlis, have been reduced to optional packages within standardized villas. In contemporary sales brochures, the majlis appears as an 'annex'; a labeled floorplan add-on, stripped of its role as a space of hospitality and community. The barjeel, once a device of climate adaptation, is reduced to decorative reference. Courtyards, once the spatial anchor of family life, are now relegated to token backyards.

2-Conditions

Examining how showroom logics such as finish tiers, model units, and upgrade menus produce standardized housing. Developers promise "Mediterranean," "Contemporary," or "Arabian" façades, but the differences are cosmetic. The showroom conditions the buyer into a consumer of options, not a co-author of space. These logics reduce cultural intelligence to branding, rendering the house a mere commodity of surfaces.

3-Prototypes

Proposing a new showroom culture that is automated yet participatory, enabling dwellings authored by identity rather than by efficiency. Instead of three façades, imagine a catalogue of cultural fragments: a majlis corner, a dual-kitchen core, woven palm partitions, aggregate walls, and symbolic light shafts. These fragments form a vocabulary from which countless dwellings can be composed. Within the compact floorplan of the UAE National Pavilion in Venice, the exhibition is staged as a sequence of familiar but inverted moments:

- **Sales Desk** — Visitors are greeted not with contracts but with provocations: What if the house were unfinished by design?
- **Options Wall** — Elements are displayed like upgrade packages, but labeled with adaptability, carbon footprint, and cultural lineage rather than price.
- **Living Fragments** — Partial spaces suggest possible dwellings. These fragments remain open-ended, gesturing toward multiple futures. Fragments are derived from oral histories and typology surveys. The grammar is extensible: parametric ranges adapt to different household cultures across the UAE.

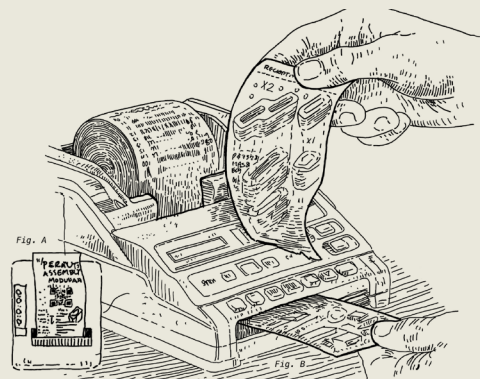
- **Combinatorial Housing Configurator (CHC)** — At the heart of the pavilion is its proprietary technology: the Combinatorial Housing Configurator. Conceived as the fictional developer's signature tool, the CHC transforms the showroom into a participatory design engine.

The CHC does not simply generate plans; it simulates how fragments can be combined to reflect contemporary family structures, from multi-generational households to shifting domestic arrangements. Visitors test how cultural and environmental logics align with personal preference, producing dwellings that are both performative and personal.

Visitors are invited to assemble dwellings from modular cultural fragments. Each combination is instantly tested against a transparent rule set for spatial needs daylight, circulation, adaptability, and ecological footprint. Behind the interface lies a logic of validation, where cultural identity and environmental performance are given equal weight.

Each visitor receives a personalized "spec sheet" that replaces financial data with cultural and ecological values. The Combinatorial Housing Configurator (CHC) is both playful and rigorous, turning spectators into authors and suggesting how residents might shape their own homes. Outputs are optional, anonymized, and showcased in the pavilion, only with consent.

- **Projection Layer** — Archival photographs merge with speculative renderings and parody marketing films. The showroom is both seductive and critical, staging a confrontation between repetition and variation.



'Would you like a copy of your receipt?' Illustration by Sarah Aladailyeh (2024)

05 — Global References

The UAE's housing question resonates globally. In Singapore, state-led HDB (Housing and Development Board) flats house the majority of the population, yet often struggle to strike a balance between efficiency and cultural specificity. In China, entire ghost cities reveal the risks of mass delivery detached from lived identity. In Europe, post-war prefab estates now face costly retrofits to reintroduce community and sustainability.

