TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
A Debate around Cultural Heritage in the Middle East

• Author(s) Name:
Sophie A Johnson

• University or Company Affiliation:
The Royal College of Art, London

• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with a written paper)
  ii. present via pre-recorded film (with a written paper)
  iii. submit a written paper only (and not attend/present)

• Abstract (300 words):
With many areas of the middle east dealing with daily destruction and the gulf areas rapidly growing. The debate around heritage has been widely discussed, with different viewpoints being argued. Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the UAE, was quoted as saying ‘We should preserve our traditions and national heritage. We should stick to our roots and our Arab and Islamic traditions’ Historic monuments, ancient buildings, oases and natural heritage are the basic elements that make up the historic heritage of many areas of the UAE. The heritage debate in the UAE seems to have several different approaches. In Dubai the ministry follows the ‘freeze in time’ method of buildings which have a more general appreciation,
while in neighboring Sharjah there is more of a holistic approach merging the heritage sensitively with a modern approach, to allow the architecture to keep on living. This paper will present different perspectives through case studies, in the UAE. These perspectives raise more than just questions of heritage but also of patronage, national identity, future visions by the government and culture of the people. Raising questions around what we think is acceptable forms of heritage in the 21st century and how we can rewrite our past through our visions of the future.

**Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Sophie Johnson is a PhD candidate at The Royal College of Art and is currently working on research surrounding Emirati National Housing in the UAE. She also has 11 years of teaching experience from Foundation to Masters level at several of London’s leading university’s such as, Wimbledon School of Arts, Central St Martins, Chelsea College of Arts and Ravensbourne as well as others. Sophie's professional background in interior design projects have ranged from bespoke pieces to whole schemes and she has assisted many clients to realise their ideas. From a very exciting high-end start to her design career it went full circle when Sophie decided to return to university to lecture. Alongside the lecturing, Sophie has regularly written for the BBC History Magazine – FootSteps, and contributed to several Middle Eastern publications such as Harpers Bazar, Arabian Houses, Better Homes. Sophie also present’s her research at international conferences.