

## Press Conference, 24th April

### Background

The Kingdom of Bahrain is participating at the Expo Milano 2015, which is themed "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" with a self-built pavilion. Opening in under a month, on 1st May, for a period of six months, the 2000sqm national pavilion of the Kingdom is entitled Archaeologies of Green - reflecting on the unique agrarian and archaeological heritage of the country.

Archaeologies of Green, the Kingdom of Bahrain's national pavilion, is conceived as a continuous landscape of fruit gardens that each contain a dominant fruit tree that is native to Bahrain and are intersected by a series of closed spaces that contain in turn a reception area, exhibition spaces and a café serving local Bahraini food. The spaces all overlook and frame the gardens, which form the main exhibition component of the pavilion and recount the rich agrarian heritage of the Islands.

While the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA) is working to ensure the national participation of the Kingdom and its pavilion raises awareness of the country's distinct national heritage to visitors of the Expo and internationally, the BACA has launched a series of national initiatives to ensure wider public participation in the effort. At the same time, a cultural event programme has been developed which brings forth some of the unique attributes of the country to Milan.

1. Welcome address and introduction about Archaeologies of Green by BACA President and Pavilion Commissioner General, Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa.
2. Bahrain Pavilion design and content by Deputy Commissioner General, Noura Al Sayeh, and Pavilion designers, Anne Holtrop and Anouk Vogel.
3. Pavilion programme during the Expo and its distinguishing features.
4. Screening of documentary trailer about agricultural landscape of Bahrain.
5. Exclusive fashion commission of Bahraini designer, Hind Matar.
6. Introduction to Bahraini cuisine selections inspired by Archaeologies of Green presentation of Bahraini fruit gardens.
7. Q&A led by Deputy Commissioner General, Noura Al Sayeh.

## Evocative design showcases agriculture in a desert region

Milan, 24th April 2015

Bahrain's agricultural landscape will be explored at Expo Milano 2015 in the evocative national pavilion developed by the Kingdom. Responding to the Expo theme, 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life,' the Bahrain Pavilion seeks to reflect the less well-known elements of the country's heritage - as an agricultural centre in an arid region - and modern-day challenges.

In February 2014, the Ministry of Culture, which commissioned the Bahrain Pavilion in Expo Milano 2015, launched an invited competition for the design of the pavilion. The firms invited to participate in the competition were: X-Architects, Senan AbdelKader, Baukuh, Studio Anne Holtrop and Francesco Librizzi Studio. The jury, comprised of HE Shaikha Mai Al Khalifa, Noura Al Sayeh, Bernard Khoury and Luca Molinari, selected the design proposal by Dutch architect, Anne Holtrop in collaboration with the landscape architect Anouk Vogel as it best encompassed the competition brief of providing evocative and atmospheric spaces that provide a backdrop to the landscape proposal.

Following the selection of the winning proposal, the technical drawings for the building were completed within four months by the winning competition team alongside SCE projects, BREED Engineering and Mario Monotti Engineering. The building permission was successfully granted by the Italian Authorities in late July and construction on site started in early September last year. The construction was undertaken by Italian contracting firm, Restaura SAL who completed the pavilion in record time, ahead of all other national pavilions.

'Bahrain's history as a wealthy country with abundant agricultural produce, which dates back to its ancient position as the land of Dilmun, linking the Ancient Near East to the Indus Valley, is brought to life in the Pavilion this year,' said HE Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, the Commissioner General and President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA). 'Our choice of

design and content was based on our desire to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding this heritage and conserving the green natural historic landscapes as well as the culinary traditions and cultures associated with it.'

Entitled Archaeologies of Green, the Pavilion is built out of white prefabricated concrete panels and is conceived to be moved to Bahrain at the end of the Expo in order to serve as a botanical garden that will reconnect the local and international audiences in Bahrain with the often overlooked agricultural heritage of the Islands. The prefabricated components of the buildings, visible through the seams that connect them to one another, refer to the inherent shapes found in the archaeology of Bahrain.

The curatorial stance of the pavilion developed by the Ministry of Culture in close collaboration with the competition team, aims to present a poetic interpretation of the agrarian cultural heritage of the country through a multi-faceted and realistic portrayal of the agricultural landscape, one that equally acknowledges its distinctive heritage and addresses the current challenges and efforts in terms of water provision, scarcity of arable land and food security.

'This has been a most rewarding experience,' commented Anne Holtrop. 'It is both demanding and ultimately satisfying to work on a project with multiple uses when most Pavilions are demolished at the end of an expo's duration...'