Open-source movements, such as WikiHouse, offer modular variation but lack the rootedness of vernacular traditions, materiality or culture in the region. *Assembled Identities* positions the UAE as a counterpoint: a place where housing can be delivered at scale while remaining embedded in cultural intelligence.

By reframing the showroom as a site of participation, the project speaks to a global condition while remaining rooted in the Emirates.

06 – Framework and Publication

The research framework is not only an exhibition strategy but also the foundation of the *Assembled Identities Brochure*.

Designed in the language of a real estate developer's sales catalogue, the publication mimics the aesthetic of glossy marketing material while subverting its logic. Instead of mortgages and floor plans, it offers cultural genealogies, critical essays, and speculative prototypes.

The brochure unfolds across three sections, each corresponding to the registers of the exhibition:

1- Genealogies (Housing and Typologies)

Content: Oral histories, photographic surveys, and analytical drawings documenting UAE housing typologies, from areesh huts and courtyard houses to state villas and suburban compounds.

Essays: Contributions from historians, anthropologists, and architects reflecting on continuity, rupture, and adaptation in domestic life.

Visuals: Annotated timelines, archival photographs, and diagrams mapping the transformation of vernacular typologies such as the majlis, courtyard, and barjeel.

2- Conditions (Developer Systems)

Content: A critical reading of the showroom as the apparatus of housing delivery, tracing how its role has shifted over time.

Essays: Analysis by architectural theorists and economists on how standardization is produced through market mechanisms and branding.

Visuals: Reproductions of marketing brochures, comparative façade studies, and satirical diagrams that expose how cosmetic variety conceals structural repetition.

3- Prototypes (User Engagement)

Content: Documentation of the pavilion's modular fragments and the Combinatorial Housing Configurator (CHC), presented as the fictional developer's proprietary system. The CHC invites visitors to compose dwellings from intelligent architectural modules: cultural fragments that negotiate identity, family structure, and environmental performance. Each user-generated configuration becomes a record of a possible future, demonstrating how housing can be authored rather than consumed. The showroom itself participates in this experiment: an assembly of modular components that mirrors the system it exhibits. Choices are indexed by Adaptability, Carbon Footprint, and Lineage.

Essays: Reflections from architects, designers, and material scientists on translating vernacular intelligence into modular building blocks and embedding them within digital configurators. Contributions also explore how computational tools, can democratize design without reducing architecture to a superficial choice.

Visuals: Visitor-generated CHC outputs, annotated fragment taxonomies, exploded diagrams of cultural components, and performance dashboards recording adaptability, carbon footprint, and artistic lineage.

Positioning of the Publication

The Assembled Identities Brochure serves as both an artifact and a critique of the concept. On the one hand, it assumes the familiar role of a developer's catalogue, featuring glossy imagery and enticing language. On the other hand, it reframes housing as a cultural and ecological practice, exposing how identity and performance can be embedded into systems of delivery. Distributed at the Biennale and beyond, the brochure extends the pavilion's reach into public discourse, offering a tool that is both seductive and critical.

07 — Participatory Futures

Assembled Identities presents housing as participatory. Homes are not delivered fully formed; they are co-authored. Visitors inscribe their own variations into the system, testing how cultural identity can be embedded in adaptive design.

Conceived as an open protocol, the project extends beyond Venice through collaborations with UAE manufacturers, material scientists, and communities. It creates opportunities for partnerships with universities, housing authorities, and developers seeking more sustainable and identity-rich approaches.

