



## **Call for Conference Papers:**

### **Museums in Arabia 2019**

26-28 June 2019, London, United Kingdom

Hosted by

**King's College London**

#### **Organisers:**

Dr. Sarina Wakefield, Zayed University, UAE and Dr. Serena Iervolino, King's College London

How are different cultural, political, social and economic actors involved in and shape cultural practices within museums, arts and cultural heritage institutions? And how is this key question addressed within the rapidly developing and complex landscape of the Arabian Peninsula? Academic debate has tended to privilege top-down understandings of museums and cultural organisations in the Gulf States. With scholarly publications primarily focused on large-scale cultural institutions and their symbolic power; the unique operations and distinctive characteristics of Gulf museums and cultural institutions have been often overlooked. The conference aims to shift the focus of academic debate towards grounded arts and cultural practices and their unique operations. We are particularly interested in exploring the regional and international actors and agents who are actively involved in producing (and challenging) cultural formations and systems of knowledge production in (and on) the Gulf. We encourage both critical analyses and case-studies that examine how the actions of individuals and institutions are connected to the broader social, economic and political landscape of the Arabian Peninsula. We also welcome papers that take a theoretical approach to the conference theme, addressing one or several issues that the conference explores. In addition to twenty-minute papers, we may also consider alternative and creative formats of presentation of academic research and critical enquiry, such as films and digital artworks.

Papers may address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Official, government-sanctioned museum and cultural practices, including state-funded museums and galleries, artist residences, biennials, festivals and their practices (including exhibitionary, curatorial, educational, conservation and marketing practices)
- Institutional cultures and professional practice, and their impact on museum, heritage and arts organisations' programmes
- 'Independent', grassroots heritage and/or arts initiatives and networks (such as small-scale, 'community' arts and heritage initiatives, graffiti art, artist-led spaces)

- Private initiatives (private museums / collecting initiatives, commercial galleries and museum and heritage consultancies)
- International heritage and museum-policy bodies and their impact on defining and shaping best practices (e.g. ICOM and UNESCO)
- Local, regional and international networks of relationships, exchanges and power
- Implicit and explicit cultural policy frameworks, the narratives used to rationalise them and their applications

We also welcome abstract submissions addressing other themes relevant to this conference.

### **About the Conference**

*Museums in Arabia 2019* is hosted and supported by the King's College London, United Kingdom. It will take place between the 26-28<sup>th</sup> of June 2019 at Bush House, a Grade II listed building in central London and former home of the BBC World Service. *Museums in Arabia* is an internationally established conference series. It operates as an international collaborative network for exploring the theory and practice of museums and heritage in the Arabian Peninsula. Established in 2012, the conference series has developed successful events at host institutions including the British Museum in 2012 in partnership with the British Foundation for the Study of Arabia; the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha in 2014 in partnership with UCL Qatar in 2014 and the Bahrain National Museum, Kingdom of Bahrain in 2017 in partnership with the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities. The series encourages cross-disciplinary exchange and engagement. *Museums in Arabia* attracts scholars from a wide variety of geographic locations and research specialisations, providing opportunities to foster multidisciplinary dialogue. We therefore encourage academics and practitioners from any relevant discipline to submit proposals.

We expect to draw high-quality contributions that can lead to new publications in the field. The 2014 *Museums in Arabia* conference led to the publication of the edited volume *Museums in Arabia: Transnational Practices and Regional Processes*. Further publications are being prepared including the edited volume *Museums of the Arabian Peninsula: Historical Developments and Contemporary Discourses* (Under Contract, Wakefield, Routledge).

### **Submission Guidelines**

Please submit abstracts to: [conference@museumsinarabia.com](mailto:conference@museumsinarabia.com) Abstracts should include author's institutional affiliation, paper title, abstract (400 words maximum), 5-6 keywords, author's biography (up to 150 words) and contact details. For any queries please email the conference organisers: Dr. Sarina Wakefield [sarinawakefield@mac.com](mailto:sarinawakefield@mac.com) and Dr. Serena Iervolino [serena.iervolino@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:serena.iervolino@kcl.ac.uk)

**Deadline for abstract submissions: 10 January 2019.**

Conference Registration Fees: £100 / Student/Independent Scholars/Retired Price £30

All participants are responsible for covering the costs of their own conference fee, travel, visa and accommodation.