The gardens will be supplemented by an exhibition of archaeological objects from the Dilmun and Tylos era that refer to agricultural practices of that era as well as to the many myths surrounding the Islands in addition to a short film produced by the filmmaker and photographer Armin Linke and which reflects on the contemporary agricultural landscape of Bahrain.

Similarly, in line with the Culture Authority's interest in showcasing Bahrain and its unique heritage at the Expo, the Pavilion relied on notable Italian craftsmanship. The brass work was produced by Marzorati Ronchetti, a family owned company, specialising in metalwork related to the production of art, design and architecture while the prefabricated concrete panels were produced by Italian manufacturer, Magnetti, an established building firm dating 200 years, and the lighting was supplied and sponsored Viabizzuno, a contemporary company specialised in lighting design.

## Bahrain in Italy: the countdown to Expo Milano 2015

Milan, 24th April 2015

Opening on 1st May for a period of six months, Archaeologies of Green, the self-built national pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Expo Milano 2015, examines the country's agrarian heritage through its fruit gardens and archaeological exhibition as well as its dedicated programme of events. With over 140 countries and organisations participating in the Expo to address the challenges of safe and sufficient nutrition in a sustainable form, in addition to sampling the different foods of the world, visitors will learn about the country participants through the experiences offered.

'Bahrain will certainly have an important voice and presence at Expo Milano 2015,' explained Noura Al Sayeh, Deputy Commissioner General. 'Our event programme was devised to complement the Pavilion content, presenting the different features of the country's identity and heritage. Thus, leading Bahraini talent will present their interpretations of the Pavilion theme while the cultural programme will draw on the island's distinct pearling and agricultural history.'

The only country to have undertaken a memory-based cookbook as well as an exclusive fashion commission by Bahraini designer, Hind Matar, Archaeologies of Green seeks to showcase both tradition and innovation. The cookbook is a crowd-sourced initiative currently underway as the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities has invited public contributions. At the same time, the Pavilion cuisine, which will be sold in its café, has been carefully devised by Bahraini chef and Pavilion Ambassador, Narise Kamber.

Throughout the Expo, visitors will be able to view and purchase both the distinctive cookbook of Bahraini foods and thoughts as well as the custom-made garments designed by Hind Matar on the occasion of Bahrain's participation. Inspired by the shapes and the architecture of the Pavilion, and which include detachable elements referring to its dismantling, the garments are made from a jacquard textile that is an abstract composition of the

Bahraini fruits present in the Pavilion. The rich texture of the jacquard, its vibrant colours, unique features and intricate structure are an ode to Bahrain's own rich historic tapestry.

The founder of MATAR, a London-based luxury womenswear label, Hind Matar is a Bahraini fashion designer whose thought-provoking and eye-catching designs are known to blend contradictions, mirroring the lifestyle of the contemporary woman. Her unforgettable combinations of fabric, line and embellishment explore fresh perspectives of femininity.

In addition, launching on the Expo-selected National Day for the Bahrain Pavilion, 4th September, visitors will be treated to an enriching experience of the country's hospitality and local culture. Alongside the traditional Bahraini coffee and henna decoration, there will be live demonstrations of basket weaving and the crafting of traditional wooden boxes. Archaeologies of Green will also feature a distinguished musical performance of the Fjjiri tradition by the Qalali Group connecting audiences to Bahrain's pearling heritage and a fashion show of traditional Bahraini clothes.

Then, coinciding with the World Coffee Forum, between 28th September and 1st October, Bahraini taste in coffee and music will be showcased to visitors. In the traditional barasti or areesh setting, visitors will enjoy their Bahraini coffee in the environmentally sustainable local hut built from palm trees. Featuring live and recorded 'sut' music by the Mohammed bin Faris band, the contemporary Expo scene will be transformed.





## 30th April 2015 the Night before the Opening

Two of the Expo's world-renowned Ambassadors and countrymen present special performances to international audiences and guests of the Expo. Giorgio Armani, named a "Special Ambassador," celebrates his fashion label's 40 years in business with a runway show in Milan. This is to be followed by "Extraordinary Ambassador," Andrea Bocelli in a live performance of the event's official song "La forza del sorriso" (the power of a smile), which will be broadcast worldwide.

## 1st May to 31st October 2015

Running from 10am to 11pm daily for six months, the Expo site will welcome and enlighten visitors from around the world who want to live in a healthier and more sustainable world.

## 1st May 2015 the Inauguration Ceremony

The most eminent representatives of Italian government and international institutions will be gathered in Milan to launch Expo Milano 2015 in an exclusive inauguration ceremony. In the evening, a concert of the bells of Milan Cathedral and the *Ambrosian Archdiocese* will echo throughout the city while La Scala Theatre will open the Expo Milano 2015 season with the *Turandot*, by *Giacomo Puccini*.