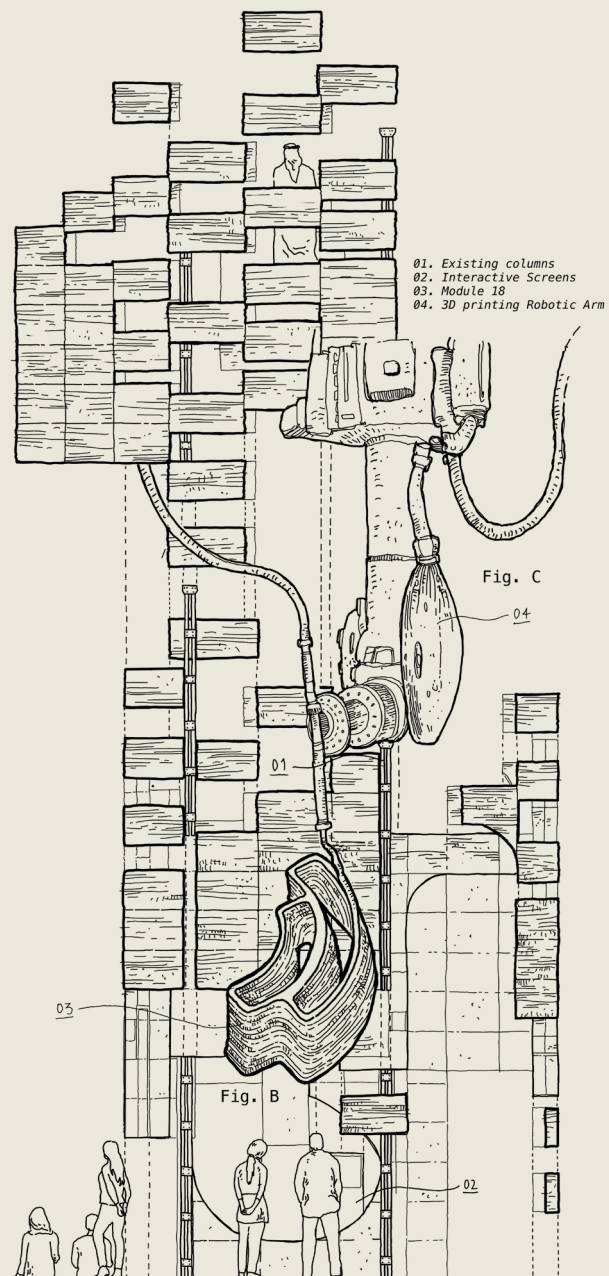
What emerges is not a single prototype, but a framework for resilient housing aligned with national agendas for sustainability, resilience, and cultural continuity.

08 - The UAE as a Laboratory

The Emirates embody a paradox: mass delivery of suburban housing alongside a heritage of adaptive vernacular forms. This contradiction is not a challenge, but an opportunity. Already positioned as a global site of experimentation in sustainability, advanced fabrication, and cultural policy, the UAE is uniquely placed to redefine the future of housing.

Assembled Identities aligns with the **We the UAE 2031** vision, which commits to building resilient, connected communities while safeguarding cultural heritage. It argues that housing is not only an economic driver but also a cultural frontier. Within accelerated change, identity can be preserved, translated, and projected forward.

By presenting this model in Venice, the UAE situates itself at the forefront of global housing debates. The pavilion is not simply an exhibition; it is a laboratory that demonstrates how scale and identity can be built together, offering lessons to nations worldwide confronting their own housing urgencies.



'Showroom, Pavilion, Housing Lab' - Illustration by Sarah Aladaye (2024)



Sheikha Salama Bint Butti House — Early Housing Project (Al Dhannah/Al Ruwais, c. 1982). Photo by Hussain AlMoosawi (2024). © Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi



Al Dhannah City — Early Housing Project (Al Ruwais, c. 1982). Photo by Hussain AlMoosawi (2024). © Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi

09 — Conclusion

Assembled Identities, Designed for Cultural Variation reframes the real estate showroom as a curatorial instrument. What once sold repetition becomes a stage for cultural representation and continuity.