MILANO 2015  
FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE

## Bahrain in Italy: a Story of Collaboration

Milan, 24th April 2015

Bahraini fashion designer, Hind Matar, has collaborated with Italian textile manufacturer, Clerici Tessuto to produce her Pavilion-inspired costume and garments in an exclusive Expo-imagined project.

The collection, which includes jumpers, a cape top, shirts with detachable cuffs and collars, skirts and scarves, pays tribute to Bahrain's rich agricultural heritage while echoing the crossroads of the mid-20th Century, an era in which the oil boom impact on the country's agricultural sector was still unclear. The jacquard fabric designed for the Bahrain Pavilion was borne out of the shapes and colours of Bahrain's indigenous fruits as well as the very structure of the Pavilion. Following the Pavilion's development and construction as a structure that would be assembled, dismantled and re-assembled in Bahrain, the collection of garments feature multiple panels and detachable details.

'The point of departure was to design a jacquard fabric with an abstract motif and organic structure that is dynamic, uplifting and has a three-dimensional quality,' commented Hind Matar. 'I interpreted the diverse shapes and colours of Bahrain's traditional fruits such as figs, mangoes, pomegranates and dates to create an energetic artwork that was in turn abstracted into a unique textile design. The resulting jacquard expresses Bahrain's inherent sensuality and a sense of self-reflected exoticism while, at the same time, references the pavilion's design features that are constructed of circular segments and straight lines.'

The Bahraini fashion designer who works between the UK and Bahrain, approached the Italian textile manufacturer, Clerici Tessuto in late 2014 to produce her designs in the first collaboration between the celebrated manufacturer and a Bahraini artist. Clerici Tessuto is one of the most important textile manufacturers in the world for the luxury sector, with ranges for men's and women's clothing, accessories and home furnishing. Founded in 1923, the company now owns a complete small scale textile production chain, which employs more than 300 people,

covering the entire finishing cycle of silk and other natural fibres.

Hind Matar first launched her luxury womenswear brand MATAR during the Spring/Summer 2014 season at the designer showrooms in Somerset House during London Fashion Week. MATAR is known for its delicate blend of contradictions. The collections explore abstract concepts and narratives such as weightlessness, the awkward beauty of flowers in bloom and lost youth, which have each contributed to the brand's evolving design language. In that elusive space between the harmonious and the confrontational, MATAR belongs in the wardrobe of an ageless, fearless and effortless woman.

'The Expo was an occasion for the Authority to launch a series of creative commissions that would produce specific and relevant content,' highlighted Noura Al Sayeh, Deputy Commissioner General of the Bahrain Pavilion. 'The fashion collection by Hind Matar was a great occasion to provide a promising Bahraini fashion designer with an international platform to showcase her work in Milan, one of the leading fashion capitals. Her collaboration with Clerici Tessuto has produced a beautiful custom-made jacquard that incorporates Bahraini symbols with Italian craftsmanship.'

The garments designed and produced for the Pavilion will be worn by the Bahraini volunteers who will support the visitor experience in Milan and will also be sold at the Pavilion gift shop.



## Bahraini food to be served in Italy

Milan, 24th April 2015

The national pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Expo Milano 2015, Archaeologies of Green, will include a café serving local food that has been developed by Bahraini entrepreneur and chef, Narise Kamber.

The menu of the pavilion café is inspired by the fruits present in the gardens of the pavilion that have been incorporated into traditional Bahraini dishes for hundreds of years. The light tasting menu presented is a sample of contemporary Bahraini cuisine and is seasonal, changing in line with the fruit bearing trees.

'Narise is a household name in Bahrain,' commented HE Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, the Commissioner General of the Bahrain Pavilion. 'An exceptional cook whose spirit pervades the many dishes she creates, Narise' collaboration with the Pavilion will bring her interpretation of the fruit gardens and Bahraini flavours to life.'

The café, which will feature her creative recipes, will comprise a variety of fruit smoothies to fruit integrated salads, savoury dishes and desserts. Delicious and flavourful, the dishes include pomelo orange salad, papaya eggplant and jarjeer salad, the ever-popular Bahraini madrooba, charcoal-scented meatballs with a rice crust, chicken and citron khubz bites, rose ice cream, date cake and amongst the many drinks a rich mango papaya smoothie, a date coffee shake, palm water tea and tamarind tea.