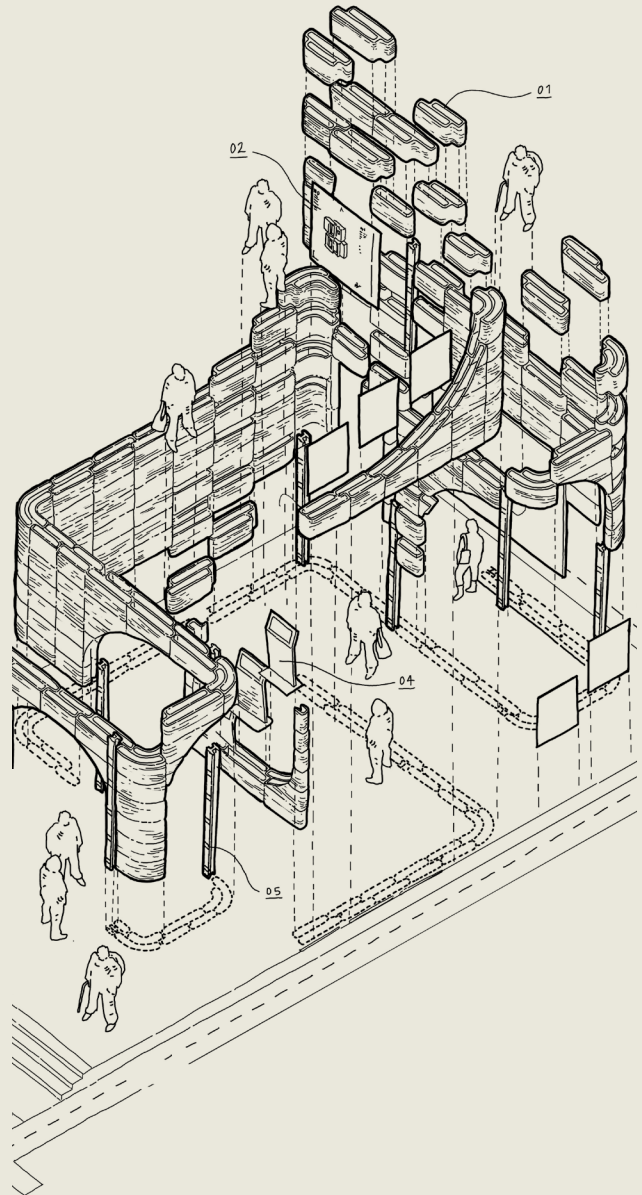
The proposed pavilion advances a clear claim: the future of housing is not sold, but assembled; not a product of uniform delivery, but an evolving practice of resilience, memory, and identity. By transforming the showroom into a speculative laboratory, the exhibition demonstrates how architecture can move beyond surface choices to embed cultural intelligence and environmental performance into systems of provision.

For the UAE, this proposition is urgent. With hundreds of thousands of new homes planned in the next decade, decisions made today will shape how communities live, remember, and adapt for generations.

Assembled Identities argues that efficiency need not erase memory. Instead, housing can become a carrier of belonging, continuity, and ecological care even within accelerated development.

For Venice, the proposed pavilion places the Emirates at the center of a global discourse. It offers a model for nations confronting mass housing: how speed and scale can coexist with cultural depth, and how the act of assembly can restore authorship to both residents and architects.

The pavilion is both mirror and prototype: a mirror to global copy-paste housing, and a prototype for an identity-positive alternative. It asks a simple question with systemic consequences: what if every home could be assembled as a bearer of culture, authored by its inhabitants, and adaptive across time?



'Permutable Assemblies' - Illustration by Sarah Aladayleh (2024)

10 — Team



Curator + Publication Editor

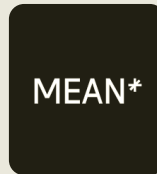
Riyad Joucka is an architect and researcher based in Dubai. He is the founder of MEAN* (Middle East Architecture Network), a design practice that integrates emerging technologies with the cultural and environmental narratives of the places in which it operates.

Alongside leading MEAN*, Joucka is the inaugural Research Fellow in Practice at the Zayed Institute for Architecture, Heritage and Arts at Zayed University, Dubai. His research, *The Adaptive Majlis*, explores this unique typology's evolution through technology, modular design, vernacular intelligence, and material innovation.

His work expands the boundaries of how we build, envisioning architecture that is both technologically forward and culturally grounded. From small-scale objects to landmark proposals, his projects have been exhibited and published internationally. At the heart of his approach lies a belief that architecture should be accessible, expressive, and connected to place, whether designing a pavilion, a home, or an entire neighborhood.

Joucka holds a Master of Architecture with distinction from the Emergent Technologies and Design (EmTech) program at the AA Architectural Association School of Architecture in London.

MEAN* www.m-e-a-n.design



Exhibition Design

MEAN* (Middle East Architecture Network) is an experimental architecture practice working at the intersection of emergent technologies and cultural production.

Founded in 2016, MEAN* has pursued a body of work that spans pavilions, public buildings, interiors, retail environments, and experimental products. Across these scales, the practice seeks to articulate a contemporary architectural language for the Middle East, one that draws from the specificity of place while remaining in dialogue with global avant-garde discourse.

Central to MEAN*'s methodology is a commitment to computation, material research, and digital fabrication as tools for rethinking how architecture is conceived and built. Rather than treating technology as an aesthetic end in itself, MEAN* uses it as a means to address urgent questions of climate, economy, and society.

The work is internationally recognized for its innovation in material and fabrication, and for positioning architecture as both a speculative pursuit and a practical craft.

MEAN* seeks to create architecture that is visionary yet grounded, preserving the memory and ecology of its context while projecting confidently toward a global future.



Graphic, Publication Design + Art Direction

Clara Sancho's eponymous studio is a Madrid-based design practice specializing in arts and culture projects across Spain and the Arab world. The studio offers expertise in visual communication, publication design, typography, and exhibition graphics, working seamlessly across Latin and Arabic scripts.

Recent projects include the visual identity for Design Space AIUla, a new cultural hub in AIUla, Saudi Arabia, and its inaugural exhibition Mawrid: Celebrating Inspired Design (2024).

Trained in Spain, Finland, and the UK, Clara specialized in Book Design at the University of Reading. Over her 20-year career, she has collaborated with OMB Design, the Victoria and Albert Museum, Mind the Gap (Beirut), and GSM Dubai. She is available for international collaborations and open to fieldwork in support of cultural initiatives worldwide.

Clara Sancho Studio: www.clarasancho.com



Type Designer + Arabic Typography Expert

Pascal Zoghbi is a Lebanese designer and educator with a Master of Design in Type & Media from KABK.

He founded 29Letters Type Foundry in 2013. Building on a cross-cultural approach, he has developed an outstanding collection of contemporary multi-script typefaces. Having moved to Madrid in 2018, he expanded 29LT's focus on Arabic and Latin scripts to embrace a global multi-script approach that taps into other world scripts.

Zoghbi taught for ten years at various design schools in Lebanon and in the UAE. Internationally renowned, he has received prestigious design awards, such as TDC, Gran-shan, AIGA, and was nominated for Jameel Prize 3. He also co-authored and edited the "Arabic Graffiti" book.

29LT: www.29lt.com



Photographer

Hussain Al Moosawi is an Emirati designer, photographer and storyteller who is actively documenting the UAE's urban identity. After obtaining his Higher Diploma in applied media, he went to Australia in 2004 to study, work and live for 8 years, where he obtained his BA and MA in communication design.

Returning to the UAE in 2013, he served as an infographic artist for The National, and content creator and art director for various brands at Abu Dhabi Media.

His ongoing project "Facade to Facade" is creating a comprehensive visual classification system of buildings from all around the UAE, to better shape our understanding of the country's heterogeneous architectural identity. He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of National Geographic AlArabiya Magazine.

Hugraphic: www.hugraphic.ae



Illustrator

Sarah Aladayleh is a Jordanian architect and illustrator based between London and Dubai. She is a Design Lead at Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) in London, leading large-scale urban and architectural projects across the Middle East and the UK.

Her research-based illustrations draw on the aesthetics and histories of technical manuals, how-to-guides, and other systems of architectural drawings.

She subverts these conventional representations by weaving satire commentary, collective memories and emergent forms of storytelling. Sarah's work has been commissioned and published internationally, including by the Institut du Monde Arabe in France, Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah Art Foundation.