Italian chefs at the International School for Italian Cuisine (ICIF) in Costigliole d'Asti have been trained by Ms Kamber to produce the Pavilion menu items and were taught the underlying distinguishing features and tastes associated with Bahraini food as juxtaposed with Italian cuisine. The owner of Jena Bakery and Saffron by Jena, Ms Kamber first collaborated with the Ministry of Culture in 2012 when she established her Bahraini food concept in the old Qaisariya Suq in Muharraq.

Her dishes and presentation attest to the rich blend of Iraqi, Indian and Persian influences on Bahraini cuisine while her specially designed menu for the Pavilion also incorporates many of the fruits, which are bountiful in Bahrain such as figs, pomegranate, lime, and papaya amongst others. As a trading port and place of exchange, Bahrain has long been open and exposed to diverse cultures.

A Bahraini entrepreneur, passionate about cooking and creating dishes, Narise Kamber owns Saffron by Jena and Jena Bakery. Her outlets are very popular, launching a trend for the serving of Bahraini food at local eateries. The winner of the Time Out Award for best Bahraini restaurant in 2014, Saffron is a chic destination due to its modern execution of traditional dishes. Narise is recognized for her creativity and flair for cooking and has made a large number of appearances in television cooking programmes in addition to overseeing Bahraini cuisine lessons to visiting tourists and expatriates. Her skills led her to be nominated for the young female entrepreneur award within the Deauville Partnership with Arab countries in 2013.



MILANO 2015

FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE

## Bahraini youth play an active role in Expo Milano 2015

Milan, 24th April 2015

After a rigorous screening and assessment process of over 200 applications received for the Bahrain Pavilion volunteer programme, 24 Bahrain-based volunteers have been selected to travel to Milan and represent the Pavilion and Bahrain.

Undergoing intensive training conducted by the Bahrain Authority for Culture & Antiquities (BACA) in association with the Economic Development Board, the volunteers will travel in six groups with participants spending one month in Milan at a time.

Each outstanding in their own way, the first group includes young Bahraini graduate, Amal Al-Saffar who in 2013 became the first Bahraini woman to travel to Antarctica. Having climbed Mount Kilimanjaro since then in order to raise awareness about the protection of the planet's ecological sites, Amal embodies the values of the global citizen.

'The Expo Milano 2015 represents an opportunity for me to represent my country in an international platform and show our deeply rooted heritage,' she explained. 'At the same time, I can share my environmental values and cross-cultural skills, proving to the world that Bahraini youth and women in particular are important contributors to society.'

Accompanying the first group of volunteers also is Bahrain Polytechnic graduate, Ali Talahi, the National Coordinator of the Arab Youth Climate Movement. The Information & Communication Technology graduate, Ali's portfolio of interests and skills is diverse including freelance work as a graphic designer and photographer.

'Food security is one of the subjects which I am looking forward to highlighting during the Milan Expo because in this part of the world, especially Bahrain, most of our food is imported... Milan will be an excellent gathering point to start dialogues about food security and the impact of climate change and how we as individuals and groups can contribute towards mitigating or adapting to this issue,' noted Ali.

Serving as representatives of Bahrain's vision of heritage preservation, food security and sustainability, the selected volunteers were chosen from the pool of applicants due to their shared sense of mission with the Pavilion's core objectives, language skills, enthusiasm and proven field background. They will help staff the Pavilion, greet the visitors who will frequent it and ensure the tours of the grounds explain Bahrain's landscape and vegetation while promoting its history and heritage.



MILANO 2015  
FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE



## About the Pavilion Team

### LEADERSHIP

*Commissioner General*

#### **Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa**

A leading figure in the Arab culture and art scenes, HE Shaikha Mai has spearheaded national efforts to develop the cultural infrastructure in the Kingdom of Bahrain for heritage conservation and the growth of sustainable tourism. The President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, amongst her myriad achievements have been the 2005 and 2012 inscriptions of the Bahrain Fort and the Pearling: Testimony of an Island Economy as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in addition to the establishment of the Bahrain Fort Site Museum and the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage, a UNESCO Category 2 Centre.

Renowned as a local historian whose work has been published both in Bahrain and internationally, her pioneering work has been recognized around the world and she is the recipient of the Légion d'Honneur, the Moroccan Order of Ouissam Alaouite (Grand Officer) and the Order of the Italian Star as well as the First Class Order of Merit from HM King Hamad of Bahrain.