Sara Aladayleh: www.sarahaladayleh.com

11 — Publication



Co-Editor

Adina Hempel is an architect, urban researcher, and Associate Professor at Zayed University, where she leads the Zayed Institute for Architecture, Arts, and Heritage, studying arid and desert culture in the region.

Adina's research investigates the socio-cultural and contextual influences on architecture, focusing on the evolution of the built environment in the Arabian Peninsula.

Adina is a member of the Technical Committee for Modern Heritage of the UAE. She has served as Head of Research for GSMproject on the Shindagha Museum in Dubai, and in 2014, was part of the curatorial team for the 1st National Pavilion of the UAE at the 14th International Architecture Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia.

Adina Hempel graduated with distinction from the Technical University of Dresden, trained in Urban Studies at Columbia University in New York, and is currently completing her PhD dissertation on the role of 'The Majlis: A Space for Mediation'.

Zayed University: www.zu.ac.ae



Co-Editor

Basem Mohamed is a designer, researcher, and educator whose work explores computational design and fabrication in housing. He earned his PhD from McGill University's School of Architecture, where he developed a digital platform for mass customization of prefabricated housing systems.

His research focuses on design processes and digital tools that rethink housing production through technology and cultural context. Basem has collaborated with leading prefabrication companies in Quebec and housing authorities in Abu Dhabi to develop new design protocols addressing local needs. His work has been published in ARCC, MCPC, and Open House International, among others.

With over fifteen years of teaching experience across Egypt, Canada, and the UAE. He currently serves as Associate Professor at Zayed University's College of Arts and Creative Enterprises, where he teaches design studios, furniture design, and digital modeling, integrating computation and making in architectural education.

code_lab : www.instagram.com/code_lab/



Contributor

Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi is an Emirati columnist and researcher on social, political and cultural affairs in the Arab Gulf States. He is also the founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation, an independent initiative established in 2010 to contribute to the intellectual development of the art scene in the Arab region.

He has taught 'Politics of Modern Middle Eastern Art' at New York University, Yale University, Georgetown University, Boston College, The American University of Paris, Brandeis University, Harvard Kennedy School, Columbia University and Bard College Berlin.

In 2023, Sultan completed a Fellowship at Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and in 2024, Sultan was a Research Associate at SOAS Middle East Institute, London. Sultan is currently an Instructor at the American University of Sharjah.

Barjeel: www.barjeelartfoundation.org

12 — Examples of Work

House 00

Villa for Solitude — an experimental residence organized around a shaded courtyard and a textured façade — reimagines domestic privacy and belonging within nature through a modular, adaptable framework. Set against the backdrop of Jebel Jais, the house quietly mirrors the rhythm and materiality of its surroundings.

MEAN Middle East Architecture Network, Dubai Design Week, Dubai, 2020



Photo Credit: Adham Selim

Cosmos House

A housing prototype developed with WASP, combining large-scale 3D printing with local vernacular cues. The project investigates robotic fabrication using sand and additives for adaptable living environments co-existing with the natural environment of the desert of Alula.

MEAN Middle East Architecture Network with WASP, AIUla, Saudi Arabia, 2021



Photo Credit: Francesco Ortigas

Meta-Modular

A conceptual study by MEAN*, extending the logic of modular housing into cultural, material, and climatic adaptation. The project reinterprets prefabrication not as a tool for repetition but as an instrument for authorship, enabling variation, personalization, and ecological sensitivity within systems of construction.

MEAN Middle East Architecture Network, Dubai, 2022



Photo Credit: Dheyaa Dhiyeaa

Housing in the UAE is expanding at extraordinary speed, but the urgent question is identity, not provision.

'Assembled Identities' reframes the real estate showroom as a critical stage, replacing contracts and façades with cultural fragments and participatory futures. Drawing on vernacular intelligence — from majlis corners and dual kitchens to courtyards and barjeel — and mobilizing emergent technologies such as 3D printing, Ai driven configurators, and bio-based materials, the pavilion proposes housing as an evolving system of modular building blocks. It asserts a clear claim: the future of housing is authored, adaptive, and assembled.