*Deputy Commissioner General*

#### **Noura Al-Sayeh**

Noura Al-Sayeh is an architect currently working at the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) as Head of Architectural Affairs, where she is responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of cultural institutions and museums as well as the creation of an active agenda of exhibitions and academic exchange initiatives. Previously, she worked as an architect in New York, Jerusalem and Amsterdam. She was the co-curator of Reclaim, Bahrain's first participation at the 12th Venice Architecture Biennale in 2010, which was awarded the Golden Lion for best national participation and the curator of Background, Bahrain's second participation at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2012. Alongside her work for the BACA, she works as an independent architect on projects in Brazil, Nablus and Bahrain.

## DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

*Pavilion Architect*

### **Anne Holtrop**

Anne Holtrop (born 1977, The Netherlands) is an independent architect based in Amsterdam. His work ranges from models to temporary spaces and buildings, on which he occasionally collaborates with the artists Krijn de Koning and Bas Princen. He is course director of the master Studio for Immediate Spaces at the Sandberg Instituut Amsterdam, and was editor of OASE, an architectural journal for architecture from 2005 till 2013. For his practice he has been awarded several grants from the Fonds BKVB, as well as receiving the Charlotte Köhler Prize for Architecture from the Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation.

*Landscape Architect*

### **Anouk Vogel**

Born in 1977, Anouk Vogel studied landscape architecture at the Metropolitan University of Manchester from which she graduated in 2001. Since then, she has been living and working in The Netherlands, where she also founded her own practice in 2007. The winner of the competition for new furniture of the Vondelpark, a Dutch national heritage monument, Vogel was also one of the finalists for the prestigious Prix de Rome for Architecture in 2010. Her work has been exhibited across Europe and she continues to lecture on a regular basis.

## EXHIBITION

*Exhibition Curator*

### **Dr Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh**

Nadine Boksmati-Fattouh is an advisor for the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. With an MA in Archaeology (American University of Beirut) and a PhD in Classical Archaeology (University of Cambridge, UK), she worked for the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities between 1993 and 2007. In 2008, she moved to the Kingdom of Bahrain and soon after was appointed Director of Qalat al Bahrain Site Museum. In addition to her responsibilities at the site museum, Nadine was in charge of exhibitions and cultural programming at the Bahrain National Museum. In 2010, she was appointed Advisor for Museums Affairs and was in charge of the Museum department. Following her relocation to the United States, Nadine has curated a number of exhibitions at the Bahrain National Museum and is currently leading the National Museum permanent galleries remodeling project.

*Director of documentary*

### **Armin Linke**

Armin Linke was born in 1966 and lives in Milan and Berlin. As a photographer and filmmaker he combines a range of contemporary image-processing technologies in order to blur the borders between fiction and reality. His artistic practice is concerned with different possibilities of dealing with photographic archives and their respective manifestations, as well as with the interrelations and transformative powers between urban, architectural or spatial functions and the human beings interacting with these environments. He is currently professor at the HfG Karlsruhe.



## Archaeologies of Green

The pavilion of the Kingdom of Bahrain at the Expo Milano 2015 is a poetic interpretation of the cultural agrarian heritage of the country, which stems from the ancient civilization of Dilmun.

With ten distinctive fruit gardens, containing trees that will be fruit-bearing at different moments throughout the six-month duration of the exhibition, the pavilion also features archeological artifacts that celebrate the millennia long tradition of agriculture and perpetuate the many myths of Bahrain as the location of the Garden of Eden and the land of the million palm trees.

Built out of white prefabricated concrete panels, the pavilion will be moved to Bahrain at the end of the Expo and once rebuilt will serve as a botanical garden. The prefabricated components of the buildings, visible through the seams that connect them to one another, loosely refer to the inherent and distinguished forms of the archaeology of Bahrain.

*For more information, please contact [Suha Matar](mailto:s.matar@moiracommunications.com) via email: [s.matar@moiracommunications.com](mailto:s.matar@moiracommunications.com)*

## Expo Milano 2015

The Expo Milano 2015 is a non-commercial Universal Exposition with some very unique and innovative features. Not only is it an exhibition but also a process, one of active participation among a large number of players around the theme of Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. It is sustainable, technological, thematic and focused on its visitors. Open from 1st May to 31st October 2015, the Expo will host over 140 participants. Running for 184 days, this giant exhibition site, covering one million square meters, is expected to welcome over 20 million visitors.

Visitors will experience a unique journey that looks at the complex theme of nutrition. They will have the possibility to take a trip around the world, sampling the food and traditions of people from all over the globe. Expo Milano 2015 will be the first Exposition in history to be remembered not only for its products but also for its contribution towards education on food and the planet's precious resources.



MILANO 2015  
FEEDING THE PLANET  
ENERGY FOR LIFE